77-26,353

SALZMAN, Catherine Laura, 1948-
CONSUMER SOCIETIES AND THE CONSUMER COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT IN RUSSIA, 1897-1917. (VOLUMES I-II)

The University of Michigan, Ph.D., 1977
History, Europe

Xerox University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106

CONSUMER SOCIETIES AND THE CONSUMER COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT IN RUSSIA 1897-1917

Volume I

by
Catherine Laura Salzman

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(History)
in The University of Michigan
1977

Doctoral Committee

Professor William G. Rosenberg, Chairman
Associate Professor William G. Lockwood
Professor Arthur P. Mendel
Professor Roman Szporluk

for Herman

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe both a personal and an intellectual debt of thanks to my graduate advisor William G. Rosenberg. The majority of the research for this dissertation was done in Moscow, under the auspices of the International Research and Exchanges Board. The year I spent in the Soviet Union was an experience for which I will always be grateful. I also want to thank the History Department and the Center for Russian and East European Studies of the University of Michigan for various fellowships, including an NDFL.

PREFACE

Prior to 1917, consumer societies were one of the very few types of democratic social organizations in existence in Russia. They were set up across the Russian Empire for the purpose of selling food and other consumer goods. On the eve of the revolution, as a result of the goods crisis, they became very widespread. Towards the end of 1917, virtually every person in the Russian Empire must have had some contact with the consumer cooperative movement. A study of consumer societies provides much information on the social and economic changes taking place on the eve of the revolution. The history of the consumer cooperative movement illuminates the development of the goods crisis and illustrates how the goods crisis led to revolution.

Many moderate socialist and liberal social activists in pre-revolutionary Russia placed great hope in the consumer cooperative movement. They believed that consumer societies could unify Russia. They were attracted to the movement because of their concern about the vast social and political divisions that existed in Russia. The idea that the less educated members should be trained to take an active part in management was accepted by almost all cooperators, at least in theory. Furthermore, since no

one social class or political party can be said to have dominated the consumer cooperative movement, social activists hoped that all cooperators could agree on a program of moderate social change.

It is fair to say that although the consumer cooperative movement had both radical and reactionary elements, as a whole it was a movement for moderate change. But it is important to keep in mind that under the conditions of tsarist Russia, moderate change had revolutionary implications. This explains the fact that the tsarist government's suspicion of consumer cooperatives was by no means limited to the small number of societies with the active participation of the radical political parties. The entire consumer cooperative movement agreed on the principle of democratic management, with each member having only one vote, regardless of the number of shares he owned. Furthermore, a remarkable amount of sympathy was felt on the part of the moderate center of the movement for its radical wing. The consumer society section of the First All-Russian Cooperative Congress in 1908 passed many worker oriented resolutions, including the resolution that special credit funds should be established for the use of workers in times of unemployment, strikes or lockouts.

As it turned out, the consumer cooperative movement failed to fulfill the hopes placed in it. As a result of the goods crisis, people joined consumer societies in

droves, but nevertheless, at the end of 1917, Russia was more disunited than ever. One does not have to dig very deeply into the history of the consumer cooperative movement to find examples of conflict between classes and parties, and these conflicts increased with the deepening of Russia's social crisis. The growth of the consumer cooperative movement should be thought of mainly as a result of the social crisis, and only secondarily as a means of relieving it.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DEDICATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
PREFACE	iv
CHAPTER I: BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT	1
A. The foundations of the modern Russian consumer cooperative movement	1
B. The five basic types of consumer societies	12
C. The Moscow union of consumer societies	40
D. Consumer societies and other types of cooperatives	60
E. Rochdale and Russian interest in the European cooperative movement	69
CHAPTER II: COOPERATIVE OPERATIONS ON THE LOCAL LEVEL	91
A. Organizational and financial structure	91
B. Retail trade	113
C. Consumer societies during the war: special problems of growth and management	122
CHAPTER III: THE SOCIAL FUNCTIONS OF CONSUMER SOCIETIES	166
A. Why consumer societies were founded	166
B. The general meeting	174
C. The cultural and educational activity of consumer societies	187
D. Publishing	205
E. Conclusion: the social impact of the consumer cooperative movement	235
CHAPTER IV: COOPERATORS: THE SOCIAL BASE OF THE CONSUMER COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT	249
A. Officials	249
B. Employees and their treatment	253

Page

C. The consumer cooperative movement and its women members 271
D. Instructors: the most politicized cooperators 279

CHAPTER V: COOPERATORS AND POLITICS BEFORE 1917 296

A. The consumer cooperative movement and the revolution of 1905-7 296
B. The consumer cooperative movement and the government: the state duma, the tsarist administration and the zemstvos 304
C. The consumer cooperative movement and the political parties 351
D. The Russian consumer cooperative movement and Ukrainian nationalism 373
E. The consumer cooperative movement and the war: the struggle for "Popular Initiative" 380
F. The last months of the autocracy 398

CHAPTER VI: POLITICS IN 1917: THE BREAKDOWN OF THE CONSUMER COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT . . 413

A. Introduction 413
B. Consumer cooperatives and the new organs of power 417
C. The origins and realization of the split 432
D. Separate cooperative lists for the Constituent Assembly 456
E. Consumer cooperators and the Bolshevik seizure of power 462

CONCLUSION 479

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY 484

CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT

A. The foundations of the modern Russian consumer cooperative movement

The year 1897 is the logical place to begin a study of Russian consumer cooperatives in the twentieth century. In that year, Nicholas II introduced a Model Code for consumer societies. The code facilitated the approval of the charters of new societies, for which there was increasing demand. The year 1897 is the only year for which exact figures exist as to the number of consumer societies. From then on the number grew so quickly as to make all later counts necessarily either approximative or incomplete. The following year, 1898, saw the founding of the Moscow Union of Consumer Societies (MSPO), which was to play an indispensable part in the development of the Russian consumer cooperative movement. Thus the last years of the nineteenth century were a turning point for Russian consumer societies. The establishment of the Model Code and the founding of the Moscow Union of Consumer Societies were essential preconditions for the modern Russian consumer cooperative movement.

In 1897 most consumer societies were located in urban areas and a large proportion of them were concerned with

the sale of luxury goods. Between 1897 and 1917 there was a trend toward the predominance of rural societies and the sale of articles of everyday use. A study made in 1897 counted 307 consumer societies. They were broken down into the following six categories:

CONSUMER SOCIETIES IN EXISTENCE IN 1897[1]

type of society	number of societies	per cent of societies
factory	91	29.7
railroad	25	8.2
military	23	7.5
all-class city	99	32.2
village	56	18.2
officials and employees	13	4.2
total	307	100.0

Over the next 20 years the relative proportion of different types of societies changed completely. The proportion of military societies, all-class city societies and societies of officials and employees decreased significantly, so that in almost all later counts they would be placed together under the classification of "city societies." A small, but politically important new type of society began to appear after 1905, independent worker societies. The number of village societies expanded dramatically. By 1904, the proportion of village societies was already 40%.[2] By January, 1912, this figure had risen to 70.1% and by January, 1914, to 79.5%. In the latter year, 10,080

consumer societies were counted, of which village societies numbered 8,020.[3]

Despite the fact that by 1914 about 80% of all consumer societies were located in villages, the village population as a whole remained somewhat underrepresented in consumer cooperatives. The average village consumer society was very small. It was only about one-third the size of the average consumer society. The proportion of members of consumer societies from village societies was therefore no more than 25 per cent. On the eve of the revolution the village population amounted to about 80% of the total population. Thus the proportion of the rural population that belonged to consumer cooperatives was smaller than that of the urban population.

Precise figures on the per cent of the population of any given city that belonged to consumer societies are unavailable. The best authority on worker consumer cooperatives, M. Balabanov, estimated that in the industrial centers of Russia on the eve of the revolution, between 50 and 90% of the working class population belonged to one or another consumer society.[4] The proportion of the population belonging to consumer cooperatives was especially high in Moscow. In the summer of 1918, consumer societies of various types in Moscow counted 587,876 members. If we assume that each member of a consumer society represented a family of five, we come to a total of 2.9 million. The

population of Moscow at that time was about two million.[5] This means that virtually everyone in the city of Moscow belonged to a consumer society and some belonged to more than one.[6]

It was only after 1897, as a result of the establishment of the Model Code and the Moscow Union of Consumer Societies, that the Russian consumer cooperative movement really began to grow. For virtually all of the period covered by this dissertation the consumer cooperative movement was not particularly widespread in Russia. The first consumer society in Russia was founded in 1865, but it was only after 1905 that the movement began to grow quickly. In January, 1914, about one per cent of the population were members of societies. During the World War, however, the consumer cooperative movement grew at a tremendous rate, so that at the end of 1917, some eight per cent of the population belonged to a consumer society. At that time, Russia had some 35,000 societies and about 11,500,000 members.

After 1914, the Russian consumer cooperative movement was growing so quickly that as it grew older, and the number of members increased, the amount of time that the average person had been a member of his society actually decreased. The most complete statistics on consumer societies from 1914 to 1922 were compiled by A. V. Merkulov.[7] The figures refer to January 1 of each year.

TOTAL NUMBER OF CONSUMER SOCIETIES
AND TOTAL MEMBERSHIP, 1914-1922

year	number of societies	total members (in millions)
1914	10,080	1.4
1915	11,400	1.65
1916	14,500	2.61
1917	23,500	6.815
1918	35,000	11.55
1919	47,000	17.0
1920	53,000	18.5
1921	25,000	entire
1922	25,000	population

Precise population statistics are not available for this period, but Russia's population in 1917 was about 140 million. Based on this figure, on January 1, 1918, 8.2% of the population were members of consumer societies. If one assumes, as cooperators did, that every member represented a family of five, then 41% of the people in Russia were members of families, the heads of which were members of consumer societies. The figure is even higher when one takes into consideration the fact that consumer societies averaged about 50 per cent of their sales to non-members. Thus in talking about consumer cooperation one is talking about a movement that affected most of the Russian Empire in 1917. The proportion of families buying goods through consumer societies on January 1, 1918, was probably close

to 75%. The soviet government's law of March, 1919, which decreed that the food distribution system of the entire country was to be carried out exclusively by consumer societies and that every person had to be a member of a consumer society, thus did not drastically change the existing situation.

Some background is necessary on the Model Code, which put the consumer cooperative movement on a new legal basis. Nicholas II published the decree establishing the Code on November 27, 1897.[8] It was one of many Model Codes drawn up during the early years of Nicholas's reign. On the same day codes were published for societies for philanthropic aid to the poor, for city and village fire-fighting brigades and for insurance societies for factory and handicrafts workers. In 1895 a Model Code had been established for the organization of agricultural cooperatives and in February, 1898, for the organization of local agricultural societies.[9]

The Model Code (Normal'nyi Ustav) for consumer societies had its origins in a Congress of Trade and Industrial Organizations held in Nizhnyi-Novgorod in August 1896 and organized by the Committee on Village Savings and Loan and Industrial Organizations, which was part of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Imperial Moscow Society of Agriculture. The St. Petersburg Branch was an organization which, especially after its formation, in 1897, of a

Permanent Committee on Consumer Societies, became quite important in fostering the development of the consumer cooperative movement. (In contrast, the Moscow Society itself did little or nothing in this field.) The Permanent Committee was also called simply the "Third Section". The Third Section was frequently involved in helping cooperative organizations, making statistical studies, and publishing theoretical and popular literature. The members of the Third Section had left-liberal sympathies, as is shown by the fact that in 1905 they contributed 5,000 rubles (of a total of 18,601 received) to the St. Petersburg Soviet of Workers' Deputies.[10] The only larger contribution was 6,000 rubles from the Union of Unions. In 1915, the president of the committee was the Legal-Marxist S. N. Prokopovich and the vice-president was Menshevik consumer cooperator, M. L. Kheisin. The Third Section published a journal called Vestnik Kooperatsii (Bulletin of Cooperation) which was edited by Russia's other leading Legal-Marxist, M. I. Tugan-Baranovskii.

The Congress of Trade and Industrial Organizations was attended by the representatives of some 28 consumer societies. The Committee on Village Savings and Loan and Industrial Organizations brought to it a project for a Model Code for consumer societies.[11] The final form of the Model Code for consumer societies was worked out by the Ministry of Interior and approved May 13, 1897, although it

was only put into operation some six months later. To a significant degree it incorporated the recommendations of the St. Petersburg Branch and the Nizhnyi-Novgorod congress.

Previously there had been nothing in Russian law on the subject of consumer societies. In practice they were considered a form of "philanthropic society", the approval of which, according to the Law Code of 1892, was the responsibility of the Ministry of Interior or, in the case of factory consumer societies, of the Ministry of Finance. With the institution of the Model Code, societies whose charters conformed to the code would be approved by the provincial or city governor, and the Ministry of Interior only informed post factum.[12] Societies with charters not based on the Model Code had to send them, as before, to the Ministry of Interior, and consequently few societies followed that route.

The Model Code laid out in great detail just how a consumer society was to be organized and operated. It was written in terms of two variants, one for societies run through a general meeting and one for societies run through a meeting of representatives. The variant for societies run through a general meeting had seven sections and was 65 paragraphs long. The sections consisted of:

I. Goals, rights and duties of the society
II. Resources of the society
III. Composition of the society and rights and duties of its members
IV. The general meeting
V. Accounting, the distribution of profits and distribution of dividends

VI. The resolution of disagreements over the business of the society, responsibilities and going out of business.

The variant for societies run via a meeting of representatives had an extra section and eight more paragraphs.[13]

The goals of a consumer society were spelled out in the first paragraph:

> The consumer society is organized with the goal of obtaining for its members, either at the lowest possible price or at the average market price, various consumer goods or goods of household use and, with the profits from the operations of the society, to provide its members with the opportunity of making savings.
>
> Note: The society may, with proper approval and in accordance with the relevant decrees, establish organizations having as their goal, by means of various funds and resources, the improvement of the material and moral level of the members of the society.

Also with "proper approval", the society had the right to join a union.

Three groups were excluded by the Model Code from membership in consumer societies, including pupils, although not university students, persons currently doing military service, except in places intended for their settlement, and those deprived by law of civil rights. The founders of a society could limit its membership to a particular district or to the employees of a particular enterprise. This was most commonly done with factory societies.

Literally from the beginning, persons interested in the cooperative movement began to complain about

deficiencies in the code. The same article in Russkiia Vedomosti which announced the publication of the Model Code complained that it was too limiting to fit all the needs of a society and that simple governmental regulation was all that was needed to keep societies from being harmful.[14] In particular, cooperators resented the need for approval of all non-economic activities and provisions requiring the supervision of the most innocuous functions. Reform efforts centered around the passage of an all-cooperative law, instead of separate model codes for each type of co-operative. An ideal all-cooperative law would have permitted societies to begin operation by a simple act of registration. This ideal system was called "automatic order" (iavochnyi poriadok).

The institution of the Model Code in itself did not insure the speedy approval of all charters. Requests were often turned down by governors, possibly because they were fearful of revolutionary activity or possibly because they had financial interests in the area to protect. One suspects that many governors dragged their feet because they saw no reason to take responsibility for something that couldn't possibly do them any good and just possibly might do them harm. The approval of charters was often delayed for a full three years. According to Prokopovich, in Odessa applications were only accepted from the Union of Russian People. Sometimes specific persons were

forbidden to take part in a society and some charters were not approved because the society in question made known that it had the intention of joining the Moscow Union of consumer Societies.[15] But the Model Code did facilitate the approval of the charters of consumer societies, especially given the fact that the number of requests increased so dramatically.

The founding of consumer societies before 1914 can best be understood as a means of filling in the gaps in Russia's growing capitalist economy. The use of money was being extended as a result of the expansion of industry and the commercialization of agriculture. But the expansion of the system of distribution of articles of consumption was proceeding much more slowly. This caused shortages and high prices, especially in isolated areas. It is not accidental that a large proportion of early societies were located in the industrial towns of the Urals. Of 563 consumer societies in existence in 1898, fully 84 (14.9 per cent) were located in Perm guberniia. At the same time, there were only 18 in Moscow guberniia and 37 in St. Petersburg guberniia.[16] By 1916, the distribution had changed but there was still a relatively large proportion of societies in the non-central areas.[17]

NUMBER OF CONSUMER SOCIETIES AND PER CENT OF TOTAL SOCIETIES IN SELECTED REGIONS AND GUBERNIIAS, JULY 1916

region or guberniia	number of societies	per cent of societies
Podolia	975	6.4
Kiev	956	6.3
Perm	790	5.2
Siberia	728	4.8
Novgorod	644	4.2
Caucasus	626	4.1
Moscow	589	3.9
Nizhegorod	558	3.7
Petrograd	539	3.6
Poltava	486	3.2
Viatka	448	3.0

The really spectacular growth in consumer cooperation after 1914, on the other hand, can best be understood as having had a different cause: the goods crisis. The pressure of the World War threw the prevailing system of distribution of goods into total disarray. During this period of economic and social crisis, consumer societies were institutions to which many people turned in order to obtain scarce goods.

B. The five basic types of consumer societies

The statistical studies of the Moscow Union of Consumer Societies broke consumer cooperatives into five groups: city, factory (fabrichno-zavodskye), railroad, village and worker. That categorization will be followed here. This section deals with the distinguishing characteristics of the different types of consumer societies.

The key difference was size, both size of membership and size of yearly circulation, the total amount of business that a society did in a year. In 1912, MSPO village societies were less than one third the size of the average MSPO society, while railroad societies were over nine times larger than average.

AVERAGE MEMBERSHIP OF MSPO CONSUMER SOCIETIES IN 1912[18]

city	285
factory	620
railroad	3,836
village	137
worker	431
average	416

Factory and railroad societies were much larger than village and worker societies. Over half of MSPO railroad societies had a yearly circulation of over 300,000 rubles. The largest group of MSPO village societies had a yearly circulation of less than 10,000 rubles.

YEARLY CIRCULATION OF MSPO CONSUMER SOCIETIES[19]

circulation (in thousands of rubles)	city	factory	railroad	village	worker	total
under 10	7	0	0	58	1	66
10 to 20	14	2	0	57	6	79
20 to 50	44	16	1	55	12	128
50 to 100	36	21	3	7	10	77
100 to 300	18	35	3	2	7	65

(Continued on next page)

YEARLY CIRCULATION OF MSPO
CONSUMER SOCIETIES
(continued)

circulation (in thousands of rubles)	city	factory	railroad	village	worker	total
300 to 500	1	15	4	0	0	20
500 to 1000	0	7	0	0	0	7
over 1000	0	2	4	0	0	6
total	120	98	15	179	36	448

Differences in size led to differences in share capital and reserve capital. (Reserve capital was formed by means of an obligatory yearly allocation of a small percentage of the society's profits, placed in an uncirculating fund for paying its debts in case it went out of business.)

AVERAGE SHARE CAPITAL AND RESERVE
CAPITAL OF MSPO CONSUMER SOCIETIES[20]

type of society	share capital	reserve capital
city	5660	2180
factory	17283	8851
railroad	61266	15087
village	2305	216
worker	3806	188
average	8575	3178

One important distinction between consumer societies is that between "open" societies and "restricted" ones. Factory, railroad and a small portion of city societies were restricted, meaning that they were restricted to

those who worked for a particular firm or practiced a particular profession. In contrast, village, worker and other city societies were open, meaning anyone could join, although membership was usually limited to a particular district. To become a member it was only necessary to buy a share and the cost of a share in open societies was normally low. This distinction meant that village and worker societies had a pronounced tendency to be more democratically run than the other types of societies.

The rest of this section consists of a description of the five types of consumer societies, beginning with factory societies and continuing with railroad, village, worker and city. The reason for leaving city societies for last is that they are a very amorphous type, and in some respects can be better understood in terms of what they were not than in terms of what they were.

* * *

Factory consumer societies originated in Russia as a form of factory shop. In the nineteenth century many large factories, particularly those located in areas without private stores, had factory shops, where workers might buy goods which they needed or desired, such as food, clothing and alcohol. Most of these shops were an additional means for the owner to make a profit, enabling him to recover a large portion of the rubles he paid out

in wages. Some factories paid their workers in kind rather than in money, either out of necessity, at a time when there was not enough cash to make the payroll, or simply because that was a way, in effect, to pay lower wages. But a law of 1886, following worker uprisings in 1884 and 1885, forbade paying workers in kind and ordered that wages be given out at least twice a month. The same law made it somewhat easier to organize a consumer society by making it unnecessary to get the permission of the factory inspector, whereas the permission of the factory inspector was necessary for organizing a company shop. Both for a consumer society and for a company shop, however, the factory inspector had to approve the list of goods and prices.

As a result of this law, many factory owners began organizing consumer societies rather than company shops. A major advantage of this was that share capital could be collected and the factory owner would not be responsible for the society's losses beyond the amount of his original share payment. In some cases, factory owners simply turned company shops into consumer societies. S. I. Prokhorov, a Moscow factory owner, donated the shop's building to the society and took compulsory share payments from workers' wages. The society allowed workers credit up to 60 per cent of their monthly wages.[21]

Since factory consumer societies were in many cases simply an arm of the factory administration, it is not surprising that often in times of strikes, violence was directed partly against them. In 1899, during a strike at the Sormovo factories near Nizhnyi-Novgorod, strikers broke windows in some factory buildings and offices, in the residence of the director and in the headquarters of the company consumer society. The shop was partially plundered, in particular the liquor department.[22] Some factory societies were nicknamed "plunder-shops".[23]

A study done by the Third Section in 1909 of 45 factory and railroad societies shows the important role played by the business administration in the affairs of the societies. Societies were formed on the initiative of:[24]

administration	18
employees and workers	11
employees only	7
workers only	7
intelligensia	1
unknown	1

The term 'administration' is a somewhat vague one, encompassing owners and top management. One of the factors which distinguished employees from workers was that employees tended to be highly sympathetic to the requests of the management. In the vast majority of cases the initiators of factory consumer societies were closely connected with the factory administration.

Furthermore, in most cases members of the administration were included on the boards of societies. The

Third Section study found this to be true in 24 of the 45 societies studied. In 14 societies there were no representatives of the administration on the board and for seven societies no information was available. Of the 24 societies which had members of the factory administration on the board of the society:

6 societies had 1 member from the administration
1 society had 2 members
8 societies had 3 members
5 societies had 4 members
2 societies had 5 members
1 society had 7 members
1 society had 9 members[25]

In addition, in the vast majority of cases, the president of the board of the society was either a member of the factory administration or an employee:

factory owner	1
director of the factory	5
member of the board	4
factory manager	1
factory employee	10
worker	6
bookkeeper	3
mining engineer	1
cashier	1
share holder	1
manager of wine storehouse	1
manager of a farm (khutor)	1
doctor	1
veterinarian	1
peasant	2
unknown	6[26]

The difficulty in describing factory consumer societies was that they were not all alike. Some societies were run very independently of the factory administration, with inexpensive shares, making it possible for most workers to afford to buy one, and low prices. In other factory

societies the cost of a share was very high, 20 rubles and over. The consumer society at one Petrograd plant admitted new members only with a 25 ruble share payment and then only with the approval of the general meeting.[27]

But most factory consumer societies were dependent on the factory administration. The dependence of the consumer society of the Putilov factory in St. Petersburg, founded in 1880, was written into the charter. According to paragraph 26, at least 10% of the delegates to the meeting of representatives had to come from the central office of the factory and the director of the factory had the right, at his discretion, to check the accounts of the society and to call special meetings of representatives.[28] Of some 15,000 workers in the Putilov factory in 1905, only about 100 owned shares in the consumer society. When the workers went on strike in June, 1905, the factory administration instructed the consumer society to stop giving credit. It stopped.[29]

On occasion, factory consumer societies were taken over by the workers. This was most often the case after the revolution of 1905-7 had lost momentun, but before the reaction intensified in 1909. Some consumer societies, like the consumer society of the factory of Savvy Morozov and Sons changed hands several times. It was a common pattern for workers to mount a campaign to take over a factory consumer society, then either abolish or sharply

restrict the sale of goods on credit. Restrictions on credit would be made either on principle or out of necessity, in that the society had lost the financial support of the factory management. Then in the course of some years the interest of the workers in the society would fade, at least partly due to these restrictions on credit. The factory administration would then reassume control over the society.

* * *

All that has been said about administration domination of factory societies is doubly true for railroad societies. Railroad societies only rarely used the Model Code. There did exist a project for a model code for railroad societies which many used, although it was not obligatory. Under this code, allocations for the improvement of the "material and moral level of the members of the society" were not provided for. The code provided that share capital could be collected by means of deductions from salaries and that delegates to the meeting of representatives could be elected by mail. One third of the delegates were to be chosen by the railroad management, as was the president of the society.

The management principles of railroad consumer societies were extremely conservative. Normally, the director of the railroad, or someone delegated by him, presided at meetings of representatives, named some of the members of

any committee and had the right to veto any proposed amendment to the charter. Often in practice the rights of the director went even further. In the Consumer Society of the Employees of the Perm Railroad there were cases of the refusal of the director of the railroad to recognize the election of a group of delegates. An elected delegate might not be allowed to take office. He would be given the alternative of either leaving the society or losing his job.[30]

Railroad consumer societies were the only Russian consumer societies which compared in size to contempory European societies. This was undoubtedly due to the fact that they had better transport facilities at their disposal than the other Russian consumer societies.

S. N. Prokopovich calculated the percentage chances of consumer societies founded between 1896 and 1911 surviving until January 1, 1912. For factory, railroad and independent worker societies, which he counted as one group, he got the following results.

RATE OF SURVIVAL OF FACTORY, RAILROAD AND WORKER CONSUMER SOCIETIES FOUNDED BETWEEN 1896 AND 1911[31]

	Time period during which societies were founded		
	1896-1900	1901-1905	1906-1911
Third Section study made in 1906:			
number of charters approved	91	69	

RATE OF SURVIVAL...Continued

	Time period during which societies were founded		
	1896-1900	1901-1905	1906-1911
number of societies still working on January 1, 1901	88		
per cent of societies still working on January 1, 1901	96.7		
number of societies still working on January 1, 1906	74	61	
per cent of societies still working on January 1, 1906	81.3	88.4	
Third Section study made in 1912:			
number of charters approved	144	110	316
number of societies still working on January 1, 1912	117	94	283
per cent of societies still working on January 1, 1912	81.2	85.5	89.6

In the above table, it is the underlined figures that are the most important. These show the proportion of societies founded during a given time period which survived until 1901, 1906 or 1911. The study made in 1912 was obviously more thorough than that of 1906, as it counted more societies. Corresponding figures on village and city societies will be given later in this section.

* * *

Village consumer societies were the smallest and weakest of Russian consumer societies. The average MSPO village society had only 125 members, and it can be safely assumed that the average non-MSPO village society was even smaller. Village societies were extremely poor. MSPO village societies had an average of only 2305 rubles in share capital and 216 rubles in reserve capital, and it can be assumed that non-MSPO village societies had even less. This is in contrast to an average of 61,266 rubles in share capital and 15,087 rubles in reserve capital for union railroad societies.[32]

But during the period under study, village societies, although they did not appreciably increase in average size or financial strength, grew in numbers at an astounding rate, from 18% to 80%. The proportion of village societies in the MSPO was somewhat smaller. In January, 1917, there were 2076 village societies in the MSPO of a total membership of 3166, making 65.6%.[33]

The number of village societies was growing as a result of the fact that economic relationships in the village were becoming increasingly commercialized. Peasants were producing more goods to be sold on the market, not only their grain but also their handicrafts products. In turn, they were buying more food and more tools. In 1914, the St. Petersburg Branch counted 621 societies, or

6.3 per cent of the total, exclusively or primarily concerned with selling raw materials for handicrafts production. Consumer societies in grain producing areas, particularly in the Ukraine, sold seed and plows and sometimes mineral fertilizer. Some village societies had grain-cleaning stations. The shortage of privately owned stores made the founding of consumer societies attractive. The stores that did exist normally had a monopoly position and used it to charge exorbitant prices. The founding of a consumer society would break that monopoly.

An article in Ob'edinenie in 1913 gave an additional reason for the growth of consumer cooperatives in the village. The article pointed out that the organization of consumer societies was one of the few ways in which peasants could improve their standard of living without changing their traditional work habits. As Michael Confino has shown with respect to the 18th century, the way in which the Russian peasant tilled the soil was closely connected to his religion, his family relationships and to his whole world view. This was one reason why it was so difficult to improve the productivity of Russian agriculture. The institution of a consumer society was one of the few easy changes that could be made to raise peasant incomes.[34]

Village societies were normally dominated by the local landlord or a member of the village intelligensia. But the cooperative press did not look upon this domination as

the same evil as the domination of factory and railroad consumer societies by the factory and railroad administration. For example, in 1913 Ob'edinenie reported on the help given to a village society in Riazan guberniia by the local landlord. He constructed a building for the society and he bought 1000 rubles worth of shares. Still, Ob'edinenie concluded that the society could not be considered to be dominated by the landlord. "The members, of which there are about 100, resolve the fate of the society at the general meetings completely independently.[35]

The domination of village consumer societies by the local landlord or intelligensia was more disinterested than the administration domination of factory or railroad societies. A local landowner did not directly profit from the existence of a consumer society. Aid to village consumer societies was a form of philanthropy. Many village societies established tea houses to provide an alternative to vodka drinking for village men. Tea houses also served as social centers for the village. Furthermore, the skills of an educated person were in much shorter supply in village societies than in factory societies. The local landlord or member of the intelligensia brought to village societies the ability to keep books and order goods, as well as the ability to understand the complex process of working out a charter and getting it approved.

Prokopovich's figures on the longevity of village societies are given below. A problem with these figures is that many societies founded between 1896 and 1905 were not picked up in the count of those still working in 1906. But one can say that the chances of a village society surviving beyond the first few years of its existence were not as high as for factory and railroad societies. This is entirely what one would expect, given their shortage of financial resources and of qualified leadership personnel.

RATE OF SURVIVAL OF VILLAGE CONSUMER SOCIETIES FOUNDED BETWEEN 1896 AND 1911[36]

	Time period during which societies were founded		
	1896-1900	1901-1905	1906-1911
Third Section study made in 1906:			
number of charters approved	118	445	
number of societies still working on January 1, 1901	112		
per cent of societies still working on January 1, 1901	94.9		
number of societies still working on January 1, 1906	82	409	
per cent of societies still working on January 1, 1906	69.5	91.9	

RATE OF SURVIVAL...Continued

	Time period during which societies were founded		
	1896-1900	1901-1905	1906-1911
Third Section study made in 1912:			
number of charters approved	155	641	4715
number of societies still working on January 1, 1912	125	505	4527
per cent of societies still working on January 1, 1912	80.6	78.8	96.0

These figures suggest that the short term chances of success for village societies was better than for factory and railroad societies, but after the first five years the survival rate dropped sharply.

* * *

Independent worker societies were the radical left wing of the consumer cooperative movement. The major stimulus to the founding of worker consumer societies was the revolution of 1905. The formation of the first societies was a part of the revolutionary struggle. As the reation began to set in, many societies were founded as an acceptable alternative to illegal political activity. But by 1911, when the reaction had consolidated, the number of worker societies virtually stopped growing. The number of independent worker societies as a per cent of the societies in the MSPO reached a peak in 1911 and thereafter declined.

WORKER CONSUMER SOCIETIES AS A PER CENT OF ALL MSPO SOCIETIES, 1911-1915[37]

year	total societies	worker societies	in per cent
1911	549	37	6.7
1912	776	39	5.0
1913	1016	43	4.2
1914	1260	50	3.9
1915	1737	47	2.8

After 1911, the number of worker societies grew much less quickly than the total number of societies. According to Balabanov, the MSPO counted at least one third of all worker societies among its members. No count was ever made of non-MSPO worker societies[38] and no count was made of MSPO worker societies before 1911.

Worker societies were distinguished by the fact that all their financial resources came from worker members or their intellectual sympathizers. As a consequence, they were very poor. Only village societies had less share capital than worker societies and no type of society had less reserve capital.[39] Some stability was probably provided by the fact that the members were not all employed at the same place, so the societies would not be so drastically hurt in case of a strike or in case a factory went out of business.

The most important worker consumer society was "Trudovoi Soiuz" (Laboring Union), founded in St. Petersburg in August, 1906. The driving force behind the founding of

the society was the anarcho-syndicalist V. A. Posse, who was the editor of a journal of the same name. "Trudovoi Soiuz" prospered quickly. A year after it was founded, it had 19 shops selling bread baked at its central, modern bakery. But the society's demise came just as quickly. By 1910, when it was closed by the Ministry of Interior, it existed essentially only on paper.

The reasons for the failure of "Trudovoi Soiuz" were a subject of debate in the cooperative press. Some said that the shop managers were to blame, and it does seem to be true that there were cases of embezzlement. Some blamed the central manager, E. T. Ionov, who had been appointed in October, 1907, saying that he tried to centralize the society too much, overriding the powers of the shop committees. But there were a large number of more important problems with the way that "Trudovoi Soiuz" was run. These problems had nothing to do with individual leaders and are symtomatic of the problems of worker cooperatives as a whole.

One such problem was that "Trudovoi Soiuz", like most other worker consumer societies, sold goods, particularly bread, below the market price. At times, bread was even sold below the cost of producing it.

Most consumer societies sold their goods at the middle market price, that is, at the price currently being charged in private shops. This was one of the Rochdale

Principles, which will be discussed as a whole in a later section. Selling at the middle market price was essential if a society was to be able to build up its financial resources. Savings were to be distributed at the end of the year in the form of rebates on purchases and dividends on shares. But some Russian consumer societies, and in particular many worker societies, disregarded this principle. They disregarded it in part because the members did not understand it and in part because they were too poor to wait until the end of the year. They wanted to receive their benefits immediately.

The practice of selling below the middle market price called forth the determined opposition of private shopkeepers. Such societies presented a far greater and more immediate threat to merchants than ones which distributed their savings at the end of the year. To combat "Trudvoi Soiuz" some private shopkeepers formed a "union of merchants" and opened a shop which sold goods at a clear loss.

Since most worker consumer societies had members and leaders from the radical political parties, the merchants had another trick up their sleeves to use against them. They could make anonymous denunciations to the police of alleged revolutionary activities on the part of the society. The bread trucks of "Trudovoi Soiuz" were frequently stopped by the police, who said they had received information that they contained bombs.

No such denunciations would have been successful, of course, if the government had not been inclined to believe them. Another problem experienced by "Trudovoi Soiuz" and other worker consumer societies was government hostility. The founders of "Trudovoi Soiuz" had intended for it to be run by a council elected by the shop committees with delegates from over 100 factories. After its first meeting, the city governor sent out an order saying that there could be no further meetings. When Posse led a delegation to his office to ask for an explanation, they were told that the council was looked upon by the government as a disguised renewal of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies. Other acts of harassment by the government included the arrest of two officials of the society and their banishment from the city.

Another difficulty experienced by "Trudovoi Soiuz" which exemplified the difficulties of worker consumer co-operatives as a whole was the lack of preparation on the part of worker members for running the society's affairs. Posse described the worker members of "Trudovoi Soiuz" as "simple, modest, sobor, non-smoking and in general family people, with many years of work behind them."[40] But this meant that they were also uneducated. Meetings were noisy and unproductive. They were full of people trying to shout each other down. As difficulties appeared the initial enthusiasm faded. Ionov commented: "Although it makes one

sad, it is necessary to recognize that we have enough spirit and energy only for the beginning of an enterprise, but we are not capable of bringing it to a conclusion."[41]

One respect in which "Trudovoi Soiuz" did differ from other worker societies was in the degree of participation of members of the intelligensia. Members of the professional classes made up one eighth of the members of the society and contributed 61 per cent of the capital.[42] The largest amount came from the Menshevik M. S. Ermolaev and his brother, who paid 60,000 rubles for a modern bakery for the use of the society. The society was to pay the money back over a ten year period.[43] Another important intellectual in "Trudovoi Soiuz" was M. A. Kuklina, who in 1905 left her husband and came to St. Petersburg, obtaining a job as a teacher in a workers' Sunday school. There she formed a circle of workers who formed the core of the worker participants at the society's first meeting. The meeting was attended by 25 workers and 26 intellectuals. Many of these workers were former Gaponists.[44]

It was not uncommon for a factory to make an offer to an independent worker society to pay the debts of those of its workers who were members, normally up to 50 to 75 per cent of their monthly salary. This was an offer that independent societies found it very difficult to refuse. Buying on credit was a part of the way of life of Russian workers and peasants. They bought on credit from virtually all private shops. But few independent societies could

afford to permit buying on credit. Unless a society received cash from its members it would not be able to pay its own bills. But, of course, the offer of a factory to cover the debts of its workers was by no means a disinterested one. It would have an important effect in decreasing the propensity of the workers to go on strike, since they would know that in all likelihood credit would be cut off. A police report from 1915 noted that at all meetings called for the purpose of founding consumer societies working class speakers opposed accepting material help from manufacturers. For example, when the Franco-Russkii Factory offered workers founding a consumer society 10,000 rubles on the condition that two representatives of the factory management be placed on the society's board "the workers saw this as an infringement on the internal affairs of their cooperative." Nevertheless, as the police report noted, on most occasions the help was accepted. "In the end, the workers almost always agree to accept financial aid, only holding back from complete dependence on the given factory."[45]

The number of worker consumer societies was very small. But for the consumer cooperative movement they had an importance that far exceeded their numbers. Their existence raised a number of political questions. Many Social Democrats, Mensheviks and Bolsheviks, argued against participation in worker societies because they were essentially

reformist rather than revolutionary organizations. They argued that such work was counterproductive in terms of producing a revolution. But the SDs who opposed participation in consumer societies on that basis were wrong. At times when open revolutionary activity was impossible, worker societies were centers for legal political work. They frequently gave employment to SRs and SDs, raised the consciousness of workers and occasionally housed underground presses. At times when more overt revolutionary activity was possible, such as from 1905 to 1907 and after 1916, worker cooperatives were only rarely centers of attention. But they never stood in the way.

* * *

The most difficult type of consumer society to describe is the city society. Essentially, this was a makeshift category that included several different types. In 1908, the Third Section made a study of 37 city societies. Their founders included:

city dwellers (raznochintsy)	15
government officials	8
officials and city dwellers	3
officials and landowners	1
landowners	1
military officer	1
president of district court	1
employees	4
unknown	3[46]

The only groups that did not participate in the founding of city consumer societies were workers and peasants.

Most of the early consumer societies were city societies. Many of these were founded for the convenience of the more well-to-do urban groups. A good idea of the general nature of these early societies is to be had by taking a look at two of them, "Vzaimnaia Pol'za" (Mutual Benefit) and the Economic Society of Officers of the Moscow Military District. They were both located in Moscow and were both charter members of the Moscow Union of Consumer Societies. Their activities were covered regularly by Russkiia Vedomosti. Both dealt almost entirely in luxury goods.

The Economic Society of Officers of the Moscow Military District was founded in the 1890s. The society's most energetic organizer was N. P. Gibner, an officer himself and the son of an officer and the graduate of a military academy. The society had its headquarters in the Arsenal Building of the Kremlin, undoubtedly a very prestigious location. When the MSPO was organized, the military society gave the union one room from its headquarters rent free. From that time on, Gibner spent the greater part of his time working for the MSPO. (The MSPO got its own headquarters in 1905.) Later the military society had a new building constructed on Tver Prospect, now Kalinin Prospect.[47] It moved into the building in 1910.

The society was very active during the war with Japan, shipping goods to the far east, such as canned meat and

vegetables,[48] marching boots and shoes, linen, sheepskins, waterproof coats, trousers, full-dress coats, camp beds, horse equipment, tea, sugar, congac, rum, writing paper, tobacco and various other items for the officer far away from home.[49] The Moscow Economic Society of Officers did not ship goods for ordinary soldiers. It might seem that meat, vegetables, tea and sugar are necessities, but under the conditions of the war with Japan, they were luxuries. In fact, the Model Code stated that non-officers were not allowed to join consumer societies except in areas designated for their settlement.

Economic societies of officers were important in the early years of the consumer cooperative movement, but as the movement grew, the number of officers' societies did not keep pace. In 1906, there were 28, but the number did not appreciably increase after that. Officers' societies did not in fact operate on the basis of the Model Code, but rather normally on the basis of a special code drawn up by the Ministry of War. Many were early members of the MSPO, but the Ministry of Interior forced all military societies to leave the union in 1908, after the early closing of the first All-Russian Cooperative Congress by the police.[50]

At the time of the founding of the MSPO, "Vzaimnaia Pol'za" was not even a full fledged consumer society. Prior to 1905, it was rather common for societies to be

organized on what was called the "rebate system". A society would reach an agreement with one or more private merchants, promising that its members would make all their purchases at those stores. In turn, at the end of the year, the society would receive a rebate from the merchants on its members' purchases. Ideally, most of the rebate would not be redistributed among members but used for establishing the society's own store. "Vzaimnaia Pol'za" was one of the largest societies of this type. Three times a year it published a list of the stores with which its members might do business. In 1898, "Vzaimnaia Pol'za" had agreements with 160 suppliers, the vast majority of which dealt in luxury goods. By that year, the society had collected some 48,000 rubles by means of the rebate system.[51]

In 1899, two shops were opened, starting what at one point was referred to as an "experiment in trade in articles of everyday use." The experiment was a decided failure. The shops needed 500 rubles a day in purchases to make ends meet, but the society's 2500 members managed to spend only 200 to 300 rubles a day. Essentially, the problem was that the members of the society were not interested in using their society for the purchase of everyday goods. They were not willing to go out of their way to buy bread and potatoes for a slightly lower price. At a meeting in March, 1904, a resolution was unanamously accepted to liquidate the society.[52]

In most early city societies membership was limited to a particular profession, such as military officers, government officials or zemstvo employees. In the majority of city societies after 1905, however, membership was open to anyone. During the World War many members of the working class joined open city societies. City societies were wealthier than village or worker societies but much poorer than factory or railroad societies.[53] The fact that the majority of early city societies traded mainly in luxury goods explains the phenomenon that their chances of long term survival were much lower than those for village or factory consumer societies. Prokopovich's study of city societies gave the following results:

RATE OF SURVIVAL OF CITY CONSUMER SOCIETIES FOUNDED BETWEEN 1896 AND 1911[54]

	Time period during which societies were founded		
	1896-1900	1901-1905	1906-1911
Third Section study made in 1906:			
number of charters approved	134	127	
number of societies still working on January 1, 1901	120		
per cent of societies still working on January 1, 1901	89.6		

RATE OF SURVIVAL...Continued

	Time period during which societies were founded		
	1896-1900	1901-1905	1906-1911
number of societies still working on January 1, 1906	85	108	
per cent of societies still working on January 1, 1906	63.4	85.0	
Third Section study made in 1912:			
number of charters approved	151	200	514
number of societies still working on January 1, 1912	85	127	448
per cent of societies still working on January 1, 1912	56.3	63.5	87.2

Of city societies founded between 1896 and 1900, only 56.3% were still operating in 1912. This compares to 80.6% of village societies and 81.2% of factory and railroad societies.[55]

* * *

This section has emphasized the differences between different types of consumer societies. There were, however, important similarities, particularly with respect to their organizational and financial structure. Consumer societies were locked into the social fabric of pre-revolutionary

Russia. Consumer societies were forced, in practice, to operate in basically similar ways. This problem will be fully discussed in a later section on the organizational and financial structure of consumer societies.

C. The Moscow Union of Consumer Societies

The Moscow Union of Consumer Societies was the economic and ideological center of the Russian consumer cooperative movement. It was far from the only union of consumer societies. In December, 1916, there were some 92 local unions of consumer societies. There were an additional 127 unions of cooperative societies that included consumer societies among other types of cooperatives.[56] But the MSPO was the only all-Russian union. Only the MSPO had the means to distribute food supplies all over the country. The MSPO owed its position at the center of the Russian consumer cooperative movement to its conservative but flexible system of management.

The all-Russian character of the MSPO is shown by the fact that only 12.6 per cent of union societies at the end of 1915 and 16.4 per cent of the union's share capital came from the city of Moscow or Moscow guberniia. Only 45.8 per cent of union societies and 46.1 per cent of union share capital came from the guberniias of central Russia. The MSPO divided its member societies into the following twenty districts:

PER CENT OF MSPO UNION SOCIETIES AND SHARE CAPITAL COMING FROM VARIOUS DISTRICTS[57]

district	per cent of union societies	per cent of union share capital
Moscow (city)	2.1	5.0
Moscow (guberniia)	10.5	11.4
Central Northeast	8.3	10.1
Central Northwest	8.7	8.3
Central West	4.3	3.0
Central Southwest	5.4	3.8
Central Southeast	5.5	4.5
Lower Volga and Don	2.8	2.4
Rostov-Don	6.9	5.4
Donetsk mines	2.2	5.7
Middle Southwest	3.3	2.1
South	5.4	3.3
Southwest	9.4	5.4
Baltic	1.5	.9
North	4.9	5.7
Middle East	3.1	2.4
North Urals	4.6	7.6
South Urals, West Siberia	3.1	5.4
Middle Volga, Central Asia	6.5	5.1
East Siberia	1.9	2.5
total	100.0	100.0

Some areas, such as the city of Moscow, the Donetsk mines, the Urals and west Siberia were significantly over-represented in terms of share capital. The Ukraine was significantly under-represented in share capital. This is a reflection of the type of society prevalent in the area. Ukrainian societies were almost entirely village societies. But the societies of the Donetsk and the Urals were mainly large factory societies.

Other unions of consumer societies came and went, but the MSPO continued to grow, from its founding in 1898. The

founding members were a typical mixture of the type of societies in existence at that time. The unions' 18 charter members were:

Economic society of Officers of the Moscow Military District
"Vzaimnaia Pol'za" (a Moscow city society)
Economic Society of Officers of the Odessa Military District
Consumer Society of the Employees of the Moscow-Kazan Railroad
Tver Consumer Society (city)
Ufa Consumer Society (city)
Vladimir Consumer Society (city)
Consumer Society of the Kulebak Mine
Spassk Consumer Society (village)
Consumer Society of the Gorbatov Writing Paper Factory
Consumer Society of the Factory of Russian Manufacture of Carpetware
Cherdynsk Consumer Society (city)
"Berezhlivost" (Thrift, of the Moscow-Iaroslav-Arkhangel'sk Railroad)
Consumer Society of the Upper Ural Factory
Krasnoiarsk Consumer Society (city)
Kynovsk Consumer Society (factory)
Consumer Society of the Pashiisk Factory
Economic Society of the Officers of the First Transcaspian Rifle Brigade

making a total of:

type of society	number of societies
factory	6
railroad	2
military	3
city	6
village	1[58]

The success of the MSPO was surely largely due to its central location and to the conservative economic principles to which it always remained committed. The union's initial success was also due to its influential friends, rich consumer societies as "Vzaimnaia Pol'za" and the

Economic Society of Officers of the Moscow Military District, and to the St. Petersburg Branch. When the MSPO began publishing Soiuz Potrebitelei in 1903, these friends were probably instrumental in obtaining the right to publish the journal without preliminary censorship. The relatively restrained tone of the journal was also surely important in maintaining the existence of the union.

The union's charter was approved in July, 1898, and the first meeting of representatives was held in October. The meeting was chaired by Ivan Khristoforovich Ozerov, the first cooperative publicist of stature. Ozerov was a professor of financial law at Moscow University and was said to have been a very popular lecturer.[59] Most of the discussion at this first meeting was devoted to the organization of collective purchasing.[60]

The first union budget was modest indeed. Expenditures of 1800 rubles were projected for the year 1899. This was to include:

salary of 1 employee at 75 rubles a month	900
travel expenses for members of board and employee	300
bookkeeping materials, telegraph and printing	300
miscellaneous (including tea and servants)	300
total	1800

It was projected that if there was a great deal of business it might be necessary to hire an assistant to do the bookkeeping for an additional 300 rubles.[61]

In 1903, the union had only four paid employees, including a secretary, typist, clerk and bookkeeper. (The last three were women.) The only furniture in its office were three tables and some chairs. The union was chronically short of funds. Not infrequently, the union's unpaid officials, V. I. Anofriev and N. P. Gibner would leave the office, instructing the secretary that if creditors came seeking payment of bills, "say that we went to the bank for money and they can come back tomorrow."[62]

Initial union funds came from share payments made by union societies. In 1899, an arrangement was worked out whereby union member societies were to buy shares of 50 rubles each in proportion to three per cent of their own share capital. The purchase of these shares could be stretched out over a period of several months. This system was maintained until 1919. A side effect was that MSPO members tended to come from the more prosperous societies, who could afford such expensive shares.

In January, 1903, in the first issue of Soiuz Potrebitelei, the union published a list of its goals. These were:

1. to make it possible for societies at union meetings to discuss their business together;
2. to establish a central office, from which societies can receive advice and information on prices, quality and sources of goods;
3. to buy goods for societies efficiently and centrally;

4. to make agreements with producers and large firms in Moscow and other places for general deliveries to societies;

5. to collect union warehouse capital for all operations and for short-term loans to union societies;

6. to try to establish union production of goods;

7. to buy and stock large quantities of goods and distribute them among societies;

8. to maintain strict bookkeeping and statistics on union societies;[63]

The tenor of the union's goals was overwhelmingly sensible and businesslike.

The implementation of the union's third goal, to buy goods for societies efficiently and centrally, took the form of the collective purchase of those goods most needed by its members, particularly grain and cloth. The first major collective purchase made by the MSPO was at the annual market at Nizhnyi-Novgorod. In 1900, several union societies arranged a collective purchase in the amount of 200,000 rubles.[64] Later the union set up a permanent office at the fair. But although the value of purchases made collectively through the union grew every year, it never reached more than 15 per cent of the purchases of all union societies. Small societies bought a much larger percentage of their goods through the union than large societies, since large societies were able to get relatively good prices, and probably better delivery service, on their own. The following figures show that the higher the

circulation of a society the less likely it was to make purchases through the union.

CIRCULATION OF MSPO SOCIETIES WITH THE UNION AS A PER CENT OF THEIR TOTAL CIRCULATION[65]

type of society	1909	1910	1911
city	9.0	10.4	10.9
factory	4.1	3.6	4.4
railroad	1.1	2.3	2.9
village	14.5	14.7	18.1
worker	12.3	13.1	17.0
circulation (in thousands of rubles)			
up to 10	10.5	24.3	20.2
10 to 20	18.5	14.5	21.2
20 to 50	15.0	16.6	16.7
50 to 100	6.6	8.6	12.1
100 to 300	4.7	4.3	6.4
300 to 1000	4.7	3.7	4.1
over 1000	.6	1.6	2.3

The major impediment to establishing collective purchasing on a larger scale was distribution. By 1913, the MSPO had distribution points in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Tula, Kiev, Odessa and Rostov-na-Dony. For consumer societies far from these distribution points, it was usually not efficient to buy from the union. Distribution problems prevented the MSPO, and other unions of consumer societies, from organizing collective purchasing on anything like the scale of West European unions of consumer societies. Figures compiled by German cooperators show that the MSPO compared very unfavorably with European unions of consumer societies with respect to collective purchasing.

CIRCULATION OF VARIOUS NATIONAL UNIONS OF CONSUMER SOCIETIES AS A PER CENT OF THE CIRCULATION OF THEIR MEMBER SOCIETIES, FOR 1910[66]

Denmark	75.9
Scotland	73.0
Hungary	50.3
England	44.2
Holland	41.0
Finland	30.2
Germany	23.8
Sweden	12.6
Austria	11.7
Belgium	6.3
Russia	4.6
Norway	4.4
France	3.6

One of the MSPO's goals was to encourage the establishment of consumer societies. In 1903, the union considered going even further and began working on a project to actually establish a number of societies with the union's own capital. Noting that due to the fact that all existing societies in Moscow were restricted either to military officers or to employees or workers in a given firm, the union decided to try to set up a network of ten consumer societies open for anyone to join. They were to be placed in the worker districts on the outskirts of Moscow. It was hoped that very high dividends on purchases could be given out. The union calculated that each society would have to have 800 members in order to be solvent. After some time the project was quietly shelved. It must have become clear that the prospects of success were rather dim and that if the societies failed it would be a tremendous

drain on the union's capital.[67] Open societies were soon established in Moscow by individual groups anyway. In later years, the MSPO limited its encouragement of the establishment of new societies to providing information and advice.

In its early years, the MSPO had two special problems, both of which show that the established business community did not easily accept the union's existence. The first problem had to do with organizing collective purchasing. Firms sought to weaken the union by offering union societies lower prices if they bought directly than if they ordered through the union.[68] The union sought to deal with this problem by organizing boycotts. The first firm to be boycotted was the perfume and pharmaceutical manufacturer Keller. That occurred in 1904. The boycott was successful. Later, when the union became stronger, the problem disappeared.[69]

The second special problem of the early years of the MSPO was that the union could not get insurance. The union wanted to insure its own property as well as to arrange policies for member societies. In 1909, the union went to several companies before it found one willing to insure it, and this was at a very expensive rate. But after a few years, the union was able to get a better price and by 1914 the union had enough capital to insure its member societies by itself.[70]

Consumer societies joined the MSPO for other than purely practical reasons. In 1913, two consumer societies gave the following statements:

> ...and therefore we have decided to enter the union, in order not to be isolated and in order to benefit from the union's ideological support...
>
> We are not sure whether we will be able to purchase goods from the union, since in general our board must make our purchases from the least expensive wholesalers and thus has to decide in each case whether or not it is advantageous to buy from the union.[71]

The MSPO was not merely another wholesale supplier. It was a center for the moral and ideological support of consumer cooperatives.

In the period between 1898 and 1917, the consumer cooperative movement changed and the MSPO changed with it. The first publications of the union reflected the conservative social outlook of the societies that made it up at that time. A short guide to founding a consumer society, published by the MSPO in 1902 and written by one of its founders, V. I. Anofriev while he was chairman of its board, is representative of this outlook. In the pamphlet, Anofriev recommended that societies try to find a sympathetic factory administration or factory inspector to set up a credit fund for the members of the society. Although Anofriev personally recommended that all members of a society should have one and only one vote, regardless of the number of shares they owned, he stated that other opinions on that issue were possible.[72] No later MSPO

publication accepted the opinion that members of consumer societies owning more than one share should have more than one vote, and all agreed that societies should avoid the domination on the part of the factory administration which would be the inevitable result of its guaranteeing of credit.

The MSPO held meetings of representatives twice a year. Normally only 15 to 20 per cent of union societies attended. Since societies had to pay their own way to the meeting, the wealthier and more centrally located societies were better represented. The 26th Meeting of Representatives in December, 1912, was attended by 132 societies, or 17 per cent of the total. These included:

SOCIETIES ATTENDING THE 26TH MEETING OF REPRESENTATIVES[73]

type of society	number of societies	per cent of societies
village	46	34.9
city	31	23.5
factory	22	16.7
worker	22	16.7
railroad	4	3.0
foundations or central cooperative organizations	7	5.3
total	132	100.0

A large percentage of societies attending were from the city of Moscow or Moscow guberniia. The following figures are available on where societies attending the 25th Meeting of Representatives came from:

Moscow guberniia	31
Moscow city	22
Vladimir, Ekaterinoslav, Kaluga	7
Smolensk	6
Don	5
Tver, Vitebsk, Riazan, Chernigov	4
Kostroma	3
Tula, Kherson, Kiev, Kuban, Perm	2
Orlov, Kazan, Penza, Tersk, Kharkov, Bessarabia, Saratov, Volynsk, Petrograd, Vologda, Nizhnyi-Novgorod, Orenburg	1
total	126[74]

It is interesting that most of the societies attending were very young. Almost two thirds were under five years old.

23 years old	1
22 years old	1
16 to 18	8
11 to 15	16
6 to 10	19
3 to 5	47
1 to 2	23
under one	8[75]

These figures underline the fact that consumer cooperation was a young movement. As years went by, the number of newly founded societies increased.

The rate of growth of the MSPO from 1898 to 1921 was extremely impressive.

MSPO MEMBERSHIP, 1898 to 1921[76]

year	member societies	affiliated unions	total members
1898	21		unknown
1899	37		21,409
1900	68		26,973
1901	83		40,868
1902	108		40,670
1903	131		50,652
1904	144		71,657
1905	153		65,107
1906	166		65,520
1907	201		97,148
1908	257		123,025
1909	294		135,000
1910	393		149,058
1911	548	1	179,601
1912	771	7	225,776
1913	1009	9	284,503
1914	1243	19	426,968
1915	1737	41	474,062
1916	3012	154	733,502
1917	3036	281	1,084,000
1918	3036	311	total population
1919	--	332	total population
1920	--	99	total population
1921	--	135	total population

The number of union societies grew at a fairly steady rate, but the growth in membership was uneven. In 1902 and 1905, the membership actually fell. Large spurts of growth were experienced in 1907 and 1908 and during the World War.

The figures on growth in circulation are impressive, even allowing for inflation.

MSPO CIRCULATION, 1898 TO 1921[77]

year	circulation (in thousands of rubles)	circulation (in thousands of pre-war rubles)	union production as a per cent of total circulation
1898	--		
1899	31		
1900	139		
1901	109		
1902	178		
1903	260		
1904	347		
1905	440		
1906	291		
1907	400		
1908	722		
1909	1,278		
1910	2,360		
1911	3,881		
1912	6,241		
1913	7,835		.5
1914	10,343		.7
1915	22,855	19,027	1.3
1916	86,632	50,959	5.4
1917	210,570	46,791	10.4
1918	606,900	30,348	15.4
1919	4,428,200	44,286	5.5
1920	18,956,500	94,752	2.6
1921	2,312,000,000	66,835	1.5

The social composition of the MSPO changed during the course of the war. The smallest percentage growth between January 1914 and January 1917 was in worker societies. The largest percentage growth was in local unions. The proportion of village societies reached almost two thirds of the total.

MSPO MEMBERSHIP, JANUARY, 1914 AND JANUARY, 1917[78]

	1914		1917	
type of society	number of societies	per cent of societies	number of societies	per cent of societies
open city	214	20.8	471	14.9
closed city	21	2.0	55	1.7
factory	140	13.6	222	7.0
railroad	21	2.0	29	.9
worker	43	4.2	49	1.5
village	559	54.3	2076	65.6
local unions affiliated with credit or agricultural society	7	.7	154	4.9
	24	2.3	111	3.5
total	1029	100.0	3167	100.0

Month by month figures show that peak growth was reached in the spring of 1916.

SOCIETIES AND UNIONS JOINING THE MSPO FROM 1915 TO 1917, BROKEN DOWN BY MONTH[79]

	1915	1916	1917	
			societies	unions
January	14	96	44	18
February	35	156	37	15
March	22	208	29	7
April	28	162	23	7
May	41	152	31	15
June	45	150	19	11
total Jan.-June	185	924	183	73
average Jan.-June	31	154	31	12

SOCIETIES AND UNIONS...Continued

	1915	1916	1917	
			societies	unions
July	36	115	29	28
August	38	121	9	9
September	44	96	11	11
October	28	65	7	7
November	113	89	2	2
December	83	57	1	1
total July-Dec.	342	543	59	58
average July-Dec.	57	90	10	10

One can only speculate as to why the rate of growth reached a peak in the spring of 1916 and then fell off. Evidently consumer societies had been organized by that time in most localities. The total number of members of MSPO societies continued to grow and existing societies became somewhat larger as the growth in numbers of societies slacked off.

The union's activity, at least until the intensification of the goods crisis towards the end of 1915, was characterized by great moderation. This was even recognized by the tsarist police, in a report written at the end of 1916. The report noted that the meetings of representatives of the MSPO were "normally peaceful and businesslike," although at the 30th Meeting of Representatives, held October 22-24, 1915, there had been a discussion of the question of inflation which had resulted in the passing of a resolution the tone of which was sharply hostile to the government.[80]

The MSPO's position did not leave it free of criticism. Fundamental criticism of the union was made, for example, by village societies, worker societies and Ukrainian societies. In general, the union reacted quite flexibly to such criticism. Important changes were often made along the lines suggested by critical groups.

At a Saratov Cooperative Congress held in November, 1904, the MSPO was heavily criticized for failing to meet the needs of village societies. One representative of a village society said that his society was unable to join the MSPO because it couldn't afford the 50 ruble share payment. Another speaker criticized the union for not knowing the peasant's needs. He recommended that the union do research on the needs of the village. A third critic pointed out what was perhaps the essential reason the MSPO failed to meet the needs of village societies: it did not make long term loans. Village consumer societies could benefit from the services of the MSPO because the union did fill orders from non-member societies, alleviating the necessity of the 50 ruble share payment. But few village societies could make purchases without substantial credit. Lack of credit forced many societies to buy from other suppliers, even at higher prices.[81]

On several occasions, representatives of independent worker consumer societies called for the establishment of a separate center for worker cooperatives. "The Moscow

Union," declared the worker group at the second All-Russian Cooperative Congress in 1913, "uniting completely disparate groups, cannot satisfy the worker cooperative movement, whose special tasks flow out of the general condition of existence of the working class."[82] Due to the shortage of financial resources on the part of the worker cooperative movement, attempts to separate from the MSPO economically were bound to fail. Some left wing co-operators called for breaking from the MSPO ideologically, in terms of propaganda, but not economically. The All-Russian Congress of Worker Cooperatives, which met in Moscow in August, 1917, passed a resolution to that effect. But left wing cooperators were always active in MSPO publishing and propaganda. The Menshevik E. O. Lenskaia was the head of the union's "popular propaganda department." Worker cooperators, as the Menshevik M. L. Kheisin, contributed regularly to the union's worker-oriented journal Ob'edinenie.

The All-Russian Cooperative Congress of 1913 heard much criticism of the MSPO. One writer commented that many speakers confused the congress with an MSPO Meeting of Representatives, bringing up and criticizing one or another of the union's activities. This was a reflection of the MSPO's central place in the Russian consumer co-operative movement.

A group of Ukrainian cooperators accused the union of being too tightly centralized. They called for the

compulsory placement of regional unions between the MSPO and individual societies. The reasons for this proposal, which will be discussed more completely in a later section, were partly economic and partly nationalistic. But the point in the present context is that the MSPO made a number of important concessions to its critics. The congress was held in Kiev, which in itself was a concession of importance. It allowed the critics, or 'federalists', to hold the congress in the area of their greatest concentration. The proposal accepted by the congress on the issue of 'federalism' v. 'centralization' called for the organization of local purchasing "not at the expense of common union capital, but at the expense of special funds of local unions". This proposal was in fact proposed by MSPO board member D. S. Korobov. Soiuz Potrebitelei minimized the extent of this concession, implying that Korobov's proposal had nothing to do with pressure being put on the union. But Russkiia Vedomosti called it a major concession and that is probably what most people thought of it.[83]

In fact, the union was almost constantly discussing proposals for reorganizing itself. For example, an article in Soiuz Potrebitelei in 1908 brought forward a proposal that unions of cooperative societies should not be limited to those of a particular type but should include all types of societies (i.e., credit, consumer, producer, etc.).[84] In 1912, the Moscow Union implemented a new form

of organization. The Board of Directors was no longer to be elected centrally. It was to consist instead of one representative elected by each of the 20 districts plus the top union employees.[85]

The 30th Meeting of Representatives, held in October, 1915, made a decision which was really the logical outcome of the federalist resolution adopted by the 1913 congress. It was decided that the union would no longer accept applications from individual societies for membership. It would transform itself into a union of unions of consumer societies, rather than a union of consumer societies. This resolution was only fully implemented after the February Revolution. The new name which the MSPO began using in 1916 was the Central All-Russian Union of Consumer Societies, or the Tsentrosoiuz, abbreviated TsVSPO. But the old name continued to be used for some time and even in 1918, many cooperators and many cooperative publications still referred to the MSPO by its old name.

As of August 1, 1917, 265 local unions were members of the MSPO. The union's statistical department estimated that 107 local unions were not members. This was a function of location. Of 21 local unions in Moscow guberniia, all were in the TsVSPO, but of 23 local unions in Petersburg guberniia, only four were members.

One police report commented that the transformation of the MSPO into the TsVSPO was potentially dangerous,

given the interest that the union was now showing in politics. The structural transformation put control of more funds into the hands of the central organization, which, it was correctly pointed out, could potentially be used against the government.[86]

D. Consumer societies and other types of cooperatives

Consumer societies were only one type of cooperative, and until they received the stimulus of the goods crisis, they were not the most widespread. At the end of 1917, the cooperative movement as a whole was made up of:

COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES AND THEIR MEMBERS, DECEMBER 31, 1917[87]

type of cooperative	number of cooperatives	number of members
consumer	35,000	11,500,000
credit	16,261	10,500,000
agricultural societies	5,500	1,600,000
agricultural associations	2,300	230,000
milk cooperatives	2,900	435,000
handicrafts cooperatives	1,200	60,000
total	63,161	24,325,000

One can only speculate as to what proportion of these 24.3 million members belonged to more than one cooperative. Assuming that half of all members of cooperatives belonged to one other cooperative, there would have been slightly more than sixteen million members of cooperatives in Russia. If each of these represented a family of five, then more than 80 million people, or more than 57 per cent

of the population of 140 million were members of families the heads of which were members of cooperatives.

There is little or no recent work on cooperatives for the production of handicrafts, usually called artels, or on agricultural societies or associations. Most artels were located in rural areas where the peasantry could not make its living entirely from agriculture. Their membership tended to come from the poorer peasantry of the non-black soil areas. The membership of the various types of agricultural societies and associations, including milk cooperatives, on the other hand, tended to be composed of prosperous peasants. These were limited agricultural producer cooperatives. They were normally involved only in the cooperative use of machinery. It was very unusual for the work or the ownership of land to be organized jointly. The Siberian Association of Milk Producers was a particularly large agricultural association.

More information is available on credit cooperatives. Interesting new work has been done on this subject by Anita Brendahl Petersen. Until 1914, credit cooperatives were the largest group within the Russian cooperative movement.[88] There were two government authorized models for the formation of credit cooperatives in Russia. The older Schulze-Delitzsch model was based on the principles of economic utility and individual responsibility. Another model, the Raiffeisen model, began to be sponsored by the

government after 1895. This type of credit cooperative emphasized communal, social goals and joint liability for debts.

Credit societies were less democratically inclined than consumer societies. One reason is that they were highly dependent on the tsarist administration. Fully 81 per cent of all credit societies received loans from the State Bank. Beginning in the 1890s, the development of rural credit as a tool for the modernization of Russian society had been a policy of the Ministry of Finance. This policy was first initiated by Count Witte. When credit societies were not financed by the State Bank, they were normally supported by local zemstvos. The Ministry of Interior actually placed some obstacles in the way of zemstvo aid to credit societies. This was partly a result of the tsarist administrations distrust of all forms of popular initiative. Another important reason was that zemstvos had a tendency to be interested in the development of credit cooperatives for the sake of promoting the democratization and the political modernization of Russian society. The government's own interest in credit cooperatives was strictly in terms of economic modernization.[89]

Credit societies are the only cooperatives for which information is available on how the economic position of their members compared with the population at large. The

figures indicate that the members of credit cooperatives tended to come from the wealthier rural groups. Data collected in Khar'kov, Taurida and Ekaterinoslav guberniias on the number of horses owned by members of credit societies compared with the number owned by non-members shows that the members were a clear cut above average.

HORSES OWNED BY MEMBERS OF CREDIT SOCIETIES COMPARED WITH THE TOTAL PEASANT POPULATION[90]

number of horses	per cent of members	per cent of total population
0	12.2	32.8
1	8.8	8.2
2	46.6	34.0
3-4	19.7	15.4
over 5	10.7	9.6
total	100.0	100.0

Data collected in Ufa shows that members of credit societies tended to plant more land than the average peasant.

DESSIATINA PLANTED BY MEMBERS OF CREDIT SOCIETIES COMPARED WITH THE TOTAL PEASANT POPULATION[91]

dessiatina	per cent of members	per cent of total population
none	5	10
up to 2	12	21
2 to 10	64	56
over 10	19	13
total	100	100

The Ufa figures also showed the number of horses owned by the members of credit societies between 1906 and 1911.

HORSES OWNED BY CREDIT SOCIETY MEMBERS, 1906-1911[92]

horses	1906	1908	1909	1910	1911
0	2	3	3	4	4
1	16	25	27	27	28
2	29	31	32	31	32
3-4	34	29	26	27	25
over 5	19	12	16	11	11
average	100	100	100	100	100

Antsiferov concluded from this data that it showed that the membership of credit societies was gradually becoming "democratized." He pointed out that although the poorest and wealthiest groups remained about constant, within the middle group, the lower part had grown larger and the upper part had become smaller. In my opinion, however, this data is too limited to be conclusive.[93]

Anita Petersen argues that credit societies gave loans to poor as well as to wealthy peasants. But she makes the point that loans given to poor peasants were too small to enable them to make any real improvement in the technical level of their production. There was a shortage of funds and poor peasants were not reliable borrowers. Usually, societies only gave loans to those with the tools and personal property to guarantee repayment. Thus loans often supported handicrafts production rather than agriculture directly. According to Petersen, perhaps the most tangible effect of credit cooperation was to give a reprieve to the commune by providing extra cash.[94]

Credit societies had difficulty accumulating resources for loans. The main reason, according to Petersen, was that peasants hesitated to make deposits. Peasants knew that most borrowers from credit societies were peasants like themselves and that peasant property could not be mortgaged or otherwise used as collateral since it was inalienable. Thus peasants knew that the power of cooperatives to collect loans was limited and therefore their savings were in some danger. Petersen gives three more factors which made it difficult to see that loans were repayed. First, many peasants did not understand the principles upon which loans were made, including the principle that they were to be repaid with interest and that they were to be used for improving production rather than consumption. Collection was also hindered by the fact that credit societies usually covered too large an area to be able to supervise repayment effectively. A third problem was that the time set for repayment was usually too short. The average time limit for repayment was 7.6 months.[95]

Credit cooperatives were more businesslike than consumer societies and less interested in political and social change. There was relatively little interest among the leaders of credit societies in promoting the participation of the less educated members in decision making. Virtually all credit societies had paid officials.[96] Credit

cooperators were outnumbered by consumer cooperators at the pre-revolutionary all-Russian congresses of cooperatives, in 1908 and 1913. This was a reflection of the fact that consumer cooperators were far more politically involved. The police interrupted the proceedings of the credit society sections of the congress far less frequently than they interrupted the proceedings of the consumer society sections. Credit societies were in general far less likely than consumer societies to get into trouble with the tsarist administration. Of course, there were occasional difficulties. Occasionally, credit inspectors overruled the results of elections in credit societies.[97] But credit societies did not have nearly as much difficulty getting their charters confirmed as consumer societies.

Where conflicts between different types of cooperatives occurred, they usually occurred in the village. The cooperative press frequently reported cases of petty disputes between village consumer societies and credit societies. These disputes were a form of class conflict. A typical case was that of one village consumer society in Iaroslav guberniia which ran into the opposition of both the local agricultural society and the local credit society. Merchant members of the village agricultural society made it difficult for the consumer society to rent premises for its shop and the credit society refused to make a loan to the consumer society. The reason for

the refusal was evidently that the credit society had developed a profitable side line in agricultural implements and seed.[98]

It is impossible to say with precision the degree which such conflicts permeated village cooperation as a whole. Reports of conflicts between village consumer and credit societies appeared in Soiuz Potrebitelei a few times a year. The frequency of such conflicts was necessarily limited by the fact that until the beginning of the war, it was rather uncommon to have both a consumer society and a credit or an agricultural society in the same village. But where credit societies had ties with local merchants, conflicts between them and consumer societies were bound to occur. Occasionally, especially during the goods crisis, credit societies helped supply local merchants with goods. The same help was not extended to consumer societies. At the beginning of 1916, a credit society in a village in Tula guberniia whose president was a local merchant distributed sugar to the merchants of the area.[99]

Of course there were other instances in which consumer and credit or agricultural societies actively cooperated with each other. Also in the beginning of 1916, in Kherson guberniia the Inguletsk Credit Society and Elizovetgrad Consumer Society worked out a plan for a union. The credit society became a member of the consumer society and bought shares in it.[100] But cases of joint

activity were reported much less frequently in the co-operative press than cases of emnity.

An ongoing example of joint work by different types of cooperatives was the formation and development of the Moscow People's Bank. The bank was founded in 1911 as a source of funds for cooperatives. While it was in the process of becoming organized, the MSPO lent it office space. Consumer societies played an increasingly great role in its work. In January, 1914, when the share capital of the bank equalled only about one million rubles, only 1 per cent was contributed by consumer cooperatives. But in February, 1918, when the share capital of the bank equalled 35 million rubles, the share of the consumer cooperative movement was 37 per cent. Information on the proportion of loans that went to consumer cooperation is not available for the period before 1917, but in January, 1917, 36 per cent of the loans went to consumer co-operatives and, in February 1918, 66 per cent of the loans. loans.[101]

A final activity which should be mentioned in this section is Russian participation in the International Cooperative Alliance. This international association of cooperatives of all types had socialist leanings, and, as we shall see below, pacifist resolutions were passed at the congress it held on the eve of the outbreak of the war. Not surprisingly, the International Cooperative Alliance

was a suspect enterprise as far as the tsarist administration was concerned. In 1913, Truzhenik, a journal for members of worker consumer societies published in Poltava, announced that the governor of Vladimir guberniia had ordered the Ivanovo-Voznesensk consumer society "Edinenie -Sila" (In Unity - Strength) to resign its membership in the Alliance, threatening to close it otherwise.[102] Information on the precise number of Russian societies belonging to the International Cooperative Alliance is not available, but there must have been a significant number, because the English leaders of the Alliance, fearing that the order of the Vladimir guberniia governor would cause all remaining Russian societies to resign their memberships, asked the English Minister of Foreign Affairs to try to find out if the order did not contradict existing Russian law. The minister encharged the British ambassador to bring the matter up with the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs.[103] The protest apparently had some effect. Many Russian societies were still members of the Alliance during the World War.

E. Rochdale and Russian interest in the European cooperative movement

In reading the publications of the Russian consumer cooperative movement, one cannot help but be struck by the passionate interest shown in the history and development of the cooperative movement in the West. Virtually

every issue of every cooperative journal and every book published about the consumer cooperative movement had some space devoted to one or another European development. A book published by the Shaniavskii Public University of the City of Moscow on the organization of courses for training cooperators on the local level, for example, concentrated chiefly on examples of what had been done in the West. The introduction to the book commented:

> In all our social undertakings, we are accustomed to look to the west and to borrow from abroad the best forms of our activity.[104]

The book justified this tendency to look to the West by the fact that it was "more advanced in its cultural development" and that "too many of us have spent long years abroad."

Russian interest in the European cooperative movement paralleled Russian interest in European society as a whole. The liberals and moderate socialists who made up the core of consumer cooperators were almost unanimous in seeing the West as a model to be emulated. It virtually never occurred to anyone that the European model might be an unrealistic one for Russia.

The focal point of what might almost be called a mania was Rochdale, the world's first consumer cooperative, founded in the village of Rochdale, in England, in 1844.[105] Russian cooperators writing about Rochdale were often extremely sentimental. A. V. Merkulov, for example, told his

readers that in November, 1824:

> Some tens of poor flannel weavers gathered in poor, barren and gloomy quarters to discuss by what means it would be possible to save themselves from their deep poverty.[106]

"The Rochdale pioneers," as the founders of Rochdale were usually called, enunciated certain principles which served as guidelines for the operation of the society. These can be summarized as follows:

1. The major part of the profits is to be distributed among the members in proportion to their purchases. A small dividend is to be paid on share capital.
2. Goods are to be sold at the market price.
3. Purchase and sale are to be made only for cash.
4. All members of the society are to have equal rights. Each member has only one vote, no matter how many shares he owns.
5. The cooperative should be neutral on all political and religious questions.
6. A portion of the profits are to be alloc ed to raising the cultural level of the members of the society.
7. Only good quality products are to be sold, with clean weight and exact measurement.

These were known as "the Rochdale principles." It was asserted repeatedly in popular literature that by following the example of the poor Rochdale weavers, the Russian worker and peasant could accomplish what they had.

There were, to put it mildly, a number of problems with this assertion. First, despite the emphasis of Merkulov and others on the poverty of the Rochdale weavers,

the goal of the founders of Rochdale and other English societies was not to enable the desperately poor to struggle out of their poverty but rather to enable the moderately prosperous laborer to accumulate some savings. In fact, the Rochdale Principles excluded the poor from participation in consumer cooperatives.

This point can be best understood by taking another look at the Rochdale principles. The most important principle was the first, that the majority of the profits were to be redistributed not on the basis of shares but on the basis of purchases. Several of the other principles were related. The distribution of profits according to purchase made no sense unless goods were sold at the market price and sales were made only for cash. Otherwise there would be little or no profits to distribute. But the poor could not pay cash.

The Rochdale principles are what made the English consumer cooperative movement a definite break from the political radicalism of Chartism. The Chartists had promised their followers that in the distant future their way of life would radically improve. Consumer cooperatives, in contrast, promised to provide their members with small but concrete benefits within the course of a year. As one English worker pointed out:

> The distribution of surplus in the form of dividends on purchases was not entirely new in 1844, but it made a fresh appeal to a generation which, in an age of greater prosperity, came to enjoy some slight

> margin for the exercise of thrift, in spite of the poverty that still excluded large numbers from the benefits of the cooperative store.[107]

The purpose of the consumer cooperative movement as practiced following the Rochdale principles was the gradual improvement of the lives of the laboring, but not the poverty stricken, classes, by means of thrift.

Secondly, Rochdale was founded under rather different political circumstances than the Russian consumer societies. In England, in the 1840s, there were four competing programs for social change. The most radical program was Chartism. Others were Owenism, temperance and consumer cooperation. In fact, the founders of Rochdale adopted a seven point program which included concessions to these other groups. The program stated:

1. The objects of this society are to form arrangements for the pecuniary benefit and improvement of the society and domestic conditions of its members, by raising a sufficient amount of capital in shares of one pound each, to bring into operation the following plans and arrangements:

2. The establishment of a store for the sale of provisions, clothing, etc.

3. The building, purchasing, or erecting of a number of houses, in which those members desiring to assist each other in improving their domestic and social conditions may reside.

4. To commence the manufacture of such articles as the society may determine upon, for the employment of such members as may be without employment or who may be suffering in consequences of a repeated reduction of their wages.

5. As a further benefit and security to the members of this society, the society shall purchase or rent an estate or estates of land, which shall be cultivated by the members who may be out of employment or whose labor may be badly remunerated.

6. That, as soon as practicable, the society shall proceed to arrange the power of production, distribution, education and government, or in other words, to establish a self-supporting home colony of united interests, or assist other societies in founding such colonies.

7. That for the promotion of sobriety a Temperance Hotel be opened in one of the society's houses as soon as convenient.

Points three through seven were concession to the current competing programs of social change. But in practice, nothing was done by the Rochdale consumer society to implement them.

A third problem with the assertion that Russian workers and peasants could easily emulate the success of the Rochdale weavers was that although by the end of 1917 the percentage of people on Russian territory who were members of consumer societies was fully comparable with England, in that time Russia did not by any means become a nation similar to England. It is fair to say that whereas in England the development of consumer cooperation was mainly a reflection of increasing prosperity, in Russia it was mainly a reflection of increasing poverty, brought about by the war and goods crisis. Russian co-operators had a saying: 'Cooperation is the daughter of need.' It was a slogan peculiar to the Russian cooperative movement.

Furthermore, there were tremendous structural differences between the Russian and English Consumer Cooperative movements. Although the numbers of members of consumer societies in Russia and Great Britain were roughly comparable, Russia actually had a far larger number of societies. But this was not an advantage. It meant that Russian consumer cooperatives were far less efficiently organized. The following figures on the number of societies and number of members are available.

CONSUMER SOCIETIES AND MEMBERSHIP IN GREAT BRITAIN AND RUSSIA[109]

	Great Britain		Russia	
year	societies	members	societies	members
1913	1382	2.9 million	10,080	1.4 million
1914	1385	3.1 million	11,400	1.7 million
1915	1375	3.3 million	14,500	2.6 million
1916	1362	3.5 million	23,500	6.8 million
1917	1366	3.8 million	35,000	11.6 million
1918	1364	3.8 million	47,000	17.0 million
1919	1357	4.1 million	53,000	18.5 million

In 1917, British societies had an average membership of 2773 while Russian societies had an average membership of only 330. This reflected the size of enterprises in the economy as a whole. Almost half of the privately owned shops in Moscow had no paid employees, that is, they were run exclusively by the propriator and his family.[110]

The above figures also show how different were the experiences of Russian and British consumer cooperatives

during the war. While the Russian consumer cooperative movement grew by leaps and bounds, the rise in membership in English consumer cooperatives was very moderate, while the number of societies actually declined slightly.

There is a final respect in which the reality of the western consumer cooperative movement, as exemplified by Great Britain, differed from the Russian conception of it. As time went on, the English consumer cooperative movement became less and less politicized, less and less interested in theory. Consumer cooperatives became a rooted part of the status quo. The English cooperative congresses of the 1860s and 1970s devoted a large proportion of their attention to discussion of the principles of cooperative development. But as time went on, papers on these subjects were largely 'taken as read' and put into the appendix of the printed report. Finally they disappeared from the agenda altogether. Discussion of theoretical problems and of educational aims also dropped out of the periodical literature. Early societies had seen these as equal in importance to the economic benefits of the cooperative movement. The actual management of English consumer societies passed into the hands of permanent paid officials.[111] English cooperators practiced the Rochdale principle of neutrality on all political and religious questions.

But Russian cooperators did not, after 1905, practice the principle of political neutrality. They maintained their interest in theory and became more and more involved in politics. Only after the Provisional Government began to flounder did most Russian cooperators opt for the preservation of the status quo.

Of course there were Russian cooperators who were more interested in the economic benefits of their societies than in cooperation for political and social modernization. On occasion, the cooperative press wrote of the conflict between what was called the "cooperative party" and the "economic party" within a given society.[112] But in general, it is fair to say that as it developed, the English co-operative movement moved to the right whereas the Russian cooperative movement moved to the left. The paradox is that Russian cooperators based their political activity on the desire to make Russia more like the West. In summary, the English consumer cooperative movement, upon which Russian cooperators looked as the pattern for their own movement, was quite different from the way they imagined it.

Despite all this, Russian cooperators maintained their interest in Rochdale. As late as April, 1919, Obshchee Delo announced a contest for the writing of an essay on the Rochdale pioneers in honor of the 75th anniversary of the society's founding. The essay was to be

published in the form of a popular brochure with illustrations. It was to be designed to be read at meetings of consumer societies.[113]

The point has been made that Russian cooperative literature consistantly advocated following the Rochdale principles, arguing that in doing so Russian cooperators would insure that Russia would develop on the model of England. Actually the situation was more complex. The acceptance of the Rochdale principles in theory was almost universal, but in practice, Russian consumer societies honored most of the Rochdale principles more or less only in the breach. Most societies, for example, distributed a large part of their profits in the form of dividends on shares rather than as a rebate on purchases. A significant number of societies sold goods below the market price. All but the poorest societies gave their members the option of buying on credit, an option of which liberal use was made. Russian cooperators did not preserve neutrality on political questions. Finally, for most societies, expenditures on educational and cultural work were extremely low.

All of this will be documented in later sections. The point, in this context, is that the application of the Rochdale principles, which was possible in Great Britain, was all but impossible in Russia. It was made impossible by the congenital poverty of the Russian working classes. Share capital in Russian societies was in short supply.

Unless reasonably high dividends were paid, it was impossible to attract sufficient funds. The poverty of their members caused many consumer societies to sell below the market price. It was felt that the necessity of waiting until the end of the year, when dividends on purchases were distributed, was an intolerable burden. For the same reason, it was impossible for all purchases to be paid for in cash. Most Russian consumer societies which tried to sell only for cash quickly lost their customers to private merchants who charged higher prices and gave no rebates but who did extend credit. Finally, financial limitations, from the point of view of many cooperators, made them pointless.

One might ask why Russian cooperators placed so much emphasis on the Rochdale model if they did not in fact follow it. One is forced to conclude that the infatuation of Russian cooperators with the model of Western Europe was so great that they were essentially blind to its defects. And for the most part, they lacked the imagination to work out another model more suited to Russian conditions.

The Rochdale principles were sound, conservative business principles. They were principles upon which, given sufficient availability of capital, the safe but successful running of a business could be assured. Seen in this light, it is not surprising that the only sector of the consumer cooperative movement that ever openly dissented from them

was the left wing. One example of such dissent was an article by V. A. Posse in the journal Trudovoi Soiuz. Posse pointed to the incongruity of the fact that despite the basing of all MSPO propaganda strictly on the Rochdale principles, few societies actually practiced them. The MSPO itself sold mainly on credit. Posse suggested that the time had come for young consumer societies like "Trudovoi Soiuz" to move the MSPO "from the Rochdale principles somewhat to the left, in the direction of dispensing completely with any division of profits.[114] Posse and other left wing cooperators wanted to gain acceptance of the idea that there should be no distribution of profits in any form, neither dividends on shares nor rebates on purchases. Goods would be sold below the market price and whatever profits remained would be used either for cultural and educational work or for strengthening and broadening the society.[115]

Similar conclusions were expressed by the left wing of the consumer society section of the First All-Russian Cooperative Congress. With respect to the question of selling below the market price, one worker society delegate, A. I. Bystrov, said:

> Given the poverty of the Russian population, the hope of receiving in a large profit at the end of the year forces it to suffer from high prices in the course of the whole year. The example of the West is not compulsory for us. There they can overpay and wait for the dividends with confidence.[116]

Another delegate stated his agreement by quoting a Russian proverb analogous to "a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." In Russian, this goes, "don't envy the crane in the sky, but get your hands on the blue titmouse."

The point should be underlined: English consumer cooperators had rejected the Chartist promise of substantial benefits in the distant future in favor of more limited benefits within a year. But radical Russian cooperators like Bystrov called for benefits not within a year, but immediately.[117]

The left wing cooperators who rejected the Rochdale principles did not normally reject the idea that Russia should become more like Western Europe. At the First All-Russian Cooperative Congress, when V. F. Totomiants argued that it was impossible to dispense entirely with the payment of dividends, he supported his position with the argument that no West European societies did so. His opponents defended their position by saying that some West European societies did do so. Posse advocated following the model of consumer societies in Belgium, which had, he said, dispensed with the practice of the distribution of profits.[118] Persons less entranced by the example of Western Europe would have felt it more constructive to argue the issue on its own merits, not on whether or not it was done in Europe. But voices calling for outright rejection of the Rochdale Principles were extremely rare exceptions. As a

whole, Russian consumer cooperators continued to honor the Rochdale principles loudly in theory but to disregard them quietly in practice.

FOOTNOTES

[1]N. A. Reitlinger, Obzor polozheniia i deiatel'nosti potrebitel'nykh obshchestv v Rossii po dannym 1897 (St. Petersburg: Postoiannaia Kommissiia, 1899), p. 24.

[2]Ia. A. Kistanov, Potrebitel'skaia kooperatsiia SSSR (Moscow: Tsentrosoiuz, 1951), p. 91.

[3]M. Kheisin, "Novaia statistika potrebitel'noi kooperatsii," Vestnik Kooperatsii, 6/7 (1914), p. 116.

[4]M. Balabanov, Istoriia rabochei kooperatsii v Rossii (1864-1917) (Moscow: Ekonomicheskaia Zhizn', 1925), p. 297.

[5]Michael T. Florinsky, The End of the Russian Empire (New York: Collier, 1974), p. 117.

[6]V. V. Kabanov, Oktiabr'skaia revoliutsiia i kooperatsiia (1917 g. - mart 1919 g.) (Moscow: Nauka, 1973), p. 217.

[7]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), May-June 1922, p. 22. The figures refer to January 1 of each year. Merkulov was a Kadet who, after 1916, was the editor of the MSPO's peasant-oriented journal Obshchee Delo (Common Cause).

[8]All dates in this dissertation prior to the change in calendar are given in Old Style. Dates just after the change are given both in Old and New Style.

[9]Russkiia Vedomosti (Moscow), April 15, 1898, p. 2.

[10]David Lane, The Roots of Russian Communism (Amsterdam: Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis, 1968), p. 91. Lane himself does not identify the contribution correctly, saying that the term 'Ot III' meant "possibly the Third Element."

[11]Ivan Khristoforovich Ozerov, Obshchestva potrebitelei (2nd ed.; St. Petersburg: Narodnaia Pol'za, 1900), p. 84. The committee also brought to the congress a plan for organizing a union of consumer societies, which culminated in the formation of the MSPO a few years later, and a plan for calling an all-Russian congress of the representatives of consumer societies. This last was the least successful. An all-Russian congress of consumer societies did not take place until 1908.

[12]Ibid., p. 189.

[13]The Model Code was published repeatedly, including in Normal'nyi ustav potrebitel'nykh obshchestv s prilozheniem ukazanii dlia ikh uchreditelei (St. Petersburg: S. Peterburgskoe Otdelenie Komiteta, 1898).

[14]Russkiia Vedomosti (Moscow), April 15, 1898, p. 2.

[15]S. N. Prokopovich, Kooperativnoe dvizhenie v Rossii (3rd ed.; Moscow: Sovet Vserossiiskikh Kooperativnykh S"ezdov, 1918), pp. 369-386.

[16]Ozerov, Obshchestva potrebitelei, pp. 282-284.

[17]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), December 7, 1916, pp. 1519-1922; December 12, 1916, pp. 1560-1562; December 23, 1916, pp. 1599-1602. This count was made in July, 1916. A total of 15,103 societies were reached.

[18]Ezhegodnik MSPO, 1914 g. (Moscow: MSPO, 1916), Pt. I, p. 126.

[19]Ezhegodnik MSPO, 1913 g. (Moscow: MSPO, 1914), Pt. II, p. 99.

[20]Ibid., p. 102.

[21]Balabanov, Istoriia rabochei kooperatsii v Rossii (1864-1917), pp. 45-50, 63.

[22]Russkiia Vedomosti (Moscow), July 27, 1899, p. 2.

[23]Balabanov, Istoriia rabochei kooperatsii v Rossii (1864-1917), p. 60.

[24]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), September 30, 1911, p. 718. 'Employee' is my translation of the word sluzhaschii. A longer but more precise translation would be 'white-collar worker'.

[25]Ibid.

[26]Ibid. The two "peasants" listed were almost undoubtedly workers. Most Russian workers were identified in official documents as peasants, even if their families had been living in towns for several generations.

[27]Obshchee Delo (Moscow), March 5, 1916, p. 20.

[28]M. L. Kheisin, Istoricheskii ocherk kooperatsii v Rossii (Petrograd: "Kooperatsiia", 1918), p. 43.

[29]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), July 31, 1905, p. 373; August 15, 1905, pp. 397-398.

[30]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), August 21, 1904, pp. 389-394.

[31]Prokopovich, Kooperativnoe dvizhenie v Rossii, p. 254.

[32]See above, pages 14-15.

[33]Kistanov, Potrebitel'skaia kooperatsiia SSSR, p. 126.

[34]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), December 31, 1913, pp. 4-9.

[35]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), July 23, 1913, pp. 13-14.

[36]Prokopovich, Kooperativnoe dvizhenie v Rossii, p. 243.

[37]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), July 23, 1916, pp. 943-946. The count for 1916 was probably somewhat incomplete.

[38]Balabanov, Istoriia rabochei kooperatsii v Rossii (1864-1917), p. 159.

[39]See above, pages 14-15.

[40]V. A. Posse, Moi zhiznennyi put' dorevoliutsionnyi period (1864-1917 gg.) (Moscow and Leningrad: Zemlia i Fabrika, 1929), p. 428.

[41]Ibid., p. 438.

[42]Balabanov, Istoriia rabochei kooperatsii v Rossi (1864-1917), p. 127.

[43]Ermolaev was the pseudonym of N. A. Skrypnik. After 1917, Skrypnik joined the Bolsheviks and in the 1920s, he played an important role in the struggle of the Ukrainian communist party against Russian domination.

[44]Posse, Moi zhiznennyi put' and Balabanov, Istoriia rabochei kooperatsii v Rossii (1864-1917) provide a guide to some additional sources on "Trudovoi Soiuz".

[45]A. Lozovskii, ed., Rabochee dvizhenie v gody voiny (Moscow: Tsentrarkhiv, 1926), pp. 220-221. These comments come from a report compiled by the Petrograd Police Department and sent to the Ministry of Interior December 11, 1915.

[46]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), September 30, 1911, p. 719.

[47]This building is now the Central Military Department Store. It is on the right side of the street if one is walking from the Kremlin in the direction of Arbat Square. The old name has been erased but the insignias have not.

[48]Canned goods were very difficult to get because they were not produced in Russia at that time.

[49]Russkiia Vedomosti (Moscow), May 15, 1904, p. 2.

[50]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), December 31, 1909, pp. 113-1134.

[51]Ozerov, Obshchestva potrebitelei, p. 99.

[52]Russkiia Vedomosti (Moscow), October 5, 1898, pp. 2-3; November 20, 1901, p. 3; January 2, 1902, p. 2; October 11, 1902, p. 3; October 24, 1902, p. 3; March 27, 1904, p. 3.

[53]See above, pages 14-15.

[54]Prokopovich, Kooperativnoe dvizhenie v Rossii, p. 228.

[55]See above, pages 21-22 and 26-27.

[56]Spisok kooperativnykh soiuzov i ob'edinenii. Dekabr' 1916 g. (Moscow: Vestnik Kooperativnykh Soiuzov, 1917). There were also 113 unions of credit societies or credit associations, 12 unions of marketing societies and 47 unions of manufacturing and agricultural societies.

[57]Otchet za 1915 g. (Moscow: MSPO, 1917), pp. 34-36.

[58]Sberezhenie (Moscow), April 25, 1897, pp. 3-4; May 25, 1897, pp. 5-6; June 25, 1897, p. 2.

[59]M. D. Shishkin, Iz vospominanii kooperativnykh i politicheskikh (New York: Inter-University Project on the History of the Menshevik Movement, 1960), p. 2.

[60]Ozerov, Obshchestva potrebitelei, p. 196.

[61]Sberezhenie (Moscow), December 31, 1897, pp. 4-5.

[62]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), December 1923, p. 23.

[63]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), January 15, 1903, p. 2.

[64]Russkiia Vedomosti (Moscow), July 24, 1904, p. 3. At the same time, consumer societies made individual purchases at the fair in the amount of 400,000 rubles.

[65]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), December 12, 1914, pp. 870-874.

[66]Ibid. The article noted that the German figures for Russia were slightly different than the ones obtained by the MSPO's own statisticians.

[67]Soiuz Potretitelei (Moscow), April 30, 1903, pp. 1-4.

[68]Russkiia Vedomosti (Moscow), July 22, 1899, p. 2.

[69]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), December 1923, p. 23.

[70]Ibid.

[71]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), October 31, 1913, pp. 1-3.

[72]V. I. Anofriev, Osnovye voprosy deiatel'nosti potrebitel'nykh obshchestv (Moscow: MSPO, 1902), pp. vi, 10 and 19.

[73]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), January 11, 1913, pp. 11-14.

[74]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), October 12, 1912, pp. 671-673.

[75]Ibid.

[76]M. Rozenfeld, Mirovaia kooperatsiia v tsifrakh (potreb-kooperatsiia) (Moscow: Tsentrosoiuz, 1926), p. 116. The figures refer to the end of each year. There is an error in 1918 and 1921 with respect to the number of members. The Soviet decree making the entire population members of consumer societies was in effect only from March, 1919, to March, 1921.

[77]Ibid.

[78]Eugene M. Kayden and Alexis N. Antsiferov, The Cooperative Movement in Russia During the War (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1929), p. 203.

[79]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), January 26, 1917, pp. 9-13; April 8 (March 26), 1918, pp. 29-33.

[80]I. P. Tkachukov, ed., Kooperatsiia s tochki zreniia okhranki (Saratov: Soiuz Potrebitel'nykh Obshchestv Saratovskago Kraia, 1917), pp. 8-9. This book consists of selections from documents concerning the consumer cooperative movement found in the archive of the Saratov Police Department.

[81]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), April 9, 1905, pp. 164-165.

[82]Balabanov, Istoriia rabochei kooperatsii v Rossii (1864-1917), p. 187.

[83]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), August 22, 1913, pp. 596-601. Russkiia Vedomosti (Moscow), August 4, 1913, pp. 3-4.

[84]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), February 22, 1908, pp. 113-116.

[85]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), September 15, 1912, pp. 1-6.

[86]Tkachukov, Kooperatsiia s tochki zreniia okhranki, p. 13.

[87]Kabanov, Oktiabr'skaia revoliutsiia i kooperatsiia (1917 g. - mart 1919 g.), p. 58.

[88]For statistics on their growth, see Anita Brendahl Petersen, "The Development of Cooperative Credit in Rural Russia, 1871-1914" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, 1973), pp. 175-210.

[89]Ibid., pp. 129, 211, 217-219.

[90]M. I. Tugan-Baranovskii, Sotsial'nyia osnovy kooperatsii (Berlin: Slovo, 1921), pp. 378-380.

[91]Ibid.. One dessiatina equals 2.7 acres.

[92]Ibid.

[93]Kayden and Antsiferov, The Cooperative Movement in Russia During the War, pp. 261-262.

[94]Petersen, "The Development of Cooperative Credit in Rural Russia, 1871-1914", pp. 17, 236, 313-315.

[95]Ibid., pp. 152, 303, 306, 310.

[96]Ibid., p. 168.

[97]See Sergei Maslov, Mirskoi Chelovek (Moscow: Komitet o Sel'skikh Ssudo-sberegatel'nykh i Promyshlennykh' Tovarshchestvakh pri Moskovskom Obshchestve Sel'skogo Khoziaistva, 1916).

[98]Obshchee Delo (Moscow), June 16, 1916, p. 22.

[99]Obshchee Delo (Moscow), February 27, 1916, pp. 21-22.

[100]Obshchee Delo (Moscow), March 5, 1916, p. 15.

[101]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), August 23 (10), 1918, pp. 28-30.

[102]For more on the consumer society "Edinenie - Sila", see the section of this dissertation on consumer cooperatives and the revolution of 1905-7.

[103]Truzhenik (Poltava), March 1913, p. 20. The incident is a particularly good illustration of how different the attitude of the English government towards the cooperative movement was from that of the tsarist government.

[104]Organizatsiia mestnykh kooperativnykh kursov (Moscow: Moskovskii Gorodskoi Narodnyi Universitet imeni A. L. Shaniavskago, 1917), p. 3.

[105]It might be pointed out that recently some Soviet students of the consumer cooperative movement have disputed the fact that Rochdale was the world's first consumer society. In 1968, S. N. Dneprovskii published his discovery that Decembrist exiles in Siberia had founded a consumer society in 1831. Kooperatory, 1898-1968 gg. (Moscow: "Ekonomika", 1968). The society was essentially an artel', although it did distribute some goods to its members. It soon closed, and, in contrast to Rochdale, it was soon forgotten.

[106]A. V. Merkulov, Rochdel'skie zachinateli (Kiev: Mysl', 1920), p. 11. For other examples of such sentimentality with regard to Rochdale, see below, pages 282-284.

[107]A. M. Carr-Saunders, P. Sargent and Florance and Robert Peers, Consumers' Cooperation in Great Britain (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1938), p. 31. The 'age of prosperity' referred to does not mean the 1840s, when England was going through a serious depression, but rather the 1850s and 1860s, when prosperity returned and the English consumer cooperative movement expanded.

[108]Sydney R. Elliot, The English Cooperatives (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937), pp. 22-23.

[109]Rozenfeld, Mirovaia koopersatsiia v tsifrakh (potreb-kooperatsiia), pp. 18-117. These figures refer to the end of each year.

[110]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), July 25, 1909, pp. 651-652.

[111]Carr-Saunders, Sargent and Peers, Consumers' Cooperation in Great Britain, pp. 35-36.

[112]See, for example, Ob'edinenie (Moscow), July 22, 1914, pp. 7-8.

[113]Obshchee Delo (Moscow), April 15, 1919, inside front cover.

[114]Trudovoi Soiuz (St. Petersburg), August 1907, pp. 242-245.

[115]Posse himself moved back from this position after the failure of "Trudovoi Soiuz."

[116]Pervyi Vserossiiskii Kooperativnyi S"ezd (16-21 aprelia, 1908 g.), Trudy (Moscow: MSPO, 1908), p. 81.

[117]The very name 'Bystrov' is curiously appropriate, as it is derived from the Russian word 'fast'.

[118]See, for example, Trudovoi Soiuz (St. Petersburg), March 1906, pp. 77-83; April 1906, pp. 103-106.

CHAPTER II

COOPERATIVE OPERATIONS ON THE LOCAL LEVEL

A. Organizational and financial structure

In studying the organizational and financial structure of consumer societies one is struck by the fact that, with small exceptions, the five types of consumer societies were operated in almost the same way. There were, as has been noted above, vast differences between the five types of consumer societies with respect to the size of their membership and the resources available to them. But, as we shall see below, there was little difference in the size of their profits or in how those profits were distributed.

There were three factors which determined this phenomenon. The first is that governmental regulations set down basic aspects of how consumer societies had to be organized. This was done mainly through the Model Code. Secondly, the division of consumer societies into types was by no means exact. As we have seen, the category of city societies contained a wide variety of types. Most factory and railroad societies were dominated by the factory or railroad management, but many of them were sincerely philanthropically oriented and some factory societies were run directly by the membership.

The third and most important reason for the similarity in how Russian consumer societies were operated is that they were locked into the social structure of pre-revolutionary Russia. Although many democratically organized societies would have liked to run their affiars strictly along the lines of ideology, economic and political constraints made that impossible. Important economic constraints on the actions of consumer societies included the limited nature of the purchases of their members and their habit of buying on credit.

The organizational and financial structure of consumer societies was set down in the Model Code. Each society had at least two decision making bodies: the board and the general meeting or the meeting of representatives. Some societies also had an inspection committee.

The board (pravlenie) consisted of at least three members. In general, the size of the board was determined by the size of the society and the number of people able to serve. The only study made of the organizational structure of consumer societies prior to the revolution was carried out by the St. Petersburg Branch in 1909. The study showed that village societies tended to have smaller boards than city and factory ones. This was a reflection of their smaller membership and the smaller number of people qualified to serve. A small majority of societies surveyed paid salaries to the board.

THE BOARDS OF CONSUMER SOCIETIES, 1909[1]

type of society	number of societies	average size of board	per cent in which the board received a salary
factory	44	6.5	65.9
village	60	4.4	60.0
city	37	7.0	35.1
total	141	5.7	55.3

The size and form of the payment to the board varied greatly. Some societies set a cash payment. Others allocated a fixed percentage of the net profit, usually about two per cent but sometimes as high as 20 per cent.

As the second decision making body, each society had either a general meeting, which any member of the society might attend, or a meeting or representatives. It was mainly the large factory and railroad societies that were run by means of meetings of representatives. The MSPO, as well as other organizations and private persons interested in the cooperative movement always recommended the general meeting as more democratic and more suited to developing interest and initiative on the part of the membership. An article in Ob'edinenie in 1911, for example, commented that the factory administration of the Brianskii factory saw to it that the consumer society was run via a meeting of representatives rather than a general meeting. The factory administration wished to enforce the principle that "the fewer the number of people at the meeting--the better."[2]

There were no hard and fast rules about which decisions were to be made by which body, even with respect to the basic question of naming the manager. The St. Petersburg Branch reported the following results in response to their questions on this subject.

NAMING OF THE MANAGER OF A CONSUMER SOCIETY[3]

type of society	number of societies	general meeting	meeting of representatives	board	unknown
factory	45	2	2	39	2
village	64	22	0	28	14
city	37	0	0	31	6
total	146	24	2	98	22

In general, it was the practice that decisions were made by the board and were then submitted to the general meeting or meeting of representatives for its approval. To the extent that the membership became apathetic and lost interest in the affairs of the society, a very frequent occurrance, more and more responsibility fell upon the board. The Model Code required societies to hold a general meeting or meeting of representatives at least twice a year. In some societies this became a mere formality. In other societies with especially active memberships general meetings were held up to twelve times a year.

In addition, some societies had an inspection committee (revizionnyi komitet or nabliudatel'nyi sovet) whose job it was to check the accounts for possible

discrepancies. Its work was rarely time consuming. According to the St. Petersburg Branch's 1909 study:

CONSUMER SOCIETIES WITH INSPECTION COMMITTEES[4]

type of society	number of societies	per cent having an inspection committee
factory	45	17.8
village	64	23.4
city	37	18.9
total	146	20.5

Inspection committees were seldom paid for their work.

Just as the organizational structure of consumer societies was set down in the Model Code, so was the financial structure. The code stipulated that each society was to have three basic categories of capital. First of all, there was share capital. In order to become a member of a society a person had to buy at least one share. The cost of a share was usually five to ten rubles, sometimes as little as 50 kopeks but sometimes a great deal more. The more democratically organized societies had less expensive shares and often set a low limit on the number of shares that any one person could own. The share payment was normally only refundable at the end of the fiscal year. Frequently, a member did not have to pay for his share all at once, but could pay in installments over about six months. Each member, and also anyone who wanted to buy at

the consumer society, also had to pay an entrance fee, which was not refundable and normally was set between 50 kopeks and one ruble.

The second category of capital was reserve capital. Normally, each society made an allocation of five to ten per cent of its net profit every year to reserve capital. Reserve capital was not allowed to circulate. It could not be used for regular business. It was a fund to pay the debts of the society in case it went out of business. A large fund of reserve capital made a society a good credit risk. The third and largest category of capital was called circulating capital. It consisted of share capital, entrance fees and loans, that is, all capital which the society could use to supply itself with products. Under the Model Code, no other categories of capital were permitted.

As we have seen above, there were vast differences between the five types of consumer societies with respect to size of membership, yearly circulation, share capital and reserve capital.[5] On the other hand, all types of consumer societies had in common the fact that they were growing very quickly. Between 1910 and 1912, the membership of the average MSPO consumer society grew from 370 to 416.

AVERAGE MEMBERSHIP OF MSPO CONSUMER SOCIETIES, 1910 TO 1912[6]

type of society	1912	1911	1910
city	285	273	249
factory	620	662	638
railroad	3836	3687	3062
village	137	125	104
worker	431	415	352
average	416	412	370

This was an average growth rate per year of almost five per cent. But in fact the average society grew even more quickly. By not adding into its figures societies that joined the union in the middle of the year, MSPO statisticians show that the average growth rate for a consumer society for the year 1912 alone was over 13 per cent.

GROWTH IN MEMBERSHIP IN MSPO CONSUMER SOCIETIES IN 1912[7]

		number of members		
type of society	number of societies	beginning of the year	end of the year	per cent rise
city	107	28,972	30,865	6.5
factory	62	36,165	40,518	9.3
railroad	10	36,849	41,715	13.2
village	192	21,325	26,472	24.1
worker	23	8,912	10,231	14.8
average	394	132,223	149,801	13.3

This high rate of growth was an important aspect of the organizational structure of consumer societies. Most consumer societies were constantly expanding.

There were a large number of respect in which the differences between different types of consumer societies were quite small. This is particularly true with regard to the size of gross profit and net profit.[8] The yearbook for 1913 gave the following figures on gross profit and net profit for 1911:

GROSS PROFIT, TRADE EXPENSES AND NET PROFIT OF MSPO CONSUMER SOCIETIES AS A PER CENT OF YEARLY CIRCULATION[9]

type of society	gross profit	trade expenses	net profit
city	12.8	9.8	3.0
factory	13.1	9.8	3.3
railroad	14.7	11.7	3.0
worker	11.0	8.8	2.2
village	11.8	8.1	3.7
circulation (in thousands of rubles	gross profit	trade expenses	net profit
up to 10	14.1	10.0	4.1
10 to 20	12.6	9.0	3.6
20 to 50	12.1	8.3	3.8
50 to 100	11.7	8.9	2.9
100 to 300	12.8	9.3	3.5
300 to 500	12.8	10.6	2.2
500 to 1000	12.5	9.7	2.8
over 1000	15.4	11.9	3.5

Railroad and factory societies had substantially greater gross profits than worker and village societies, but trade expenses were also relatively higher. Consequently, the figures for net profit do not show a clear pattern. When consumer societies are broken down by circulation, we see that societies with circulations in the middle range tended

to have lower gross profits and lower trade expenses.

Another basic similarity between all types of consumer societies was the per cent of sales made to members v. nonmembers. Only about half of the sales of consumer societies were made to members.

SALES TO MEMBERS AS A PER CENT OF TOTAL SALES[10]

circulation (in thousands of rubles	city	factory	railroad	worker	village	average
up to 10	51.0	--	--	--	51.2	51.2
10 to 20	56.6	64.2	--	54.1	45.8	50.3
20 to 50	53.5	58.9	--	58.1	47.6	50.9
50 to 100	52.0	54.8	96.3	80.6	46.0	58.1
100 to 300	58.1	31.3	38.5	54.0	--	45.0
300 to 500	--	39.5	92.8	--	--	50.0
500 to 1000	--	97.5	47.5	--	--	66.3
over 1000	--	--	50.3	--	--	50.3
average	54.9	44.9	57.8	59.6	47.9	51.6

The high percentage of purchases made by members in worker societies was a reflection of the fact that they tended to have the least expensive shares. The advantage of buying a share and becoming a member was that normally only members received dividends on purchases. The dividend on purchases was usually two to five per cent but sometimes as high as ten per cent. Some societies also paid out a dividend on the purchases of nonmembers. In 1911, MSPO societies allocated the following percentages of net profit to dividends on purchases of members and nonmembers.

DIVIDENDS ON PURCHASES AS A PER CENT OF NET PROFIT[11]

type of society	to members	to nonmembers
city	42.00	.74
factory	42.42	3.30
railroad	39.36	3.88
village	35.50	.63
worker	46.78	1.06
average	41.22	2.66

Another thing that most consumer societies had in common was a high rate of profitability. According to government figures, consumer societies were extremely profitable enterprises. Vestnik Finansov, Promyshlennosti i Torgovli (Bulletin of Finance, Industry and Trade), a government publication, compared the net profits, as a per cent of share capital, in a variety of types of enterprises between 1902 and 1906.

NET PROFIT AS A PER CENT OF SHARE CAPITAL IN VARIOUS TYPES OF ENTERPRISES, 1902-1906[12]

type	1902	1903	1904	1905	1906
commercial banks	12.6	12.1	11.0	11.3	13.5
trade establishments	10.0	11.1	10.8	11.4	12.7
mining and metal industry	8.2	8.9	9.4	9.1	7.1
sugar industry	17.0	19.6	27.1	19.0	18.5
all cooperatives	20.4	29.6	32.0	32.7	46.3
agricultural	23.3	26.9	25.2	12.4	19.5
handicrafts	14.4	3.6	8.3	11.6	7.9
consumer societies	25.4	31.7	34.1	32.4	52.7

Consumer societies showed large profits because administrative costs were rather low and turnover was very high.

Societies entering the MSPO in 1910 had administrative costs of only:

ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS OF CONSUMER SOCIETIES[13]

type of society	costs (per ruble of circulation)
city	9.4
factory	10.1
railroad	11.5
worker	8.4
village	6.5

Administrative costs were lowest in the smaller societies. The main reason was that administrative work there was normally unpaid. A second reason is that the rate of turnover of goods was extremely high. In MSPO societies, the amount of goods on hand as a per cent of yearly circulation was:

TURNOVER OF GOODS IN CONSUMER SOCIETIES[14]

type of society	value of goods on hand (as a per cent of yearly circulation)
city	21.7
factory	17.7
railroad	24.9
worker	10.3
village	21.0
average	20.2

Thus the turnover rate in railroad societies was about four times a year. The turnover rate for worker societies was almost ten times a year. This high a rate of turnover was

possible because societies, especially the smaller ones, dealt mainly in food products, which always have a higher rate of turnover than industrial goods.

It must not be forgotten that the high rate of profitability of consumer societies was only one side of the picture. A large number of societies collapsed and folded. Prokopovich calculated that only 81.2 per cent of factory and railroad consumer societies founded between 1896 and 1900 were still operating in 1912. The "success rate" drops to 80.6 per cent for village societies and 56.5 per cent for city societies.[15] The survival rate for all types of consumer societies, as calculated from Prokopovich's figures, is shown below.

RATE OF SURVIVAL OF ALL TYPES OF CONSUMER SOCIETIES FOUNDED BETWEEN 1896 AND 1911[16]

	Time period during which societies were founded		
	1896-1900	1901-1905	1906-1911
Third Section study made in 1906:			
number of charters approved	343	631	
number of societies still working on January 1, 1901	320		
per cent of societies still working on January 1, 1901	93.3		

RATE OF SURVIVAL...Continued

	Time period during which societies were founded		
	1896-1900	1901-1905	1906-1911
number of societies still working on January 1, 1906	241	578	
per cent of societies still working on January 1, 1906	70.3	91.6	
Third Section study made in 1912:			
number of charters approved	450	951	5545
number of societies still working on January 1, 1912	327	726	5258
per cent of societies still working on January 1, 1912	71.8	76.3	94.8

Almost all consumer societies survived their first few years of existence. But after that, members lost interest and societies began to fold.

Another area of similarity in the operations of consumer societies was in the distribution of profits. At the end of the fiscal year, the general meeting of the board of every consumer society divided the year's net profit into five parts: allocation for reserve capital, allocation for dividend on share capital, allocation for rebate on members' purchases, salaries of board and revision

committee and allocations for educational and philanthropic goals. In addition, societies with share capital of over 10,000 rubles a year had to pay a tax on their profits. The following figures are available on allocations of profits by MSPO consumer societies in the year 1911.

ALLOCATION OF NET PROFIT BY MSPO CONSUMER SOCIETIES[17]

type of society	reserve capital	dividend on share capital	rebate on members' purchases	salaries of board and revision committee	taxes	cultural work
city	12.86	13.88	42.00	7.48	1.58	1.3
factory	7.31	12.22	42.42	.73	5.84	.7
railroad	5.57	13.56	39.36	.45	11.57	5.1
village	10.17	15.53	35.50	4.46	.10	1.4
worker	9.42	10.13	46.78	5.46	.77	2.2
Circulation (in thousands of rubles)						
up to 10	15.65	14.70	33.36	7.03	.05	---
10 to 20	8.96	17.89	36.30	5.31	.28	---
20 to 50	10.99	15.09	40.27	5.05	---	---
50 to 100	9.41	13.36	49.10	6.71	.25	---
100 to 300	10.02	13.20	44.63	6.17	5.25	---
300 to 500	9.19	16.16	41.54	9.42	7.13	---
500 to 1000	4.40	8.55	55.65	1.23	12.25	---
over 1000	5.00	11.31	31.07	2.94	8.14	---

There are really very few patterns visable here. The larger societies made smaller allocations to reserve capital. This is what one would expect. Their fund of reserve capital was already sufficiently large to provide assurances to potential creditors. The wealthier societies

also paid a high per cent of their net profit in taxes.

One might have expected to find greater differentiation between the different types of consumer societies, particularly with regard to the distribution of net profit. After all, the manner in which members of consumer societies chose to distribute their profits was an expression of their view of the purpose of cooperation. One would have expected the more democratically organized societies, worker and village societies, to show much lower dividends on share capital and much higher rebates on members' purchases than the less democratically organized societies, factory and railroad societies. One would have expected the more democratically organized societies to be more interested in having in effect, lower prices, than in, in effect, rewarding wealth. In fact, worker consumer societies did have the highest rebates on purchases and the lowest dividends on share capital. But the differences were really not all that great. Furthermore, village societies, which were definitely far more democratically organized than factory and railroad societies, had the very lowest rebates on members' purchases and the very highest dividends on share capital.

This incongruity was mainly due to the fact that consumer societies were "locked" into the social fabric of prerevolutionary Russia. The most democratically organized societies were naturally those with the fewest financial resources at their command. Many societies envisioned

entirely abandoning dividends on share capital but they were always brought back to reality by the need to pay interest in order to attract it. Wealthy factory and railroad societies could afford to make rather small allocations to reserve capital, but poorer village and worker societies had to give convincing evidence to potential creditors of their ability to pay back loans, and so had to make rather high allocations to reserve capital. Furthermore, in the political conditions of prerevolutionary Russian, expenditures on educational and philanthropic goals were a poor indication of the political philosophy of the members of a society, since government restrictions made expenditure on any activity with direct political coloration almost impossible.

In effect, it was impossible for consumer societies to organize their affairs strictly along the lines of ideology. When the radical worker consumer society "Trudovoi Soiuz" began to flounder in 1908, it was largely because of ideology. A report by the society's board at a meeting in March of that year made the following complaint:

> Before undertaking any new project we spent a long time discussing and arguing, we became irritated, but we never calculated in a business like way, never considered whether or not our undertaking would be profitable. We neglected to recognize that our business differed little from a normal, capitalist enterprise.[18]

Economic constraints caused consumer societies which refused to be practical to collapse and fold.

The major economic constraint faced by all consumer societies was the poverty of their members. The diet of peasants and workers was limited in variety and quantity. Village societies had the additional problem that their members purchased a rather small percentage of what they consumed. Most of what they ate they produced themselves. A study made of peasants' budgets in Voronezh guberniia before 1917 showed that the average peasant purchased only 21.6 per cent of what he used.

AVERAGE EXPENDITURE PER PERSON (IN RUBLES)[19]

number of cattle	value of total consumption	amount purchased	per cent purchased
0	16.93	9.31	55.0
1	15.10	4.05	26.8
2	19.45	4.32	22.2
3	21.81	3.40	15.6
4	23.20	3.51	15.1
5 and more	23.95	4.11	17.2
average	20.04	4.32	21.6

The poorest peasants purchased the largest percentage of what they consumed.

The average purchase per member in consumer societies reflected this. In 1910, 1911, and 1912, MSPO societies had the following purchase per member:

AVERAGE PURCHASES PER MEMBER OF MSPO SOCIETIES, IN RUBLES[20]

type of society	1912	1911	1910
city	221	228	224
factory	397	347	303
railroad	230	196	188
worker	205	162	120
circulation (in thousands of rubles)			
up to 10	74	78	87
10 to 20	122	128	117
20 to 50	186	176	174
50 to 100	252	235	217
100 to 300	284	320	292
300 to 500	411	317	284
500 to 1000	307	323	203
over 1000	287	226	228
average	258	245	228

The most important reason why societies with a higher circulation had a far larger average purchase per member was that they were able to supply their members with a greater range of products, not only bread but also meat and dairy products, clothing and footwear. In interpreting the above figures, it is important to keep in mind that only about half of all purchases were made by members, and thus the average purchase per person was smaller. It should also be kept in mind that the corresponding figures for non-MSPO societies, if they were available, would be much lower.

The poverty of the Russian peasant and worker meant that he was in the habit of making most of his purchases on credit. In 1912, members of MSPO societies made only

41 per cent of their purchases for cash.

PER CENT OF SALES MADE FOR CASH IN MSPO CONSUMER SOCIETIES[21]

circulation (in thousands of rubles)	city	factory	railroad	worker	village	average
up to 10	98.7	---	---	---	90.5	91.2
10 to 20	80.7	78.8	---	96.3	89.0	87.6
20 to 50	75.9	34.2	11.3	67.0	84.6	77.1
50 to 100	79.1	47.2	22.1	48.0	72.5	63.1
100 to 300	68.0	21.3	48.1	51.1	---	40.0
300 to 500	64.1	16.4	36.0	---	---	30.3
500 to 1000	---	22.3	79.3	---	---	34.1
over 1000	---	11.1	30.5	---	---	23.6
average	73.2	19.5	34.3	54.6	84.0	41.0

As these figures very clearly illustrate, the higher the circulation of the society the smaller the percentage of its purchases made for cash. It was only the very poorest societies which, involuntarily, practiced the Rochdale principle that all sales were to be made for cash. The poorest societies had to trade almost completely for cash in order to be able to pay their bills, but as societies collected more financial resources they could begin to respond to the need of their members for credit. The only types of societies that did not follow this pattern were factory and railroad societies. There credit was guaranteed by the factory or railroad administration. This was a means of keeping both the consumer society and the workers under their control.

The tragedy of this reliance on credit was that it made it almost impossible for the Russian peasant and worker to break out of the status quo. The need for credit resulted in a tremendous drain on the resources of a society. As the indebtedness of members to the society went up, so did the indebtedness of the society to its creditors.

INDEBTEDNESS OF MEMBERS TO THE SOCIETY AND OF SOCIETIES TO CREDITORS[22]

	as per cent of yearly circulation		as per cent of share capital	
type of society	indebtedness of members to society	indebtedness of society to creditors	indebtedness of members to society	indebtedness of society to creditors
worker	4.7	10.5	66.6	214.3
village	5.0	11.4	30.3	84.8
city	6.4	12.6	55.7	127.6
factory	7.6	18.7	61.1	151.0
railroad	9.8	19.1	112.2	216.8
average	7.8	16.5	69.3	156.9

Looking at figures like these, one can hardly see how consumer societies were able to keep their heads above water. One should remember, however, that in Russia, most private firms did their trading largely on credit as well. The study of Voronezh peasants referred to above[23] estimated that 13.3 per cent of the money payments of the average peasant went towards the payment of debts. Families with one or two head of cattle paid a higher per cent.

CASH EXPENSES OF PEASANT FAMILIES[24]

number of cattle	total expenses (in rubles)	per cent used for payment of debts
0	115.4	12.2
1	112.7	15.1
2	215.1	15.4
3	293.7	13.4
4	354.7	12.6
5 and over	488.7	11.8
average	240.8	13.3

Russian consumer societies were locked into the socio-economic fabric of prerevolutionary Russia. Reliance on credit was one of the bonds that held them. It made it impossible for consumer societies and their members to accumulate their resources. When societies sold to their members on credit, they were in turn forced to buy from their suppliers on credit. The price of goods bought on credit was higher than the price of goods paid for in cash.[25]

The societies most badly hurt by traditional reliance of the Russian worker and peasant on credit were the independent worker societies. These societies were consciously trying to improve the lives of their members. They tried to use accumulated profits for educational work or for redistribution. Sales on credit severely limited those possibilities.

In the independent societies, loans were usually limited to a small fraction of the members' share payment,

normally one half or two thirds. In dependent factory and railroad societies, on the other hand, debts of members were guaranteed by the administration and each worker or employee was allowed to buy goods on credit up to a certain fraction of his monthly salary, usually two thirds to three fourths. This amounted to a much more substantial sum. In the short run, it provided the members of dependent consumer societies with a considerable financial cushion. But in the long run, it was actually harmful to the interests of the workers. The offer of a factory to guarantee the purchases of its workers and employees was always a difficult one for a consumer society to refuse. But such an offer never came without strings attached. The factories were frequently behind in their payments and used payment as a means of influencing the decisions of the society. As has been mentioned above, workers were made less likely to go on strike, knowing that credit would then in all likelihood be cut off. Thus the whole system of credit served to maintain the status quo.

There is evidence that when financial circumstances permitted the members of worker and village societies tried to handle their financial affairs for more democratic purposes. In the average society, dividends on share capital rose as circulation rose. But worker, village, and railroad societies did not follow that pattern.

DIVIDENDS ON SHARE CAPITAL AS A PER CENT OF SHARE CAPITAL[26]

circulation (in thousands of rubles)	city	factory	railroad	worker	village	average
up to 10	.8	---	---	---	3.1	2.8
10 to 20	2.5	2.7	---	4.6	4.8	4.4
20 to 50	4.2	4.8	---	3.3	5.7	5.0
50 to 100	3.4	5.1	4.6	4.1	3.3	4.2
100 to 300	3.4	4.1	5.0	3.9	---	4.0
300 to 500	5.0	4.2	4.5	---	---	4.5
500 to 1000	---	4.9	2.2	---	---	4.6
over 1000	---	8.2	3.2	---	---	4.6
average	3.7	5.4	3.3	3.9	4.9	4.4

In summary, this section has dealt with some of the constraints on the freedom of action of consumer societies in their organizational and financial affairs. Two of these constraints have been stressed. The first was the Model Code, which set down basic aspects of how consumer societies had to be organized. The second was the habit of Russian workers and peasants of buying on credit. These constraints on the freedom of action of consumer societies had a practical importance. They limited the ability of the consumer cooperative movement to reform Russian society.

B. Retail trade

A common practice in cooperative propaganda was the publication of lists of rules. One of these, which was made into a four-color poster by the MSPO and was

displayed on the wall of almost every consumer society, union and nonunion alike, was titled: "Ten Rules for the Members of a Consumer Society."[27]

1. Never buy something at a private shop which you could buy at your consumer society.
2. Always pay in cash.
3. Don't think only about high dividends and always remember that the main goal of a consumer society is to obtain goods for you of completely high quality for the appropriate price.
4. Try to increase the property of your society as if it were your own.
5. Never act in opposition to the interests of your society.
6. Attend all meetings. Enlighten yourself and your acquaintances on the great significance of the cooperative movement for the general welfare.
7. Don't permit the cooperative principles set forth in the charter to be replaced and distorted by capitalist principles.
8. Try to expand your cooperative. It should not be limited to the sale of edible products but should take upon itself all the needs of its members.
9. See that your society is a good member of the union of consumer societies.
10. Get your friends and acquaintances to join cooperatives. They should unite their buying power.

These rules would scarcely have been circulated so widely if it had been true that they were in every instance followed. In fact, these rules were more or less a catalog of what was normally not the case. This section concentrates on the defects of the retail trade practices of

consumer societies. Members of consumer societies were not loyal shoppers, and they frequently made purchases in private shops when prices were temporarily lower there or merely for the sake of convenience. As we have seen above, virtually all consumer societies sold on credit, and this practice was very much abused. All too often, members of consumer societies thought in terms of their own short term interest, rather than in terms of the long term interests of their society.

It was mainly the poverty of the Russian working classes that made them unreliable members of consumer societies. Whenever prices were lower in private shops than in consumer societies, all but the most devoted cooperators went back to them. This was particularly disastrous if there was a price war. Many Russian societies did not follow the Rochdale principle that prices in the shop of the consumer society should be the same as the market price, that is, the price then prevailing in private shops. According to the 1910 Third Section study of 46 factory consumer societies:

> 22 sold at the market price
> 5 sold below the market price
> 8 sold at a combination of at or below the market price
> 11 did not supply information on this subject[28]

The proportion of village and worker consumer societies selling below market prices was surely higher.

When a society did sell goods below the market price, and sometimes even when it did not, a private merchant would frequently start a price war, lowering his prices still further, counting on his greater financial reserves to see him through. The merchant knew that once the consumer society was out of business, he could raise his prices again. The lack of loyalty of the Russian consumer cooperator meant that the shopkeeper was usually successful. Vladimir Makhnovets-Akimov, who worked for a time in various consumer societies, and wrote an article about his experiences, commented.

> Russian consumers have not developed enough consciousness to do what Belgian consumers do, buying the bread of their shop even at a price higher than a private merchant is charging.[29]

It would have been more accurate to say that the problem was not one of lack of consciousness but of lack of money. The lowest monetary denomination under Nicholas II was a quarter kopek. For the Russian consumer, every quarter kopek counted.

It must be pointed out that in most places where consumer societies opened up, they were the first stores to have set prices. Until that time, prices were set by means of bargaining. The price that a consumer paid was a function of how much he bought, how much the shopkeeper thought he could afford and whether or not he paid cash. Complete information does not exist as to the amount extra people paid for goods when they bought them on credit. A

partial study of this question was made in Baky in 1906. It showed the following variation in prices:

PRICES OF GOODS BOUGHT ON CREDIT OR FOR CASH IN KOPEKS[30]

item	cash price	credit price
meat (pound)	12	15
sugar (pound)	17	19-20
rice (pound)	8	10-12
tobacco (package)	7	8-9
matches (box)	1	2

The practice of buying on credit met the short term interests of consumers, but it did not meet the long term interests of either the consumer or the consumer society. Furthermore, there was a common abuse of the practice of selling on credit usually called peretopka, literally, "re-melting." A member who needed money, sometimes in the case of an illness or sudden expense but more frequently for the sake of going out on a spree, would buy a load of goods on credit and then sell them to a local merchant. There were other words for the same phenomenon, including: peregonka, literally "distillation"; perekur, literally "smoke break"; and zavarka, literally "brewing" as with tea. The goods were resold at a price 15 to 20 per cent less than their market value. According to several articles, merchants frequently stood outside the very doors of the consumer society for the purpose of buying goods on this basis. The goods most commonly exchanged were

ones that could be easily substituted, as flour and sugar. This system apparently existed in every society that sold on credit.[31]

Cooperative activists continually complained that members acted toward their societies in a way based entirely on immediate self-interest. Makhnovets-Akimov commented, "most buyers seek only direct, immediate savings from purchases in our shop, and not finding them, behave angrily and suspiciously. Hardly anyone going into the shop says 'hello.'" Makhnovets-Akimov related several examples of rude customers, all of whom were women. One group of women was standing around complaining that the only meat available was of poor quality, but when he asked them to tell him exactly what was bad about it, they refused to explain themselves. Another woman asked for sugar, but then, when she was told that the price was 15 kopeks a kilo, refused to take it, saying that everywhere else in town it was 14.5 kopeks a kilo. Makhnovets-Akimov later checked and found that the price of sugar was indeed 15 kopeks everywhere. He commented that the woman was, in addition, very rude.[32]

Incidents like these seem to have inspired a very homey little statement entitled, "My Very Favorite Shop," published repeatedly in Ob'edinenie and several times on the back covers of cooperative booklets. It gave five reasons why the consumer society was the best place to shop.

"My Very Favorite Shop"[33]

1. where the interests of the buyer and the seller are not opposed to one another
2. where I can save money that would otherwise go to the shopkeeper
3. where greater savings are made for me than I could make for myself
4. "I like to go into a shop which teaches me to think about others."
5. where cooperative principles are practiced

"The consumer society is the beginning of the road, leading the worker to prosperity.
House-keeper! Make all of your purchases only in the shop of the consumer society."

"My Very Favorite Shop" emphasized both social and economic reasons for shopping in consumer societies. Point three sought to convince consumers that they could save more money by paying the set price in the consumer society than by clever bargaining in private shops.

It is not surprising that there were several aspects of the retail trade practices of consumer societies that were not unlike the retail trade practices of private shops. Like private shops, consumer societies worked long hours. Normally, they had a ten to twelve hour day, without any break for lunch or tea.[34]

Also like private shops, almost all consumer societies sold wine, although many refused to sell vodka. In fact, much of the wine and vodka was supplied by the MSPO. The amount of wine and vodka sold by the MSPO increased

dramatically from 1908 to 1912, both absolutely and as a per cent of total sales.

MSPO SALES OF WINE AND VODKA[35]

year	sales of wine and vodka (in rubles)	total sales (in rubles)	sales of wine and vodka as a per cent of all sales
1908	14,096	570,975	2.4
1910	74,959	1,715,985	4.4
1912	148,076	2,940,185	5.0

This was evidently mainly wine. According to MSPO figures, as of 1911, only some 16 per cent of MSPO societies, 70 of 448 included in the yearly survey, sold vodka.

MSPO SOCIETIES SELLING VODKA[36]

city	33%
factory	10
railroad	20
worker	0
village	10
average	15.6

There was much opposition within the cooperative movement to the idea of selling alcohol. Consumer societies trying to raise the standard of living of the Russian people naturally were concerned with the problem of alcoholism. This is why many consumer societies set up tea houses, as an alternative to the local pub. The cooperative press commented with great disapproval upon the establishment of a cooperative wine factory[37] and frequently noted its approval when societies abolished the sale of alcohol.

Resolutions against the sale of alcohol were passed at cooperative congresses. But most consumer societies continued to sell wine, if not vodka. For the factory, railroad and city societies which had no interest in raising the standard of living of their members, this is not surprising. But other societies reasoned, probably correctly, that if they did not sell alcohol then their members would simply buy it from private merchants. Consequently, it was better to sell it themselves, since they would charge a fair price, perhaps limiting the amount that could be bought at any one time.

In concluding this section, it is necessary to say a few words about conflicts between consumer societies and local merchants, because this did constitute one aspect of the day to day affairs of consumer societies. The opening of consumer societies was clearly detrimental to the interests of local shopkeepers. In villages where there was only one merchants, he had more or less a free hand to charge whatever prices he wished. One way for him to try to drive the consumer society out of business was by starting a price war, as mentioned above. Another tactic was to spread the rumour that the society was about to go out of business so that members would rush to cash in their shares. Sometimes private merchants gave out free beer. Since many local merchants were also local landowners, they could use their influence to see that no one

rented land to members of the consumer society. In the political atmosphere after 1905, it was very easy to convince the police that a consumer society should be closed due to revolutionary activities. But normally, however, if the society did not try to sell below the market price, restricting the savings of its members to dividends and rebates distributed at the end of the year, the two could live side by side more or less indefinitely.

C. Consumer societies during the war: special problems of growth and management

A correspondence article published in Ob'edinenie in January, 1917, commented on the Russian peasants' traditional submission to misfortune:

> The average person has been accustomed since childhood to being skinned alive. He bears everything without protesting, and the greatest shove is necessary in order to wake him from his long somnolency... And only when prices have risen to unbelievable heights does he begin to think about how to deal with his poverty.[38]

Throughout the length and breath of the Russian Empire, the First World War and the accompanying goods crisis constituted such a shove. The fall in production, the demands of the army and the breakdown of the system of transport caused prices to become enormously inflated. The inertia of the working classes was overcome. The arguments of the active enemies of the consumer cooperative movement, of private merchants and their friends, lost their force. People joined consumer societies in droves.

As a result of the goods crisis, the system of private trade broke down. Consumer societies expanded to take its place. But in the process of expansion, the consumer cooperative movement changed in fundamental ways. There was a breakdown in orderly management. Many new consumer societies were limited in their activities. Some sold only one or two products that were badly in demand. Fewer societies made allocations for cultural work. Shortages of capital and of goods led to confusion and distrust. The war and goods crisis had the same impact on the tsarist administration as on trade. The government too was breaking down. The Provisional Government did not succeed in picking up its tasks. In the course of 1917, the people themselves, through their newly formed soviets and other committees, tried to do so. The goods crisis was, in effect, the precondition for a mass based revolution.

In studying the special problems of growth and management during the war, the period between August, 1914, and March, 1919, should be treated as a whole. With the outbreak of the war, the system of private trade began to break down. This resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of consumer societies, a dramatic increase in the number of members and, consequently, in important changes in the way societies were run. But the events of February, 1917, and October, 1917, in no way changed the essential

nature of the process that had begun in 1914. All they did was to speed it up. Two weeks after the February revolution, Soiuz Potrebitelei commented:

> One of the most pressing questions of Moscow life already before the revolution was the production crisis. As far as we can see, the change in power has brought nothing new to that area of city life. More than that, the situation seems to have gotten worse: the lines have become longer in front of the bakeries. Often, despite the fact that one has stood for several hours in line, it is necessary to return home without bread.[39]

This was not at all what liberal and socialist cooperators had been expecting as the result of the change in power. Ever since mid-1915, they had been arguing that all that was necessary to solve the production crisis was to turn it over to the hands of the voluntary organizations. In the first few months after the February revolution, there was still confidence that the new authorities, with the cooperation of the people, would soon gain control of the situation. But they never did. After the October revolution, Ob'edinenie editorialized:

> That which we have awaited with horror but all the same hoped to avoid has become an unavoidable fact. Hunger has come...The final blow to the economy was brought by the October coup.[40]

But it is easy to overestimate the initial impact of the Bolshevik revolution on consumer cooperatives. The Bolsheviks really only began to interfere in the management of consumer societies as of March, 1919. A detailed analysis of Bolshevik power and the cooperative movement cannot be made at this time. But it is evident that the

Bolsheviks were reluctantly convinced at the beginning of 1918 not to attempt to interfere, for the present, in the operation of consumer cooperatives. The government seems to have reasoned that although the attitude of the co-operative movement toward Bolshevik power was by no means ideal, it was at least acceptable. Furthermore, the co-operative system of food distribution was at least working and to interfere with this would be to risk famine on a wide scale. By its law of March, 1918, the Bolshevik government did little more than to announce its presence to the cooperative movement. Only with the law of March, 1919, were fundamental changes introduced.

* * *

The arrival of the goods crisis was something of a surprise. The scarcity and high prices that accompanied the war had not been expected. When the war broke out, it is interesting to note, it was the universal opinion of "experts" that Russia's greatest problems would result from a surplus of goods. The economists of 1914 were wondering what might be done about the vast quantities of Russian grain which had formerly been sold abroad but would now, they thought, flood the domestic market and drive down prices.[41]

But grain did not flood the domestic market. The diet of the drafted peasant was better than what he had gotten at home. It included such products as meat,

butter and sugar. At the same time, the draft seriously disturbed production. Florinsky's estimate of the male population of working age drafted is:

1914	15%
1915	25%
1916	36%
1917	37%

The shortage of foodstuffs was also aggravated by the rapid growth in the urban population. Petrograd grew from 2.1 million in 1914 to 2.465 million in 1917. Moscow grew from 1.6 million in 1912 to over two million in 1917.[42]

The price of food would have gone up in any case because of its increasing scarcity. But it was driven up at an astronomical rate because of the methods used by the government to finance the war. War expenses were not met to any significant degree by increasing taxation. Revenue was even lost as the result of the prohibition of the sale of liquor. Instead, expenses were met by contracting loans and by using the printing press. Both of these methods were inflationary. The amount of paper rubles in circulation at the outbreak of the war was 1,633 million. This increased, according to Florinsky's figures, at the following rate:

PAPER RUBLES IN CIRCULATION, JULY 1914 TO OCTOBER 1917[43]

July 1914	1,633,000
January 1915	2,946,000
January 1916	5,617,000
January 1917	9,097,000
March 1, 1917	9,949,000
October 1917	18,917,000

Nominal wages rose but real wages declined. According to the census data of 1918, nominal and real wages from 1913 to 1917 were:

NOMINAL AND REAL AVERAGE MONTHLY EARNINGS OF EMPLOYEES IN ALL INDUSTRIES, 1913 TO 1917[44]

year	nominal	real
1913	85.5	85.5
1914	85.5	84.6
1915	103.0	79.2
1916	142.0	69.8
1917	255.6	38.0

Based on the expectations of the "experts", when the war broke out, Russian cooperators were asking themselves whether it would not be better to postpone the opening of new societies until the end of the war. One commentator on this subject, the MSPO official A. Lavurkhin, said that special difficulties would be caused by the contraction of consumer demand, on the one hand, and by the absence of raw materials and of goods produced only abroad, by difficulties in transport, the drafting of experienced craftsmen and shortage of money credit on the other. Consequently, he recommended that societies only be opened in places where their financial solvency could be assurred.[45] But by the summer of 1915, the mistaken nature of this prediction was becoming clear. A correspondence article in Ob'edinenie in June noted that:

> They say that many consumer societies have suffered losses in connection with the war. Perhaps there were special reasons for that, but we have observed the opposite situation: the greater number of societies not only have not suffered losses, but have even been able to progress and develop.[46]

The main reason why consumer societies profited was that their membership was swelled by people seeking to avoid inflation. One correspondent to Obshchee Delo commented:

> Our consumer society was founded in the summer of 1915, that is, at the time when our village bosses understood that the World War, which is so ruinous for the people and government, is a real blessing for scoundrels of all classes...The merchants decided that, since a war doesn't take place every year, you have to take advantage of it while it lasts...[47]

Another widespread mistaken belief shared by some of the most eminent economists and scientific societies at the outbreak of the war was expressed by the slogan "business as usual." According to Florinsky, this slogan "was accepted as the concise expression of both patriotic duty and the last word in economic theory." The public at large should not concern itself about the war. Industry must perform its normal functions. It was thought that the effects of the war would be limited to the area immediately adjoining the front. It was only after the beginning of 1915 that military defeats caused the creed of "business as usual" to be rejected.[48]

The policy of "business as usual" was accepted by the MSPO as well. At the end of 1914, Ob'edinenie commented optimistically on the union's operations during the war.

The most difficult time for the MSPO, according to the article, had been during the first few weeks of the war. Uncertainty on the part of suppliers made it impossible to get credit and the fact that railroad transport was entirely occupied with troop mobilization meant that shipments to the provinces were almost completely stopped. Societies as far as 80 to 100 versts from Moscow (about 55 to 65 miles) hauled supplies in carts. The MSPO had placed an order for goods worth over 100,000 rubles with the English Society of Wholesale Purchases, the English equivalent of the MSPO, but was informed that the order could not be filled since the government had forbidden the export of food products. Furthermore, about 35 employees of the MSPO's central office were drafted. But Ob'edinenie was confident about the future. It announced that this

> threatening time had been lived through without difficulties. After a short time, one got used to the war, like one gets used to everything.[49]

It was happily noted that with the aid of the guberniia zemstvo the union had recieved the so-called right of "out-of-turn shipment" (vneocherednaia otpravka), the right to ship goods to Moscow without waiting in line. This was a right which in the course of the war virtually every public or private organization received, making it practically useless.

The rate of inflation within the consumer cooperative movement itself is indicated by MSPO figures on the retail

prices in union societies. The rise in price on most items between December 1, 1915, and December 1, 1916, was over 50 per cent.

RETAIL PRICES IN MSPO CONSUMER SOCIETIES[50]

item	price (in kopeks)		per cent rise
	12/1/15	12/1/16	
course wheat flour, 1st quality, 1 pood	385	576	50
course wheat flour, 2nd quality, 1 pood	351	514	46
rye bread, 1 pood	176	273	55
wheat bread (course flour), 1 pood	378	597	58
wheat bread (fine flour), 1 pood	330	533	62
beef, 1st quality, 1 pound	19	44	131
beef, 2nd quality, 1 pound	17	40	135
vegetable oil, 1 pound	67	193	188
butter, 1 pound	85	222	161
milk, 21 pints	151	317	110
eggs, 10	44	75	70
sugar, granulated, 1 pound	19	23	21
sugar, refined, 1 pound	23.4	28	21
salt, 1 pood	113	132	17
kerosine, 1 pound	7.4	12	62
soap, 1 pound	27	62	130

It should be kept in mind that these were the prices of goods when they were available.

Inflation in the economy as a whole seems to have been even greater. The following table gives prices in 1917 as a percentage of those in 1913 and 1916. Inflation averaged over 100 per cent a year.

PRICES IN 1917 AS A PERCENTAGE OF 1913 AND 1916[51]

	1913	1916
food products	562	240
granulated sugar	202	129
refined sugar	378	242
candy	916	327
sausage	810	447
cotton cloth	508	220
woolen cloth	484	221
clothing and shoes	496	178
adults leather shoes	404	192
children's low quality shoes	810	224
average for all categories	434	196

Wages rose, but they did not keep up with prices. Balabanov made a study of changes in how Moscow workers dispensed their incomes. The figures indicate that the earnings of textile workers were no longer large enough to cover their expenses. They were forced to spend their savings or to go into debt. Of all workers, 12 per cent were meeting their additional expenses by spending their savings, 13 per cent were pawning some of their possessions and 18 per cent were going into debt.

EXPENDITURES AS A PER CENT OF THE TOTAL BUDGETS OF MOSCOW WORKERS[52]

	metal workers		textile workers	
item	before the war	1915	before the war	1915
rent	19.5	20.0	9.6	13.5
food	51.0	54.0	57.2	92.0
liquor	4.6	.5	4.6	.5
newspapers	1.4	1.2	.6	1.7
culture	2.0	1.4	1.1	1.1
wood	3.7	3.3	5.4	6.2
miscellaneous	.5	1.3	.5	.9
total	72.7	81.7	79.0	117.9

An interesting difference between textile workers and metal workers is that textile workers began spending a larger percentage of their incomes on newspapers, while metal workers spent slightly less.

With the goods crisis came lines. The lines in the cities were swelled by people from the surrounding villages, where many products, including bread, were sometimes totally unavailable. There is some evidence that at first consumer societies had fewer and shorter lines than did the private shops. According to an article published at the end of 1915, entitled "Lines", in order to get a few pounds of sugar at a private shop in Moscow, it was necessary to stand for several hours outside the doors of the store. According to the article, the situation was entirely different in consumer societies.[53] But as the goods crisis continued, lines became just as common in

consumer societies. Under these conditions, some societies refused to sell to nonmembers.[54] Cooperators wrote about the necessity of finding a means of bringing an end to lines. An article published in October, 1917, in Trud called for dealing with this problem by increasing the number of branches. This was especially important, the article continued, "in that winter is approaching and we must not leave women and children to stand in the rain and snow."[55]

The goods crisis was more severe in rural areas than in the cities. Often, the fair distribution of goods within a consumer society serving several villages was a problem. One such society in a town in Irkutsk guberniia passed a resolution that before a new shipment of goods was put on sale, members living in the surrounding villages had to be informed so that they would have a chance to get to the society before the order was sold out.[56]

One correspondent to Ob'edinenie described his trip through a series of villages in central Russia with a large home-weaving industry, a grain purchasing rural area. In one village he found that rumours of the possible arrival of a shipment of flour were virtually the only subject of conversation. In another village the peasants complained that they had ordered three wagon loads of flour already one and a half months earlier but to date had not received any. The supplier had told them only that there were no

wagons available for transport. Recently they had been able to buy some flour from "a Jew" but now he had none either. The article concluded that whereas in the city there was inflation in the villages there was no bread whatsoever.[57]

As has been mentioned above, the goods crisis led to tremendous growth in the numbers of consumer societies. Under conditions of acute shortage of goods, societies were sometimes set up virtually overnight. One correspondent to Ob'edinenie described an incident that occurred outside the consumer society in a small town in Klin uezd, Moscow guberniia, on April 20, 1917. A line had begun to form already early in the morning, mainly of women from the surrounding villages waiting to buy rationed flour. When the employees of the society closed the shop at noon for lunch, the frustration of the women in line mounted considerably. "They are parasites!" the women outside shouted. "They work for four hours and already they are tired! They must have lunch! ...But we got up at the break of dawn and will have to stand here while they are idle for one and a half hours to eat." One woman in the line called for opening their own women's cooperative. They would get goods from a union and would not have to spend all day standing in line. The idea was warmly supported by everyone on the street, presumably without leaving their places. One woman was given the responsibility of collecting share

capital. The founding meeting was held that evening. One hundred seventy rubles had been collected and there were 70 members, including ten men. A board was chosen of two women and one man. The man was included, according to one woman at the meeting, to "drag the sacks." The shop opened the next day.[58]

The type of society that experienced the fastest rate of growth from 1912 to 1917 was the city society followed by the independent worker society.

AVERAGE MEMBERSHIP PER SOCIETY[59]

type of society	1912	1916	1917	per cent growth 1912-1917
city	285	1429	1998	601
factory	626	816	1174	87
railroad	3836	4522	8354	118
village	137	294	443	223
worker	430	1762	2611	507

Most of the new members were city dwellers, presumably mainly factory workers. But they showed a marked preference for other than factory-dominated consumer societies. Ob'edinenie concluded that "where conditions were favorable "workers were forming their own societies, but where they were not favorable, workers were participating in the organization of all-class city societies."[60]

Some individual societies showed striking rates of growth in themselves. A case in point is the society "Kooperatsiia" (cooperation) in Moscow. It was an

independent worker society, and one with much SR and SD participation. It opened in 1916 with two shops but by December, 1917, had 23 shops. Its membership grew from 18,632 on February 1, 1916, to 61,897 on January 1, 1917, and to 91,721 on January 1, 1918.[61]

During the First World War, the Russian army was not without its consumer societies. They were quite different from those that had existed during the war with Japan, which had dealt largely in luxury goods for officers.[62] Military consumer societies during the World War provided goods for the common soldier. According to Obshchee Delo, most of these societies were founded after the February Revolution. Most of the organizers had experience working with consumer cooperatives before the war. An important role in military societies was played by the Union of Zemstvos, which served as a center for purchasing. The societies quickly fell apart after the October Revolution, as soldiers deserted from the front and the Union of Zemstvos was disbanded.[63] The military societies showed interest in developing habits of self-help in the soldiers and they were politically active. There was even a conference of representatives of military consumer societies. It took place at the end of November, 1917, and was attended by 63 delegates of military consumer societies and 20 representatives of military divisions. The conference was evidently dominated by non-Bolshevik socialists. It passed

a resolution calling for unity, for the establishment of a democratic peace and for the convening of the Constituant Assembly.[64]

It was entirely to be expected that the goods crisis would have a large impact on consumer cooperatives. The shortage of food quickly became an explosive political issue. Foods riots, even if they had no political goals, always had political ramifications. Ob'edinenie reported on one food riot which took place as early as August, 1915. It occurred in Kolpino, a worker suburb of Petrograd and began with a rise in the price of herring. According to Ob'edinenie, one woman "began to yell" and a crowd of women gathered. The crowd began breaking windows and pillaging shops. In the evening, when the men came back from work, they joined in.[65]

The goods crisis was studied by the Okhrana as well as by the local police. A report written by an official in the Moscow Okhrana at the end of 1916 stated:

> in many places it is appropriate to speak not just of food shortage, but of downright hunger...Production difficulties and incredibly high inflation are producing tension, to such an extent that such terms as: sharp irritation, extreme resentment, indignation etc., are understatements of actual feelings...In comparison with the mood of the present moment, the mood of 1905-1906 was undoubtedly more favorable towards the government. If in the near future we do not succeed in conquering (the production crisis) and do not succeed if not in lowering prices then at least in preventing further inflation, then no patriotic feeling will hold.[66]

The commissioner of police in Astrakhan wrote of lines of six hours and more for such goods as sugar and flour. He pointed out that this was especially difficult for working people with little time.[67] A report of the commissioner of police in the Don Oblast, written in October, 1916, described strikes at some commercial establishments and factories and food riots in rural areas. It noted that people were turning to consumer societies to alleviate the shortages:

> The struggle against inflation often takes the form of the establishment of cooperatives, which unite a huge part of the population into organized groups.[68]

In a report sent to the Ministry of Interior in December, 1915, the Petrograd Department of Police stated its surprise that uneducated workers were attending lectures on the subject of inflation.

> The question of inflation is still extremely sensitive as far as the working classes are concerned, because the measures taken by the cooperative movement and by the city dumas have still not produced the expected benefits. Lectures on this topic attract more and more listeners, especially if the speaker is a progressive social activist.[69]

The report added that the workers did not respond favorably to talks by pro-government speakers. A movement like that organized by Zubatov in 1904 had no appeal. Kerensky and Chkheidze, on the other hand, were particularly popular speakers. Tickets for a program at which they were to lecture, on November 15, 1916, were sold out days in advance. The building of the city duma, in which the

program was held, was filled to overflowing, partly with students, but mainly, according to the police report, with workers, despite the fact that only economic questions were discussed.

The food shortage was also a military problem. Soldiers were concerned about the food situation in the cities. Government payments to the families of drafted soldiers were inadequate, especially for those living in the cities.[70] Soldiers at the front were aware of the goods crisis from letters and from comrades returning to the front from furloughs. Rumours circulated that the situation was even more serious than it really was. According to a police report, there were rumours of famine in Petrograd, of bread selling for a ruble a loaf and a cemetary opened for those who had died of starvation. Letters to hospital funds were

> full of invectives against the authors of the rise in the cost of living, and speak of a "day of reckoning" when the war is over, or even before.[71]

Thus the economic problem of the shortage of food and other products created a political problem of the first order.

* * *

The remainder of this section consists of a description of the changes that took place, as a result of the goods crisis, in how consumer societies were run. The situation was characterized by a breakdown in orderly management.

The overall economic effect of the goods crisis on the consumer cooperative movement is illustrated by the following figures. Circulation increased by leaps and bounds, but the increase in share capital was extremely moderate while the average share capital per member, in a time of rampant inflation, actually decreased. The figures refer to the beginning of each year.

TOTAL CIRCULATION,
CIRCULATION PER SOCIETY AND PER MEMBER[72]

year	total circulation (in millions of rubles)	average circulation per society	average circulation per member
1914	250	24,000	178
1915	290	25,400	176
1916	580	40,000	222
1917	1,762	75,000	260
1918	5,845	167,000	550
1919	20,000	426,000	1177

TOTAL SHARE CAPITAL, SHARE CAPITAL PER SOCIETY AND PER MEMBER

year	total share capital (in millions of rubles)	average share capital per society	average share capital per member
1914	28.0	2,780	20.0
1915	32.175	2,800	19.5
1916	46.980	3,240	18.0
1917	109.0	4,640	16.0
1918	162.0	4,620	14.0

The situation was made worse by the fact that it was no longer possible to get credit. This resolved, in practice, one of the time consuming debates of consumer cooperators: it was no longer necessary to argue about whether or not societies should buy goods on credit. Firms

would no longer sell on credit, except in special cases with substantial guarantees. On the contrary, suppliers demanded payment in advance on most orders. Wholesalers were in a position to take advantage of retailers and frequently did so. It was not uncommon for a firm to tell a society that it was not possible to fill an order that had been made several months earlier, due to the absence of railroad cars for shipment. The firm would return the society's payment, of course, but without paying any interest on it. The firm would then sell the goods to a new buyer at a price which had, in the meantime, risen. And then with the new buyer the same story would be repeated.[73]

Societies did what they could to raise more capital. Those with low limits on the number of shares that could be owned by any one member often raised them. Local and guberniia zemstvos and other public organizations were beseiged with requests for no-interest or low-interest loans. The last resort was to borrow from a bank or to sell bonds, usually at the rate of six to seven per cent interest.

Shortage of funds was a pressing problem, but the shortage of goods upon which it was based was even greater. Joining a union was no longer an act of conscious choice on the part of a consumer society. It was an act of necessity. Societies now joined unions specifically in order to obtain goods. The necessity of paying an entrance fee

in order to join a union was no longer a hindrance. Some societies joined several unions, hoping that at least one could get it the goods its needed.

The following complex and bizarre story took place in the consumer society "Samopomoshch" (Self-Help), a society of 5000 members in a town in Vladimir guberniia. The society ran short of flour in the fall of 1916. The president of the board went to Petrograd to try to get some. The Minister of Land received him cordially and sent telegrams to agents telling them to send 35 train car loads of rye from Tambov, ten of wheat from Nizhnyi-Novgorod and one of wheat from Simbirsk. The present returned proudly to the society, but some members were skeptical, and rightly so. (They said, "Yes, the day has come that we're going to done on buns from the ministry.") When the guberniia governor visited the society, the president of the society asked him if the society itself should procure train cars for shipping, but the governor replied that this would not be necessary. Time passed, but no grain arrived. Then the treasurer of the society went to Tambov to see what was happening. He telegraphed the society that five car loads were ready for shipment but the society would have to supply the vehicles. The society sent one of its members, the factory inspector, E., to the city of Vladimir to see the guberniia governor about this. The governor promised the cars for November 2. But on

November 2, the governor refused to provide them, questioning the right of E. to act as an agent for the society and saying that he had no right to try to obtain vehicles anyway without the special permission of the Ministry of Trade and Industry. Some days later, the society's treasurer came back from Tambov, saying that the authorities there had told him that they would not supply the additional 30 car loads of flour that had been promised, since Vladimir was not one of the guberniias to which they were supposed to supply flour. (These were only Petrograd, Moscow, and one other.) Furthermore, the price for the flour was higher than the price in private shops. The treasurer said there was no reason for the limitation, since as far as he could tell there was plenty of flour on hand. This was evidently the case. Flour could be had if an extra payment was made of fifty rubles per car. The treasurer said that he did not understand the purpose of this extra payment, but it seems clear that these 50 rubles were to go into the pocket of the agent. The treasurer added that he had not been able at any time to talk directly to the agent but had only talked to his assistant. He added that it seemed that the agent, "like the Tsar," one never saw. Finally, the society found a dealer who had flour available to sell to the society. Although the price was extremely high, the society found that it had no choice but to buy it, no matter what the price.[74] What

this complex story shows, essentially, is that the traditional system of food distribution had broken down and that individuals, or groups of individuals united into consumer societies, had to take it upon themselves to obtain food.

As might be expected, many societies founded under such circumstances were very limited in their outlook. Many of the new societies, perhaps 20 per cent of those founded after the middle of 1916, sold only one or two products that were especially difficult to obtain, as for example flour and sugar. The cooperative press spoke of these as "flour", "sugar", or "margarine" societies. A group of people would collect capital haphazardly and elect a committee, the members of which would travel to a nearby town or city and bring back a load of whatever was needed.

Frequently, new societies were founded with restrictions as to nationality. At a conference of cooperative instructors in the Odessa area, organized by the MSPO in December, 1917, one instructor pointed out that many new societies in that area excluded Jews. He attributed this to the low level of consciousness of the new cooperators.[75] Restrictions with respect to nationality were practically unheard of before the war. It is likely that the level of consciousness of new cooperators was no lower than that of older ones. The reason for the spurt in the number of

societies with anti-semitic restrictions was probably that cooperative instructors and central cooperative organizations were overburdened by the rampant growth in the number of consumer societies and were unable to exercise their customary supervision. It is also true that hard economic times almost always led to a burgeoning of anti-semitism.

Cooperative instructors were also concerned that there was no organized direction to the growth in the number of societies. Some areas were still totally without societies while in other areas, two or even three might be competing with each other. As class conflict increased in 1917, societies sometimes divided up along class lines. One large and experienced consumer society in a town or village might be replaced by two new ones, both with insufficient financial resources. In July, 1917, control of the consumer society of the Savvy Morozov factory was taken by the worker members. The factory employees, who had formerly been in control, then obtained the support of the factory administration to set up a new society, which opened on October 14. The splitting of consumer societies was particularly harmful in villages with few financial resources at their disposal, but instructors were not able, in practice, to do anything about it.[76]

Few of the new societies allocated funds for cultural and educational activity. An article in Ob'edinenie complained that women were the most backward in this respect, sometimes actively opposing any allocations whatsoever.[77] In 1915, some energetic women members of one worker society in Moscow collected more than 100 signatures, all from women, in opposition to the proposal of the board to give 35 rubles a month to the families of drafted employees. The women threatened to stop buying goods from the consumer society. But they were frightened from carrying out their threat due to fear of government action against them.[78]

Of course, there were new cooperators who were enthusiastic supporters of cultural and educational work. At a meeting in early 1918, the society "In Unity - Strength" resolved to support the "worker, trade union and strike movement, and equally also the socialist parties" by means of "the greatest possible allocations from profits" and with goods themselves. The meeting passed a resolution instructing the board to set up a special credit fund for cases of need arising from accidents, strikes and unemployment. This society, located in the textile center of Ivanovo-Voznesensk, had, as of Easter, 1917, 8796 members and on October 1, 1917, 15,336. It was one of the few societies in which there was appreciable Bolshevik influence although, as can be seen from the above resolution, the Bolsheviks did not dominate the society. The

correspondent who sent in this information, incidently, felt that the actions of the society were far too radical. He complained that the meeting had been attended by less than 400 of the more than 15,000 members. Thus the vast majority of members were allowing their interests to be decided by "a minority of discontented persons."[79]

Occasionally, the work of consumer societies was made easier by the cooperation of local authorities. One of the earliest examples of really harmonious cooperation between a consumer society and a city administration occurred in Ekaterinodar and began early in 1916. The city government reached an agreement with the consumer society "Osnova" (Basis) that the city would set up a warehouse stocked with the goods that were most in demand. These goods would be distributed to outlets throughout the city managed by the consumer society. Goods other than those stocked in the warehouse could be ordered through the city on a commission basis. The administration of the consumer society received 3000 rubles worth of goods for each shop from the city warehouse and was given 2000 rubles for each shop for other goods, not from the warehouse. The project was administered by a joint commission of representatives of the consumer society and the city.[80]

Another case of fruitful cooperation between a consumer society and the local government was in Samara, where the city duma gave the consumer society "Self-Help"

a loan of 20,000 rubles in cash and goods.[81] In Petrograd, the city authorities granted a loan of 50,000 rubles to the Society of Wholesale Operations, a union of consumer societies of the Petrograd area. In Siberia, the city authorities of Minusinsk and Kainsk became share holders in local consumer societies and in Omsk the city authorities gave the consumer society free office space. There were also examples of joint work in Novgorod, Kurgan, and Kostroma.[82]

There were cases where help to consumer societies was criticized as infringing upon their independence. This occurred in the case of Samara, referred to above. But in general, the need was so great that any criticism was muted.

What was far more common in the cooperative press was criticism of city authorities who refused help to consumer societies. Already before the outbreak of the war, Soiuz Potrebitelei pointed out that while city governments had been doing more over the past few years to fight inflation, they almost always set up their own organizations for doing so, rather than working through existing consumer societies. Instead of setting up their own stores for selling such items as wood and meat, city administrations should, according to Soiuz Potrebitelei, turn the goods over to consumer societies or make loans to societies so that they could expand their activities themselves.[83]

At the end of 1914, the Petrograd City Duma and the Cheliabinsk City Management were criticized in Ob'edinenie for giving organizational help to private merchants while refusing it to consumer societies.[84] In 1915, the leadership of the Krasnoiarsk consumer society "Samodeiatel'nost" (Popular Initiative) asked the city duma for a loan of 10,000 rubles and a guarantee of credit with wholesale suppliers of 25,000 rubles. This was turned down, for the stated reason that the consumer society would then be able to undersell the city's private merchants. The duma stated that its goal was not the "lowering" of prices, but rather their "regulation."[85]

One frequent form of cooperation between local authorities and consumer societies was the granting of the privilege of shipping goods out-of-turn, without waiting in line. This right could be granted by city authorities or by guberniia zemstvos. It will be recalled that at the beginning of the war, the MSPO had received that right from the Moscow guberniia zemstvo. But by the middle of 1915, this was a "privilege" which almost everyone had obtained. This point was discussed at the Union of Cities' Congress on Inflation, held in July, 1915. It was pointed out that private merchants had less difficulty getting their goods shipped than consumer societies because they knew how to bribe the proper officials.

> For the privilege of shipping goods without waiting in line, railroad agents have taken it upon themselves to establish a new long line, and in order to speed this one up, private shippers normally seek the assistance of so-called "pushers" (tolkachi), who take for their services a special commission.[86]

Consumer societies were less skilled at such bribery.

The goods crisis necessitated changes in the laws governing the approval of the charters of consumer societies. But changes were made in practice long before they were legally authorized. In the context of wartime shortages, the complex proceedure of writing a charter and having it approved by the guberniia or city governor, which could not reasonably be expected to take less than six to twelve months, was a tremendous burden. Many consumer societies simply did not bother with it. It can be assumed that most societies founded after 1915 started operations without waiting for their charter to be approved. In many cases, a charter was not even applied for, and the new society was set up on the basis of an "agreement" (dogovor). Usually the agreement took the form of a written document, stating that in a given place a group of people would set up a new branch of an already existing society. This "agreement system" never received the explicit approval of the tsarist government and occasionally a guberniia or city governor would order such a society to be closed. For example, in October, 1916, the administration of Kostroma guberniia threatened to close a union of cooperatives in

Vetluzhskii raion which was operating on the basis of an agreement. In this case, the intervention of the zemstvo prevented the union from being closed.[87] In practice, the governor was almost always forced to close his eyes to this infraction of the rules. The widespread practice of the agreement system was one of many signs that the tsarist administration was losing its control over the tsarist empire.

One of the early acts of the Provisional Government was to give final approval to the all-cooperative law. The law had been approved by the State Duma in April, 1916, but never approved by the State Council. The Provisional Government implemented it March 20, 1917. Russian co-operators had been looking forward to the passage of an all-cooperative law since 1912. The main benefits was to be quicker approval of charters and less governmental interference in cultural and educational work. But due to the agreement system, by the time the law was enacted, the approval of a charter was rarely an obstacle to the formation of a society. Furthermore, by 1916, the government had lost much of its ability to regulate cultural work.

In fact, in some cases, the passage of the all-cooperative law presented new difficulties. The law transferred the responsibility for dealing with charters from the guberniia or city governor to the district courts

(okruzhnye sudy). Charters no longer required approval. They were simply to be registered. But the courts often did not know how to apply the new law or interpreted it arbitrarily. They might simply let charters pile up without action. More important, partly because peasants and workers did not understand the new regulations, they very often met with obstacles in the process of registration. The district courts might also have a bias against the approval of peasant or worker societies. B. I. Vornikov, a Tsentrosoiuz instructor, complained at the Odessa conference of instructors in September, 1917, that the charter of a trade union had been rejected due to the fact that one of its articles reserved the right to found cooperatives.[88] Upon occasion, groups of private merchants were able to unite into so-called cooperatives for the purpose of facilitating the procurement of goods. In the summer of 1917, a group of merchants in Orenburg guberniia organized such a "consumer society." It had 54 members and the price of a single share was 1000 rubles. Share capital was collected totaling 100,000 rubles. It was because merchants had no difficulty understanding the formalities of registration that their charters could easily be approved. The society of the Orenburg merchants was certified by the local district court as completely fulfilling the demands of the new cooperative law.[89] In Odessa, there were four such merchants' cooperatives and

even a so-called "Union of Consumer Societies", the board of which consisted of bankers, merchants, and directors of large trade and industrial enterprises.[90]

In the course of 1917, complaints began to appear in the cooperative press about interference on the part of organizations of revolutionary democracy in the affairs of individual consumer societies. This is an interesting phenomena. Before February, 1917, consumer cooperatives rightly thought of themselves as virtually the only democratic public organizations in Russia. But after the February revolution, a great many other public organizations took shape, notably soviets and land committees, which were in fact generally far more democratically organized than consumer societies. Conflicts were also experienced with organizations that had existed before 1917, as village meetings and supply committees. Some of these organizations began to give orders to consumer cooperatives in the name of revolutionary democracy. One does not get a very complete picture of this problem in the cooperative press, because it was predisposed to give only the cooperatives' side of the story.

As examples of the interference of outside organizations in the work of consumer societies, Soiuz Potrebitelei cited threats by the chief of the militia or the local police to arrest the members of boards for the lack of goods in the shop or for the fact that "the members

supposedly do not wish to intercede in the interests of the people." The journal also complained that "volost committees" and "village meetings" ordered prices to be charged for goods sold by consumer societies that were as little as half their cost. As a result, the guberniia commissar of Riazan guberniia in the summer of 1917 sent the following order to uezd commissars:

> Recently, the guberniia Executive Committee has received information from various places about the fact that the normal work of cooperatives is being disturbed by the interference in their internal affairs on the part of persons representing outside organizations. Recognizing such practice as not in the public interest and completely inadmissable, I request you to take measures to prevent it.[91]

A similar order was issued by the Provisional Government's first Minister of Land A. V. Shingarev, who noted that complaints had been received from many cooperatives "carrying out the supply of bread and other products for the army and the country" to the effect that volost and village committees were interfering illegally in their work, calling meetings of the societies on their own initiative and demanding the immediate replacement of elected or hired officials. Shingarev ordered local officials to make clear that such action was inadmissable and to see that it ceased.[92]

Such interference was even more frequent after the October Revolution. Despite the fact that the decree of March, 1918, ordered the continuation of cooperative work with only minor changes and forbade the nationalization of

cooperatives, some local soviets disregarded these instructions. In July, 1918, the consumer society of Belsk, in Smolensk guberniia, was nationalized by the Belsk Soviet of Workers' Deputies. When the society asked the central authorities and the Belsk Union of Cooperatives for help, the Union, but apparently not the central authorities, sent a complaint to the Soviet. The trade department of the soviet replied that it would nationalize all societies which "1) do not stand on the platform of soviet power and 2) have in their organization elements of the bourgois classes and parties openly or secretly opposing the activities of the authorities."[93]

In Kirillovskii uezd in Novgorod guberniia the uezd Executive Committee proposed that the city cooperative voluntarily come under the authority of the soviet. Shares were to be redistributed so that no person owned more than one and so that persons too poor to buy a share would receive one free. The cooperatives refused. But shortly thereafter the soviet nationalized all private trade in the city and founded the "Soviet-State Cooperative of the City of Kirillov", a so-called cooperative with no shares, no general meetings and no board.[94]

It is important to recognize that such nationalizations were locally, and not nationally, inspired. This was recognized by the editors of Ob'edinenie, who published an article at the beginning of 1918 which warned that the

government was preparing a decree which would turn consumer cooperatives into government enterprises. It added that in some places local soviets were not waiting for the decree but were proceeding immediately to take control of societies.[95] Although the Bolshevik government was in a position to influence the actions of local soviets and other revolutionary committees it was in no position to control them. Just as the young Bolshevik government was unable to put a stop to spontaneous nationalizations of factories, landed estates and trade establishments, it was also unable to put a stop to the nationalization of cooperatives. But for the time being, consumer cooperatives got a reprieve from the establishment of government control. The Bolsheviks were reluctantly convinced, at the beginning of 1918, not to interfere in the management of consumer cooperatives. It was only in March, 1919, that the economic policy of War Communism began to be applied to the consumer cooperative movement.

Articles showing the break down of the system of food distribution appeared continuously in the cooperative press. The aspect of this phenomenon with which cooperators were most preoccupied, and wrote about in almost every issue and in much detail, was the fact that the goods shortage made the task of management much more difficult.

The biggest complaint was that the members of societies did not understand the general nature of the shortage

of goods. The vast majority of members did not read newspapers and they blamed the high prices and the shortages on their society's management. Based on that illusion, the general meeting often voted the old board out of office and elected a new, less experienced one. The new board would be even less able to deal with the crushing difficulties than the last, and so it went. In July, 1917, the manager of a society in the town of Bekava in Saratov guberniia complained that people held him responsible for every problem.

> The manager of our shop is always the scapegoat for everything. Why are there shortages of flour, butter, tobacco, kerosine, and other goods? Why is the purchase of sugar limited to one pound? Why are flour, butter and other goods given out in small quantities? It is endless. For everything--he is responsible.[96]

A proposal of a group of workers to replace the board of this society was only averted when an instructor pointed out that in six and a half months the society had a circulation of 94,000 rubles and made a net profit of 6,000 rubles. "People do not want to understand," complained the manager, "that there is chaos and disorder all over the country."

In September, the Odessa Congress of Instructors complained that the founders of new societies and sometimes the leaders of old ones were not willing to listen to the advice of experienced cooperators and instructors. There were frequent changes in the boards of societies "chiefly

because the board is supposedly unable to procure goods."[97] In 1919, Obshchee Delo complained that the quality of persons working as buyers for consumer societies had changed completely. One no longer saw the "thrifty, experienced and sharp peasant, loving cooperative work, knowing the market and able to get goods advantageously." They had been driven out by the lack of understanding of the membership. The buyers that were left were "illiterate and incompetent carters, with no understanding of their work and no interest in cooperative life."[98]

The members of consumer societies dealt with officials who they felt had failed the society not just by removing them from office but also by punishing them. According to one correspondent from Vladimir guberniia, only the intervention of an instructor stopped the members of one society from punishing the president of the board "for having lost a railroad shipment of 15,000 rubles" by forcing him "to walk barefoot in the snow." "Fortunately," added the correspondent, "such cases are comparatively rare." More common than physical punishment was for consumer societies to apply fines and to requisition property in order to collect them. The former president of one society took it upon himself, without the participation of the inspection committee, to review the society's accounts. Discovering irregularities, he proposed to the general meeting to fine the society's current president and its

buyers 1200 rubles. The general meeting approved the fine and instructed that it should be paid by requisitioning one cow and one horse from the father of the new president! In another society, the inspection committee found a shortage in the books of 3500 rubles. An instructor came to the general meeting at which this was to be discussed and discovered that a mistake had been made and there was no shortage at all. All the same, the general meeting resolved to requisition 3500 rubles from the bookkeeper and sales manager.[99] As these incidents show, the goods crisis caused a break down in orderly management.

The war and goods crisis had the same impact on the tsarist administration as on trade. The government too broke down; the Provisional Government did not succeed in picking up its tasks. In the course of 1917, the working classes, through their newly formed soviets and other organizations, tried to do so. The goods crisis was more than a cause of the transformation of the consumer co-operative movement. It was the precondition for a mass based revolution.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), September 30, 1911, p. 719. The survey covered a total of 146 consumer societies, but information on these questions was unavailable for five societies.

[2]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), August 28, 1911, pp. 10-11.

[3]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), October 10, 1911, p. 744.

[4]Ibid.

[5]See above, pages 13-14.

[6]Ezhegodnik MSPO, 1914 g., Pt. I, p. 126.

[7]Ibid.

[8]MSPO statisticians defined net profit as the amount left after subtracting trade expenses from gross profit. Trade expenses included salaries of employees, rent and interest payments on debts.

[9]Ezhegodnik MSPO, 1913 g., Pt. II, p. 114.

[10]Ibid., p. 93.

[11]Ibid., p. 115.

[12]Ab. Berg', "Iz oblasti statistiki otchetnykh i neotchetnykh predpriiatii," Vestnik Finansov, Promyshlennosti i Torgovli, 15 (April 11, 1910), p. 50-58. I have listed only selected figures.

[13]Prokopovich, Kooperativnoe dvizhenie v Rossii, p. 348.

[14]V. N. Zel'geim, "Organizatsiia i praktika potrebitel'nykh obshchestv v Rossii," in Kursy po kooperatsii, ed. by A. A. Manuilov (Moscow: Moskovskii Gorodskoi Narodnyi Universitet imeni A. L. Shaniavskago, 1912), Vol. II, p. 453.

[15]See above, pages 21-22, 26-27, and 38-39.

[16]Prokopovich, Kooperativnoe dvizhenie v Rossii, pp. 228, 243, 254.

[17]Ezhegodnik MSPO, 1913 g., Pt. II, pp. 115-116. Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), July 12, 1913, p. 5.

[18]Balabanov, Istoriia rabochei kooperatsii v Rossi (1864-1917), p. 125.

[19]G. A. Dikhter, Vnutrenniaia torgovlia v dorevoliutsionnoi Rossi (Moscow: Nauka, 1960), p. 30.

[20]Ezhegodnik MSPO, 1914 g., Pt. I, p. 127.

[21]Ibid., p. 93.

[22]Ibid.

[23]See pages 107-108.

[24]Dikhter, Vnutrenniaia torgovlia v dorevoliutsionnoi Rossi, p. 36.

[25]See below, page 117.

[26]Ezhegodnik MSPO, 1914 g., Pt. II, p. 93. The results for railroad societies, indicating that dividends on share capital decreased as circulation increased, are difficult to explain. They are probably a statistical illusion, owing to the small number of railroad societies included in the survey.

[27]See, for example, Ob'edinenie (Moscow), April 29, 1913, inside back cover. The rules were written in the familiar (ty) form.

[28]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), October 10, 1911, pp. 744-746.

[29]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), November 25, 1909, pp. 1011-1018.

[30]S. I. Bondarev, Chastnaia torgovlia i potrebitel'skaia lavka (Moscow: MSPO, 1917), p. 6.

[31]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), February 25, 1911, pp. 6-7. Ob'edinenie, Vesti III-go raiona, March 8, 1914, pp. 19-20.

[32]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), December 5, 1909, pp. 1055-1062.

[33]See, for example, Ob'edinenie (Moscow), February 25, 1911, pp. 7-8. The quotation marks are found in the original.

[34]For more on this subject, see below, pages 264-267.

[35]Ezhegodnik MSPO, 1911 g. (Moscow: MSPO, 1911), Pt. I, p. 36. Ezhegodnik MSPO, 1914 g., Pt. I, p. 125.

[36]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), January 31, 1914, pp. 79-82.

[37]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), February 8, 1914, p. 12.

[38]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), January 2, 1917, pp. 23-25.

[39]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), March 15, 1917, pp. 17-18.

[40]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), December 29, 1917, p. 4.

[41]B. Grave, K istorii klassovoi bor'by v Rossii (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo, 1926), p. 27.

[42]Florinsky, The End of the Russian Empire, pp. 34, 36, 117.

[43]Ibid., p. 46. Note that after the February Revolution the rate of growth of paper rubles in circulation only increased.

[44]Ibid., p. 122.

[45]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), December 31, 1914, pp. 14-15.

[46]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), June 22, 1915, pp. 14-15.

[47]Obshchee Delo (Moscow), February 27, 1916, pp. 17-18.

[48]Florinsky, The End of the Russian Empire, pp. 48, and 126.

[49]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), November 12, 1914, pp. 6-8.

[50]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), October 29, 1916, pp. 1322-1323; January 1, 1917, pp. 9-11. The MSPO sent a questionnaire on prices to its member societies every three months, but the responses became increasingly difficult to collect. The percentage of societies responding decreased each time. I have presented only the figures on the more important products and have also left out those which were not counted completely in the survey.

[51]Dikhter, Vnutrenniaia torgovlia v dorevoliutsionnoi Rossii, p. 217.

[52]Balabanov, Istoriia rabochei kooperatsii v Rossii (1864-1917), p. 127.

[53]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), November 30, 1915, pp. 7-8.

[54]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), July 23, 1916, p. 20.

[55]Trud (Petrograd), October 1917, pp. 12-14.

[56]Obshchee Delo (Moscow), February 23, 1917, pp. 24-25.

[57]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), May 8, 1915, pp. 6-9.

[58]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), May 23, 1917, p. 21.

[59]Balabanov, Istoriia rabochei kooperatsii v Rossii (1864-1917), pp. 210, 238.

[60]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), March 28, 1916, pp. 4-8.

[61]V. Dunaev, Dva goda zhizni obshchestva potrebitelei "Kooperatsiia" v Moskve (Moscow: Obshchestva Potrebitelei "Kooperatsiia", 1918), p. 4.

[62]See above, pages 34-36.

[63]Obshchee Delo (Moscow), February 19, 1918, pp. 18-19.

[64]Obshchee Delo (Moscow), February 19, 1918, pp. 18-19; December 20, 1917, pp. 19-20.

[65]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), August 28, 1915, pp. 10-11.

[66]Grave, K istorii klassovoi bor'by v Rossii, pp. 172-174.

[67]Ibid., p. 176.

[68]Ibid., p. 175.

[69]Lozovskii, Rabochee dvizhenie v gody voiny, p. 222.

[70]Florinsky, The End of the Russian Empire, p. 154.

[71]Ibid., p. 166.

[72]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), May-June, 1922, p. 20.

[73]Obshchee Delo (Moscow), February 7, 1916, pp. 6-9.

[74]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), November 30, 1916, pp. 1501-1503.

[75]Zhurnal i postanovleniia pervago soveshchaniia deiatelei po potrebitel'skoi kooperatsii XII raiona Vserossiiskago Tsentral'nago (Moskovskago) Soiuza Potrebitel'nykh Obshchestv (Tsentrosoiuza), sozvannago instruktorskoi Odesskago otdeleniia Tsentrosoiuza v g. Odesse 14 i 15 sentiabria 1917 g. (Odessa: Odesskoe Otdelenie Tsentrosoiuza, 1917), p. 9. (Hereinafter referred to as Zhurnal i postanovleniia.)

[76]Zhurnal i postanovleniia, p. 10. Ob'edinenie (Moscow), November 25, 1917, pp. 19-20.

[77]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), March 20 (7), 1918, pp. 12-13.

[78]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), December 12, 1915, pp. 22-24.

[79]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), March 20 (7), 1918, pp. 26-27.

[80]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), February 15, 1916, p. 15.

[81]Valuiskii Zemskii Listok (Voronezh guberniia), March 30, 1916, p. 4.

[82]V. F. Totomiants, Kooperatsiia i bor'ba s dorogoviznoi (Moscow: MSPO, 1916), p. 12.

[83]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), May 22, 1914, pp. 408-411.

[84]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), November 12, 1914, pp. 17-18.

[85]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), August 20, 1915, pp. 21-22.

[86]K. Pazhitkov, "Dorogovizna zhizni i Moskovskii S"ezd 11-13 iiulia," Sovremennyi Mir, 8 (1915), p. 166.

[87]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), September 22, 1916, p. 1330.

[88]Zhurnal i postanovleniia, p. 10.

[89]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), September 30, 1917, pp. 3-5.

[90]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), September 23, 1917, pp. 21-23. Zhurnal i postanovleniia, p. 8.

[91]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), August 10, 1917, pp. 33-35.

[92]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), June 12, 1917, p. 19.

[93]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), August 31 (18), 1918, pp. 21-22.

[94]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), August 15 (2), 1918, p. 22.

[95]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), February 28 (15), 1918, p.3.

[96]Obshchee Delo (Moscow), July 20, 1917, p. 27.

[97]Zhurnal i postanovleniia, p. 11.

[98]Obshchee Delo (Moscow), July 31, 1919, pp. 45-46.

[99]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), April 30 (17), 1918, p. 20.

CHAPTER III

THE SOCIAL FUNCTIONS OF CONSUMER SOCIETIES

A. Why consumer societies were founded

It is evident that people founded consumer societies for a wide variety of reasons. Given the tremendous differences that existed between different types of consumer societies, from conservative factory and railroad societies to radical independent worker societies, unanimity on the purposes of the consumer cooperative movement was inconceivable. Still, it is fair to say that most people who founded consumer societies had some social objectives in mind. During the period under study there was a gradual radicalization in these objectives. Before 1905, very few consumer cooperators were socialists. But later, more and more cooperators began to believe that struggle against capitalism should be their primary goal.

At the same time, however, there was almost universal agreement on the principle that consumer cooperatives should prepare Russian peasants and workers for attaining a better future. Cooperators of all political colors could agree on this while disagreeing as to what was meant by "a better future." This section will discuss the social objectives of the founders of consumer societies. After

that, we will proceed to consider what social objectives consumer societies actually accomplished.

The generally moderate views of early cooperators were expressed quite cogently in a discussion of the relationship between consumer societies and capitalism, held in the consumer society section of the Saratov Congress of Cooperative Organizations, in November, 1904. It was the sense of the cooperators who participated in the discussion that consumer societies were not meant to struggle against capitalism but rather to work with it. This position was expressed most clearly by one delegate, who said:

> I think it is a mistake to maintain that consumer societies fight against capital. If one considers by what means consumer societies achieve their purpose, to obtain for the consumer good quality products at the lowest possible price, then it is clear that this goal cannot be obtained by means of struggle against capital, but on the contrary only by establishing the tightest, most direct ties with powerful capital, with powerful producers. Consumer societies try to avoid only small middlemen - that is their main role.[1]

The delegates felt that private merchants had certain business advantages with which consumer societies could not compete. Most important, they had the financial resources to sell on credit, which kept many customers coming back, despite the higher prices. When one delegate, identified as a "peasant", stated that he looked forward to the day when consumer societies would have the financial resources to destroy private trade, few other delegates agreed. But the very fact that the issue was so extensively

discussed indicates that there was a real difference in points of view. In the future, more cooperators would be agreeing with the peasant. In any case, at the end of the discussion the section passed a resolution stating that, "the task of the consumer society is struggle against the middleman."

At the same time, these non-socialist cooperators had very clear social objectives. A second resolution passed by the section emphasized social responsibility and social solidarity as goals of consumer societies.

> Consumer societies normalize prices, teach the people social responsibility and develop in them a sense of solidarity of interests.

Occasionally, consumer societies became directly involved in commercial enterprises. In 1901, one factory consumer society in Tambov guberniia, together with a number of merchants and landowners, arranged to purchase their factory from the state. The state had taken it over some years earlier, due to the owner's inability to pay his taxes. But few societies had the funds to undertake such projects.[2]

In the course of the prerevolutionary period, the publication of the consumer cooperative movement gave more and more attention to the struggle against private capital. A concern of many cooperators was that the profits of private merchants could better be used to improve the lives of working class people.

To illustrate what could be done, Soiuz Potrebitelei, in 1909, printed the estimate of the statistical department of the Moscow City Council that private shops in the city had a combined yearly net profit of at least 11.5 million rubles. This estimate was based on the assumption that the shops with no employees, run by the owner and his family, had an average profit per month of at least 50 rubles and that shops with one or more employees had an average profit per month of at least 75 rubles. There were approximately 15,700 private shops in the city.[3] Nothing needed to be added about how much could be done to improve the standard of living of the workers of the city with that much money.

A good source on the attitudes of moderate socialist cooperators is the MSPO's worker-oriented journal Ob'edinenie, which began publishing in 1911. The cover of the journal's second issue showed a picture of Edward Anzele, an important figure in the Belgian consumer cooperative movement, with the quotation:

> Cooperation is a fortress - from which we will bombard bourgeois society with two pound breads and cheaper potatoes.[4]

On the cover of the next issue there was a quote from Luigi Luzami, identified as the "father" of the Italian cooperative movement. In 1907, he said:

> The happy future of the people will be accomplished by cooperatives, preparing the resolution of the social question.[5]

The fact that these were the messages on the covers of two of the first three issues is an indication of the importance ascribed to them.

A more concrete statement on the same theme appeared in the following issue. It was a quotation from D. D. Holyoke, an English writer on the cooperative movement.

> In former times, capitalists hired labor, payed it the market price and took for itself all profits. Cooperative labor takes upon itself the task of overturning that order. Its plan is to hire capital, pay it the market price and keep all the profits for itself.[6]

A few months later, Ob'edinenie commented on a poster hanging on the wall of the worker consumer society "Forward" in Ghent, Belgium. It carried the message:

> Workers (male and female) of Ghent! Come in, and after 25 years all the plants and factories of Ghent will belong to you.[7]

Ob'edinenie said that the MSPO made only a more modest promise:

> Come in, and after two to three years, you will possess a headquarters adequate for a movement which strives to conquer the future.

The vast majority of socialist cooperators did not think in terms of accomplishing their goals through revolution. Soviet writers correctly point out that in general cooperative ideology was evolutionist. V. V. Kabanov, by far the best Soviet scholar on the history of the consumer cooperative movement, points out for example, that socialist cooperators did call for struggle against private capital but not by means of class struggle.

The political methods used by cooperators, according to Kabanov, were "political neutrality, collaboration of all efforts, social peace, avoidance of power, and the promotion of popular initiative and social education."[8]

The publications of the left wing of the consumer cooperative movement emphasized a nonviolent path to socialism. The right SD Makhnovets-Akimov probably expressed the feelings of most socialist cooperators when he wrote in 1915:

> One would like to think that our Russian life will follow more closely the English path rather than the German one. But in order for that to come about, it is necessary that the interests and rights of the separate classes of the population be recognized as legal, and it is necessary that it be possible to discuss them freely and defend them by peaceful means.

Makhnovets-Akimov was a Social Democrat, but his writings emphasized the more moderate, gradualist side of Marx. In 1913, he wrote that "the working class should look upon Marx as one of its teachers" and identified as Marx's main idea that:

> The socialist order, under which mankind will attain for himself an intelligent and just life, will arise inevitably from the contemporary capitalist order...[10]

In the following issue, Ob'edinenie printed the following gradualist quotation from Marx's writings:

> We consider that the cooperative movement is one of the forces transforming the class contradictions of contemporary society. Its great service is that it shows how the existing, despotic order...can be placed by a comradely organization of the labor of free and equal producers, which will promote their welfare.[11]

It is true that under the conditions of tsarist censorship the quotations from Marx that were evolutionary rather than revolutionary were the only publishable ones. All the same, they coincided with the evolutionary tenor of the consumer cooperative movement. The socialism of the left wing of the consumer cooperative movement usually played down the idea of class struggle.

So far, the problem of why people founded consumer societies has been presented only in its theoretical aspects. But the problem was also a practical one. Most of the discussion of the goals of consumer cooperation was in terms of concrete issues, particularly the issues of prices and distribution of profits. A decision on the part of a consumer society to sell below the middle market price, for example, was essentially a decision to struggle directly against private merchants instead of merely competing with them. Similarly, a society which made the decision to distribute its profits entirely in terms of rebates on purchases, paying no dividends on shares, was also, in effect, making a decision to struggle against capitalism. But, as we have seen above in discussing the financial organization of consumer societies, the import of these decisions was normally obscured. Shortage of financial resources limited the freedom of a consumer society in making ideological decisions. A society might want to distribute all of its profits in rebates on purchases or

to dispense entirely with the distribution of profits, using all savings for cultural and educational work, but would usually be prevented from doing so by the need to attract share capital. It was almost impossible to attract sufficient share capital without dividends. Another way for cooperators to express their ideological objectives was through the organization of cultural and educational work. But, as we shall see below, governmental restrictions on cultural work made it a poor vehicle for the expression of the political views of cooperators.

In his memoirs, M. D. Shishkin, a Menshevik active in the cultural work of consumer societies, summarized the reasons why people worked in the consumer cooperative movement. His statement applies both to socialists and non-socialists.

> Some believed that through cooperation the people would come to democracy. Others nourished the even greater faith that through cooperation the people would come to socialism. All agreed that through cooperation the people would gain the habits, experience and knowledge necessary for the building of a better future.[12]

The rest of this chapter seeks to determine to what extent these social objectives of the consumer cooperative movement were realized, to what extent consumer societies developed in their members "the habits, experience and knowledge necessary for the building of a better future." Three broad areas of the activities of consumer societies will be considered: their general meetings, cultural and

educational activity and publishing. In a concluding section, it will be argued that although the consumer co-operative movement had significant potential for raising the cultural level of the Russian working classes, as of 1917, the movement had accomplished relatively little.

B. The general meeting

The general meeting had a larger purpose than that of making decisions about the work of the consumer society. Ideally, the general meeting would develop democratic habits in the membership. It would teach the Russian workers and peasants to run their own affairs. This would be accomplished by means of the better educated members teaching the less educated ones. No consumer cooperators openly disputed that ideal, although in many societies it was quietly neglected. Most factory and railroad societies made little pretense of striving for democratic management. Societies in which the charter provided for a meeting of representatives rather than a general meeting were rarely democratically run. But in most consumer societies, a greater or less effort was made to develop the ability of the working class members to participate in making decisions. This section deals with the question of to what extent that effort was successful.

The evidence on this issue is not easy to interpret. Virtually all of the evidence consists of correspondence articles in the consumer cooperative press, articles written

by cooperators telling of the successes or failures of their societies. Correspondence articles spoke far more frequently about how well things were going in a given society than about how poorly. The vast majority showed only by how much the present year's circulation had increased over that of previous years. But the financial affairs of consumer societies and the way they were managed were two different things. Readers rarely wanted to send in material that was critical of their society. But when detailed accounts of the proceedings of general meetings were published, they almost always showed great disorder.

But a disorderly general meeting was not necessarily a bad sign. Uneducated peasants and workers could not be expected to gain democratic habits overnight. If everything went smoothly at the general meetings of a factory, worker or village consumer society, it could only mean that no attempt was being made to run it democratically. Disorderly general meetings can be seen as a sign of progress. On the other hand, the accounts of disorderly general meetings in correspondence articles are certainly not sufficient evidence to conclude that consumer societies were successful in teaching their less educated members to govern themselves. In 1908, one correspondent commented on the disorganized way meetings were held in his village consumer society, "The members discuss the affairs of the society like they do at village meetings."[13] In that statement, he expressed his disappointment that his

consumer society had not succeeded in breaking out of traditional, backward village patterns. There is no evidence that the overall character of the general meeting improved during the period under study.

The enormity of the task faced by consumer societies in implanting democratic habits is shown by a list of "rules" drawn up by the MSPO for guiding general meetings.

> 1. Only questions on the agenda before the beginning of the meeting can be discussed and resolved...
>
> 2. On every question, there must be a report by the board, the revision committee or by a representative of the group of members raising the question.
>
> 3. Those wishing to speak must indicate this to the president, who will give the floor in order of request.
>
> 4. It is forbidden to speak out of turn, to interrupt another speaker or to speak on a question other than the one being discussed.
>
> 5. One must try to conserve time and not repeat that which has already been said by others.
>
> 6. To vote on a question does not mean to try to shout so loud as to drown each other out. It is much easier to vote by means of raising hands... In this way, every question will be decided according to the wishes of the majority. In practice, these simple things are by no means always easily mastered.
>
> But on the dry bank, it is not possible to learn to swim. Although at the same time, the man who does not know how to swim, before climbing into the water should ask the way to the shore, look around himself and slide in.[14]

In societies dominated by factory or railroad administration, or in general in societies where no attempt was

made to teach the less educated members "how to swim", keeping order in the general meeting did not present a major problem. But in all more or less democratically oriented societies it did.

One of the few societies which showed little hesitation in discussing the disorderly quality of its general meetings was the radical worker consumer society "Trudovoi Soiuz." Many of its members were left wing intellectuals who were consciously concerned with the problem of raising the ability of the proletariat to handle its own affairs. Disruptions at the general meeting that took place on October 14, 1907, were particularly shocking and consequently two articles were published about the meeting in the next issue of Trudovoi Soiuz, the journal associated with the society. The meeting had been attended by some 2000 people and a very difficult problem was discussed, that of who was to blame for the fact that a large amount of money had been stolen from one shop.

"The meeting of October 14 can be of great use if we can seriously pay attention to what it teaches us," the first article began. One problem that the meeting illustrated was that of alcoholism.

> At future meetings of "Trudovoi Soiuz" people must never be admitted with heads dimmed by vodka. At this meeting, there were many who were, if not drunk, at least intoxicated and they could not soberly listen to what was said or sort out what was true and what was false. They were unable to refrain from shouts and noise, which cause only disturbance and help nothing.[15]

According to the other article, at one particularly disorderly point in the meeting, the president managed to bring the crowd to order by saying:

> Comrades! I speak to you not as a president. I speak to you as one worker to another! Comrades! We should be ashamed, as workers of Petrograd, not to be able to conduct ourselves properly at a meeting![16]

The members of consumer societies often showed great interest in its affairs, especially at first. In some places meetings were held ten or twelve times a year. But this interest usually slackened off after some time. When interest fell off, people stopped coming to meetings. According to the Model Code, a general meeting could not begin without one third to one half of the members present. (In requesting approval of its charter each society could decide which.) If enough members were not present, the meeting was to be rescheduled for a later day, at which time any number of members present was satisfactory. In practice, this procedure was almost always dispensed with. Most large societies met with well under one tenth of their members. Sometimes the result was that the decisions of one sparsely attended meeting were overturned by the next sparsely attended meeting. This was most frequently the case with respect to the question of the distribution of profits. The end result was normally that the general meeting became less and less important in the actual running of the society and consequently was called less and less often.

Financial matters were a frequent cause of dissension at general meetings. One correspondent reported that one very disorderly general meeting became even worse when it was announced that the board had decided that dividends would not be distributed this year as previously.[17] In another society, the board was dismissed because it had raised the salaries of the society's employees. It had done so without consulting the general meeting because it feared that the meeting would have disagreed.[18]

A poor relationship between the board and the general meeting was itself the cause of many problems. If a board lost the confidence of the general meeting it might be voted out of office before its term was up and a new one elected. But this was by no means a perfect solution to the problems of the society. One correspondent wrote that in his society so many boards had lost the confidence of the membership and been voted out of office that now the general meeting was forced to elect anyone who was willing to serve. One board member elected on that basis took more than his share of flour. (The society had placed a limit of 15 pounds per person.) An instructor from the local union had a great deal of difficulty convincing the general meeting not to take the matter to court, but to handle it within the society itself.[19] Not infrequently an entire board would resign, due to expressions of distrust on the part of the membership, but the general meeting would

find itself without members capable enough or willing to take its place and would have to ask the old board to resume its position.

The members of consumer societies often failed to appreciate the value of experience. In one case, despite the advice of an MSPO instructor that the affairs of the society were in order and that the old board should be re-elected for another term, and despite the request of new candidates to the board that at least one experienced member be retained, the general meeting elected a new board consisting entirely of new members.

An important area of potential disagreement between the general meeting and the board was over the issue of chosing a manager. A disagreement over that issue took place in an independent consumer society of mine workers in Ekaterinoslav guberniia. The first person chosen by the board was unable to supply a deposit. (It was very common for a manager to have to supply a deposit to the society to cover possible theft.) The board then hired a former foreman from the local mine, a man who, according to the correspondence article in Soiuz Potrebitelei, "was hardly competent in matters of trade and, more important, did not enjoy the confidence of the vast majority of members." When, at the general meeting, many members expressed the wish that he not be hired, the board retorted that members of the society should not interfere in its work and

it threatened to resign. The correspondent continued that the situation was all the more difficult since this board had in general been extremely satisfactory. This situation indicates that the difficulties of cooperative work could be so great as to try the patience of even dedicated cooperators. Board members who had spent much time and effort trying to hire a manager came to see the desires expressed at the general meeting as just one more difficulty in an already difficult task.[20]

Government interference was at the heart of many of the problems of consumer societies. According to the Model Code, each society was required to keep the local police informed of the decisions of its general meetings. The degree of police supervision was normally left up to local authorities. In some areas, police came to every meeting. More frequently, a copy of the resolutions adopted was sent to the police after the meeting. The police sometimes vetoed them, especially budgetary allocations. Of course, such supervision was greater in times of social unrest. Not surprisingly, the visits of the police might provoke hostility on the part of the membership.

This happened at a meeting held in August, 1905, at the tea house of the Kostroma guberniia zemstvo to discuss the founding of a consumer society. The organizers of the meeting were two zemstvo employees, one identified only as

a student and the other, a woman, as a student (slushatel'-nitsa) at a medical institute. The meeting was attended by about 100 workers from the local flax factory. Shortly after the meeting assembled, five policeman came in. The students were very hostile to the police and the workers followed their lead. When the police said that they had come to drink tea, the woman-student refused to let them be served. The police then announced that they had not come to break up the meeting, but if they were driven out, then that meant that "something bad" was going to happen. At this, according to the Soiuz Potrebitelei correspondent, the workers took offense. One got up and said that they had come there as for a holiday, cleanly dressed and well behaved. Another pointed out that they were all local peasants, working in the factory for many years and that the police knew them all by face and family. Some hours later, after some business had been discussed, the police chief came in and made a great show of snatching a piece of paper out of the hands of the person who happened to be speaking. The paper turned out to be a copy of the Model Code, published by the MSPO. The police chief examined it carefully, "as though it were a bomb," and then asked the name and place of residence of the reader and left.[21]

The pages of cooperative journals are full of examples of the interference of the police in the affairs of consumer societies and their unions. This particular account

is especially interesting, however, in that it shows not so much that the police were trying to repress the consumer cooperative movement, which was the conclusion of the correspondent, but rather that the cooperative movement was something of an unknown quantity. It was the job of the local police to see that revolutionary organizations did not have a chance to form, and they went to the founding meeting to see if this was in fact a revolutionary organization. Naturally, their presence was provocative. The interference of the police in the general meetings of consumer societies had a disruptive and a radicalizing effect.

In attempting to attain the goal of implanting democratic habits in the members of consumer societies, much hope was placed in the leadership abilities of the intelligensia. Members of the intelligensia were to serve, to return to the metaphor of learning to swim, as swimming instructors, and also perhaps as lifeguards. Usually they did. But the intelligensia could not always live up to this ideal picture.

Such criticism as there was of members of the intelligensia in the consumer cooperative press was usually with respect to their failure to work to develop initiative and organizational ability on the part of the less educated members. An article on village societies in Kiev guberniia reported that most societies, including those headed by the village intelligensia, were in need of practical

advice and information. The members often understood the charter poorly and broke it unintentionally.[22] Frequently at meetings of village societies the educated members sat in front and decided everything while the peasants stood aside, taking no part in the discussion. One obstacle to the democratization of relationships in village societies was a shortage of chairs. A handbook for organizing courses to train cooperators commended that the board must not sit while the rest of the members stood.[23]

The discussion of a formal document as the charter was often particularly difficult. Correspondence articles frequently complained that the reading of the charter at the founding meeting or the reading of a report by one of the members of the board at the general meeting was done in a completely monotone voice, without any sort of explanation to make it comprehensible to uneducated members.[24] An article in Ob'edinenie in 1915 suggested that the situation could be improved if the business of the society was discussed in such a way as to make it intelligible to uneducated members and also if more uneducated members were gradually included as members of the board.[25] But only a small number of writers on this subject seem to have been aware of the real difficulties involved.

One aspect of the general meeting which uneducated members were least able to carry out correctly was voting. This was the case in most village societies. Secret

balloting was practically unheard of. Uneducated members were easily influenced by the wishes expressed by wealthy or educated members. One correspondence article from a trade-industrial village in Tambov guberniia showed how easily uneducated members were influenced in making their decisions. At the first general meeting of one consumer society, in the process of choosing the board and inspection committee, the illiterate members went up to the literate ones and asked them to write the names of the candidates on their ballots. "Whose names should I write down?" a literate member asked. "Write down who you know," the peasants responded, "write down what you have written on your own ballot." Later, a heated debate took place over whether to allocate three per cent of the net profit for cultural activities. When the first speaker spoke in favor of the motion, the meeting loudly voiced its agreement. But when the second speaker spoke against it, the meeting again voiced its agreement and when the third speaker was in favor the sense of the meeting again reversed itself.[26]

A singularly bitter attack on the intelligensia in a cooperative publication appeared in 1912 in a small journal called Splotchina, published in the Urals, and the editorial board of Soiuz Potrebitelei seems to have been quite shocked by it. The article said that the intelligensia was useful in the same sense as arsenic, "in small and timely doses."

It went on to accuse the intelligensia of using their knowledge of bookkeeping to keep peasants off the boards of societies and of seeking to raise the profits of the societies artificially for the sake of raising their own salaries. Soiuz Potrebitelei commented that the author of the article had not supplied the facts to prove his case and that "where the mass of people is unconscious the main role inevitably goes to the intelligensia, but that is not their fault."[27]

In order to supplement the voluntary efforts of the intelligensia, consumer societies and their unions often hired "instructors." Instructors were experts in the problems of consumer societies and were hired to visit individual societies to help them with their problems. Among the accounts of general meetings held in an orderly and productive way, especially noticeable are accounts of the visits of instructors. In 1916, for example, one correspondent reported that when the meeting of one consumer society ended late at night, tea was served and discussion groups formed. The largest group gathered around the table where a young instructor from the uezd agricultural society was sitting. He told the members of the society about Moscow, about Shaniavskii University,[28] about cooperative unions like the MSPO and about the Moscow People's Bank. The members in turn told him about the formation of their society, about how they had gone from

house to house to collect the first capital and about their distribution of cooperative books and pamphlets.[29] Such encounters gave cooperators high hopes for the future.

But the problem was that teaching an uneducated person how to participate intelligently in running his consumer society was a great deal more difficult than teaching a child how to swim. It was a job that required commitment, intelligence, patience, creativity and, above all, time. And as we know from hindsight, after the beginning of the First World War, time began to run out.

C. The cultural and educational activity of consumer societies

Less than a year before his death, at a time when he virtually had the status of a living saint among Russians of all political persuasions, Lev Tolstoy made a very favorable comment on the value of the cooperative movement. Cooperators were greatly pleased by the statement and it was widely quoted:

> I think that in our time cooperation is one of the best activities in which young people seeking a cause to which to devote themselves, and there are many of them, can become dedicated. If I were young, I would become involved in that work, and still now I do not hesitate to try to do what I can among our peasantry, which is so close to my heart.[30]

If cooperatives had been entirely or even mainly economic organizations, Tolstoy would never have assessed their importance so positively. Tolstoy's interest in the

cooperative movement was related to his interest in the spiritual side of man. He was interested in cooperation for the sake of its cultural and educational work.

The raising of the cultural and educational level of Russia's peasants and workers was considered by cooperators to be both the goal of cooperative activity and the essential precondition for its development. Ozerov, for example, argued that the consumer cooperative movement was developing slowly in Russia, in comparison with the West, because of the illiteracy of the working class population.[31] This was the stated or unstated assumption of almost every cooperator. Cultural and educational activity was ideally, like the general meetings of consumer societies, to prepare the Russian working classes for a better life. Literacy was only a small part of this. Cultural and educational activity emphasized the moral development of the working classes. In the prerevolutionary period cooperatives were also important centers for political education. At the All-Russian Congress of Cities, in July, 1915, the cooperator Chaikovskii stated that, "At the present time, there is no other road to the peasant masses than that through cooperatives."[32]

The importance which consumer cooperators ascribed to cultural and educational work is attested to by the fact that the cooperative press carried many articles on that subject. But, exactly as with the general meetings of

consumer societies, there was a difference between the ideal and the reality. In reality, the cultural and educational activities of consumer societies tended to be quite limited. In 1911, MSPO consumer societies spent an average of only 1.31 per cent of their net profit on cultural and educational work.

The emphasis on the moral development of the working classes in cultural and educational work is illustrated by an MSPO pamphlet giving examples of projects initiated by various societies. The pamphlet was prefaced by a statement said to have been made by a peasant girl:

> All of us have the same idea--we want to form a circle in our village. We are all from the peasantry and we know what kinds of pleasures our young men participate in when they come home on holidays: drunkeness, cards, etc. Where can our growing young men get the strength, cheerfulness and energy necessary for life? What will make our lives good when ignorance and darkness dominate everything...[33]

In 1915, one society in Ekaterinoslav guberniia organized a summer school for young children. An article written by the organizers emphasized that the school sought to develop in the children a love of nature, respect for manual labor, habits of personal hygiene and a spirit of "comradely relationships." This was to be achieved, for example, by playing games "where feelings as respect and compassion are expressed." In a village in Volokolamsk uezd in Moscow guberniia, a consumer society organized a project for children to sell cooperatively produced ice cream at a

local fair in order to compete with a private ice cream dealer.[34]

The cultural work of consumer cooperatives included an extremely wide variety of activities, from the distribution of cooperative journals or the establishment of libraries to the organization of lectures or Christmas parties for the children of members or the presentation of plays or concerts. A large percentage of allocations went towards paying the educational expenses of promising students, especially for attending courses to train them as employees of consumer societies. In 1911, MSPO member societies made allocations in the following amounts:

ALLOCATIONS FOR CULTURAL WORK
BY MSPO MEMBER SOCIETIES[35]

type of project	number of societies	total allocation (in rubles)
schools, aid to students	12	11,334
founding of library	9	4,898
books, newspapers, journals	239	4,735
lectures	8	571
misc., including Christmas parties	24	2,593
total	292	24,131

The MSPO's handbook on cultural and educational work gave a rather detailed list of the holdings of one library established by a union of various types of cooperatives in Smolensk guberniia. It contained books and journals on a

wide variety of subjects. Of 1252 books, most were belles-lettres (810). A large number were on agriculture (239). There were also books on spiritual and moral themes (82), popular science (64), the cooperative movement (44) and crafts (13). Of the 239 books on agriculture, 155 dealt with the production of grains, 34 with livestock, 36 with fruits and vegetables and 14 with beekeeping. The library received 18 periodicals, including six cooperative journals, five on various aspects of agricultural production, two childrens' magazines and five general political journals and newspapers. These general political periodicals were Zhizn' dlia Vsekh, Russkoe Slovo, Iskry, Smolenskii Vestnik and Vernost'. The editor of the pamphlet suggested that Russkiia Vedomosti would have been a better choice than Russkoe Slovo.[36]

There were a number of dramatic circles attached to Russian consumer societies. About five of these were in Moscow guberniia and were directed by Shishkin. This was a form of village entertainment and not a form of great art. An honest appraisal of one such theatrical production in Moscow guberniia appeared in Ob'edinenie in 1915.

> The goal is positive, of course, but the quality of the production was lower than can be expressed by even the sharpest criticism. The actors could not even deal with the music. What was presented was really not a play but a kind of putting of airs and clowning, and with totally incorrect diction.[37]

The review concluded that all the same, the group should go on trying. The poor quality of the production and the

incorrect diction show that the cultural work of consumer societies was successful, at least to some extent, in attracting the participation of uneducated members.

Cultural and educational work inevitably had political implications. Whether the goal of cultural work was thought of as promoting self government, or developing the "habits, experience and knowledge necessary for the building of a better future"[38] or merely the attainment of literacy, cultural work was a challenge to the tsarist administration. Cultural work did not have to be directly illegal to attract the attention of the tsarist administration. Still, there is some evidence available on cultural work that transgressed the rather confining boundaries of the law. This was a subject which the publications of the cooperative movement were naturally hesitant to discuss. The libraries of some consumer societies did contain some illegal publications, although we have no way of knowing what percentage. Information on this topic comes from one correspondence article in Obshchee Delo in 1916, which criticized one former board member of a society in the Don oblast for opposing further allocations to the society's library "as though only because in it were included works by inappropriate writers." The president of the library committee defended the allocation, indicating that recently "most of these books" had been removed. The article went on to state that "the opinion was expressed" that since "forbidden

fruit is sweeter" such books were very useful in attracting readers, "although of course there should also be books with appropriate criticism."[39] It is not hard to see why few articles appeared that were so frank in discussing illegal activity. The society mentioned in the above article probably got a visit from the local police soon after its publication.

Other evidence of cultural activity that bordered on illegality comes from an article about a dramatic circle that had been formed by members of a society in Moscow guberniia. The circle had been in existence for five years and performed plays every Sunday in the surrounding villages. The society had censored copies of various plays, which apparently came in very handy "because they permit us to do these plays because we have already shown the district policy officer a censored copy." The implication was that the text actually used in the performance was different from the one that had been shown to the censor.[40] It can be inferred that revolutionary ideas were expressed in many lectures. Lectures were normally given by visiting instructors and as of 1917, the vast majority of instructors were members of one of the socialist parties.

Given the disposition of the tsarist administration, cultural work did not have to be illegal to attract the attention of the police. Interference by the tsarist administration in the affairs of consumer societies was

centered around their cultural work. As soon as the revolution of 1905-7 began to die down, the police began to crack down on those consumer societies which had sympathized with the revolution, focusing in particular on their cultural activities. According to one source, written in 1911, this began as early as 1906, but it did not reach the revolutionary centers, as Petersburg, until 1909. "It has reached the point," the source complained, "that in the last year it has become nearly impossible to organize lectures on social themes, not to mention systematic courses." There had been a drop in attendance in those lectures and excursions which were organized, although there had been an increase in interest in "community dances."[41]

In exceptional cases, the police restricted the economic activities of consumer societies. For example, at the end of 1909, ten consumer societies which had formerly been part of the now defunct "Trudovoi Soiuz" were deprived of the right to have more than one shop. But this economic restriction was clearly made only because these were left wing consumer societies with strong interest in cultural and educational work.[42]

Later, in the summer of 1916, when the tsarist administration, as it turned out unsuccessfully, cracked down on the social movement, the repression focused on the cultural work of consumer societies. The Menshevik E. O.

Lenskaia, the head of the Tsentrosoiuz's popular propaganda department, was forbidden to live in Moscow and eleven union instructors were forbidden to hold lectures. Ob'edinenie was closed and Soiuz Potrebitelei was fined "for the most innocent articles" (and some not so innocent ones as well) and told that if it didn't "change its tone" it too would be closed. In the fall, the union was told privately that the police were planning to arrest several of its leaders and was considering banning all cultural activity.[43]

But despite the importance ascribed to cultural and educational activity in the books, pamphlets and periodicals published by the cooperative movement, the amount of money allocated towards it always remained quite low. Based on the statistics of the MSPO, I have calculated expenditures on cultural work by type of societies and by circulation. Different types of societies with the same circulation showed big differences in their contributions to cultural and educational activities.

ALLOCATIONS FOR CULTURAL WORK BY MSPO SOCIETIES[44]

circulation (in thousands of rubles) and type of society	total expenditures on cultural work	net profit	total expenditures as per cent of net profit
up to 10			
city	---	2,234	0.00
village	418	16,758	2.49
	418	18,992	2.20
10 to 20			
city	21	5,993	.35
factory	65	1,428	4.55
village	670	34,963	1.92
worker	---	2,737	0.00
	756	45,121	1.68
20 to 50			
city	503	53,933	.93
factory	721	25,772	2.80
railroad	---	2,135	0.00
village	1,076	63,847	1.69
worker	233	12,023	1.94
	2,533	157,710	1.61
50 to 100			
city	1,049	61,514	1.71
factory	397	54,617	.73
railroad	---	9,253	0.00
village	298	13,375	2.23
worker	379	18,658	2.63
	2,123	157,417	1.35

(Table continued on next page)

ALLOCATIONS FOR CULTURAL WORK BY MSPO SOCIETIES (continued)

circulation (in thousands of rubles) and type of society	total expenditures on cultural work	net profit	total expenditures as per cent of net profit
100 to 300			
city	2,717	95,893	2.83
factory	2,832	247,352	1.14
railroad	---	6,030	0.00
village	---	12,250	0.00
worker	637	17,847	3.57
	6,186	379,372	1.63
300 to 500			
city	---	10,760	0.00
factory	3,054	138,496	2.21
railroad	400	20,809	1.92
	3,454	170,065	2.03
500 to 1000			
factory	1,736	138,636	1.25
over 1000			
factory	---	141,380	0.00
railroad	1,976	260,084	.76
	1,976	401,464	.49
total	19,182	1,468,777	1.31

Circulation was not a reliable determinant of expenditure on cultural and educational activities.

When these figures are shown differently, however, some more interesting patterns emerge.

(See page 199 for Table.)

Worker and city societies had a very consistent pattern: the higher the circulation of the society the higher the relative allocation. Worker and city societies seem to have had a very consistent view of the importance of cultural work. They were prepared to make allocations to the extent that their finances permitted. In factory societies the pattern was quite different. Some of the smaller societies made very high allocations while the larger societies made very small allocations. This suggests that smaller factory societies tended to be run for more philanthropical goals than the larger ones. Railroad societies had the smallest relative allocations, which is what one would expect, given the non-democratic character of most railroad societies. No clear pattern is visable with respect to village societies.

It must be mentioned that MSPO statisticians, working with the same raw data, reach different percentages than I do as to the size of allocations for cultural work in relation to net profit. MSPO statisticians calculated that in the year 1911, MSPO member societies spent an

ALLOCATIONS FOR CULTURAL WORK BY MSPO SOCIETIES

type of society and circulation (in thousands of rubles)	total expenditures on cultural work	net profit	total expenditures as per cent of net profit
city			
up to 10	---	2,234	0.00
10 to 20	21	5,993	.35
20 to 50	503	53,933	.93
50 to 100	1,049	61,514	1.71
100 to 300	2,717	95,893	2.83
300 to 500	---	10,760	0.00
	4,290	230,327	2.11
factory			
10 to 20	65	1,428	4.55
20 to 50	721	25,772	2.80
50 to 100	397	54,617	.73
100 to 300	2,832	247,352	1.14
300 to 500	3,054	138,496	2.21
500 to 1000	1,736	138,636	1.25
over 1000	---	141,380	0.00
	8,805	747,681	1.17
railroad			
20 to 50	---	2,135	0.00
50 to 100	---	9,253	0.00
100 to 300	---	6,030	0.00
300 to 500	400	20,809	1.92
over 1000	1,976	260,084	.76
	2,376	298,311	.80

(Table continued on next page)

ALLOCATIONS FOR CULTURAL WORK BY MSPO SOCIETIES (continued)

type of society and circulation (in thousands of rubles)	total expenditures on cultural work	net profit	total expenditures as per cent of net profit
village			
up to 10	418	16,758	2.49
10 to 20	670	34,963	1.92
20 to 50	1,076	63,847	1.69
50 to 100	298	13,375	2.23
100 to 300	---	12,250	0.00
	2,462	141,193	1.74
worker			
10 to 20	---	2,737	0.00
20 to 50	233	12,023	1.94
50 to 100	379	18,658	2.63
100 to 300	637	17,847	3.57
	1,249	51,265	2.44
total	19,182	1,468,777	1.31

average of 1.85 per cent of their net profit on cultural and educational work. The breakdown by types of society was as follows:

ALLOCATIONS FOR CULTURAL WORK AS A PERCENTAGE OF NET PROFIT, AS CALCULATED BY MSPO STATISTICIANS[45]

type of society	allocation
city	1.3
factory	.7
railroad	5.1
village	1.4
worker	2.2
average	1.85

I have found it impossible to discover how MSPO statisticians arrived at these figures. It seems likely that they made the mistake of failing to include in their calculations those societies which made no allocation at all. Confusion arises from the fact that many societies which sent in information on their net profit did not include information on their allocations to cultural work. I find that it is necessary to assume that societies that sent in no figures on allocations for cultural work in fact made no allocations. However, I was unable, by not including in my calculation of total net profit, societies which made no allocations, to arrive at the same percentages as the MSPO. My own calculations are by far the more satisfactory because they show, as one would expect, higher allocations for cultural work by the more

democratically organized societies and lower allocations for cultural work by the less democratically organized societies.

Evidence that the expenditures of worker societies on cultural and educational work increased as their financial resources permitted is corroborated by other figures, showing that between 1911 and 1914, the allocations made by worker societies for cultural activities increased substantially. Allocations per society and per member both more than doubled.

ALLOCATIONS OF WORKER SOCIETIES FOR CULTURAL WORK[46]

year	rubles per society	kopeks per member
1911	16.79	13.4
1912	22.29	24.5
1913	22.97	25.8
1914	35.69	34.8

Worker and village societies did much better in comparison to other types of societies when allocations for purchase and distribution of cooperative literature are considered apart from total allocations.

ALLOCATIONS FOR PURCHASE AND DISTRIBUTION OF COOPERATIVE LITERATURE[47]

	number of societies					
group	in group	making allocation	%	sum in rubles	average per society	% of trade expenditures
city	128	75	58.6	1547	20.6	.18
factory	90	49	54.4	2725	55.6	.12
railroad	18	5	27.8	488	97.6	.03
village	216	137	63.4	1529	11.2	.37
worker	27	21	77.8	1194	56.9	.49

An important question about cultural work is why allocations for it were so low. It is obvious that even the 2.44 per cent of net profit allocated by worker societies was nothing to boast about, still less the 1.31 per cent allocated by the average societies. A great deal of attention was devoted to cultural work in the cooperative press. On this basis one would expect that allocations would have been higher.

The low level of allocations to cultural work can be attributed to two factors. Many members were simply not interested. Others, who were disposed to be interested in cultural work as a means of reforming Russian society were discouraged by government restrictions.

Many members of consumer cooperatives were outright hostile to cultural work. In the discussion of allocations for a library, referred to above, some members were quoted as saying, "We don't need a library, We don't read books," or "Let those whose children go to

school pay for it."[48] There were often complaints that the boards of union consumer societies failed to distribute the union's journals. All union societies were required to subscribe to Soiuz Potrebitelei and most ordered Ob'edinenie or Obshchee Delo. But members occasionally wrote to the union with comments like, "We see the journal rarely. The board receives it and stores it away in a pile. It never gets as far as the members."[49] In a few cases, the implication was that the board of a conservative society didn't want its members or employees to read the union's progressive journals. But in most cases, the cause of the failure to distribute the union's journals was simply lack of interest.

A study made of the readers of Ob'edinenie in 1914 showed that very few readers expressed particular interest in reading articles on cultural work. Only a small percentage of the readers of the journal responded to the survey upon which the study was based, but if the journal's most dedicated readers were not interested in articles on cultural work, then it is clear that interest in that subject really was very low.[50]

The lack of interest is more comprehensible given the fact that governmental restrictions made any sort of meaningful, politically oriented cultural work very difficult. Consumer societies were chronically short of funds. Given that shortage, it is entirely understandable that

conscientious cooperators would hesitate before advocating the allocation of precious resources for cultural work. This explains why, despite the attention given to cultural work in the cooperative press, in practice there was very little of it.

D. Publishing

A very important, special form of cultural work in the consumer cooperative movement was publishing. It was very widely developed and is an excellent reflection of the values and spirit of the movement. Cooperative literature, as it evolved in the period from 1897 to 1917, was dedicated to democratic principles and to improving the lives of the working classes. Consumer cooperative publishing can be thought of as having had two goals. It wanted to spread advice and information on the founding and operation of consumer societies, and it wanted to spread the idea of cooperation among the literate members of the working classes.

Just as the cooperative movement grew by leaps and bounds during the prerevolutionary period, so did the number of cooperative publications. A study lists 6611 works published between 1856 and 1923 on the cooperative movement. It is interesting to study the breakdown of these works.

COOPERATIVE LITERATURE PUBLISHED BETWEEN 1856 AND 1923, BROKEN DOWN BY SUBJECT MATTER[51]

year	general	consumer	housing	credit	agriculture	artels	insurance	total
1856-60	3	1	0	2	0	1	0	7
1861-65	1	0	0	3	0	4	0	8
1866-70	7	6	0	7	12	3	1	36
1871-75	19	2	0	41	5	16	0	83
1876-80	5	1	0	19	4	8	0	37
1881-85	6	0	0	21	5	8	0	40
1886-90	6	0	0	24	1	4	0	35
1891-95	14	7	0	31	8	10	0	70
1986-00	24	31	0	43	15	18	0	131
1901-05	26	25	6	101	42	18	0	218
1906-10	178	96	12	179	104	41	1	611
1911-15	715	308	20	349	337	54	16	1799
1916-20	1166	567	9	190	354	76	16	2378
1921-23	160	205	10	22	136	50	8	591
unknown	136	100	12	170	114	20	15	567
total	2466	1349	69	1202	1137	331	57	6611
per cent	37.3	20.3	1.0	18.1	17.2	5.0	1.1	100.

The percentage of books and pamphlets dealing with the consumer branch of the cooperative movement was larger than the percentage dealing with any other specific branch. Over half of the works on the consumer cooperative movement (681 of 1349) were published by a single source, the MSPO.[52]

Consumer cooperatives were generally more democratic in character than other types of cooperatives. One reflection of this was that they showed a greater interest in popular literature. Popular literature consisted of less technical books and pamphlets, written in a simple style and directed towards the less educated cooperator. It can be thought of as being addressed to the member of a society or the potential member, as opposed to cooperative officials and employees. Between 1856 and 1923, 1068 books and pamphlets of a popular nature were published by the cooperative movement as a whole. Almost a third of these dealt specifically with consumer cooperatives.

POPULAR COOPERATIVE LITERATURE PUBLISHED BETWEEN 1856 AND 1923, BROKEN DOWN BY SUBJECT MATTER AND TYPE OF WORK[53]

	branch of movement with which it dealt					
type of work	general	consumer	credit	agriculture	artels	total
brochure	98	159	112	69	24	462
daily newspaper, leaflet	49	136	32	10	8	235
artistic work	53	0	0	0	0	53
calendars, reference works	115	0	0	0	3	118
posters	63	36	17	2	1	119
biography	81	0	0	0	0	81
total	459	331	161	81	36	1068
per cent	43.0	31.0	15.1	7.6	3.4	100.

There were also many cooperative journals, but most were relatively small in circulation. Just as Russian cooperatives, in comparison with the cooperatives of Western Europe, were relatively many in number but small in size, so Russian cooperative journals were relative many in number but small in circulation. In 1911, Ob'edinenie counted 150 cooperative journals over the world as a whole in 17 languages. Of these, 15 were published in Russia, 50 in England, 16 in Germany, 12 in Italy and 10 in Switzerland.[54] The number of cooperative journals in Russia rose to 40 by 1916, to 63 by 1917, and to 143 by 1918. Of these, 22 were published in Moscow alone.[55] But while the total number of copies of cooperative journals printed in 1910 in England was

745,000, in Germany 315,000 and in Switzerland, 154,000, in Russia it was certainly no more than 20,000.[56]

The first major consumer cooperative journal in Russia was Soiuz Potrebitelei. The government department dealing with the press (Glavnoe Upravlenie po Delam Pechati) gave the MSPO permission to begin publishing the journal on October 25, 1902 and it began publishing in January, 1903. Interestingly, the union was allowed to publish without preliminary censorship. This was undoubtedly due to the union's well placed friends. The editor of the journal from its founding until the beginning of 1906 was Nikolai Petrovich Gibner. Gibner had previously been the editor of Sberezhenie (Savings), the journal of the Economic Society of Officers of the Moscow Military District, which prior to the founding of Soiuz Potrebitelei had followed the founding and development of the MSPO very closely.

Soiuz Potrebitelei (Union of Consumers) was written at an intellectual level that made it comprehensible and interesting only to rather well educated cooperators. Its price was relatively high. At the time of its founding, it cost three rubles a year for societies that were members of the MSPO and five rubles a year to any other person or organization. It was published according to a 'program' which had to be approved by the Ministry of Interior. According to the approved program, the journal was to include:

1. decrees and statements of the government relating to consumer societies and discussion of these decrees within the limits established by law

2. articles directly related to the affairs of the MSPO and information on the position and activities of consumer societies in Russia and abroad

3. information on activities of other types of cooperative establishments, in Russia and abroad, relating to consumer societies, as loan and savings associations, housing cooperatives, production associations, agricultural associations, etc.

4. private advertisements[57]

The main emphasis, in practice, was on numbers two and three.

Soiuz Potrebitelei was run at a loss for quite some time. Its first year of publication ended with a loss of over 1200 rubles, its second with a loss of about 1000 rubles and its third with a loss of about 800 rubles. These losses were especially high considering that virtually all of the editing work was done on a volunteer basis. The basic cause of the journal's insolvency was its low circulation. As late as 1906, only 500 copies of each issue were printed.[58] But the MSPO considered the publishing venture worthwhile and covered the losses. Eventually, the problem solved itself as interest in the consumer cooperative movement spread.

The purpose of publishing Soiuz Potrebitelei and other journals was to stimulate interest in the consumer cooperative movement and to provide practical advice on

how societies should be run. But there was by no means universal agreement on how cooperative journals were to go about this task. When this question was discussed at the 17th Meeting of Representatives of the MSPO in November, 1908, some delegates argued that Soiuz Potrebitelei was too specialized. These delegates proposed including more articles of a general character, including poems and short stories. Others said that interest could be better stimulated by having more articles on the cooperative movement in the West, accompanied with illustrations. Still others called for more regular information on goods and prices. But all agreed that the journal should be more varied in character and that more money should be spent on its publication. At that meeting, the suggestion was made for the first time of publishing an additional, "popular" issue each month, costing less and written more simply than Soiuz Potrebitelei.[59] An additional area of disagreement was over the role that should be played by local correspondents, as opposed to professional editors, in the publication of MSPO journals. Some argued that an attempt should be made to have the majority of articles, including the general ones, written by local correspondents, rather than by the editorial staff itself. But this idea was never put into practice. These questions continued to be discussed at almost every MSPO meeting of representatives.

In 1910, 48 issues of Soiuz Potrebitelei were published a year. One issue a month was supposedly a popular one, designed to be more appealing to uneducated readers. In fact, it hardly differed from the rest of the issues. As of 1911, the publication of the popular issue of Soiuz Potrebitelei was stopped and replaced by the founding of a new journal called Ob'edinenie. The name "Ob'edinenie" is another word for union, usually used to refer to a small, regional union. The first issue of this journal appeared February 18, 1911. It was designed for working class members of consumer societies and contained a wide variety of articles. The first issue of Ob'edinenie announced that it would include:

1. articles, news and information on the MSPO
2. notes and information on societies and associations of various types, including credit, agricultural, production, housing, trade union, mutual aid, temperance and educational
3. articles and information on questions of worker and peasant customs, life and law
4. stories and poetry
5. pictures
6. miscellaneous notes and anecdotes
7. information on business management and the struggle against unfair business practices, notes on hygiene, bringing up children, and house-keeping
8. biography
9. questions and answers
10. advertisements

Ob'edinenie was to be published twice a month and a single copy was to cost only three kopeks in Moscow and five kopeks in the provinces. A year's subscription was to cost

1.20 rubles. Societies were encouraged to order many subscriptions to distribute among their members by reduced rates for ordering more than one. Three subscriptions cost two rubles, five subscriptions cost three rubles, 50 subscriptions cost 20 rubles and 1000 cost 250 rubles.[60]

The editor of both Soiuz Potrebitelei and Ob'edinenie was the socialist sympathizer V. N. Zel'geim. Shishkin's memoirs contain a glowing description of Zel'geim. He was

> spiritually strong, European educated, with great energy in the field of the cooperative movement, and possessed brilliant intuition with respect to complicated questions, modest, simple and respected by all.[61]

As we shall see later in this section, Zel'geim was not only an energetic editor but a courageous one. He was certainly responsible for the MSPO's position of cautious opposition to the war and he was arrested more than once during the war for articles written with a radical slant.

A further step by the MSPO in the direction of a more popularly oriented press was taken by the establishment of Obshchee Delo (Common Cause), the first issue of which appeared February 7, 1916. From that time, Ob'edinenie came to be directed mainly toward the urban working class and Obshchee Delo mainly toward the rural working class. The first issue of Obshchee Delo announced that it was intended for the "wide circles of the village population... With respect to its language, our journal is intended for

the least educated reader."[62] The editor of Obshchee Delo throughout its history was the Kadet A. V. Merkulov.

The MSPO had even wider plans for the development of its periodical publications. For a short time in 1914, Ob'edinenie was published with three supplements, each intended for a different district. They were four pages long and contained correspondence and articles only on the district in question. It was planned to start with one each for the Moscow area, the Ivanovo-Voznesensk area and the Perm area and as interest increased to increase the number of supplements. This idea was dropped a few months later without explanation. Later, in February, 1916, Obshchee Delo announced that as of March, 1917, the MSPO would begin publishing a journal to be called Nashe Edinenie (Our Unity) to deal particularly with the problems of worker and city cooperatives.[63] In March, 1916, Ob'edinenie announced that a meeting of MSPO employees had decided to begin publishing a journal to be called Kooperativnyi Sluzhashchii (Cooperative Employee), specializing in questions of interest to cooperative employees. Publication was to begin the following month. Nothing further was seen or heard of these two prospective journals, including no announcement explaining why they did not appear. Possible reasons include lack of funds, government disapproval or simply shortage of paper. In March, 1916, Obshchee Delo announced that scarcity of paper had caused its price to more than quadruple.[64]

By 1916, the total circulation of the MSPO's three journals was 41,220. This included:

	1915	1916[65]
Soiuz Potrebitelei	6920	9630
Ob'edinenie	24465	21443
Obshchee Delo	---	10147
total	31385	41220

The circulation of Ob'edinenie fell between 1915 and 1916 due to the establishment of Obshchee Delo, but the net effect of the foundation of the new journal was to raise the circulation of the MSPO press by over 7000 in one year. In 1916, Soiuz Potrebitelei came out with 48 issues and Ob'edinenie and Obshchee Delo came out with 24 issues each. (Occasionally, a somewhat longer issue was published, which counted for two regular issues.)

From the very beginning, the editors of MSPO journals showed surprising independence in criticizing the interference of factory or railroad administrations in the affairs of consumer societies. A good example was the publication of the fact that when a strike began at the Putilov factory in June, 1905, the Putilov consumer society stopped giving credit. In August, an article appeared in Soiuz Potrebitelei stating point blank that the factory administration had instructed the consumer society to do so. The article noted that the consumer society was completely controlled by the factory administration and added that of some 15,000 workers in the factory, only

about 100 owned shares in the society, and that was "mainly for decoration." This independent criticism is particularly surprising in view of the fact that the Putilov society and many other administration controlled factory and railroad societies, were members of the MSPO.[66]

One special subject on which cooperative journals often carried articles was the struggle against what was referred to as "falsification." It was a rather common practice for merchants to adulterate their merchandise. An anecdote was told in the first issue of Ob'edinenie about a small newspaper in Normandy which had recently carried the announcement:

> I invite the merchant who yesterday sold me a pound of sugar with 'just a dash' of plaster in it to bring to the editorial office of this newspaper a half pound of sugar, since in the pound I bought there was that much plaster. Otherwise, I will publish his name tomorrow.

The effect of the notice was that packages of sugar were brought to the newspaper by every merchant in town except two.[67] On another occasion, Ob'edinenie reported on the macabre punishments meted out to dishonest merchants in earlier ages, such as, in ancient Greece, burning or burying alive.[68]

The publications of the consumer cooperative movement, and particularly of the MSPO, have been the most important sources used in writing this dissertation. It is important to say something about them as historical sources,

particularly with respect to their publication of "correspondence." In the middle of 1908, for the first time, the editors of Soiuz Potrebitelei invited their readers to send in information about their societies. "Literary form is of no importance," said the front page box. "What is important are facts, to which the editorial board can always add approriate literary form."[69] This was the origin of the key source for the historian of consumer cooperatives. A few years later, every important consumer cooperative journal had a section called "correspondence," consisting of descriptions of the successes and failures of individual consumer societies written by their members.

In instituting correspondence sections, the editors of cooperative journals were not thinking of the needs of future historians but of contemporary cooperators. Correspondence articles provided cooperators with ideas about how they could improve their societies, and probably more important, with success stories for encouragement in their difficult task. Only in 1918, was payment introduced for correspondence articles. In March, 1918, the editors of Obshchee Delo offered fifteen kopeks a line for correspondence and in June, the editors of Ob'edinenie offered twenty kopeks a line.[70]

There is a major problem with correspondence as an historical source. It is impossible to know for sure to what extent what was published in correspondence articles

was a fair sample of what actually occurred. It has been mentioned above that correspondents preferred not to send in material that was critical of their society.[71] When a critical correspondence article was published, it was often followed by a long winded rejoinder, arguing that the writer had gotten his facts wrong and that he must for some reason be trying to discredit the society. Sometimes in such cases the editors tried to check the facts, but that was very difficult. The front pages of Ob'edinenie and Obshchee Delo frequently contained announcements from the editors asking readers to send correspondence. The announcements emphasized that: "Only one demand is made on correspondence from the lives of societies--trustworthiness with respect to facts."[72] It was added that correspondence should be written neatly, on only one side of the page, and if possible typewritten. The implication is clear that much correspondence was illegible and some was hardly literate.

It is also impossible to know what sort of sample of the correspondence that was sent in was actually published. The editors were certainly selective. It is particularly suspicious that there are certain periods, for example 1909 through 1911 and 1918 to 1919, when virtually the only news that was published was good news. But these were years when consumer societies were experiencing particularly rough times, when the whole consumer cooperative

movement was under special pressure from the government. It seems that during these periods the editors did not want to give any possible excuse to the government for further attacks. Correspondence articles must be used with care, because they undoubtedly give an unrealistically rosy picture of what was happening in individual societies.

Statistical sources on the history of the consumer cooperative movement are abundant. The task of studying the history of consumer cooperatives is made far easier by the fact that the cooperative movement took a great interest in studying itself. The pages of Soiuz Potrebitelei frequently contained statistical studies of all sorts of problems for which the historian would otherwise have to rely upon impressionistic evidence. These studies were often compiled by the MSPO's own staff of statisticians. Furthermore, for the years 1911, 1912, 1913, and 1914 the MSPO published voluminious yearbooks, filled with all sorts of data.

While these statistics are an invaluable source, they do have certain limitations. First, the vast majority cover only MSPO societies and cannot be projected easily to Russia as a whole. The societies which belonged to this union were, on the whole, better off than nonunion societies. Furthermore, only about two thirds to three fourths of MSPO societies sent in reports for use in

compiling union surveys. The larger, better established societies sent in a larger percentage of reports. Illustration of this point is found in the following table, showing the percentage of reports sent in by various types of societies.

PER CENT OF MSPO CONSUMER SOCIETIES SENDING IN USABLE FINANCIAL REPORTS IN 1912[73]

	city	factory	railroad	worker	village	total
number of societies in union	195	117	21	39	378	750
per cent of societies in union	26	16	3	5	50	100
number of societies reporting	133	93	18	28	222	494
per cent of societies reporting	27	19	4	6	45	100
per cent of societies of type reporting	68	79	86	72	59	66

Factory and railroad consumer societies, which were the largest and wealthiest, sent in the largest relative percentage of reports. Village societies, the smallest and poorest, sent in by far the smallest percentage of reports. The smaller societies kept less accurate records than the larger ones so that responding to the union's surveys required a greater effort.

Furthermore, many of the reports which were considered usable were not complete. Out of 448 societies which sent in reports on membership and circulation for 1911, only 343 included figures on distribution of profits.[74] For that reason, it is very difficult to answer such interesting questions as the relationship between different methods of allocating profits and the circulation of a given type of society.

A final problem with the statistics available on the consumer cooperative movement is that the dislocations of the First World War seriously interrupted the gathering of them. The last complete statistics, found in the yearbook for 1914 were published in 1916 but refer to the year 1912.

No individual cooperator and no cooperative journal could claim to speak for the entire cooperative movement. Each journal had its particular slant, which can be discerned upon careful reading. Even the three journals of the MSPO were written from different points of view. Ob'edinenie was left oriented, Obshchee Delo conservative and Soiuz Potrebitelei in between. At the same time, cooperative journals rarely discussed politics directly. An important limitation of the publications of the consumer cooperative movement as an historical source is that, except for a short time in 1917, they do not mention political activities of cooperatives nor do they identify any activity at all with respect to political party.

Furthermore, they hardly ever refer to any individual cooperative worker by name. The only biographical information on Russian cooperators that appeared in cooperative journals was in occasional obituaries. I believe that this was an attempt to avoid harassment wherever possible. Whatever the cause was, the result is that information available on the political activities of consumer societies and of the consumer cooperative movement is incomplete and conclusions can only be drawn with some caution.

In October, 1903, the MSPO received permission to publish its first two pamphlets. One was V. A. Anofriev's "Kak mozhno deshevo Zhit' v skladshchiny (How to live more cheaply by pooling resouces)". This was a rather pedestrian account of the advantages of joining a consumer society, originally published in 1901. The second was a technical brochure, written by union officials, called "Osnovye voprosy deiatel'nosti potrebitel'nykh obshchestv (Basic questions on the activity of consumer societies)".[75] Neither of these first two pamphlets went into a second edition. It seems that neither was particularly successful in meeting the needs of readers and that it took a few years before the MSPO was able to learn to produce popular literature that really met the needs of its members and member societies.

Among the most successful examples of MSPO popular literature, if the number of editions they went through is any indication, were "Predvaritel'nyia ukazaniia uchrediteliam potrebitel'nykh obshchestv (Preliminary instructions for the founders of consumer societies)"[76] and K. K. Suzdal'tsev's "Kopeika rubl' berezhet (A penny saved is a penny earned)".[77] The former pamphlet provided organizers of consumer societies with practical advice, such as how to comply with governmental decrees regulating the establishment of a society and with bibliography for further reading. The eighth edition was revised in order to include the changes put into effect by the all-cooperative law of March, 1917.

"Kopeika rubl' berezhet" was a simply written but highly articulate pamphlet on the advantages of joining a consumer society. It began by pointing out that in England in 1914, consumer societies had made a total net profit of 135 million rubles. "If it were not for consumer societies that money would have gone into the pockets of shopkeepers, but now it remains with the purchasers."[78] The pamphlet pointed out that by joining a consumer society, a person could secure lower prices and better quality goods. It told the following story to make the point better:

> An old peasant woman came into a consumer society with a bottle and asked that it be filled with kerosine. And wasn't she surprised when she was told that one and a quarter funt less went into the bottle than had been poured in for her by the

> local shopkeeper! She literally, for two or three minutes, couldn't come to herself, but finally uttered, 'Well, that villain has been telling me for ten whole years that this bottle holds six and a quarter funt, as though it had neither top nor bottom. And that village grandma became an ardent propagandist for the idea of cooperation. Everywhere, at every convenient and inconvenient opportunity, she told about the ten year swindle by the merchant, and many people followed her advice and started to buy at the consumer society.[79]

The pamphlet also had a political message, which was a moderate socialist one. The main benefit of consumer societies, according to Suzdal'tsev, was that they got people into the habit of working together for the common good. Only when the social and economic life of all peoples was organized on a cooperative basis would it be possible to avoid international conflicts. The final paragraph was even stronger.

> Thus consumer societies are not only an adroit invention for keeping a few rubles in the pocket of the consumer, but they are fated to play an important role in the liberation of the working class. They prepare the road for a more just construction of society. Karl Kautsky says, 'Is there any model of future society better for us than that of an immense consumer society, and, at the same time, the social manufacturing, which produces products for those who become its members.'[80]

These two pamphlets can be taken as representative of the best of popular cooperative literature. They cost 15 and 20 kopeks respectively per copy, which in 1917 was next to nothing. They provided practical instruction and moral inspiration, both of which were things that local cooperators surely needed.

Another type of popular literature put out by the MSPO and other cooperative organizations, was calendars. For 1917, the MSPO printed 250,000 copies of a general 'tear-off' calendar (i.e., a calendar with a separate sheet for each day which was to be torn off at the end of the day), 50,000 copies of a table calendar for urban societies and 100,000 copies of a table calendar for village societies. There were also agenda notebooks (one model designed for the member of a consumer society and one designed for officials) and pocket calendars. These all contained short articles on forming and running societies. The agenda notebooks also contained frequently needed information such as addresses of central cooperative organizations and tables showing postal rates.

Information on who read the literature published by the consumer cooperative movement is quite scattered but is of great interest. The readers of cooperative literature were clearly among the most dedicated cooperators. By taking a look at who read cooperative literature, we come a long way towards understanding what they were like. We find that they were people from a wide variety of backgrounds and with a wide variety of interests. Consumer cooperative publishing came a long way towards achieving its goal of spreading of the idea of cooperation among the literate members of the working class population.

Highly interesting information on who read cooperative journals is found in a survey made in the summer of 1914 of the readers of Ob'edinenie. One issue of the journal contained a questionnaire asking various questions with respect to profession and interests. Out of 17,000 questionnaires only 505 replies were received and only 494 were from people who said that they read the journal, but the survey is interesting as an indication of the thoughts of the most dedicated readers. The respondents gave the following account of their professions:

THE PROFESSIONS OF 494 READERS OF OB'EDINENIE

	number	per cent
employees in cooperatives	115	23.3
workers	113	22.9
employees in other enterprises	90	18.2
agricultural workers	65	13.2
village intelligensia	46	9.3
miscellaneous professions	28	5.7
agricultural workers with an additional source of income	21	4.2
miscellaneous	16	3.2
total	494	100.0

Not surprisingly, virtually all of the people who responded to this survey read other journals besides Ob'edinenie. Forty-eight per cent read three or more other journals, 22 per cent read two other journals, 20 per cent read one other journal and only four per cent read only Ob'edinenie.

At least a small number of copies of Ob'edinenie were read by more than one person. Only 26 per cent of those

who filled in the questionnaire said they read the journal alone. Another six per cent said they read it with their families and 55 per cent said they passed it along to others or distributed it in some way. This question was not answered by 13 per cent of the respondents.

The questionnaire asked readers to list the types of articles they were interested in. The following answers were volunteered:

SUBJECTS OF INTEREST TO THE READERS OF OB'EDINENIE

topic	percent of readers mentioning it
everything	20.4
the cooperative movement	75.7
activities of societies	59.8
the cooperative movement abroad	6.3
stories	25.3
poems	26.4
the worker question	21.4
alcoholism	9.4

A "very small" number of readers indicated particular interest in biographies of famous cooperators and other famous people, in agricultural questions or in cultural work. About six per cent said that they read each issue cover to cover.

There was much disagreement on the value of stories and poetry. Some readers said that these should be excluded from the journal while others said that this was the only part of the journal that they read. Soiuz Potrebitelei concluded that this was an indication that

such features were very important for the less well educated readers.

Those readers who said they were particularly interested in the worker question, had in mind articles dealing with worker insurance and sickness funds. Very few articles on the trade union movement appeared in Ob'edinenie until 1917. Other readers said that articles on the worker question should be excluded from the journal.

The most important thing that this survey indicates is that although white collar workers and members of the intelligensia made up most of the most dedicated readers of Ob'edinenie, they were by no means the only readers. The journal was relatively successful in attracting the interest of the less educated reader. Certainly a larger percentage of readers who failed to respond to the survey fall into the less educated group.[81]

A study of the employees of MSPO consumer societies made in 1912 asked whether they read the union's journals. Fifty-nine per cent of the employees reached by the survey said that they always did so. The employees who read the journals tended to be those most closely involved in management. Answers were supplied by 900 employees.

PER CENT OF MSPO SOCIETY EMPLOYEES READING SOIUZ POTREBITELEI OR OB'EDINENIE[82]

position	always	occasionally	never
bookkeeper	83.0	12.0	5.0
manager, chief salesperson	76.0	10.0	14.0
clerk	55.4	15.6	29.0
assistant sales-person	52.6	7.4	40.0
watchman, worker, odd-jobber	30.0	3.0	67.0
average	59.0	8.5	32.5

The employees of village societies had the best record on reading the union's journals. This is a reflection of the fact that village societies were the smallest and consequently had the largest percentage of employees involved directly in management. Seventy-six per cent of the employees of village societies said that they always read one of the journals, in contrast to 52 per cent of the employees of factory societies and 55 per cent of the employees of railroad societies.

Another approach to the question of who read cooperative journals is to look at the type of advertisements they contained. About half of the advertisements that appeared in Soiuz Potrebitelei were for particular products. They were obviously directed towards buyers for consumer societies. For example, there were advertisements for candy, hot chocolate and bicycles. The MSPO advertised some of its own products, including tea and mustard. In

view of the union's equivocal stand in the fight against alcoholism, it is interesting to note that there were advertisements for wine. An advertisement printed in January, 1908, said, "You should know why doctors recommend wine."[83]

Virtually all of the rest of the advertisements were for cooperative literature. In Soiuz Potrebitelei, the MSPO advertised its other journals, pamphlets and books. MSPO journals also contained advertisements for posters on cooperative themes. One of the most popular posters showed a cartoon depicting a poor consumer carrying on his back a shopkeeper, who in turn is carrying a middle man (komissioner), who in turn is carrying a wholesale distributor who in turn is carrying a factory owner. Underneath was the slogan: "Consumer! Divided you are nothing, united you are everything."[84]

At the beginning of each year, Soiuz Potrebitelei carried advertisements for non-MSPO journals as well. The number of these advertisements expanded each year to the point that in the first two issues of 1917, Soiuz Potrebitelei carried advertisements for 96 different journals! These advertisements were surely submitted on the assumption that at least a few of the readers of Soiuz Potrebitelei would be interested in them. The 96 journals advertised covered an extremely wide range of interests.

JOURNALS ADVERTISED IN Soiuz Potrebitelei IN JANUARY 1917, DIVIDED BY SUBJECT MATTER[85]

cooperative movement	
consumer	5
credit	5
agricultural	1
handicrafts	2
general	11
agricultural	22
economic/political/literary	10
zemstvo and city organizations	11
insurance	2
Jewish	2
finance and trade	10
industry and mining	3
general regional	2
medicine, education, nature	10
total	96

All publications of the Russian Empire were censored. The fact that Soiuz Potrebitelei was published "without preliminary censorship" meant that it was read after publication. This was as far as governmental trust extended. All other MSPO publications were censored prior to printing. In the remaining pages of this section, we will look at how the censorship apparatus affected the publications of the consumer cooperative movement.

No MSPO publication was prevented from appearing until March, 1912, when an issue of Ob'edinenie was seized by the government, evidently for an article calling for the passage of a new, all-cooperative law.[86] Later, upon the outbreak of the World War, issues of Soiuz Potrebitelei and Ob'edinenie were confiscated and the journals temporarily lost the right to publish as a result of pacifist

articles. The union received permission to begin publication again with the issue of September 1.[87] In the same year, the Cooperative Table Calendar for 1915 was withheld from distribution due to two offending articles by Zel'geim. They were titled respectively, "Philanthropy and Mutual Aid" and "Worker Life" and the censor saw in them a call for class struggle.[88] Zel'geim was sentenced to a month in jail by a lower court, but the case continued to be appealed until January, 1916, when the conviction was overturned by the State Senate. The Calendar was finally put on sale in October, 1915, with the offending portions removed.[89] One can only speculate as to the reasons for Zel'geim's final acquital.

But Zel'geim was to get into trouble again later in 1916 when he was brought to trial for an article written in praise of Karl Leibknecht, titled "His Father's Son." The article was to be published in the July 23, 1916, issue of Ob'edinenie, but the government did not allow the issue to be distributed and brought charges against Zel'geim. Only two more issues of the journal were allowed to appear before it was summarily closed. The last issue of 1916 appeared on September 22. The following issue was published only on April 16, 1917.

These were the major cases of governmental interference in the publications of the consumer cooperative movement. Without access to archives, the precise

number of minor ones is impossible to know. It is normally not possible to see what has been cut out. There are two significant exceptions. Trud (Labor), a left wing worker consumer cooperative journal began publishing in the summer of 1916 in Petrograd, under the auspices of the St. Petersburg Branch. Virtually every issue of this journal had many blank spaces on every page normally making the content of the articles practically incomprehensible. Starting in the summer of 1916, the left wing Ukrainian consumer cooperative journal Iiuzhno-Russkii Potrebitel' (South-Russian Consumer) was also filled with such delitions.

It becomes clear from reading the consumer cooperative press that in the course of the war the tsarist government gradually lost its control over what was published. Cooperative journals found it possible to publish a great deal of political information, information which could never have been printed prior to 1914. The issue of Obshchee Delo that appeared on the eve of the February Revolution carried an article which illustrates the weakened powers of the government. When Ob'edinenie had been closed Obshchee Delo had taken its place. It took over the other journal's subscription list, shifted its focus towards the coverage of the activities of worker cooperatives and even adopted Ob'edinenie's more aggressive tone. The article in question stated that the Minister of

Interior had sent a letter to all provincial governors criticizing their "weak supervision of the provincial--general and cooperative--press."[90] The very fact that Obshchee Delo could and would publish such a report was a part of the problem. Publication was possible because the censorship apparatus was partially parallyzed, no doubt largely as the result of overwork. Journals like Trud and Iiuzhno-Russkii Potrebitel' were exceptions. There the government was able, after a fashion, to control what was published and read. But even there, the blank spaces in the articles were a rather eloquent statement of dissent. Clearly, the additional burdens put upon the tsarist government by the war, at first only by the fighting but later also by the goods crisis and popular unrest, made it impossible for it to maintain the sort of control over the press that it previously had. We have already seen that the powers of the tsarist government were weakened in another area as well. The government could no longer force consumer societies to follow legal procedures in asking approval for their charters.[91] In a later chapter, we shall see how cooperators and other progressive groups were able to use their support for the war effort as a means of winning the right of popular initiative. The tsarist government was losing its grip on the Russian Empire.

E. Conclusion: the social impact of the consumer co-operative movement

This section is to assess the impact of consumer co-operatives as social institutions. It is a difficult problem and the answer depends in part on how it is formulated. If one asks whether consumer cooperatives brought about the disintegration of the tsarist government the answer is undoubtedly not. The war and goods crisis did that. If one asks whether the consumer cooperative movement prepared the Russian working classes for self government, the answer is again that it did not. In 1917, the Russian working classes were not prepared for self government. Power quickly passed back into the hands of an elite.

But if one asks whether the consumer cooperative movement had the potential of preparing the Russian working classes for self government, the answer is that it did. It is best to go back to Shishkin's definition. All consumer cooperators, said Shishkin, socialist and non-socialist,

> agreed that through cooperation the people would gain the habits, experience and knowledge necessary for the building of a better future.[92]

Cooperators sought to achieve this goal, as we have seen, through their general meetings, their cultural and educational work and their publishing. The task remained unfinished, but the potential was there.

During the optimistic days that followed the February Revolution, many consumer cooperators assessed the social impact of their movement more positively. There was an air of self congratulation among cooperators, as though nothing would have happened if it had not been for them. A correspondence article in Ob'edinenie in mid-April stated that in Tula the overthrow of the old tsarist administration and its replacement "went easily with the help of the habits of social activity accumulated in previous work." The article went on to state that the change in power had been considerably less well organized in Orlov, since "cooperatives there are weak and therefore there were no centers and organizations prepared to form a new authority."[93] One speaker at a meeting held by a village consumer society in early March in Moscow guberniia said:

> Now in the village it is impossible to defend the old tsarist structure. Of course, it would have been difficult for the village inhabitant to imagine the new order without the tsar if he were not acquainted with the establishment of a cooperative.[94]

Such comments were a reflection of the heady atmosphere that accompanied the initial successes of the provisional government. The tone was more muted in September, 1917, when one cooperator, who had worked as a census taker registering people to vote in the elections to the Constituant Assembly, commented on the poor preparation of the population at large to take up the role of

government. He had visited 60 apartments in a poor section on the outskirts of Moscow, each of which housed 20 to 28 persons. He concluded that the only people for whom there was any hope at all were those who had belonged to consumer societies. When he came to apartments the inhabitants of which belonged to consumer societies and told them what he was doing, the people always knew just what he was talking about and gave all necessary information readily. But in other apartments, he was met with hostility, disbelief or simple ignorance. When he tried to explain what he was doing at one apartment, for example, the inhabitants only told him repeatedly that they did not need him there because they already had ration cards.[95]

The self congratulation stopped entirely after the October Revolution. In December, 1917, Obshchee Delo commented that "while some of the former enemies of cooperation, such as the kulak administration and the police, are gone, the chief enemy remains: the ignorance of the masses."[96] In June, 1918, Obshchee Delo complained that many of the cultural and educational projects established in 1917 had already fallen apart.

> They are all either dead or living out their last days. Involuntarily one asks oneself, what is the reason? It is difficult to grasp the true cause and one is forced to limit oneself to the conclusion that the organizers were not sufficiently experienced, patient and capable...[97]

V. V. Kabanov, the foremost Soviet historian on the history of the consumer cooperative movement, makes an

assessment of the social impact of the movement that is essentially similar to the one made by cooperators in the first months after the February Revolution. Kabanov quotes a statement made by Lenin to the effect that the cooperative movement served as a tremendous cultural legacy which it is necessary to value and to use." Lenin added that "The great work done by the cooperative movement is fully comparable to the accomplishments of Soviet power." He even went so far as to say in 1918 and again in 1923 that "the cooperative, if it encompasses all of society and if the land is socialized and the factories and plants are nationalized, is socialism". Kabanov specifies for Lenin of what, in his opinion, the "tremendous cultural legacy" of the cooperative movement consisted: "the material-technical and organizational strengths of cooperatives, the experience of cooperative work, the development of public initiative among the members and the capacity of the cooperative movement to develop the habit of collective work and the ability (on the part of the working classes) to organize their own affairs in a cultured and literate way."[98]

Kabanov provides virtually no specific information on exactly how the cooperative movement fulfilled its cultural legacy. This can conceivably be justified by the fact that Kabanov's book is largely concerned with the cooperative movement between October, 1917, and March,

1919. Doubtless much of the material presented in this dissertation, especially in this chapter, could be used by Kabanov in support of his position.

Kabanov's approach to the history of the cooperative movement is unusual in Soviet scholarship for its flexibility and lack of [illegible]atism. Unlike other Soviet historical work, Kabanov does not paint his subject matter only in black and white. He does not insist, as others do, that the cooperative movement was all good or all bad. He takes the position which I believe to be correct that the consumer cooperative movement was complex and varied. Its participants included persons across the whole spectrum of political persuasion and the movement served, in different ways, both to reinforce capitalism in Russia and to undermine it. All the same, I am forced to take exception to Kabanov's conclusion on the social impact of the cooperative movement.

Let us review the ideals and accomplishments of the consumer cooperative movement with respect to its social objectives. Ideally, the general meeting would teach the Russian workers and peasants to run their own affairs. This would be accomplished by means of the less well educated members following the example of the better educated ones. The evidence indicates that prior to 1917, cooperators had not made much headway in this extraordinarily difficult task. The disorderly quality of general

meetings shows that a process of education was taking place, but that it was nowhere near completion. The cultural and educational work of consumer societies had the same ideal objective. It emphasized the moral development of the working classes and, to whatever extent possible, their political development. But it is no accident that the tsarist administration was suspicious of any activity which had as its purpose to instill in the working classes the "habits, experience and knowledge necessary for a better future." Cultural work was severely limited by government restriction and by shortage of funds. Consumer cooperative publishing was a special form of cultural activity which worked to spread information and advice on the founding and operation of cooperatives and to spread the idea of cooperation among the literate members of the working classes. Partially through its publication of popular pamphlets and journals, the consumer cooperative movement was extremely successful at reaching a wide variety of readers. Cooperative publishing was restricted by government consorship but in the course of the war the government lost much of its control over what was published.

There are four important reasons why consumer societies, despite their indisputable potential, had only a limited impact on the cultural level of the working classes of Russia, why they could not prepare the working

classes for self-government. First, the consumer cooperative movement did not have enough time to reach enough people. It is highly probable that by 1917, the consumer cooperative movement had made a substantial impact on those few people who had been members of societies for a number of years. But while, according to Merkulov's figures, 11.55 million people were members of consumer societies at the beginning of 1918, at the beginning of 1914, only 1.4 million were members. It is only on those 1.4 million persons, which was about one per cent of the populaton of the Russian Empire, that the cultural work of consumer societies can be expected to have had a substantial impact.[99] It is not possible to argue that consumer cooperatives had a sizable impact on the cultural level of Russian society as a whole.

Second, the task was an overwhelmingly difficult one. Among the qualities it required were intelligence, commitment, creativity, patience and time. The nature of the task must have tried the patience of even the most dedicated cooperators and after 1914, time was running out.

The number of people that cooperative publications could reach was limited by the fact that on the eve of the October Revolution only some 20 to 25 per cent of the population of Russia was literate.[100]

Finally, the growth of the consumer cooperative movement should be thought of as primarily a result of

the intensification of Russia's social crisis and only secondarily as a means of alleviating it. The World War was the major stimulus to the growth of the movement. Like other institutions, such as the Imperial Duma or the War-Industries Committees, consumer cooperatives were created as the result of the social crisis. The problems that created consumer societies grew faster than their ability to alleviate them.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), May 2, 1905, pp. 195-196.

[2]Russkiia Vedomosti (Moscow), May 25, 1901, p. 2.

[3]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), July 25, 1909, pp. 651-652.

[4]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), February 25, 1911, front cover.

[5]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), March 16, 1911, front cover.

[6]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), March 29, 1911, p. 8.

[7]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), July 15, 1911, pp. 1-3.

[8]Kabanov, Oktiabr'skaia revoliutsiia i kooperatsiia 1917 g. - mart 1919 g.), p. 75.

[9]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), July 25, 1915, pp. 11-13.

[10]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), March 13, 1913, pp. 4-6. Italics in original.

[11]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), March 30, 1913, p. 9. The precise work from which this statement came was not identified.

[12]Shishkin, Iz vospominanii kooperativnykh i politicheskikh, p. 2.

[13]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), November 22, 1908, pp. 858-861.

[14]See Ob'edinenie (Moscow), March 29, 1911, pp. 1-4.

[15]Trudovoi Soiuz (St. Petersburg), August, 1907, pp. 229-231.

[16]Ibid., p. 233. It is unfortunate that the article did not state who was presiding at that time. It could have been Posse but it could have been one of the society's worker members.

[17]Obshchee Delo (Moscow), April 20, 1916, pp. 17-18.

[18]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), August 31, 1913, pp. 19-20.

[19]Obshchee Delo (Moscow), January 12, 1917, pp. 25-26.

[20]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), January 31, 1909, pp. 82-83.

[21]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), September 23, 1905, pp. 502-504.

[22]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), November 22, 1908, pp. 858-861.

[23]I. M. Podel'skii, "Organizatsiia otdel'nykh lektsii po kooperatsii," in Organizatsiia mestnykh kooperativnykh kursov, p. 70.

[24]See, for example, Obshchee Delo (Moscow), May 29, 1916, pp. 18-19.

[25]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), August 28, 1915, pp. 11-13.

[26]Obshchee Delo (Moscow), January 12, 1917, pp. 23-25.

[27]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), August 22, 1912, pp. 537-538.

[28]For more on Shaniavskii University, see below, pages 259, 261-262.

[29]Obshchee Delo (Moscow), April 20, 1916, pp. 17-18.

[30]The statement was first made in a letter addressed to V. F. Totomiants and published in Vestnik Kooperatsii (St. Petersburg), February, 1911, pp. 59-60.

[31]Ivan Khristoforovich Ozerov, Chto takoe obshchestvo potrebitelei, kak ego osnovit' i vesti (3rd ed.; Moscow: 1909), p. 42.

[32]Grave, K istorii klassovoi bor'by v Rossii, p. 317.

[33]Iz praktiki kul'turno-prosvetitel'noi raboty kooperativov (2nd ed.; Moscow: MSPO, 1917), p. 5.

[34]Ibid., pp. 16-18, 30.

[35]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), July 12, 1913, pp. 506-511.

[36]Iz praktiki kul-turno-prosvetitel'noi raboty kooperativov, p. 9.

[37]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), February 24, 1915, p. 15.

[38]See above, page 173.

[39]Obshchee Delo (Moscow), July 12, 1916, p. 20.

[40]Iz praktiki kul'turno-prosvetitel'noi raboty kooperativov, p. 29. The article was unsigned but it was almost undoubtedly written by Shishkin.

[41]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), February 25, 1911, pp. 8-9.

[42]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), January 9, 1910, p. 20.

[43]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), April 16, 1917, p. 18.

[44]Ezhegodnik MSPO, 1913 g., Pt. II, pp. 74-75. The figures apply to the year 1911. That year was chosen because the statistics are the most complete. A total of 448 societies were counted.

[45]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), July 12, 1913, pp. 506-511.

[46]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), July 23, 1916, pp. 943-946. This source does not give the total annual allocations, and since the figures given do not correspond precisely to those in the yearbooks, it is not possible to fill them in.

[47]Ezhegodnik MSPO, 1914 g., Pt. I, p. 151. Note that here allocations are given as a percentage of trade expenses rather than as a percentage of net profit.

[48]Obshchee Delo (Moscow), July 12, 1916, p. 20. See above pages 192 and 193.

[49]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), February 9, 1912, pp. 109-113.

[50]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), May 22, 1914, pp. 412-421. See below, pages 226 and 227.

[51]I. F. Gritsenko and A. V. Merkulov, eds., Sistematicheskii ukazatel' russkoi literatury po kooperatsii 1856-1924 (Moscow: Kooperativnoe Izdatel'stvo, 1925), p. 14.

[52]Ibid., p. 22.

[53]Ibid., p. 16.

[54]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), June 15, 1911, p. 15.

[55]Kayden and Antsiferov, The Cooperative Movement in Russia During the War, p. 166.

[56]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), June 15, 1911, p. 15.

[57]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), January 15, 1903, pp. 1-2.

[58]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), March 24, 1906, p. 99.

[59]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), December 6, 1908, pp. 893-900.

[60]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), February 18, 1911, back cover.

[61]Shishkin, Iz vospominanii kooperativnykh i politicheskikh, pp. 18-19.

[62]Obshchee Delo (Moscow), February 7, 1916, inside back cover.

[63]Obshchee Delo (Moscow), February 7, 1916, back cover.

[64]Obshchee Delo (Moscow), March 5, 1916, pp. 12-13.

[65]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), May 15, 1916, p. 607.

[66]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), August 15, 1905, pp. 397-398.

[67]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), February 28, 1911, p. 12.

[68]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), December 12, 1912, p. 16.

[69]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), July 22, 1908, p. 517.

[70]Obshchee Delo (Moscow), March 23 (10), 1918, p. 1. Ob'edinenie (Moscow), June 30 (17), 1918, p. 1.

[71]See above, page 174.

[72]See, for example, Ob'edinenie (Moscow), September 13, 1913, p. 1.

[73]Ezhegodnik MSPO, 1914 g., Pt. I, p. 123.

[74]Ezhegodnik MSPO, 1913 g.

[75]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), October 15, 1903, p. 1. See above, pages 49 and 50.

[76]Predvaritel'nyia ukazaniia uchrediteliam potrebitel'nykh obshchestv (8th ed.; Moscow: VTsSPO, 1917).

[77]K. K. Suzdal'tsev, Kopeika rubl' berezhet (6th ed.; Moscow: MSPO, 1917).

[78]Ibid., p. 7.

[79]Ibid., p. 22.

[80]Ibid., p. 24.

[81]The results of the survey are found in Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), May 22, 1914, pp. 412-421.

[82]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), February 9, 1912, pp. 109-113.

[83]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), January 7, 1908, back cover.

[84]See, for example, Ob'edinenie (Moscow), March 29, 1922, front cover.

[85]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), January 1, 1917; January 26, 1917. Among journals dealing specifically with the consumer cooperative movement, I have included other MSPO journals but not Soiuz Potrebitelei itself. It is possible that I have misidentified the nature of a few journals, so these figures may be slightly in error.

[86]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), March 29, 1912, pp. 1-3.

[87]See the section below on the struggle for popular initiative.

[88]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), October 31, 1915, p. 1065.

[89]Obshchee Delo (Moscow), February 7, 1916, p. 19; March 23, 1916, p. 18.

[90]Obshchee Delo (Moscow), February 23, 1917, p. 18.

[91]See above, page 151.

[92]See above, page 173.

[93]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), April 16, 1917, pp. 23-24.

[94]Obshchee Delo (Moscow), July 17, 1917, p. 11.

[95]Obshchee Delo (Moscow), October 25, 1917, pp. 21-22.

[96]Obshchee Delo (Moscow), December 20, 1918, p. 16.

[97]Obshchee Delo (Moscow), June 20 (7), 1918, p. 20.

[98]Kabanov, Oktiabr'skaia revoliutsiia i kooperatsiia (1917 g. - mart 1919 g.), pp. 9, 51.

[99]For the figures on the aggragate membership of the consumer cooperative movement, see above, page 5.

[100]Florinsky, The End of the Russian Empire, p. 28.

CONSUMER SOCIETIES AND THE CONSUMER COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT IN RUSSIA 1897-1917

Volume II

by
Catherine Laura Salzman

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirement for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
(History)
in The University of Michigan
1977

Doctoral Committee

Professor William G. Rosenberg, Chairman
Associate Professor William G. Lockwood
Professor Arthur P. Mendel
Professor Roman Szporluk

CHAPTER IV

COOPERATORS: THE SOCIAL BASE OF THE CONSUMER COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT

A. Officials

The two most important characteristics of the officials of consumer societies were the variety of their occupations and their relative lack of education by modern standards. Any conclusions one draws about officials must be generalized from limited data. But the general picture is a reliable one. It is supported by the fact that material on the employees of consumer societies and on cooperative instructors shows similar characteristics in those groups.

Many early cooperators, especially those who became interested in the cooperative movement before 1905, were essentially philanthropists. It is characteristic that until 1906 the members of the board of the MSPO did not receive salaries. In addition to running the union, the members of the board also wrote and edited Soiuz Potrebitelei. Nikolai Petrovich Gibner, the president of the union from its founding until 1916, never received a salary. But after 1905-7, cooperators came more and more frequently to have third element backgrounds. It was

particularly common for people to begin work in the consumer cooperative movement after having worked or been trained as village teachers or zemstvo doctors.

A very good picture of the social origins of the officials of consumer societies, based on somewhat later material, can be obtained by an examination of the delegates attending the 25th, 26th and 27th meetings of representatives of the MSPO.[1] The vast majority of the delegates were also officials in their societies. Of 188 delegates to the 25th Meeting of Representatives, 118 were members of the board, 22 were members of the revision committee, 17 were employees of the society and only 35 were members who held no official position in the society. With some reservations, the information on these delegates can be considered indicative of the character of consumer cooperative officials as a whole. It should be remembered that MSPO consumer societies were on the whole somewhat older and better established than non-MSPO societies. Also, societies located in or near Moscow and the somewhat wealthier societies were more likely to send a delegate to the Meeting of Representatives than other societies. It is likely that some societies were only able to send a delegate if he or she paid their own expenses.

OCCUPATIONS OF DELEGATES TO MSPO MEETINGS OF REPRESENTATIVES

	25th	26th	27th
workers	56	55	42
employees in private establishments	15	40	9
employees of cooperatives	13	17	17
teachers	6	20	17
zemstvo and city employees	11	16	12
factory and railroad employees	7	9	-
peasants	3	8	20
'agriculture'	10	5	-
medical assistants	2	4	-
doctors	4	3	-
priests	1	2	-
agronomists	2	1	3
village scribes	2	1	-
free processions	4	7	-
clerks, bookkeepers, accountants	-	-	22
miscellaneous	-	-	16
artisans	-	-	13
total	136	188	171

The delegates to the meetings of representatives of the MSPO included people from peasants and workers to members of the village intelligensia and the free processions.

The most surprising thing about cooperative officials was their youth and their relative lack of education. The ages of the delegates to the 26th Meeting of Representatives were:

over 52 years	4
41 to 50	34
31 to 40	86
26 to 30	53
21 to 26	10[2]

Eighty per cent of the delegates were under the age of 40.

As the following figures show, most of the delegates had been members of their societies only for a short time:

11 to 20 years	5
6 to 10	13
3 to 5	51
2 to 3	43
1 to 2	32
less than 1	30

(An additional eight delegates said that they had been members of their society since its founding but did not state when the society had been founded.) And more than half of the delegates were attending their first meeting:

attending first	97
second	35
third to fifth	31
sixth to eleventh	16
twelfth and over	5

These figures are a reflection of the fact that most consumer societies represented were young. But it must be remembered that due to the rate at which the consumer cooperative movement was growing, most consumer societies were always young. The societies represented in these figures were even a bit older than the average consumer society.

Finally, it is astonishing to discover that the vast majority of the delegates to MSPO meetings of representatives were, by modern standards, scarcely educated at all. The same thing, as we will see later, was true of the employees of consumer societies. Of 188 delegates to the 26th Meeting of Representatives, 23, or 12 per cent,

had no formal education whatsoever, but were self-taught.[3] The largest group, 101 delegates, or 54 per cent, had a so-called "lower" education, consisting of two to three years in a local school. Thirty-six delegates, or 19 per cent, had a "middle" education, of about six to eight years. Only 27 delegates, or 14 per cent, had what was known as a "higher" education, that is, over eight years.

B. Employees and their treatment

Two aspects of the topic of employees working in consumer societies will be considered in this section. First it is necessary to take a look at the employees themselves: who were they, what sorts of positions existed, how much money did they make and how much education did they have. The most interesting thing one finds is that their level of formal education was, like the level of formal education of the officials of consumer societies, very low. To deal with this and other problems, cooperative organizations occasionally set up courses for training people to work in consumer societies. Second, it is necessary to take a look at how the employees of consumer societies got along with their societies. The situation was not entirely a happy one. Some left wing consumer cooperators were particularly disappointed with the situation in worker and village societies. Material on how cooperative employees looked at their societies and how the societies treated them gives an interesting indication of

the level of consciousness of the working classes in the prerevolutionary period.

In the yearbook for 1912, the MSPO published the results of a questionnaire distributed to 450 MSPO societies and 3000 of their employees in mid-1911. The survey provides much interesting information on the employees of MSPO societies. Responses were received from 183 societies (58 city, 32 factory, 5 railroad, 66 village and 22 worker) and from 978 employees. Of the employees, 941 gave usable answers with regard to the type of work they did. The following table shows the positions of the employees who filled in the questionnaire. By far, the largest group was that of assistant salespeople. Women employees were concentrated in the less responsible positions.

POSITIONS OF EMPLOYEES IN MSPO CONSUMER SOCIETIES[4]

position	men	women	per cent women	total
assistant salesperson	353	21	5.6	374
clerk	120	19	13.7	139
chief salesperson	124	3	2.4	127
manager	104	4	3.7	108
cashier	21	62	74.7	83
bookkeeper	53	4	7.0	57
watchman, worker, carter	24	0	0.0	24
butcher	16	0	0.0	16
baker	9	1	10.0	10
shoemaker	3	1	25.0	4
total	827	115	12.1	942

Not every society had persons employed in all of these positions. The smaller societies had only one or two employees who had to do everything that needed to be done.

As figures quoted earlier have indicated with respect to the officials of consumer societies, the employees of consumer societies were also very young. Only about 15 per cent were over the age of 40.

AGES OF EMPLOYEES IN MSPO CONSUMER SOCIETIES[5]

age	men	women	total	per cent
up to 20	97	27	124	13.5
20 to 24	161	31	192	20.9
25 to 29	199	15	214	23.3
30 to 34	132	14	146	15.9
35 to 39	88	13	101	11.0
40 to 44	60	9	69	7.5
45 to 49	40	3	43	4.7
over 50	27	2	29	3.2
total	804	114	918	100.

Of the men, 323, or 40.2 per cent, were single and of the women, 74, or 64.9 per cent, were single.

Salaries varied greatly according to type of society and position. The yearly salaries of selected catagories of MSPO society employees are given below.

YEARLY SALARIES OF MSPO SOCIETY EMPLOYEES[6]

type of society	manager	chief sales-person	assistant sales-person	bookkeeper	clerk
city	658 (31)	578 (36)	306 (100)	576 (10)	356 (16)

YEARLY SALARIES (continued)

type of society	manager	chief sales-person	assistant sales-person	bookkeeper	clerk
factory	950 (24)	604 (19)	350 (84)	939 (22)	403 (56)
railroad	1212 (14)	723 (20)	488 (63)	1589 (11)	593 (35)
village	512 (20)	439 (26)	243 (67)	516 (3)	226 (4)
worker	543 (18)	571 (16)	326 (39)	596 (6)	304 (10)
average	749 (107)	577 (117)	339 (353)	943 (52)	438 (121)

The only persons paid over 75 rubles a month were the managers and bookkeepers of railroad and factory societies, i.e., the most responsible positions in the very largest societies. Almost every other category of employees averaged less, sometimes much less, than 50 rubles a month. (These figures do not include the cost of housing, which some societies, especially village ones, provided for their employees.)

A comparison of the salaries of male and female employees shows that the men were better paid. A survey of employees working at the central office of the MSPO showed that the average man made 65 rubles a month while the average woman made only 55 rubles a month.[7] A similar situation existed in the union's member societies.[8] Many societies, especially worker and village ones,

actively sought to hire women rather than men precisely because they could be paid less. This position is understandable, if not justifiable, in view of the shortage of financial resources on the part of village and worker societies. A correspondence article published in September, 1913, in Ob'edinenie complained about such a situation in a society in a town in Moscow guberniia. Later the board of the society wrote a letter to the editor, arguing that the society had no other choice.[9]

MSPO statistics on the level of education of society employees are entirely consistant with those quoted earlier on society officials.

EDUCATION OF SELECTED CATEGORIES OF MSPO SOCIETY EMPLOYEES[10]

position	illiterate	self-taught	beginning	above beginning	middle and higher	not known	total
manager	0	10	58	32	2	2	104
chief salesperson	0	11	79	34	0	0	124
asst. salesperson	1	32	293	36	0	7	369
bookkeeper	0	4	13	30	4	2	53
clerk, cashier	0	3	64	72	0	2	141
baker, shoemaker watchman	6	10	18	1	0	1	36
total	7	70	525	205	6	14	827
women	1	13	37	22	41	0	114
total with women	8	83	562	227	47	14	941

A footnote defined "above beginning" as the equivalent of the completion of a city three or four class school or a two year ministry school.

It is striking that 68 of 104 managers of consumer societies and 17 of 53 bookkeepers were either self-taught or had only a beginning education. One cannot help but admire what consumer societies were able to accomplish in spite of this obstacle.

An even more striking revelation of the above table is the extremely high level of education of the women employees of consumer cooperatives. Forty-one of 114 women, or 36 per cent, had a middle or higher education. The same can be said of six out of 827 men. But at the same time, women employees held a far smaller percentage of responsible positions.[11] There was clearly discrimination against women in employment in consumer societies.[12]

Further evidence of the youth and lack of formal education on the part of the employees of consumer societies is found in the background data of the 44 men and six women who enrolled in the first course for cooperative employees offered at the Shaniavskii Public University of Moscow in 1913. There were a total of 53 persons enrolled in the course, which featured lectures by well known cooperators, including Zel'geim. The vast majority of those enrolled were under 30 years of age.

Eight were between 17 and 20, 16 were between 21 and 25, 16 were between 26 and 30, seven were between 31 and 35 and only 3 were over 35 years of age. Eleven said that they were married and 37 said that they were not. Their previous jobs were the following:

workers	8
office workers and employees	13
salesmen	12
landowners	5
owners of private shops	2
teachers	3

With regard to economic position, 21 considered themselves reasonably well off, 23 said their families were financially in need and six declined to answer the question. They had completed the following education:

one class school	26
two class school	3
railroad school	2
city school	4
four class middle school	5
degree as village teacher	5
completed middle school	3
completed agricultural school	1
self-taught	1

It is interesting to note that the women were again better educated than the men. Of the six women, one had finished a two class school, two had finished a lower level secondary school of four to six classes (progimnaziia), two had finished secondary school and one was preparing to be a zemstvo agronomist and was taking bookkeeping for consumer societies as additional preparation.[13]

Courses like the one offered at Shaniavskii University were organized in response to the need of cooperative societies for people specially trained for work in cooperatives. The recognition of this need was stimulated in part by an excursion organized by the MSPO to Western Europe in 1910. The goal of the excursion was for Russian consumer cooperators to become acquainted with the operation of consumer societies in the West. The Russians were impressed to learn, when they visited the society "Forward" in Brussels, that it was not dependent on private trade establishments or private trade schools to train their employees. Employees could get all necessary training simply in the course of their normal work or through special cooperative schools. A relatively small amount of special training was necessary for the employees of cooperatives in the West, due in part to the fact that the system of public education was much more highly developed than in Russia. Also, consumer cooperatives were so large in the West that all preparation of goods for sale was normally done at a central distribution point. Only a small percentage of the total number of employees had to know how to do organizational or bookkeeping work. In the many tiny Russian societies, in contrast, especially in the villages, the manager, bookkeeper and salesman were one and the same person.

Most Russian consumer societies, especially in the cities, hired their employees via employment agencies. The main advantage of this was that the agency was responsible for any losses incurred by the society as a result of theft, although the society often had to go through a long legal process to collect the money owed it. But an important disadvantage was that the persons available for hire via the agencies were usually former employees in private shops or former owners. Consequently, they came to consumer societies with habits opposed to the principles of the cooperative movement and were often hostile to central cooperative organizations, preferring to buy through private suppliers.[14] Beginning in 1911, cooperators started to found schools for cooperative employees, as a means of avoiding these problems. Frequently, also, such courses were organized by guberniia zemstvos and occasionally teacher training schools gave some lectures on the organization of cooperatives.[15]

As has been mentioned above, a course for cooperative employees was also arranged by the Shaniavskii Public University of Moscow. The course consisted of one general class on cooperative theory and two specialized classes, one to prepare managers and the other to prepare bookkeepers. The only requirement for the first specialized class was literacy. For the other it was necessary to have a complete knowledge of arithmetic. The cost of the general class plus one specialized class was forty rubles.[16]

The course was first offered in the summer of 1913 and was offered at least twice after that. The requirements do not seem particularly demanding but other courses for cooperative employees had even lower requirements.

Russian cooperators had a penchant for organization and at the beginning of 1915, they went one step further. A course was offered on the organization of courses for training cooperative employees. It was attended by 127 persons. In 1917, Shaniavskii University published a book based on material covered in the course. The book placed great emphasis on courses for training cooperative employees offered in the west, particularly in England. Interestingly enough, this was by far the most useful part of the book. The experience of the West was, at least in this respect, more useful for Russian cooperators than their own experience. Articles based on European experience gave detailed explanations of the sorts of subjects that should be covered by a good course. Articles based on Russian experience, on the other hand, dealt with highly theoretical questions. One article, for example, discussed ideas which should be used by speakers to stimulate their listeners. It emphasized:

> The first idea of the lecturer should be about the people (o narode), if possible about populism (narodnosti)...The people - like the sea.[17]

Such words as "popular initiative," "activity" and "creation" were to be "zealously repeated."[18] The book

also provided a forum for some surreptitious discussion of revolutionary ideas. An article entitled "The Distribution of Work and Rest at the Courses" was in fact devoted to an argument for the eight-hour day.[19]

* * *

At this point, we will turn to the second subject to be treated in this section, that of how the employees of consumer societies got along with their societies. The most important point is that in many respects employer-employee relations were just like those in private enterprise and in some cases they were worse. There is evidence that working conditions were actually worse in worker and peasant societies. The working classes exploited their employees as they themselves were exploited. But there were some left wing cooperators who were trying to improve the situation.

In his article quoted above on his impressions of the daily operations of local consumer societies, Vladimir Makhnovets-Akimov also wrote about cooperative employees. He painted a gloomy picture. "Among hundreds of employees and workers who I met," he wrote,

> I came to know only five conscious cooperators. All the rest looked upon their jobs as though they worked in a private shop...They did not have the least understanding of the cooperative movement and were not in the slightest degree interested in the course of the business of the society in which they worked. And, unbelievable as it may be, <u>not in one society</u> did I notice the slightest traces on the part of the

> board of concern for the overall development of their employees and for their enlightenment regarding the affairs of the society.[20]

Makhnovets-Akimov's point was that cooperative employees did not strive to serve their societies in an exemplary manner because, first of all, they started their work with no real interest in the cooperative movement and because the societies themselves did not make an effort to develop that interest.

The assertion that many cooperative employees had no real interest in the cooperative movement is corroborated by other evidence. Of 543 employees working in the central office of the MSPO only 269, or 58 per cent, were actually members of consumer societies. The fact that 203 of these were members of independent worker societies is indicative of a left wing orientation within this group. Of the employees in the central office, 64 showed special interest in the movement by belonging to more than one society. Only 19 were members of boards of societies and ten took part in the activities of credit and/or agricultural societies.[21]

Further evidence of the lack of specific interest in the cooperative movement of employees of consumer societies is provided by looking again at the participants in the Shaniavskii University course for employees. Of the 50 people taking the course, only 28 had earlier been associated with cooperatives. Furthermore, of 42

people who gave their reasons for enrolling in the course, eleven said that it was in order to be able to earn a better living, seven said that it was for the sake of education and only 24 said that it was out of specific interest in the cooperative movement.[22] The point is that for many, if not most, employees a job in a cooperative was just like any other job. Employees in consumer societies, as distinct from officials and founders, were in most cases, just people looking for work.

The quality of working conditions in consumer societies were a source of disappointment to many left wing cooperators. One respect in which the working conditions in consumer societies were fully comparable to those in private industry, and in some cases worse, was the length of working day.

LENGTH OF WORKING DAY OF EMPLOYEES IN MSPO CONSUMER SOCIETIES[23]

hours	city	factory	railroad	village	worker	total
up to 8	9	21	62	0	5	97
8½ to 10	45	91	54	6	22	218
10½ to 12	139	96	25	66	56	382
over twelve	13	16	8	62	9	108
not established	2	4	1	4	5	16
unknown	0	2	7	3	4	16
total	208	230	157	141	101	837

The records of factory and railroad societies were actually better than the records of village and worker societies.

The largest number of employees of railroad consumer societies worked only up to eight hours a day. The largest number of employees of worker societies worked ten and a half to twelve hours a day. The employees of village societies were almost evenly divided between those who worked from ten and a half to twelve hours a day and those who worked over twelve hours a day.

There is additional evidence that the conditions of employment were worse in worker and peasant societies than in the less democratically run societies. Wages were lower, working hours longer and benefits fewer. A detailed story of the treatment of an employee by a working class consumer society comes from a village society in the Ukraine. "He was not a drunkard," wrote a correspondent to Ob'edinenie of the employee, "didn't steal and always treated customers with complete honest." The members used to say of him, "He's a good fellow, only a little soft in the head." He worked from five a.m. to nine p.m. every day including holidays when, the correspondent pointed out, even the cattle were allowed to rest. And he earned all of 20 rubles a month, of which five rubles went towards his deposit. (If an employee did not have enough money to make the complete deposit all at once, he could make it in installments, by means of deductions from his salary.) At one general meeting it was announced that there was a shortage in the accounts of the society

of 64 rubles. But the president of the board pointed out that if one allowed for four kopeks per ruble of loss in the process of weighing out goods which the employee prepared for sale in the society's second shop, then there would be no shortage, or if the society gave him a rebate of a half kopek or one kopek on goods sold in the main shop then there would also be no loss. But, despite the pleas of the employee, the general meeting voted to take 64 rubles from the 67.35 already in the employee's deposit. As a result, the employee quit. The society had to find someone to take his place, and when they found someone, he was not 'soft in the head.' He insisted upon receiving five kopeks per ruble on goods sold in the main shop and four kopeks per ruble on goods sold in the branch shop.[24]

One reason why the employees of working class consumer societies were treated so badly was that working class members could not see why their employees should be treated any better than they themselves were treated by their own employers. At one city society in Rostov-na-Dony, the board recommended that the society's two employees receive a month's paid vacation. The worker members of the society were against it, saying simply, "they don't give it to us." In this case, the worker members were outvoted and 100 rubles was allocated.[25] Board members tended to be more generous than the average share holder, partly because they tended to come from the

more prosperous classes and did not themselves suffer from oppressive employment conditions and partly since they had a better appreciation of the necessity of treating employees well in order to be able to count upon them working conscientiously.

Some leaders of the consumer cooperative movement were interested in raising the working conditions of employees. One of the means by which they sought to do so was by giving them more rights within the society. In many societies before 1905, employees did not even have the right to join, or if they could join, they might not have the right to participate in the general meeting, for fear that they might unduly influence it for their personal benefit. Virtually all of these restrictions had been abolished by about 1912, and employees were occasionally elected to positions within the society or as representatives to cooperative congress or MSPO meetings of representatives. A new plan of organization for the MSPO, implemented in 1912, gave more power to union employees. Under the new plan of organization, the four top employees (president, manager of the trade department, manager of the non-trade department and manager of finance department) were made voting members of the union's board. To those who objected, the editors of Ob'edinenie responded, "It is a bad master who does not know who to use the initiative and devotion of his employees."[26]

Despite the fact that as a whole cooperative employees got their worst treatment at the hands of working class societies, it was the more left wing cooperators who showed the greatest interest in improving their working conditions. A case in point is M. L. Kheisin, a Menshevik consumer cooperator, who wrote a wide range of cooperative books and pamphlets. The founders of "Trudovoi Soiuz" were also interested in improving the position of employees, although they failed in this, as in so much else.

The association of the demand for better working conditions for cooperative employees with the left wing of the consumer cooperative movement is shown in a list drawn up by the editors of Ob'edinenie in 1913 of "Ten Rules for the Cooperative Employee." Seven of the ten rules exhorted the employee to work for the good of the society, especially with regard to raising the consciousness of the members. For example, the employee was told to:

> 9. Try to spend your free time not with cards and vodka but with reading literature, comradely discussion, study excursions and social outings.[27]

But three of the points had to do with solidarily between the employees of cooperatives and the trade union movement:

> 4. Remember that the successful development of the cooperative movement is predicated upon the success of the legal, social, and in particular the trade union worker movement.

5. Radical improvement in the conditions of employees in cooperatives is unthinkable without the improvement of the position of employees in private enterprises and therefore consider it your responsibility to be a member of your trade union, the most important task of which is to attain the eight-hour working day.

6. Be an active member of your trade union, since you have greater freedom of action in comparison with comrades employed by private capital.

Local and all-Russian cooperative congreses often had commissions which discussed the problems of employees. A group which studied working conditions in cooperatives at the Second All-Russian Cooperative Congress in 1913 passed resolutions declaring that all cooperative employees should be hired by contract, and that this contract should include an eight-hour day (six hours for office workers), a minimum wage for every locality, a lunch break, the abolition of overtime work and of deposits, free medical care and equal pay for men and women doing the same work.[28] These resolutions were so far removed from the actual state of working conditions in cooperatives that one suspects that the commission which passed them was more interested in working out a set of ideals for which the trade union movement as a whole should be striving than it was in the working conditions of employees in cooperatives per se.

The treatment of employees by working class consumer cooperatives should be regarded as an indication of the level of consciousness of the working classes on the eve

of the revolution. Although some cooperators were trying to improve conditions of employment, in general the situation was much the same as in private industry, because urban and rural working class members of consumer cooperatives did not think of treating their employees any differently than they themselves were treated.

C. The consumer cooperative movement and its women members

Beginning in about 1910, the consumer cooperative press began to show concern about the lack of cooperative-mindedness of the women members of consumer societies. It was pointed out with consternation that women frequently preferred to do their shopping elsewhere. Equally incomprehensible to most cooperators was the fact that women rarely attented meetings of their consumer societies. Yet, the cooperative press rarely showed real understanding of what the real problem was or of what might be done to solve it. The problem was that women were second class members of consumer societies, just as they were second class members of Russian society as a whole.

The interest of cooperators in the participation of women was significantly stimulated by the founding in Petersburg in September, 1911, of a Women's Consumer Society. The charter stated that men could join only by special resolution of the board. Dissappointingly little information is available on the affairs of this society,

possibly because the consumer cooperative movement as a whole was so sharply opposed to the principle on which it was founded. Ob'edinenie commented, for example,

> From our side we note that we do not see the need for a special consumer society for women. If women would more actively register as members of existing cooperatives the result would be the same.[29]

The Woman's Consumer Cooperative was still in existence and apparently prospering at the end of 1915, when the Ministry of Interior, for unexplained reasons, forbade the society to admit any men, even by special resolution. Ob'edinenie took the opportunity to comment that it could not refrain from taking exception to the whole idea of a consumer society only for women. "Is it possible to propose," the journal asked, "that women need some special women's products, like women's tea, sugar or kerosine?"[30] I have not come across a single statement by a consumer cooperator which approved of the existance of the Women's Consumer Cooperative.

The most complete statement of the concerns and perceptions of most cooperators with respect to the participation of women in the consumer cooperative movement is found in V. N. Zel'geim's series of lectures, which formed part of the course for employees of cooperatives offerred at Shaniavskii University. Zel'geim blamed the indifference or even the hostility of women on the fact that nearly nothing had been done to spread information

on the goals and tasks of the cooperative movement and on the role it could play in easing the life of the working woman. As a result, women resented consumer societies, according to Zel'geim, because they occupied the leisure time of their husbands so that they spent less time in the home. Zel'geim argued that the situation could be improved if cooperatives worked to establish creches and kindergartens, and collective kitchens and laundry facilities. The work of the English Women's Cooperative Guild, Zel'geim said, should serve as a model. Educated women should take the initiative in attracting working women to the cooperative movement, since they had more free time than their husbands or than working class women. Zel'geim objected to the recent formation of the Woman's Consumer Cooperative in Petersburg, but said that the society could be useful if it took up the task of satisfying special needs, such as providing clothes and other items for needy children.[31]

Zel'geim's comments did not question the traditional role of women as housekeeper and mother. He reasoned that women should show more interest in consumer cooperatives because it was they who did the shopping. Cooperatives could attract the participation of more women if they would provide services that would lighten household tasks. The Woman's Consumer Cooperative was a bad thing, but it would be acceptable if it would devote itself to philanthropic activities for children.

What few cooperators realized, however, was that even in the context of the women's role as housekeeper and mother, there were needs that were satisfied for women by private shops that were not satisfied by consumer societies. Zel'geim himself got close to the heart of the problem of why many women were uninterested in consumer cooperatives and preferred to buy from private merchants when he quoted the reasons expressed by several women for their preference. None of the women complained that the meetings of consumer societies occupied the spare time of their husbands. All of the comments related to a more pleasant atmosphere in private stores. Women said, for example, "the shopkeeper has more polite manners," "on holidays, from respect, presents are given out." Another woman pointed out that in the private shop "it is possible to bargain and to unburden one's soul" while "in the consumer society everything is formal, goods are given out in turn and there is no discussion, you pay whatever price they say."[32] These statements have a very realistic ring. It is possible to understand how bargaining with the shopkeeper gave many women a feeling of satisfaction that they could not get by simply paying the same price at a consumer society, and as has been pointed out earlier, it normally was the policy of consumer societies to sell goods at about the same price as private shops, restricting the savings of their members to rebates and dividends distributed at

the end of the year. Bargaining with the shopkeeper added to a woman's feeling of self worth. It gave her the feeling, although wrongly, that she was saving money. At the same time, the private shop provided a more congenial atmosphere for gossip, discussion and complaints, all things which everyone seems to enjoy. The shopkeeper had an interest in hearing out the woes of his customers: it kept them coming back and it enabled him to figure out how much to charge. The satisfactions that some women obtained by shopping at the stores of private merchants rather than consumer societies should be considered false satisfactions. One did not really save money by clever bargaining. It would have been wiser to create other opportunities for gossip. But the consumer cooperative movement still failed to replace them with something better.

Other complaints in the cooperative press about women members were related to the way they participated, or failed to participate, in the work of their societies. The fact has been noted above that during the World War, women members of consumer cooperatives were considered to be extremely uncooperative-minded, seeking only immediate advantages from their societies and opposing allocations for philanthropic or cultural and educational work.

Such complaints neglected the fact that there were structural and social barriers to the participation of

women in consumer societies. The charters of pre-Model Code societies actually stated that women could not be admitted as members.[34] Article 12 of the Model Code stated that women were permitted to join. But it was only with the implementation of the all-cooperative law by the Provisional Government that it was specifically emphasized that women had an equal right to join cooperative societies and to take part in their activities. Another structural barrier to the participation of women in the work of consumer societies was the fact that if a man bought shares in a consumer society, they were bought in his name. They were normally not even considered to give his wife the right to participate in meetings. An editorial in Ob'edinenie in 1911 suggested that it would be appropriate to establish a rule that if a member bought a second share, it should be in the name of his wife. The editorial stated that this procedure had been followed in recent years in tsarist Poland and was successfully attracting peasant women to participate in consumer cooperatives there. The editorial added that members should be sure to take their wives and sisters with them to general meetings.[35]

But the biggest barrier to the participation of women in the work of consumer societies was the fact that most men thought that the place of the woman was (to coin a phrase) in the home. When women came to the meetings of

consumer societies they were looked upon as though they did not belong there. One man complained that when a woman would appear at a meeting of his society,

> everyone looks at her furtively...jabs each other in the ribs and begins whispering...as though they felt they were in some sort of embarassing situation.[36]

At all-Russian cooperative congresses and at MSPO meetings of representatives women were present only in tiny numbers. A group photograph of the delegates to the 1908 congress showed about twelve women. The total number of delegates in the picture was over 400. The group photograph of the 1913 congress showed about the same number of delegates but even fewer women. Based on names listed in the MSPO yearbook for 1913, it is possible to count the number of women who were delegates to the 25th, 26th and 27th meetings of representatives.

DELEGATES TO THE 25TH, 26TH AND 27th MSPO MEETINGS OF REPRESENTATIVES[37]

	25th	26th	27th
delegates with full vote	211	209	--
delegates with advisory vote	64	47	--
total delegates	275	256	343
female delegates with full vote	4	4	--
female delegates with advisory vote	5	2	--
total female delegates	9	6	11
female voting delegates married to male voting delegates	1	1	--
female voting delegates married to male advisory delegates	1	0	--

DELEGATES (continued)

	25th	26th	27th
female advisory delegates married to male voting delegates	1	1	--
female advisory delegates married to male advisory delegates	1	1	--
total female delegates married to male delegates	4	3	6
per cent of total female delegates married to male delegates	44	50	55
per cent of total male delegates married to female delegates	3.8	2.4	3.3

Worker and village societies sent a larger number of women as delegates than other types of societies.

FEMALE DELEGATES TO THE 25TH, 26TH AND 27TH MSPO MEETINGS OF REPRESENTATIVES, BROKEN DOWN BY TYPE OF SOCIETY[38]

	25th	26th	27th
female delegates	9	6	11
number of female delegates whose society I was able to trace	8	1	7
type of society			
city	0	0	1
factory	0	0	0
railroad	1	0	0
village	3	0	3
worker	4	1	3

Women were also discriminated against in employment. It has been pointed out in the preceeding section that MSPO statistics show that women employees, in proportion to their numbers, occupied far fewer positions of responsibility within societies. They also received lower salaries than their male counterparts, despite the fact that they were much better educated than male employees.[39]

The only woman ever to gain a really important position in the MSPO was the Menshevik E. O. Lenskaia, who headed the propaganda section during the World War. But the very fact that the women employed were so well educated indicates that consumer cooperatives were one of the few institutions or businesses where educated women could get any sort of responsible employment whatsoever. Discrimination against women in employment was by no means limited to consumer societies.

There was no easy solution to the "woman question" in the consumer cooperative movement. In this respect, as in many others, Russian consumer societies were locked into the social fabric of prerevolutionary Russia.

D. Instructors: the most politicized cooperators

The major obstacle faced by people who wanted to set up a consumer societies was lack of expertise, lack of people who knew how or could learn how to order goods and keep accurate accounts. In about 1911, cooperators began to develop a new approach to that problem. Unions of cooperatives, agricultural societies and zemstvos began to hire knowledgable and experienced cooperators to travel from society to society. They were called instructors. They gave advice and answered questions and very often they delivered lectures on the purposes and ideals of the consumer cooperative movement. Cooperative instructors

were part of the growing third element in Russian society. Evidence from 1917 shows them to have been a highly politicized group.

Within the MSPO, the idea of hiring an instructor was first discussed at the 19th Meeting of Representatives, held in December, 1909. The idea was of so much interest to member societies that many representatives came to the meeting with prepared statements from their boards or general meetings stating their approval and indicating the amount of money that their society would be willing to allocate.[40]

The first MSPO instructor, D. V. Koliukh, began visiting societies in January, 1911. Soiuz Potrebitelei informed societies wishing to make use of his services that they should contact the union.[41] By June 1, he had covered an astonishing amount of territory. He had visited 56 societies in the guberniias of Moscow, Vladimir, Iaroslav, Tver, Tambov, Saratov, Arkhangel'sk, Volynsk, Chernigov, Orlov and Kaluga, as well as the Don military district.[42] The cost to a society of the visit of an instructor depended on its circulation. As of 1912, it was between five and ten rubles for the first day and between three and six rubles for any additional days. The society also had to pay the cost of the instructor's trip by boat, train or horse.[43]

The institution proved to be extremely popular. By 1917, the MSPO had hired 20 instructors and by 1918, it had hired 36.

MSPO INSTRUCTORS, 1910-1918[44]

1910	1	1915	12
1911	2	1916	12
1912	2	1917	20
1913	3	1918	36
1914	10		

The war and goods crisis caused the MSPO to expand its staff of instructors significantly. But MSPO instructors were only a small portion of the total number. By the beginning of 1917, there were about 300 instructors working with consumer cooperatives.[45]

Very few instructors were occupied full time with this job. Many, especially those employed by zemstvo and agricultural societies, spent most of their time working with credit and production cooperatives and only a small portion of their time with consumer societies. Others were employees of a consumer society or a union or consumer societies or even employed in private enterprise and spent only a small amount of their time, or perhaps only their spare time, as instructors. Of 28 persons attending a conference of instructors organized by the MSPO in December, 1911, only six were full time instructors. Of 20 participants at a conference of instructors organized by the Kiev Agency of the MSPO in 1917, very few were full time

instructors. Furthermore, almost all of them were new to their work, having served as instructors only for a short time.[46]

Instructors spent most of their time helping societies with practical problems. Until 1917, politics was never directly discussed at their conferences. The agenda of the 1911 conference, for example, consisted of:

1. bookkeeping in village consumer societies
2. collective purchasing on the regional level
3. selling on credit by village societies
4. guidelines for open societies: sales and purchasing for cash, loans as circulating capital, salaries of serivce personnel[47]

It is more than likely, however, that discussion between individual delegates at the conference centered on ideological themes.

Instructors showed their interest in the social objectives of the consumer cooperative movement in the lectures they gave for the members of consumer societies. In 1916, B. N. Iablonskii, an instructor active in Voronezh guberniia, wrote an article about his work for the Valuiskii Zemskii Listok, an uezd level zemstvo bulletin. Iablonskii said that he began his lectures by speaking himself for 20 to 30 minutes. He spoke as simply as possible and illustrated his points with examples from village life, if possible from the life of the village he was visiting. Iablonovskii seems to have illustrated his points with homey little proverbs, which he must have made up himself. He told his audiences, for example, that

> a society is like a small peasant who does not sell or eat his entire harvest, saving part of the seed for future sowing and in case of crop failure. A consumer society saves part of its profits for expanding its activities, for constructing its own building, to cover possible losses from spoilage of goods or for other accidents.[48]

Iablonovskii would then invite discussion. During the first few minutes discussion would go slowly, but it would gradually become more lively, to the point where answers to questions would be given not only by the lecturer but also by the audience. Sometimes the "secret or active enemies" of the consumer cooperative movement would come to the lecture, the relatives or friends of the local shopkeeper and also the "village sceptics." Iablonovskii wrote that their presence at a meeting was especially valuable, since it made it possible to refute their statements and disperse doubts. Iablonovskii had so far shown slides only once, since they had only recently appeared in Russia. The theme of the slide show that he presented was the successes of the English consumer cooperative movement and included pictures of cooperatively owned and operated factories, mills and warehouses. Iablonovskii said he thought this would be a very useful tool in the future, especially if it was emphasized to the audience that all this had been accomplished by people just like them.

A correspondence article in Ob'edinenie with the signature "peasant I. Gurov" described the reaction to one

lecture in the following glowing terms:

> The lecturer came onto the platform, gazed over the crowd affectionately and calmly, and poured out golden words. He spoke about the cooperative movement and its significance, spoke about the English weavers, their poverty and their labor and finally about their great association, and of the meaning of that great idea, which, like a net, has covered all civilized countries and finally came to Russia, and took root even in our Russian villages. Great feeling overcame us and we wanted to cry out: Long live the lecturer! Long live the intelligensia! Long live the peasantry, conscious of that great deed which has moved mankind still one step higher![49]

The political activities of instructors prior to 1917 were limited by the government, but when, after the February Revolution, open political discussion became possible, cooperative instructors entered the political arena with enthusiasm. At the First All-Russian Congress of Cooperative Instructors, held in Moscow from May 28 to June 1, 1917, a survey was made of political affiliation. The congress was dominated by Social Revolutionaries. Other relatively large groups were Mensheviks and non-faction Social Democrats. About two thirds of the instructors attending the congress were active in party work and a large number of them had been active for a considerable number of years.

POLITICAL AFFILIATIONS OF CONSUMER COOPERATIVE INSTRUCTORS[50]

	nature of affiliation			years of party work					
	active	sympa-thetic	total	0-1	1-3	3-6	6-13	13+	total
SD (Menshevik)	18	5	23	0	1	0	14	2	17
SD (Bolshevik)	5	1	6	0	3	0	2	0	5
SD (Bund)	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1
SD (non-faction)	18	6	24	1	2	0	9	4	16
SR	76	25	101	19	8	5	30	5	67
Anarchist-communist	2	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	2
Anarchist-syndacalist	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1
Socialist-federalist	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Socialist-sympathizer	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Popular-socialist	7	8	15	0	0	0	1	0	1
Trudovik	1	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
Peasant Union	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kadet	2	6	8	0	0	0	2	0	2
total	132	56	188	20	14	6	59	13	112

These figures probably give an accurate picture of the congress. Two hundred eighty-five instructors were present on its first day, but by the third day, only 229 were present and this questionnaire was distributed only on the forth day. Consequently, it is likely that virtually all of those present filled out the questionnaire. According to those who compiled the statistics, the answers as to length of party work should be regarded as somewhat inaccurate, because some instructors declined to include illegal party work and others mentioned a break in their party work but didn't say how long that lasted.

Instructors were, as a group, even younger than most cooperative workers. Most were between 26 and 36. A more precise breakdown is available for SRs and SDs:[51]

	21-25	26-36	over 36
SD	21.0%	55.5%	23.0%
SR	24.7%	56.4%	16.0%

This survey is especially interesting due to the fact that it was the only survey ever taken of the political affiliations of a group of cooperators. The results should be regarded as representative only of instructors and by no means of the cooperative movement as a whole. There may be other statistical information on party affiliation in the archives, but I have not had access to it.

Almost all of the members of the MSPO staff of instructors were affiliated with the left wing political parties. But according to Shishkin, prior to 1917, the

political differences between instructors did not lead to fundamental arguments over tactics. The head of the staff was E. N. Egorov, a Menshevik who joined the Bolsheviks after 1917. But Shishkin wrote that it was impossible to say what party dominated the staff because politics was not expressed openly. Social Revolutionaries devoted most of their energy to village societies. Social-Democrats worked mainly with factory and worker societies. Shishkin himself spent all his time on cultural and educational work, concentrating on organizing and assisting the work of theatre groups associated with consumer societies.[52] Prior to 1917, political differences did not lead to fundamental conflict.

The political activism of the instructors at their 1917 congress was expressed not only in their political affiliations but also in their debates and resolutions. The instructors were certainly loyal to the Provisional Government, but they were not blindly loyal. A speech by Victor Chernov on the importance of cooperatives in preparing the way for socialism was greeted with warm applause. Chernov saw the formation of local land committees as taking place under the direction of cooperative activists, "since the cooperative movement is, at the present time, the single organized social force in the village."[53] The comments of the MSPO instructor N. V. Blinov on the Provisional Government were not an expression

of complete confidence. "We have received the all-cooperative law," he said,

> The revolution gave it to us. But even at the present time our obligation is not limited merely to seeing that it is implemented. No. We must be extremely attentive towards all that is being worked out around the cooperative law, in the hiding places of the ministerial offices.

A cause of particular concern to Blinov was that S. V. Borodaevskii, who in 1915 had cooperated with the Ministry of Trade on the drafting of a proposal for a new, more conservative, cooperative law, was now employed in the Ministry of Trade.[54]

The congress heard two reports on the participation of instructors in politics and adopted the more activist. In doing so, that instructors made a statement in favor of what was called "impartiality with respect to party". The report which was adopted, which was written by Shishkin, listed the following twelve tasks as the most important ones for cooperative instructors:

1. prepare for elections to the Constituant Assembly in the interests of the wide democratization of government, the realization of all social-political demands of revolutionary democracy and the defense of the interests of the cooperative movement under the new order
2. help organize and strengthen the soviets of workers', soldiers' and peasants' deputies and develop creative ties between them
3. help organize local self government, for the immediate liquidation of remnants of the old order and aid the transfer of power from temporarily named to popularly chosen hands

4. immediately organize social-political courses to prepare political agitators and propagandists

5. help distribute social-political literature

6. strengthen propaganda among the army and navy

7. establish agreements with the propaganda and instruction departments of soviets of workers', soldiers', and peasants' deputies and other democratic organizations

8. organize a cooperative congress on cultural and educational work

9. help local, uezd and guberniia committees for popular education

10. help restricted factory and railroad societies become independent and help organize a congress of worker cooperatives

11. take an active part in the organization and operation of production committees and help implement the grain monopoly

12. take an active part in the organization and work of land committees, aiding the organized resolution of agrarian conflicts

If these were to be the priority tasks for consumer cooperative instructors, the implication was that cooperative work itself was temporarily to be put aside. An opposing report by A. F. Bolutskii supported the position that cooperative work should remain the central focus, arguing that in Russia the question of the form of government was less important than that of raising the country's productive strength and carrying out its economic and cultural regeneration.[56]

The Shishkin resolution included the following rather vague statement adopted in the form of an amendment:

> The political activity of the cooperative movement must be carried out under the flag of socialist democracy and on the basis of impartiality with respect to party.

The amendment was actively opposed only by a small group of SRs, who argued that cooperative instructors should carry out their activities specifically according to SR political principles. One young instructor justified this by saying that, in his opinion, nearly all cooperative activists were SRs anyway. Not surprisingly, there was no universal agreement as to the meaning of the term "impartiality with respect to party" (partiinaia bezpristrastnost'). A large number of instructors abstained from voting on the amendment for that reason. There was a small group which felt that it meant that the cooperative movement should not get involved in political activity in any way, and voted for the amendment on that basis. But the largest group at the congress took the position that cooperative propaganda should be impartial, in the sense that lectures, journals and pamphlets should discuss all political questions from the point of view of all democratic parties. This was not, however, to prevent cooperative activists from belonging to one or another political party and also presenting their personal views.[57]

The views expressed by cooperative instructors at thie May congress do not represent the whole consumer

cooperative movement. They represent a particular group of people at a particular time. They should be considered an expression of the most left wing and most politically active group within the consumer cooperative movement, at a time when the whole movement had been considerably radicalized and politicized by three years of war and revolution but before the process of radicalization and politicization tore it apart. The last two chapters of this dissertation deal with the consumer cooperative movement as a political movement. We will see how the consumer cooperatives entered 1917 as a more or less united movement. But the political struggle of 1917 tore them apart.

FOOTNOTES

[1]For the 25th Meeting of Representatives, held in August, 1912, see Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), October 12, 1912, pp. 671-673. For the 26th Meeting of Representatives, held in December, 1912, see Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), January 11, 1913, pp. 11-14. For the 27th Meeting of Representatives, held in December, 1913, see Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), January 25, 1914, pp. 37-39.

[2]For the rest of this discussion only the statistics on the delegates to the 25th Meeting of Representatives will be used. There was no real difference between the composition of this meeting and that of other meetings, but statistics compiled were somewhat more complete and internally consistant.

[3]The adjective used by the statisticians to refer to their level of education is domashnee, or home.

[4]Ezhegodnik MSPO, 1912). (Moscow: MSPO, 1912, p. 189.

[5]Ibid., p. 190.

[6]Ibid., p. 193. In parenthesis is the number of people reporting.

[7]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), June 5, 1916, pp. 705-707.

[8]Ezhegodnik MSPO, 1912 g., p. 195.

[9]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), September 6, 1913, pp. 14-15; December 20, 1913, p. 19.

[10]Ezhegodnik MSPO, 1912 g., pp. 198-199.

[11]See above, page 254.

[12]The subject of women and the consumer cooperative movement will be treated in more detail in the following section.

[13]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), May 10, 1914, pp. 365-372.

[14]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), October 28, 1912, pp. 10-11; November 20, 1912, pp. 8-9.

[15]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), September 21, 1911, p. 697.

[16]This information comes from an advertisement for the course published in Ob'edinenie (Moscow), February 22, 1914, inside front cover.

[17]A. Evdokimov, "Metody osvoeniia lektorov s auditoriei na mestnykh kooperativnykh kursov," in Organizatsiia mestnykh kooperativnykh kursov, pp. 185-186.

[18]Ibid., p. 181.

[19]V. Makhnovets, "Raspredelenie truda i otdikha na kursakh," in Organizatsiia mestnykh kooperativnykh kursov, p. 190.

[20]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), December 5, 1909, pp. 1055-1062. Italics in original.

[21]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), June 5, 1916, pp. 705-707.

[22]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), May 10, 1914, pp. 365-372.

[23]Ezhegodnik MSPO, 1912 g., p. 195. A footnote defined "not established" as meaning "as much as necessary" or varying depending on how much work there was to be done. The statisticians assumed that this meant an average of more than twelve hours a day. This material is from the survey made in 1911.

[24]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), February 22, 1914, pp. 14-15.

[25]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), October 29, 1911, pp. 13-14.

[26]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), September 15, 1912, pp. 1-6.

[27]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), May 16, 1913, pp. 2-3.

[28]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), August 31, 1913, pp. 4-7.

[29]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), September 28, 1911, p. 16. Italics in original.

[30]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), December 12, 1915, pp. 26-27.

[31]V. N. Zel'geim, "Organizatsiia i praktika potrebitel'nykh obshchestv v Rossii," in Kursy po kooperatsii, ed. by A. A. Manuilov (Moscow: Moskovskii Gorodskoi Narodnyi Universitet imeni A. L. Shaniavskago, 1912), Vol. II, pp. 504-505.

[32]Ibid., p. 503.

[33]See above, pages 133-135, 146.

[34]Ozerov, Obshchestva potrebitelei, p. 239.

[35]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), October 15, 1911, pp. 1-3.

[36]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), March 29, 1912, pp. 14-15.

[37]Ezhegodnik MSPO, 1913 g., Vol. II, Pt. I, pp. 73-77, 257-261; Pt. II, pp. 231-238. My tabulation of the number of women delegates married to male delegates is based on male and female variants of a common surname.

[38]Ibid.

[39]See above, pages 254-257, 259.

[40]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), December 16, 1909, pp. 1097-1101.

[41]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), January 22, 1911, p. 76.

[42]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), July 16, 1911, pp. 541-544.

[43]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), September 29, 1912, p. 642.

[44]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), January 15, 1918, pp. 24-26. These figures show the number of instructors hired, although the first MSPO instructor did not actually begin visiting societies until 1911.

[45]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), February 8, 1917, pp. 6-9.

[46]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), December 10, 1911, pp. 889-892; February 8, 1917, pp. 28-31.

[47]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), December 10, 1911, pp. 889-892.

[48]Valuiskii Zemskii Listok (Voronezh guberniia), November 2, 1916, p. 2.

[49]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), December 12, 1912, p. 12.

[50]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), August 3, 1917, pp. 19-21.

[51]Ibid.

[52]Shishkin, Iz vospominanii kooperativnykh i politicheskikh, p. 9.

[53]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), May 31, 1917, pp. 30-35.

[54]Ibid.

[55]Zhurnal i postanovleniia, pp. 17-18.

[56]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), May 25, 1917, pp. 30-35.

[57]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), August 3, 1917, pp. 36-37.

CHAPTER V

COOPERATORS AND POLITICS BEFORE 1917

A. The consumer cooperative movement and the Revolution of 1905-7

In 1905, the first revolutionary wave swept over the Russian Empire. As a result of the Revolution of 1905-7, the Russian consumer cooperative movement became politicized. Prior to 1905, cooperative journals had devoted very little attention to politics. But in 1905, cooperators welcomed the revolution and participated in it. Later, when the reaction set it, consumer cooperators and their societies were among the first to feel the effects. During and after the revolution changes were made in the way many societies were operated.

In January, 1905, immediately after Bloody Sunday, Soiuz Potrebitelei took an open stand in favor of political change. The editors felt it necessary to explain the attention the journal was now devoting to politics.

> We are living through a time when the fate of many years will be decided. In such times, interest in politics is an expression of love for ones country and fear for its future. On behalf of all that is best in Russia, we must lift our voice and cry: in the struggle for freedom of speech, for freedom of thought, for the opportunity to work, for the awakening of the power of the people - unity is the only means...[1]

In 1905, the MSPO allied itself openly with a single political party: the Kadets. Soiuz Potrebitelei was jubilant over the success of the Kadets in the elections to the first Duma. It referred to the Duma elections as a "bloodless victory achieved by the party of 'Popular Freedom'".[2] Liberal rhetoric was readily visable in the editorials of Soiuz Potrebitelei. For example, when the October Manifesto was issued, Soiuz Potrebitelei attributed it to the fact that the intelligensia had succeeded in uniting with the working class.

> For centuries the intelligensia fought alone and fell. Then the intelligensia united with the working class and together they won. In unity - is strength. Recent days have once again underlined that truth.[3]

The emphasis on unity, on a common goal which was to superceed the interests of any one class, was typical of Russian liberalism. A similar emphasis is evident in the article which greeted the opening of the State Duma in April, 1906.

> Every layer of the population expects the Duma to give it what it deserves:
> the peasant - allotment of land, equality of rights with other groups, removal of administrative supervision;
> the worker - regulation of prolonged labor, just compensation of it and correct organization of relations with employers;
> merchant and industrialist - 'the real, firm basis of freedom, which alone can make it possible for Russia to set out on the road of economic development and to build the trade and industry of the country on the basis of law and justice;'
> civil officials - 'improvement of their life.'[4]

Soiuz Potrebitelei added that cooperators could expect an end to the obstacles placed on their development by the old order.

The first consumer society to become involved in the revolution was the Arkhangel'sko-Solombal'skoe Consumer Society in Arkhangel'sk. At a regular meeting held on December 19, 1904, the consumer society resolved to allocate the entire net profit for the fiscal year 1903-1904 for cultural work. The society planned to open a library and reading room for members and to organize a series of lectures. Such a large allocation of profits for cultural work was practically unheard of. Furthermore, "after hearing a report on the present condition of Russia" the society resolved:

> to recognize as necessary in the present moment to extend to the Russian people freedom of speech and press, meeting and union.[5]

The general meeting which passed this resolution preceded Bloody Sunday by more than three weeks. No further information is available on the activities of the Arkhangel'sko-Solombal'skoe Consumer Society other than that it was closed by order of the provincial governor on March 10, 1905. The justification given by the governor was that there had been "a breaking of the charter, carried out under the influence of untrustworthy elements." Soiuz Potrebitelei commented that this explanation was "rather unclear but at the same time rather typical of recent times."[6]

The best documented case of the closing of a consumer society as a result of revolutionary activity is that of the Sormovskoe Consumer Society in Nizhnyi-Novgorod. This was a factory dominated consumer society when it was founded in 1891. As far as the workers were concerned, the consumer society was merely a branch of the factory. When they rioted in 1899 because of the failure of the factory to pay back wages, the consumer society was wrecked and plundered.[7] The Sormovskii factory had the practice of paying its workers in script which was redeemable for goods only at the factory consumer society and could be exchanged for cash only at a 20 to 40 per cent reduction.[8] But in 1901, the society's old board, consisting entirely of upper level employees, was voted out of office and a new, worker oriented management took over. The new board had to overcome the opposition of the factory management, which spread the rumour that the society was about to close, causing some members to demand that their share payments be returned. But the new management managed to calm fears and introduced such reforms as lower prices and the allocation of a part of the profits for educational and philanthropic goals, including the establishment of a tea house, a library, public baths and stipends to pay for the education of the children of worker members.[9]

Police reports show that employees of the Sormovskoe Consumer Society took part in meetings held in May and

June, 1905, at which inflamatory statements were made, in some cases by the employees themselves and in other cases by workers employed in the factory. The night watchman of the consumer society was quoted as having said:

> I am old and gray, but I want to live and fight against the government until death. You are young so you must fight. Arm yourselves, young and old. Then we will overthrow our hated government.[10]

One employee of the consumer society, who was active in printing and distributing underground literature in the area, was a Social Democrat.[11] But the main political party active in these meetings was the Social Revolutionary Party. At one rally, two banners were displayed with the slogans: "The Party of the Social Revolutionaries in the battle to obtain our rights; up with the eight hour day; up with land and liberty; down with the autocracy" and "The SR Party; honor the fighters who have fallen for freedom."[12]

On December 20, 1905, the Sormovskii Consumer Society was closed by order of the vice-governor, following the use of troops to repress "disorders" at the factory. Other social organizations, including the All-Class Club, the Public Club (narodnyi dom) and the City Social Library were closed as well.[13] The MSPO tried to convince the vice-governor to revoke his order, using the argument that closing the society was unfair to its suppliers, to whom it was in debt. The total debt was 300,000 rubles, part of which was owned to the MSPO itself. But the official was

unmoved, probably partially as a result of the fact that meanwhile he had been promoted to governor. The board of the society sent a telegram to Count Witte, who had recently rejoined the administration of Nicholas II. But Witte replied that if the governor had closed the society, he must have had "serious reasons."[14] The closing of the society was surely welcomed by the factory administration as well as by the local merchants.

The revolutionary movement was already dying down towards the end of 1906. A major reason was the success of the October Manifesto in splitting the revolutionary opposition. The moderate part of the opposition, of which the majority of consumer cooperators at that time were a part, was satisfied by the promise of parliamentary rule and had lost interest in the struggle against the autocracy. This is illustrated by a report in Soiuz Potrebitelei on the harassment suffered by the Chernigov Consumer Society since February 19, 1905, when it had allocated 350 rubles to the families of those killed in Petrograd and other cities in revolutionary demonstrations.[15] Repeatedly, the police chief had refused to give his approval to agendas of general meetings. When he did approve an agenda, he always amended it in some way, as by deleting discussion of the formation of a guberniia union of consumer societies. The Black Hundreds threatened to plunder the shop. The society was even denied permission to sell newspapers. The

conclusion of one contributor to Soiuz Potrebitelei was that it had been a mistake to ever become involved in political activity.

> Being a true supporter of the movement of liberation, I must admit, none the less, that this sort of action by general meetings is in no way in the interests of the practical side of the work of the society...Cooperatives should support the movement of liberation, but they should not fly into the breach, risking dissolution.[16]

According to the writer, the shareholders present at meetings passing revolutionary declarations were not even representative of the membership as a whole. Although this opinion was not an expression of the policy of the leadership of the MSPO, it can be taken as an indication of a shift away from the enthusiasm of the early months of the revolution.

The Revolution of 1905-7 resulted in changes in the way many consumer societies were operated, although the extent of these changes can easily be exaggerated. Many of the changes that were made turned out to be only temporary. For example, in the Morozov Factory Consumer Society in Moscow guberniia, the old board, dominated by pro-factory administration employees, was replaced by a new one, composed of lower level employees and workers. Women got the right to become members of the society. But lack of confidence in the new board resulted in a decrease in the number of shareholders from 2732 in 1904-5 to 2585 in 1905-6, while the amount of share capital decreased from 126,000 rubles to 98,000 rubles. A

few years later the consumer society was again taken over by the factory management.[17] There were reports that more people attended the general meetings of their consumer societies as a result of the stimulation provided by the revolution. But there were also, as we have seen above, contrary reports that radical resolutions were passed by a small minority of the membership.

The most important effects of the Revolution of 1905-7 on the consumer cooperative movement came mainly after the revolution was over. The number of consumer societies began to increase more quickly. This can be attributed for the most part, to economic developments. But the revolution did stimulate the idea of founding voluntary organizations for the purpose of self-help. Furthermore, after the revolution was suppressed, consumer societies were one of the very few institutions where politically oriented work could still be done. Independent worker societies were mainly founded in the years of the suppression of the revolution. Sometimes members of left wing political parties, while in exile or when returning from exile, founded or got jobs in worker consumer societies or with the central cooperative organizations. After 1905, consumer cooperative journals were never again entirely silent on political issues. In summary, the Revolution of 1905-7 served both to broaden and to politicize the consumer cooperative movement.

B. The consumer cooperative movement and the government: the State Duma, the tsarist administration and the zemstvos

The government of the Russian Empire was not unified in its attitude towards the consumer cooperative movement. Unity was impossible, given the fact that the government was made up of such diverse bodies as the State Duma and the zemstvos, in addition to the tsarist administration. Most of the members of the State Duma were sympathetic to the consumer cooperative movement, but the autocracy prevented it from acting on that sympathy. The autocratic nature of the tsarist government did not, however, prevent members of the administration from differing in their attitude towards the movement.

Consumer cooperative journals greeted the opening of the Duma, on April 27, 1906, with great enthusiasm. Consumer cooperators expected the Duma to do great things for Russia. One of the things that the Duma was expected to do for Russia was to free cooperatives from the restrictions imposed by the tsarist administration. Soiuz Potrebitelei, after listing the benefits that the Duma could be expected to provide for all social strata in Russia, added that the Duma would give cooperators "complete freedom of action."[18] By this it was meant that the Duma would give the consumer cooperative movement a new cooperative law, a law which would relieve it of

governmental interference. Cooperators expected the new law to bring an end to the long and often uncertain process of having a charter approved and an end to interference in cultural and educational work. But these expectations were never fulfilled. Only in 1915 did the State Duma even begin considering a progressive cooperative law.

In February, 1908, Soiuz Potrebitelei openly complained about the lack of results coming out of the existence of the Duma. The journal blamed this on lack of real committment on the part of Duma members.

> Despite the obviously sympathetic attitude towards the cooperative movement on the part of the governing circles and political parties, when it is necessary to move from words to action, our "friends" very often prefer to retire to the background.[19]

On February 5, a proposal made by the Social Democrat faction to exempt consumer societies with a basic capital of less than 20,000 rubles from payment of taxes had been voted down. One can only speculate as to the reasons for this, but it seems likely that liberal members of the Duma, who would otherwise have been sympathetic, hesitated to support a proposal made by the SDs.

Consumer societies had no more reason to be satisfied when, in 1908-1909, the Duma considered, but did not pass, a proposal made by 34 conservative representatives that every factory be required to establish a consumer society for its workers. The supporters of the bill were members of various conservative parties, including the Octobrists

and those to their right. The motives for the rejection of the bill were varied. Soiuz Potrebitelei, speaking for the consumer cooperative movement, objected to the proposed legislation on the grounds that the founding of consumer societies should be based on popular initiative. The journal concluded:

> We are even ready to believe that the signers of the proposal are entirely sympathetic to the interests of the workers. All the same, if this legislation is passed, it will only harm them.[20]

The proposed legislation was evidently conceived as a means of combating the spread of independent worker societies. The members of the socialist parties in the Duma were, for that reason, against it. Reacting to comments made by left wing representatives, the Minister of Trade and Industry said:

> The ministry does not accept the tendency, which finds expression more and more in worker spheres, to tear cooperative work away from the walls of the factories and plants and to found independent consumer societies, open to all.[21]

The Kadets agreed with the tsarist administration that factory societies were desirable. But they objected to the compulsory nature of the bill. The Duma did approve a resolution recommended by the Kadet Stepanov in favor of the promotion of the founding of consumer societies on a voluntary basis:

> Considering the compulsory placement of consumer societies in factories and plants to be inadmissable, the State Duma recognizes at the same time as entirely desirable, in the interests of the widespread foundation and development of such societies,

> legal regulation of their establishment and operation and provision of material resources...[22]

Finally, the tsarist administration, in the person of the Minister of Trade and Industry also opposed the bill, on the grounds that it was unnecessary, since consumer societies were already sufficiently controlled.[23] It is likely that most of the members of the conservative parties were willing to follow the government's lead.

There was no political party which really expressed the position of the consumer cooperative movement on the Duma bill, although the Kadets came the closest. Soiuz Potrebitelei pointed out that the Duma had not placed the question of cooperative law in the proper general perspective. The Duma had failed to recognize or even to discuss the position that efforts should be directed not to the development or improvement of separate model codes but rather to the development of a single code for all types of cooperative associations. The disillusionment of the consumer cooperative movement with the very institution of the Duma was evident in June, 1909, when Soiuz Potrebitelei reviewed its final action on the bill. The history of the proposed bill showed, the journal commented sarcastically, "with what incredible speed the law making machinery of the State Duma works."[24]

The failure of the Duma to pass legislation in the interests of the consumer cooperative movement must be understood in terms of the fact that it was, for all

intents and purposes, a powerless institution. The Duma did prove to be of some use as a political platform for the left wing parties. One instance of this which involved a consumer cooperator occurred in 1911. The SD representative Petrov announced that he had received a letter from a cooperator who had been arrested for distributing a pamphlet called "What is Cooperation?" and for reading it at a meeting of workers. The cooperator was now in prison in Ekaterinburg waiting to be sent into exile and asked Petrov to try to see that in view of his weak health he not be sent to a place with a severe climate.[25]

But the tsarist administration saw to it that the Duma was ineffective as a means of actually reforming Russian society. In private conversation between delegates to the First All-Russian Cooperative Congress the following apt characterization of the Third Duma was made by a peasant delegate:

> We call that Duma the childless duma. Because in order to have children you have to have three things: a man, a woman and passion. But the State Duma is a widow woman, the State Council is an old man and there is no passion. From their kind of activity you do not get results.[26]

The policies of the tsarist administration with respect to the consumer cooperative movement were characterized by paternalism. This paternalism had two elements: on the one hand a "gentle" aspect, a desire to guide the development of consumer societies in a way beneficial to the country as a whole; on the other hand a "harsh" aspect,

a determination that nothing would be allowed to happen which was inimical to the interests of the state. It might be added that the tsarist administration had a rather narrow interpretation of the interests of the state. Paternalism always contains these two elements, but in practice they are often difficult to distinguish. When a paternalistic authority is put under pressure, the gentle aspect becomes overshadowed by the harsh one. Before 1905, the gentle aspect of the paternalism of the tsarist administration was clearly visable. But after 1905, Russian society steadily became more and more politicized. After 1916, as a result of the social pressures engendured by the World War, the gentle aspect of paternalism became totally overshadowed. This pattern was already visable in 1910. In that year, an article appeared in Soiuz Potrebitelei which made the point that relations between the consumer cooperative movement and the tsarist administration were becoming steadily more hostile and that the direct cause of the worsened relations was the fact that the consumer cooperative movement was now a mass movement.

> As our cooperative movement has developed a more and more openly expressed mass character and has become one of the forms of the social movement, one of the expressions of popular organization, the attitude towards it of the various organs of government and local administration have definitely changed from well-wishing to negative and administrative restrictions and repression have begun to play a more and more powerful role in our daily life and activity.[27]

Thus the attitude of the tsarist administration towards the consumer cooperative movement definitely became more

hostile in the course of the period under study. But many of the actions of the government taken as late as 1916 are only comprehensible as expressions of paternalism.

Paternalism was expressed, first of all, in the Model Code. The purpose of the Model Code was twofold: to facilitate the approval of the charters of societies which were seen as having a salutary economic effect while preventing the establishment of those which might become centers of opposition to the government, that is, which might seek to become involved in politics in any way.

As we have seen above, the Model Code laid out in great detail just how a consumer society was to be organized and operated.[28] All this was conceived of as being for the benefit of the society. Consumer societies were prevented from adopting a form of organization which might prove to be unworkable. At the same time, the Model Code set limits beyond which a society could not go. A phrase which one finds repeatedly in the Model Code is that a society may do a given thing "with the proper approval and in accordance with the relevent decrees." To a western eye, the phrase seems redundant. It provided double insurance against a society straying from the "correct" path.

Another principle behind the code which differs sharply from western practice was that no action could be taken by a society unless specifically provided for by

the code. For example, no society whose charter was based on the Model Code could vote to make members responsible for the debts of the society beyond the amount of their share payments, although many societies wanted to do this in order to raise their reliability in the eyes of potential creditors. The practice in the West, in contrast, is generally that anything can be done provided that it is not specifically forbidden by law.

There were many other examples of restrictive paternalism in the Model Code. The agenda for each general meeting or meeting of representatives had to be submitted beforehand to the local police, although it was not specifically stated that the local police had to give its approval. Nothing was to be discussed which was not directly related to the business of the society. The provincial or city governor had the right to close the society if it took part in "any action opposed to governmental order and public safety."

In the cooperative press one comes across many complaints about the refusal of city or provincial governors to approve a society's charter. The reasons given for the refusal were normally paternalistically phrased. In May, 1909, Soiuz Potrebitelei reported that a charter submitted by a group of people in a town in Moscow guberniia had been turned down for two reasons: that there was already a factory shop in the town and that "the persons organizing the society had no guarantees of commercial

trustworthyness."[29] Soiuz Potrebitelei printed this story without comment, but there was no question about the journal's implicit disapproval.

There were frequently instances of provincial authorities acting paternalistically but without an understanding of the local situation. In one case, approval was asked for the charter of a consumer society the members of which were to come from a given village and "its surrounding area." The charter was approved, but the provincial authorities changed the phrasing to read that the members could only come from the volost in which the consumer society was actually located. The authorities may have wanted to protect the society from the danger of trying to cover too great an area, but they had not bothered to investigate the local situation: the village was located at the junction of a number of volosts."[30]

In other cases, paternalism was merely an excuse for simple hostility towards the consumer cooperative movement or the desire to protect private interests. Permission was refused to a group wishing to found a consumer society in the town of Koleev in Moscow guberniia. Three reasons were given for the refusal: that the founders were not sufficiently mature in age, that not enough share capital was available and that the founders were not acquainted with commerce. Soiuz Potrebitelei pointed out that of the twelve founders, although one was 20 and another 25, the

rest were all between the ages of 38 and 60; that 60,000 rubles in share capital had already been collected; and that although the Model Code did not require the founders of a consumer society to have knowledge of commerce, it happened to be the case that two of the founders were merchants with ten years of commercial experience. Later it was learned that a brother of the governor was the owner of a shop in the same town.[31]

Regulation of consumer societies once they were established was also based on paternalistic principles. In 1903, the Ministry of Transport authorized the granting of long term loans to railroad consumer societies. The justification for this measure was an excellent example of paternalistic reasoning. The Ministry pointed out that if the government did not support railroad consumer societies then the consumer societies would be dependent on the initiative of railroad employees, and that was to be avoided:

> The organization of railroad consumer societies exclusively by means of the initiative of the employees themselves, without material aid on the part of the state treasury and without the supervision and leadership of the local authorities of the railroad cannot, as experience has shown, be considered satisfactory.[32]

The Ministry consequently ordered that railroad administrations be allowed to make loans to consumer societies, using as collateral the wages of their employee members, and that local railroad administrations should supervise

the consumer societies in their jurisdiction more carefully, in particular seeing to it that the societies "did not permit the sale of luxury goods or excessive use of credit" both of which would be damaging to the finances of the societies. In April, 1909, the Ministry of Interior sent a circular to provincial governors, proposing that help be given to consumer societies in order to prevent them from "coming under the influence of underground organizations."[33]

As early as 1903, consumer cooperators began to reject the government's paternalism. Two weeks after the Ministry of Transports authorization of loans to railroad consumer societies, V. A. Anofriev responded to the measures, concluding that they would actually harm railroad consumer societies:

> The loans will help weak societies, but, without doubt, that advantage deprives their members of the necessity of expending their personal energy and initiative in the interests of the success of their cooperative and will deprive all societies of their most valuable function, the raising of the moral and intellectual level of their members.[34]

Anofriev and other consumer cooperators opposed the paternalism of the tsarist administration because, while it promoted consumer societies as economic institutions it limited their freedom of action as social institutions.

The attitude of officials of the tsarist administration towards the consumer cooperative movement was by no means unanimous. Virtually all officials valued

cooperatives as economic institutions. Differences were related to the extent to which they feared the effects of cooperatives as social institutions. In effect, differences were related to what aspect of paternalism officials found most congenial: the gentle aspect, the desire to facilitate the development of consumer societies in a way beneficial to the country as a whole; or the harsh aspect, the determination that consumer societies not be permitted to become politicized. The attitude of tsarist officials towards consumer cooperatives depended on whether their recognition of their economic value was outbalanced by their fear of their social effects.

One area where the local administration was particularly sympathetic towards the cooperative movement was the Transbaikal. In 1911, the military governor of the area sent a circular to local officials to the effect that they should work with the intelligensia to encourage the founding of cooperatives. They should try to:

> inculcate in the consciousness of the peasant masses the necessity of forming cooperatives, including credit associations and consumer societies, holding discussions with members of the village intelligensia and enlightened peasants for that purpose, as these are the elements most prepared to develop that idea, distribute essays giving information on the formation of peasant cooperatives and in every way support initiative in their formation.[35]

The openness of the Transbaikal military governor to the use of individual initiative in founding consumer societies can perhaps be attributed to the more open and democratic social

relations which existed in Siberia, as a 'frontier area', in contrast to central Russia.

The essence of the paternalistic position of the tsarist administration on the consumer cooperative movement was that societies were to be supported in their activities as economic institutions but that their ventures into non-economic areas, i.e., cultural and educational work, were to be strictly controlled. We have seen above that the tsarist administration's repression of the consumer co-operative movement was concentrated on its cultural and educational work.[36] If cultural work had no political implications, it would have posed no problems. In the summer of 1907, V. A. Posse, the founder of "Trudovoi Soiuz" was traveling in the Urals lecturing on the ideas on which the society had been founded. Originally the governor of the Urals had authorized the lectures, believing that from the point of view of the government the cooperative movement was harmless and even beneficial. But when he learned that Posse was an anarchist, he sent out telegrams forbidding him to speak. Posse reported that in Ekaterinburg posters advertising his talk were pasted over with posters for a "new piquant operetta" called "Hooligans".[37]

A good example of support for the cooperative movement by a member of the tsarist administration, but with emphasis on its economic aspects was a statement made in

1916 by A. G. Cherniavskii, the governor of Minsk guberniia:

> I cannot prevent myself from sharing with you... some observations on the necessity of quickly and energetically implementing the establishment of cooperatives in the guberniia. The best way to do this fully is through the zemstvos...From my side I am ready to lend the most energetic aid to the zemstvos in this task of the greatest importance.[38]

This statement was made in 1916, at a time when the tsarist administration was very hostile to cooperatives as social institutions. The governor's emphasis on the zemstvos was due partly to the fact that he was speaking at a meeting of the guberniia zemstvo, but also to the fact that zemstvos were normally inclined to pay most attention to the economic aspects of the cooperative movement.

Although articles appeared frequently in the cooperative press calling for the liberalization of cooperative law, the Model Code for consumer societies remained in force until after the February Revolution. Actually, changes making cooperative law more restrictive had a greater chance of being implemented. In 1911, a project for a new and more repressive model code was prepared by officials who felt that the existing code leaned too heavily in the direction of gentle paternalism, permitting too great a range of social and cultural functions. As Zel'geim himself had to admit, the project code made several improvements with respect to the economic opportunities open to consumer societies. The most beneficial change that would have been brought about by the proposed new code

was to make rebates on purchases exempt from taxation, although this applied only to factory, and not to independent worker societies. It also would have made possible the formation of a special fund of capital for the purchase of property. The fund could be composed of entrance payments, allocations from profits, gifts and loans. If the project had been adopted, societies would have gained the right to market goods produced by members of the society, although they would have lost the right to produce goods themselves.[39]

At the same time, the project code would have placed greater limitations on the cultural and educational work of consumer societies and increased police supervision. The project code did not include the provision that societies could organize projects for "the improvement of the material and moral life" of their members. Instead, it would have permitted allocations from net profits for "special goals" only with special approval each time from the provincial or city governor. Furthermore, there was no time limit for the governor to give his approval or refusal. The project code would have provided that persons under the supervision of the police, as exiles, or persons suspected of a crime could not be officials in consumer societies. Under the Model Code, only persons deprived by law of civil rights could be excluded from consumer societies. Zel'geim pointed out that a local merchant could

easily have relieved himself of the competition of a consumer society by accusing one of its officials of committing a crime.[40]

The project included two provisions intended to restrict Jewish membership. In places where the acquisition of property by Jews and foreigners had to be approved by local authorities, i.e., in the Pale of Settlement, such approval also had to be secured for consumer societies. This requirement could be avoided only by excluding Jews from membership. Another provision would have limited the number of Jews on the boards of societies outside the Pale of Settlement to one half of the total. Soiuz Potrebitelei commented that these provisions showed "the Jew fear of our bureaucracy." Although the latter of these provisions would hardly have affected any societies, they can both be seen as an indication of the paranoic mood of some members of the tsarist administration.[41]

The MSPO did what it could to strengthen the position of those members of the government who leaned toward the gentle aspect of paternalism, thus to the promotion of the consumer cooperative movement mainly as an economic movement as opposed to those who sought to place limits on the consumer cooperative movement mainly because they feared its social and cultural work. For example, in 1911, Zel'geim pointed out that the requirement of the project code that a copy of all resolutions of the general meeting

be sent to the local police or to the provincial or city governor would require many governors to set up a special department only for regulating consumer societies. Already in 1911, Zel'geim pointed out, Kiev guberniia had over 600 societies and many guberniias had over 200. Zel'geim said that he hoped that the Minister of Finance would make the point in coming debates that this would represent a considerable increase in government expenses.[42] Zel'geim argued furthermore that the development of the non-economic activities of consumer societies was essential for the development of their economic activities.

> The Russian consumer cooperatives are and always will be (with the exception of the societies of the Union of Russian people) politically neutral, economic organizations. Limitations on cultural and educational work, which is necessary for the development of economic activities...prevent societies from improving the living conditions of the less enlightened groups of members.[43]

The project code of 1911 had been written by the Ministry of Interior, Department on the Local Economy, and then sent to the Ministries of Finance and of Trade and Industry and to the Department of Land and Land Construction for their comments. It is likely that officials in those departments were more oriented to the gentle aspect of paternalism and that it is there that the project ran into trouble. Perhaps the key to what happened was a natural conflict between the Ministry of Interior, an important responsibility of which was the repression of revolutionary activities, and the Ministry of Trade and Industry, whose

job it was to promote the development of the economy.

As late as 1915, some cooperators supported the paternalism of the tsarist administration. In September, 1915, a conference was organized by the Ministry of Trade and Industry to discuss another project for a new model code for consumer societies and their unions. The code had actually been worked out with the help of a relatively unimportant consumer cooperator, S. V. Borodaevskii. Precise information on the provisions of this project code is unavailable. It was extremely unusual for a tsarist ministry to invite representatives of interested groups to discuss proposed legislation, and so it was of some significance that the Ministry of Trade and Industry invited four representatives of the consumer cooperative movement, including Zel'geim and Merkulov, two representatives of zemstvos, one representative of the St. Petersburg Branch and nine professors to give their opinions. Of the nine professors, only two, Tugan-Baranovskii and Antsyferov, consistently supported the views of the cooperators. Of the seven others, one was the former Legal Marxist P. B. Struve and one was Ozerov, whose work was almost of scriptural stature in the eyes of most cooperators. To the great shock of the cooperators, the professors supported the position of the Ministry on several questions regarding limitations on consumer societies with respect to cultural and educational work. Soiuz Potrebitelei was moved to

comment that the question "remains unsettled - to whom is cooperative enlightenment more necessary: to the lower class - peasant or worker - or to the upper class of the cooperative movement, the intelligensia."[44]

An all-cooperative law was finally introduced in the State Duma in the summer of 1915. It was introduced by a group of 74 representatives of the various parties of the center, including Octobrists, Progressists, Kadets and Trudoviks. It was also supported by the socialists. The bill was based on projects worked out by the 1908 and 1913 all-Russian cooperative congresses and also by a July, 1915, session of the legal commission of the St. Petersburg Branch.[45] The purpose of the bill was to reduce government interference in the cooperative movement. The charters of new societies would not have to be approved. They could begin operation by a simple act of registration. Government supervision of the economic and non-economic functions of consumer societies would be abolished. This bill, unlike the 1908 bill, was not supported by the conservative political parties, because the conservative parties were in favor of government supervision.

The bill was passed by the State Duma in April, 1916, but it never became law under the tsarist administration because the State Council never acted upon it. In February, 1917, the council was still sitting on it. But soon after the February Revolution, on March 20, 1917, the Provisional Government put the law into effect.

The key representative of the tsarist administration participating in the Duma's debate on the all-cooperative law was the Minister of Trade, Prince V. N. Shakhovskoi. Shakhovskoi's position was that the Model Code was adequate and did not need to be changed. Using a conciliatory tone, Shakhovskoi emphasized the gentle aspect of paternalism. He explained that members of the Duma who expressed hostility to the government were wrong, since, according to him, the government had been aiding the growth of the consumer cooperative movement since 1897, with the promulgation of the Model Code.

> And if it is possible to recognize a certain distrust in some cases, that can be explained by the fact that some circles have attempted to give a political coloration to what should be an economic organ.[46]

Shakhovskoi urged the Duma to recognize that "since the fact of development is much more important than legalities, the publication of various norms is of secondary importance." He added as a final argument that the various forms of cooperatives were too different to be covered by a single law. This was an oblique way of saying that consumer societies had to be supervised more carefully than other types of cooperatives.

The responses of the supporters of the bill to Shakhovskoi's statement were sarcastic. The Kadet Paul Vinogradov said that the prince was "obviously unaware of the systematic measures against the cooperative movement

taken consistently by the government. The Menshevik Skobelev continued the attack:

> In general, this invitation to occupy ourselves with economics but not with politics reminds me of the immortal words of one local police official, noted during the confiscation from a student of a textbook on political economy. The policeman emotionally declared: 'It is all very well, sir, that you should study economics, but what do you need politics for?'[47]

But Shakhovskoi by no means represented the right wing of the tsarist administration. He felt that the present cooperative law was adequate, not too conservative but not too liberal. Similar ideas were held by the Minister of Land, A. N. Naumov. In December of 1915, he spoke out in favor or extending financial aid to consumer cooperatives in cities and villages. He justified this by arguing that "these cooperatives can be of fundamental help to the population and the government in the production as well as the distribution of goods."[48]

But Shakhovskoi and Naumov came into conflict with the Minister of the Interior A. N. Khvostov, who felt that even the present Model Code was too liberal. In a comment to representatives of the Russian press, he emphasized his responsibility as Minister of the Interior, to keep careful watch over consumer cooperatives:

> On the role of cooperatives, I think, as before, that they can play an important role in the struggle with inflation, but, to my regret, there is a noticeable tendency of some extreme political groups to seize the cooperative movement and use it for political purposes. That I cannot permit.[49]

At about the same time, at a session of the budget committee of the State Duma, P. P. Gronskii asked Khvostov about his ministry's actions with respect to the social organizations fighting inflation, including cooperatives. Gronskii, implied that the ministry was actually working against the groups trying to control inflation. Khvostov replied:

> The ministry is struggling against inflation, and in those places where cooperatives do not form political cells of the Peasant Union, there they are shown all possible help. As far as the Central Cooperative Committee is concerned, all that has been demanded of it is legalization. Apart from that its existence would not be illegal. The ministry stands for the point of view of legality.[50]

Later, in April, 1916, Khvostov expressed his displeasure that Shakhovskoi had ignored his opinion on the all-cooperative law, which was that cooperative institutions should be deprived of any cultural activities whatsoever.[51]

This concludes our discussion of legislation. We will now move on to other areas of the relationship between officials of the tsarist administration and the consumer cooperative movement. One problem which should be mentioned in this context is the fact that it was not unusual to find members of consumer societies bringing members of the board to court on charges of embezzlement. There were also cases of members of societies being charged with slander for things said at general meetings. Such proceedings always had a deleterious effect upon the society. Pleas by instructors that consumer societies should settle all their conflicts within themselves and not

give the government an excuse for intervening were often not heeded.[52]

The work of many intellectuals in the interests of a democratic cooperative movement was clearly recognized by some governmental and clerical authorities, who sought to set limits on such work. In 1910, the Ministry of Interior sent an order to guberniia and city governors to the effect that the charters of consumer societies of which the founding members included employees in government organizations or in government operated railways would have to be approved by the ministry itself, rather than by provincial officials.[53] One village school council told teachers that they must either stop all work in cooperatives or be fired. Authorities often refused permission to use local schools as meeting places.[54] In many church dioceses the clergy were ordered not to participate in the work of consumer societies except as members of inspection committees. Reasons given for such orders were that it was inappropriate for the clergy to participate in commercial activities, disturbing the peaceful course of the parochial life, and that it caused emnity towards the clergy.[55] Priests from Iaroslav were not permitted by their archbishop to attend the 1913 cooperative congress.[56]

Frequently, exiles were refused permission from local authorities to take part in consumer societies. Permission was refused despite the fact that there was nothing in Russian law to that effect. In 1916, the Menshevik Duma

member Sergei Chkheidze received a telegram from exiles in Enisei guberniia protesting the fact that they were not allowed to join a local consumer society.

Virtually all instances of governmental or clerical orders restricting the participation of members of the intelligensia in the consumer cooperative movement originated on the local level.[57] This fact can best be understood in terms of the close relationship between local authorities, clergy and merchants. For obvious reasons, a local merchant might complain to local school or church authorities that a teacher or priest was committing some sort of indescretion. One correspondent to Obshchee Delo complained that false, anonymous denounciations were being made about one founder of his society, a teacher, saying that he was spending all his time at the shop and not doing his job.[58] Local authorities were likely to side against the consumer society. There is no reason to assume that central authorities favored the participation of members of the local intelligensia in consumer societies any more than local authorities did, but they would be less inclined to become involved in individual cases.

Some cooperatives were infiltrated by police agents. One agent, Ia. L. Zlamkin, infiltrated the MSPO and was even appointed manager of the trade department. Shishkin reports that no one suspected Zlamkin, who used the pseudonym S. A. Repekampf. He once tried to recruit

Shishkin to help print underground literature. The Bolsheviks even made him a member of their Moscow Committee. The identity of Zlamkin was learned after the February Revolution.[59]

Cooperative journals reported on the arrests of cooperative activists. After the beginning of 1914, such reports appeared at least every few months. In the six months that preceded the outbreak of the First World War, there were a large number of arrests of cooperators and refusals of permission to organize local congress or give courses on the operation of consumer societies. For example, on the night of June 23, 1914, in the city of Cheliabinsk, six people were arrested, including three cooperators, of whom one was an instructor employed by the uezd zemstvo and two were editors of cooperative journals, and an employee in the press where local cooperative publications were printed.[60]

A common police tactic was the practice of recording the names of delegates to congresses or people attending meetings. One purpose of this was to frighten off the timid. An example of the use of this tactic occurred at a meeting on December 4, 1915, at the headquarters of the Moscow Parent Club, a circle for discussing the upbringing and education of children. There was to be a lecture by E. D. Kuskova on "The Cooperative Movement and its Goals and Tasks in Russia and the West" followed by a discussion.

This topic attracted, according to Soiuz Potrebitelei, a large audience of professors, doctors, lawyers, high school teachers, and workers. At 8:00, when the meeting was to begin, there suddenly appeared a large group of policemen. They announced that the meeting was cancelled and that the names of everyone present would be written down. This job was not completed until midnight. No one was allowed to leave until 12:30 a.m. and those who had neglected to bring their passports were detained further.[61] This incident shows the wide interest that existed in the cooperative movement at all levels of Russian society. It also shows that police tactics of intimidation were not limited to the lower classes.

Additional information on the relationship between the consumer cooperative movement and the tsarist administration can be obtained by taking a look at the pre-1917 congresses of cooperative organizations. The organization of congresses of cooperatives was never an easy matter because the tsarist government was always reluctant to grant its authorization. As early as 1896, the Nizhnyi-Novgorod Congress of Industrial Enterprises had called for holding an all-Russian congress of cooperatives. From time to time, in the cooperative press, there appeared a notice to the effect that one or another cooperative organization was trying again to organize one. For example, in November, 1903, Soiuz Potrebitelei informed its readers that this was being attempted by the Permanent Commission

on Consumer Societies of the St. Petersburg Branch.[62] But the commission failed to obtain the necessary approval.

Although an all-Russian congress of cooperatives was not held until 1908, various guberniia and uezd level congresses did take place prior to that time. Most frequently, these were congresses of credit societies. This was partly a reflection of the fact that credit societies were more widespread than any other type of cooperative at that time. But a more important reason is that credit societies were less politicized than consumer societies. The average union of credit societies must certainly have found it easier to get governmental permission to hold a congress than, for example, a group of urban and democratically oriented consumer societies.[63]

On January 28, 1908, Soiuz Potrebitelei announced that the Ministry of Interior had given permission to hold an all-Russian congress of cooperatives. Originally, permission had been received on December 30, 1907, to hold the congress beginning on January 2. But the MSPO succeeded in getting the date postponed. The congress was held in Moscow and the organizational work was done by the MSPO.[64] A short time later, agendas for the general sessions of the congress as well as for the separate sections (consumer, credit, agricultural and handicrafts) were published. The agendas were businesslike, but several topics had definite political implications. The agenda for

the consumer society section, which had been approved by the Ministry of Interior, included the following:

I. report on the present position of consumer societies in Russia
II. desired changes in taxation
III. internal administration
    1. credit
    2. prices
    3. distribution of profits
    4. circulating funds
    5. administration of affairs
IV. technical questions (accounting, acquisition of quality merchandise)
V. position of employees
VI. relations with other types of cooperatives
VII. other services of consumer societies (with respect to cities, villages and craftsmen)
VIII. production by consumer societies
IX. formation of unions
X. desired changes in the Model Code
XI. the optimal consumer society
    1. local activity
    2. composition of membership (open or restricted)
    3. optimal direction of activity
XII. special questions of restricted societies[65]

There were a number of sensitive points on this agenda, including the distribution of profits, the position of employees and desired changes in the Model Code. In the end point IX, the formation of unions, turned out to be most sensitive of all. The consumer society section and the congress as a whole were closed early because of what happened when this was discussed.

Before explaining how it came about that the First All-Russian Cooperative Congress was closed early, it is necessary to give some background information on the composition of the congress. It was attended by 824

delegates, of whom 384 had the right to vote. Each society had at least one vote and large societies might have more than one. Some societies sent more representatives than could vote. At the congress, there were 326 delegates from 157 consumer societies, 236 delegates from 163 credit societies, 82 delegates from 42 agricultural cooperatives, and 71 delegates from 22 handicrafts cooperatives. There were also three representatives of foreign cooperative unions and 98 special guests invited by the MSPO.

Although the congress had representatives from every cornor of the Russian Empire, including five representatives from tsarist Poland, most consumer societies which sent delegates were from the Moscow area. Twelve consumer societies were located in Moscow and 33 were from Moscow guberniia. There were eleven societies from Vladimir guberniia, six from Ekaterinoslav guberniia, six from St. Petersburg guberniia, and five from Nizhnyi-Novgorod guberniia. In addition, six guberniias had four societies each, ten guberniias had three societies each, eight guberniias had two societies each and 13 guberniias had one society each.

The consumer societies attending the congress included:

city societies	43
factory	36
village	34
independent worker	27
railroad	11
military	1
miscellaneous	5

The notes of the congress pointed out that in proportion to the number of societies of their type in existence, independent worker societies were the best represented. Fully one hundred per cent of the independent worker societies known to exist attended the congress. This compares with 30 per cent of railroad societies, 18 per cent of factory societies, 17.5 per cent of city societies, 4.7 per cent of village societies and 3.6 per cent of economic societies of officers.[66]

The decision to attend the congress was partly a political decision. Societies sent representatives not just because they were interested in discussing problems relating to the consumer cooperative movement. They were interested in political issues which were discussed not only in the regular sessions but even more in private discussion. Interest in politics explains why more consumer societies were in attendance than credit societies, even though at that time there were more credit societies in existence than consumer societies. Interest in politics also expalins why a far larger proportion of independent worker societies attended the congress than any other type of consumer society. Political inclinations also explain why the police had frequent occasion to interrupt the proceedings of the consumer section but virtually left the credit, agricultural and handicraft sections alone.[67]

The discussions that took place in the formal sessions of the congresses were not the only words exchanged. An

article signed "Tan" in Russkoe Bogatstvo reported on private conversations held among delegates at the congress.[68] Many delegates were busy arranging the sale or purchase of goods. Delegates exchanged stories on the problems and successes of their societies and also on the problems of making a living. Political questions were a subject of much conversation. Delegates talked about the State Duma,[69] and about the effect of the Stolypin reform. "Tan" quoted several comments made by police agents in the course of the congress to individual delegates:

> I'm in a hurry to make a report. In a speech by one delegate, I noticed a hidden call to overthrow the government. For that reason the whole congress could be closed.
>
> No association is permissable. The best association is support for the common norms.
>
> You want to choose a committee and establish a general union. We know that it will be a Union of Unions.
>
> Essentially, the cooperative movement is a suspect enterprise, because the socialists are the ones who establish them.

These comments are more than an excellent indication of the paranoid mentality of tsarist police officials. They show the extent to which cooperative movement was politicized.

Every session of the congress was attended by representatives of the police. From the very beginning, left wing delegates were able to keep them busy. The incidents were frequently amusing. At the opening session of the congress, Posse used his quick wit to cut off one

agent. Posse was one of several speakers to make opening statements. He began by saying that he was sure that the delegates to the congress would be able to work together harmoniously, despite the fact that they belonged to different political parties, or, in some cases, like Posse himself, belonged to no party. Posse went on to make an emotional statement:

> Cooperative activity is constructive activity. The spirit of the cooperative movement is constructive, but at the same time it destroys the yolk of man over man.

At this point, he was interrupted by a representative of the police, who addressed the chairman, asking him "not to permit here the propagating of the ideas of anti-government parties." Posse replied to this that he had already said that he belonged to no political party. The representative of the police evidently could think of no reply and he was silent for the rest of the speech.[70] In his memoirs, Posse identified this police officer as Stroev, who had been the commander of a military division in Moscow in 1905. In December, 1905, he had refused to lead his troops against a demonstration. As a result, he had been arrested and told that he would be shot. He then asked and was granted permission to absolve his guilt by participating in the struggle against revolutionaries.[71]

Representatives of different types of consumer societies worked together in the consumer society section of the 1908 congress with surprising unanimity. In order

to save time and create orderly debate, a plan was worked out for limiting the number of speakers on each issue. The section divided itself into three groups: village societies, factory and worker societies, and a mixed group with city, military, and railroad societies. The discussion of each topic was preceeded by the reading of a few prepared reports. The three groups would then meet separately and choose a representative to express the opinion of the group. After that, individual speakers would have their turn. It took some time to work out this system, and it was only fully instituted on the third day of the congress.

Representatives of worker societies had come to the congress in a belligerent mood, expecting to be opposed at almost every turn. They were surprised to discover that frequently the representatives of factory societies chose them to represent the group on important issues. One can only speculate as to the reasons for this. It is possible that the factory societies represented at the congress were uncharacteristically liberal ones. It is more likely that factory managements were not particularly concerned with who represented the society at the congress, and representatives were chosen who did not really represent the views of the management. Factory society representatives would then choose worker representatives to express the opinion of the group since they could do so without fear of reprisal. Village societies

were also usually sympathetic to worker demands. Railroad societies on the other hand, voted very conservatively, generally holding themselves aloof from any group. City societies maintained a rather low profile. Where they did speak out, they often took a rather legalistic point of view. For example, when the congress accepted a worker society proposal that in addition to general meetings each society should have a meeting of delegates elected proportionally, the speaker appointed by the city group pointed out that this did not conform to the Model Code and the proposal was turned over to a legal commission.

The best example of the sympathy shown at the congress for the demands of worker cooperatives was the vote on the issue of credit. Worker societies proposed that during times of unemployment caused by strikes or lockouts, societies should allow credit in proportion to the amount of a member's share capital. This proposal was passed with only 24 dissenting votes.[72]

Information on the early closing of the congress due to political discussion is not found in the cooperative press. Evidently it was removed upon preliminary censorship. The only newspaper source is Russkiia Vedomosti which, along with the stenografic reports of the congress gives a good general idea of what happened.[73]

At some point during the congress, although it is not clear precisely when, the police announced that no discussion would be permitted on the subject of the

formation of unions of cooperatives or of associations between cooperatives and any other type of organization. The Ministry of Interior had approved the agenda of the congress, which included the question of the formation of unions of cooperatives, both in the general session and in the consumer society section, but the police withdrew this permission. The reason must have had to do with the fact that on this subject, the border line between what was legal and what was not was an extremely hazy one. In 1905, the tsarist government had theoretically granted the right of freedom of association. But revolutionary activity in the cities had died out by 1907, and the government was busily restricting that right. The government looked upon any sort of independent association as inherently dangerous.

On April 20, the fifth day of the congress, the general session had planned to discuss the holding of cooperative congresses at regular intervals in the future. But the session was cancelled because the topic was related to the question of the formation of unions of cooperatives. That evening, the consumer society section was to discuss the question of the position of employees in cooperatives. This topic was a sensitive one, since socialist cooperators felt that employees in cooperatives should join trade unions. The reports on this question were, therefore, all concerned with trade unions and cooperation

between consumer societies and trade unions. Consequently, discussion of this topic was not permitted by the police.

The next item on the agenda Gibner, the president of the section, announced, was that of collective purchasing and insurance. Gibner emphasized that only "technical" aspects of this question might be raised. Apparently, the police objected to this discussion as well, because after a short time, it was announced that there would be a ten minute break. When the section reconvened, Gibner announced that the police had demanded that the question of collective purchasing and insurance be removed from the agenda. Under the direction of the police Gibner clarified:

> It is permissable to discuss only questions relating to individual societies and instances in their lives, but not in any case the question of association.

At that point, one delegate proposed that the section adjourn permanently. The motion was put to a vote and it was passed unanimously, but without enthusiasm. One delegate proposed to thank the president, the presidium and those who had delivered reports. The delegate was interrupted by prolonged applause which was ended only when the police told Gibner to deprive the speaker of the floor since "this is a demonstration." Gibner declared the section adjourned.

The final general session of the congress was to take place the following day at noon. The agenda called for the review of the resolutions passed in the individual sections and their final adoption by the congress as a whole. But the opening of the session was postponed for two hours while the presidium met first with the representatives of the police and then alone. The police forbade the discussion of any question bearing in any way upon the topic of association between cooperatives. The presidium decided against reading only a portion of the resolutions adopted by the sections. It decided to consider all resolutions adopted by the sections as automatically approved by the congress as a whole. Prokopovich, the president of the presidium, ended the congress with the following words:

> Comrades! We must say goodbye now, but we will hope that in the not too distant future we will meet again, under happier circumstances, at the Second All-Russian Cooperative Congress. I declare the First All-Russian Cooperative Congress closed. I ask the delegates to maintain peace and leave the hall in complete order.[74]

The experience of the 1908 congress made the government unwilling to permit the calling of another one. There was an all-Russian cooperative congress in 1912, but without the participation of consumer cooperatives. It is not clear who excluded consumer cooperatives from the congress, the government or the other types of cooperatives, but the reason for the exclusion was surely their political unreliability.

The Second All-Russian Cooperative Congress was not held soon, as Prokopovich had hoped, but only in 1913. This second congress met under the shadow of the first. It was criticized by some delegates for being too theoretical and by others for being too businesslike. These were euphamisms for being too political or not political enough. Those who criticized the congress for being too businesslike complained that the principle of "preservation of the congress" was upheld by the president at all times and moments of enthusiasm were suppressed by the organizers themselves.[75] The agenda of the 1913 congress showed an attempt to keep clear of issues which might have political implications. When the consumer society section discussed the shortcomings of the Model Code, for example, it limited itself to whether or not the members of consumer societies should be allowed to take on additional responsibility for the debts of the society beyond the amount of their share payments and whether or not consumer societies should be allowed to accept deposits from their members, acting as a sort of bank.[76]

Although police observers remained present, interference in this congress was more limited than in the first one. There were a number of episodes of conflict, but the congress ended on schedule on August 8. One incident with the police involved a speech made at the opening session of the consumer society section of the congress

by G. I. Petrovskii honoring the memory of August Bebel. Petrovskii was a Bolshevik representative to the Third Duma elected from Ekaterinoslav. He led a group of representatives of worker societies within the consumer society section. He had been elected as a special additional member of the presidium of the consumer society section.[77] When Petrovskii proposed that everyone stand in honor of Bebel's memory, the police demanded that he be deprived of the floor. Everyone present stood anyway and the following morning the police demanded to be furnished with a list of all the delegates to the congress.

The consumer society section tried to rid itself of police supervision on the second evening of the congress by forming two commissions, one on cooperative employees and one on cultural work, which would be closed to everyone other than the delegates themselves. Thus the representatives of the press and of the police would be excluded. But the city governor played a neat trick, replying that the session of the commissions could only be closed provided that the police was informed of their exact membership and the composition of their presidiums. But the acceptance or refusal of this condition had to be discussed in the section as a whole. Since no session of the whole consumer society section was scheduled for that night, one could not be held, and the consumer society representatives were forced to hold no meeting at all.

Incidents of police interference also occurred in the credit society and agricultural society sections and in the general sessions. In the session of the credit section on the evening of the second day of the congress, one speaker touched upon the question of the sharing of peasant producers in the profits of sugar factories, since they were the "founders of sugar production." The police complained that this was a call for the compulsory alienation of private property, but the president of the credit section, V. A. Kil'chevskii, was able to smooth the matter over. On the third day of the congress in the agricultural section, the delegate Delarev, a representative in the Second Duma, made a reference to "the last kopek, beaten out of the pocket of the muzhik in the form of taxes." The police made a warning.[78] At the general session of the congress, the police forbade the sale of cooperative literature and demanded a detailed list of all the participants in the congress, with their names and patronymics and places of residence. The most amusing incident of police interference at the congress occurred when the police asked delegates from the Caucuses in national dress to remove their daggers in order to avoid accidents.

But the representatives of consumer societies were more willing to risk trouble with the police than the representatives of other types of cooperatives. For

example, at its very first session, the consumer society section passed a resolution to the effect that the commission working on drafting a new cooperative law should write the law as they thought best, not taking into consideration the chances of the law being passed. A proposal made by representatives from societies in Belorussia to the effect that inorodtsy (Poles, Belorussians and Ukrainians) should be allowed to use their native language in cultural work, meetings and bookkeeping was passed by the consumer society section. These incidents reflect the fact that the consumer cooperative movement was the most radical branch of the cooperative movement.[79]

Police interference in the proceedings of the two all-Russian cooperative congresses included restrictions against Jewish delegates. Jewish delegates were not permitted to come to Moscow for the 1908 congress. The MSPO complained to the Ministry of Transport and the Organizational Committee of the congress complained to the governor of Moscow, but both in vain.[80] Kiev was a city where Jews were permitted to live and Jewish delegates from other places were permitted to come to the city for the 1913 congress. But local authorities refused to extend their visas for an extra day for a boat trip on the Volga, and cooperators protested that refusal.[81]

The only aspect of the relation between the consumer cooperative movement and the government that remains to

be treated in this section is the relations between consumer societies and zemstvos. Some consumer societies received aid from zemstvos. Specific examples are noted from place to place in this dissertation. But such aid was not widespread. This was the result of lack of interest on both sides. Zemstvo journals, including Zemskoe Delo and Valiuskii Zemskii Listok devoted space to the cooperative movement in every issue, but the articles were almost always concerned with producer or credit cooperatives rather than consumer societies. This was a reflection of concern on the part of zemstvos for the technical improvement of agriculture, as opposed to the provision of the villages with supplies.

Zemstvo agronomists were actively involved in helping cooperatives, but consumer societies received only a small portion of their attention. A survey made in 1913 of 37 zemstvo instructors in Moscow guberniia showed that they spent less than one fifth of their time with consumer societies. The 37 instructors advised a total of 215 cooperatives of all types, an average of about six each. They broke down by type into:

COOPERATIVES ADVISED BY ZEMSTVO AGRONOMISTS[82]

type of society	number of societies	per cent
credit	125	58.1
consumer	42	19.5
producer		
milk	18	8.3
agriculture	22	10.2
handicrafts	8	3.9

Of 211 cooperatives, 126, or 59.7 per cent, were initially organized with the help of zemstvo agronomists, but of 41 consumer societies the proportion was much smaller.

COOPERATIVES ORGANIZED WITH ZEMSTVO HELP[83]

type of society	number of societies	organized with zemstvo help	
		number	per cent
credit	122	81	66.4
consumer	41	12	29.3
producer			
milk	18	15	83.3
agriculture	22	15	59.1
handicrafts	8	3	27.5
total	211	126	59.7

More complete information was obtained on 195 societies. Of these, 107, or 54.9 per cent, received constant help, 53, or 26.2 per cent, received occasional help, and 35, or 18.9 per cent, received no help. These included:

COOPERATIVES RECEIVING ZEMSTOV HELP[84]

type of society	percentage receiving help		
	frequently	occasionally	never
credit	54.3	31.1	14.6
consumer	27.7	32.8	33.5
producer			
milk	100.0	--	--
agriculture	85.0	15.0	--
handicrafts	25.0	50.0	25.0

Another reason why consumer societies were only a secondary focus of attention for zemstvos was that many people involved in zemstvo work were themselves local

merchants. V. A. Kil'chevskii, the president of the St. Petersburg Branch, in an article written in 1912 on zemstvos and consumer cooperatives, commented that most aid from zemstvos to consumer cooperatives came from guberniia zemstvos, "which by their composition stand further from trade interests than uezd zemstvos."[85] At a 1911 Moscow Oblast Congress of Activists of Agronomic Help to the Population, there was much discussion of the cooperative movement, but almost entirely with respect to credit and producer cooperatives and very little with respect to consumer cooperatives. Soiuz Potrebitelei explained this by pointing out that the congress was heavily attended by representatives of zemstvos and the majority of the problems discussed involved implementation by zemstvo workers. Furthermore, "the external appearance" of this congress,

> differed from the more democratically organized all-Russian cooperative congress. The occasional peasant blouses (kosovorotki) of the representatives of village cooperatives were lost in the general background of long frockcoats and starched dress shirts.[86]

An equally important reason for the relatively limited aid given to consumer societies by zemstvos was evidently that relatively few societies were inclined to seek it. Most articles in the consumer cooperative press which mentioned zemstvo aid to consumer societies were very positive about it. But occasionally they were quite hostile. In 1912, Soiuz Potrebitelei printed the

resolutions of a congress of Ural credit cooperatives urging societies not to accept aid from zemstvos because it infringed severely on their freedom of action.[87] A society dependent on the aid of a factory or landowner was more or less committed not to look for other support. Societies wishing to preserve their independence, on the other hand, were inclined to seek to be independent from all financial aid, including aid from zemstvos.

* * *

In conclusion, it will be well to summarize the arguments that have been made in the course of this section. The relations between the consumer cooperative movement and governmental institutions could not fail to be complex. Most members of the State Duma and the zemstvos were inclined to be quite sympathetic to the consumer societies, although for different reasons neither was very active in helping consumer societies. With respect to the Duma, this was because it was essentially a powerless institution. When, in 1916, the Duma finally managed to pass an all-cooperative law the State Council refused to give its approval. Zemstvos provided some aid to consumer societies but more aid to credit societies. This was a product of many factors, including the fact that zemstvos tended to see their main function as aiding the technical development of agricultural production, as opposed to the provision of the village with supplies, the fact that local

zemstvos tended to have close ties to local merchants and that consumer societies not already dependent on some source of funds tended to seek to be independent of all outside financial aid, including aid from zemstvos.

The autocratic nature of the tsarist administration did not prevent officials at different levels from differing in their attitude towards the consumer cooperative movement. The attitudes of officials were based on paternalism. Paternalism should be thought of as having two aspects: a gentle aspect, a desire to guide developments in a way beneficial to the country as a whole, and a harsh aspect, a determination that nothing would be allowed to happen which was inimical to the interests of the state. Tsarist officials differed as to which aspect of paternalism they felt it most important to stress, the gentle one or the harsh one. In practice, those inclined towards the harsh aspect of paternalism sought to limit the development of consumer cooperatives for fear of their non-economic, their social and cultural, effects. In the course of the pre-revolutionary period, the gentle aspect of paternalism became overshadowed by the harsh one. The combination of the two aspects of paternalism is seen, for example, in the Model Code. From the comments of the Minister of Trade, Shakhovskoi, on the Duma's debates on the all-cooperative law, it can be seen that he was a practitioner of the gentle aspect of

paternalism. The harsh aspect of paternalism is illustrated by the handeling of the 1908 and 1913 all-Russian cooperative congresses by the Ministry of Interior and the police.

A secondary theme of this section has been that consumer societies were treated differently by the government than other types of cooperatives. It was pointed out in an earlier section[88] that while the membership of credit and agricultural societies tended to come from the more prosperous peasantry, the membership of consumer societies was more diverse and tended to come from the less prosperous members of the rural and urban working classes. Furthermore, consumer societies were more active than other types of cooperatives as social institutions. More stress was laid than in other types of cooperatives on the participation of working class members in the administration of the society. Furthermore, consumer societies tended to be more politicized than other types of cooperatives, as can be seen, for example, in the fact that a larger percentage of consumer societies attended the all-Russian cooperative congresses. As a result, supervision of consumer societies by the tsarist administration was strict. Consumer societies found it more difficult to obtain permission to hold congresses than other types of cooperatives. Tsarist officials opposed a single, all-cooperative law, because they felt that consumer societies

had to be more strictly supervised than other types of cooperatives. The sessions of the consumer society sections of cooperative congress were interrupted more frequently than those of other types of cooperatives. Partially as a result of the same factors, the zemstvos treated consumer societies with more distance than other types of cooperatives.

A final point is in order. A close study of consumer cooperatives and the government shows considerable complexity and diversity. The tsarist autocracy was not a monolith. Its officials had differing attitudes on important problems. One can conclude that the government had a certain potential for progressive reform.

C. The consumer cooperative movement and the political parties

The most important characteristic of the political orientation of consumer cooperators was its diversity. Members of every political party in the political spectrum of the Russian Empire took part in the consumer cooperative movement, at least to some extent. The interest of all classes and all political parties in the cooperative movement was commented upon most cogently by the journal Zemskoe Delo in 1913.

> This united opinion on the cooperative question is explained by the fact that every group of the population and every social organization sees in the growth of the movement hope for improvement in the future and for the easing of the vital problems of

> the present...This is a fortunate exception to the general disagreement, intellectual hesitation and moral discord which at the present time is felt at all levels of society.[89]

The journal went on to quote the cooperative publicist V. F. Totomiants:

> The cooperative movement is such a necessary thing, like popular education, agronomy, good roads and means of communication and medical care that it can have no party affiliation.[90]

This did not mean that the consumer cooperative movement was free of conflict. But people of different political persuasions could be active in different types of consumer societies. Businessmen founded factory societies and landlords founded village societies while SRs and SDs worked to set up independent societies. Even though aims often conflicted, everyone had something to do.

Lack of information limits the conclusions one can draw on the role of the political parties in the consumer cooperative movement. One frustration of the study of consumer cooperatives is that there was never any occasion, before or after 1917, when political information was published in the cooperative press on any living cooperator. Despite the fact that virtually every issue of Ob'edinenie and Obshchee Delo prior to 1917 had on the front cover a picture of a cooperator with a quote from him, every single one of these was either a foreigner or deceased. The first and only living Russian to appear on the cover of a cooperative journal was Victor Chernov in May, 1917!

The only type of article in which it is possible to find political information on individual cooperators is an occasional obituary. Sometimes a shred of political information was given by a discrete statement that a particular cooperator had been or was in exile. For example, in an article on consumer societies in Arkhangel'sk guberniia in the MSPO yearbook for 1913, the authors state that the information upon which the article was based had been gathered "collectively, during our involuntary sojourn in Arkhangel'sk guberniia."[91] The reason for this derth of information was not a committment to political neutrality. The reason was that any information provided to readers was also provided to the police. Only dead cooperators were immune from possible repercussions.

The problem is made more difficult by the fact that political affiliations changed over time. Before 1905, most consumer cooperators were apolitical. During and for the first years after 1905, they were oriented toward the Kadets, as we have seen above.[92] Later the role of the socialist parties increased. But it is not possible to say what political party dominated the consumer cooperative movement in the pre-revolutionary period. It is only possible to give an idea of the roles played by different groups.

The difficulty in identifying the influence of political parties in the consumer cooperative movement also

held for the tsarist police and for cooperators themselves. A police report on the political affiliations of the members of the Central Cooperative Committee came up with some very strange identifications. According to the police report, there were ten members, including two Social Democrats (Menshevik), three "left populists", four "left cooperators" and one "moderate cooperator". One of the Mensheviks was supposedly Prokopovich. The terms 'left populist', 'left cooperator' and 'moderate cooperator' were extremely vague, especially considering that all members of the committee were cooperators. The only thing this "party identification" really shows is that the government's treatment of political parties made it impossible even for it to make specific identifications.[93] It will also be recalled that Shishkin commented that it was impossible to say who dominated the instructors department of the MSPO.[94] He said that the reason for this was that politics were not openly expressed. If Shishkin could not say what political party dominated the the instructors department in which he worked, then it is understandable that it should be impossible to say which party, or combination of parties, played the greatest role in the movement.

One must assume that the landlords, factory owners and higher employees who founded and ran village, factory and railroad consumer societies sympathized with the Kadet

or Octobrist parties. But Kadets and Octobrists participated in consumer cooperatives as individuals rather than as members of their parties. Unlike SDs, these parties were not in the habit of passing resolutions stating their position on various issues. Thus one finds no declarations from these parties giving their position on the consumer cooperative movement.

An expression of the point of view of a conservative cooperator was published in Novoe Vremia in 1908. An article signed with the initials 'A.K.' compared the "beneficial old societies, given birth to and brought up without the help of the revolutionary intelligensia" with the "shortlived and impermanent new societies, which arose in the cities with the direct participation of those who were revolutionaries yesterday but say they are cooperators today." The article expressed pleasure at the speedy growth of village consumer societies, with very little participation on the part of "professional cooperators."[95]

Outright reactionary political parties also had their consumer societies. Beginning in 1908, the Union of Russian People founded several consumer societies, mostly in the Ukraine[96] but also in Petrograd. The organizers of the Petrograd society had a method of assuring the financial success of their society which was more authoritarian than anything practiced by other societies: it was announced that a 50 ruble fine would be imposed upon

anyone who made a purchase in another shop.[97] Union of Russian People consumer societies even held a congress. It took place in Nizhnyi-Novgorod at the same time as the Second All-Russian Cooperative Congress in Kiev. Ob'edinenie gleefully announced that the 13 delegates, in contrast to the 1500 in Kiev, "looked at each other, decided that there weren't enough of them to do anything" and closed on the second day.[98]

The left wing cooperative journal Nashe Delo (Our Cause) interpreted the founding of Union of Russian People societies as an attempt on the part of landlords "to smooth over the agitated relations between themselves and the peasantry." They were making use of the discontent of the peasantry with the village merchants which had been stimulated by the Revolution of 1905-7.[99]

A strong streak of anti-Semitism ran through Russian society as a whole and consumer cooperators were not immune from it. Prokopovich pointed out that where local trade was in the hands of Jews cooperators did not shy away from enlisting the help of the Union of Russian People.[100] In 1910, Vladimir Makhnovets-Akimov wrote that the goal of the cooperative movement was "to take possession of the Jews' profits and to permit the consumer to receive goods directly from the factory."[101] Makhnovets-Akimov was a member of the right wing of the Social Democratic Party. His obituary stated that he had been an Economist.

He spent some time in prison and was in exile in the West from 1908 to 1913.[102] But Makhnovets-Akimov's remarks should be understood in the context of the tendency to use the word 'Jew" as a synonym for 'profiteer' rather than as a specifically religious designation.

The liberal and socialist leadership of the consumer cooperative movement protested against expressions of anti-Semitism by cooperators. In 1913, Ob'edinenie complained that a consumer society in Poltava guberniia used a post card to make a request to the MSPO portraying a spider with the face of a caricatured Jew and with tentacles labelled "grain trade," "banks," "spying," "theatres" and "developed social opinion." The caption read, "activity and achievements of the Jews." Ob'edinenie also complained that consumer societies in Tsarist Poland took part in anti-Semitic activities.[103] Protests against expression of anti-Semitism by consumer cooperators should be seen as part of the social and political work of the consumer cooperative movement in the interests of the liberalization of Russian society.

The major change that took place in the political orientation of consumer societies and cooperators after 1905 was an increase in the participation of members of left wing political parties, including Social Revolutionaries, Social Democrats and anarchists. The change was due partly to the radicalization of Russian society

as a whole, but it was also due to a changed analysis of the cooperative movement on the part of the left. The dominant attitude of the socialist parties before the revolution of 1905-7 had been that consumer societies were institutions on which it was not worth spending time.

Marxist theory predisposed Social Democrats against the consumer cooperative movement. An anonymous Social Democrat who had taken a job as a clerk with the MSPO in 1910 upon finishing his term of exile wrote an article later, in 1918, about his attitude towards the cooperative movement. He had not applied for the job as the result of a special interest in the cooperative movement but rather simply because he needed work. He continued:

> On the contrary, through Marxist literature, I had obtained a negative view of the cooperative movement in general: with respect to producer cooperatives because in the course of time they developed into private capitalist enterprises and with respect to consumer societies because, due to the fact that they unite disparate social elements, they appeared to cloud the class consciousness of the proletariat, lowering its disposition to carry out a revolution.[104]

As a result, workers interested in founding consumer societies often found that members of the left wing political parties were hostile to them. This was a problem for "Trudovoi Soiuz." According to one source, workers in the process of organizing "Trudovoi Soiuz"

> got no help from adherants of pure politics. A typical response received from a well known worker, a former member of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies, when asked for help was: 'What do you want to do, become members of the bourgeoisie?'[105]

It should be noticed that the author of the statement quoted above did not refer only to Social Democrats but to "adherants of pure politics." One suspects that this statement applies to Social Revolutionaries as well.

One fundamental, although often unstated SD principle which affected the early SD attitude toward consumer societies was that a revolution could only be carried out by a proletariat which was acutely suffering. Posse, as an anarchist, took strong exception to this idea. Posse stated his position on this issue in his opening speech at the First All-Russian Cooperative Congress.

> We cooperators are not supporters of the principle 'the worse, the better' but rather 'the better, the better'...Misery gives birth to alcoholism and depravity, and not to brotherhood and freedom.[106]

Beginning in 1907 and 1908 it became respectable in SD party circles to advocate participation in the cooperative movement. In 1911, an article in Ob'edinenie dealt with the changes that had taken place in the attitude towards cooperatives of persons who had been exiled to Siberia for revolutionary activity. The author of the article himself had been in exile in Tobol'sk. In 1906, the opinion of exiles on the cooperative movement was unanimously negative. They said that it was "petty bourgeois" and that those who thought that it would help Russia in any way were looking through "rose colored glasses." The author added that

> in the tone of voice there was undisguised distain... for those who bothered fooling around with triffles, with conversations about bluebirds (pro ptichky-sinichky).[107]

Now, in 1911, many people had changed their minds. Many of those who were freed returned home to found consumer societies. The author attributed the change to the need for consumer societies in the small Siberian towns to which the exiles were sent. The towns usually had only one merchant, who was free to sell low quality products for high prices.[108] But surely a more important reason for the change was that work in consumer cooperatives was a fruitful form of political activity and in the atmosphere of political repression of 1908 to 1912 work in consumer cooperatives was one of the few areas where practical political activity was still possible.

With respect to their official attitude toward work in the consumer cooperative movement, there was no clear or consistent difference between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. Both factions initially had a negative attitude toward co-operatives. Both initially feared that they would draw the attention of the working class away from the class struggle, away from political struggle. Also, within both factions this attitude began to change at about the same time, in 1907. In arguing that the attitudes of Bolsheviks and Mensheviks toward the consumer cooperative movement did not fundamentally differ, I am following such early sources as Balabanov and Frommett.[109] My

study convinces me that prior to 1917, the split between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks was not nearly as deep and irreconciliable and not nearly as important as many historians, both Soviet and non-Soviet, have thought it to be.

At the London congress of the Social Democratic Party in the spring of 1907, a Bolshevik sponsored resolution gave the following hesitant endorsement of work in the cooperative movement:

> A cooperative movement is taking shape which is attracting various layers of the working class... Despite the special character of this movement, we support it...In defending and serving the economic interests of the laboring masses, with the exception of Social Democratic Party work itself, the chief form of organization is the trade unions, and after that other forms of workers' organizations, as cooperatives, etc.[110]

In conjunction with this resolution, there appeared an article arguing that it was time for the party to re-evaluate its position on the cooperative movement. The article pointed out that the movement had arisen without any help from the SD party but that workers had shown much interest in it. It argued that the government would undoubtedly oppose SD participation in cooperatives but that this opposition would stimulate class consciouness. The societies founded by SD organizers were to be completely independent from factories and no members of the bourgeoisie were to be admitted. The societies were to make low profits and these were to be used for cultural

and political work. Organizers were to keep in mind, however, that building cooperatives could not lead to socialism. Socialism could only come when the "working class rips governmental power from the hands of the bourgeoisie."[111]

Also in 1907, there appeared a brochure giving the first indications of a new Menshevik position. The authors of the brochure, M. Kheisin and M. Broido, rejected the arguments that political conditions did not permit the development of the cooperative movement and that the development of cooperatives would take workers away from political struggle. They argued instead that political and economic activity would supplement each other. "In this revolutionary epoch," they concluded, "we must build both political and economic organizations."[112]

At that time, there was still much opposition to consumer cooperatives from those like the Menshevik K. Dmitriev, who feared that involvement in the cooperative movement would turn the attention of workers away from the class struggle. But others argued that the active participation of Social Democrats in the cooperative movement would tear it away from the bourgeoisie. The pro-cooperative group adopted the following rather unweildy slogan:

> The worker movement must be united but in three forms, each supplementing the other, i.e., political, trade union and cooperative, flowing out of a single class ideology of revolutionary activity.[113]

A more concise expression of the same principles was the slogan published in Profetsional'nyi Vestnik (Professional Herald) in 1907.

> Build consumer societies but more than anything remember the trade unions.[114]

By 1910, work in the cooperative movement, supplementing work in the party and in trade unions was firmly accepted, at least theoretically, by both SD factions. In that year, at the Copenhagen International Socialist Congress, the Russian delegation, headed by Lenin, proposed a resolution that consumer societies, having a positive effect on the material conditions of the workers, could be of great assistance in the political struggle.[115]

All of the statements made by Social Democrats emphasize that the consumer cooperative movement should be treated as one form of the worker movement. There were a number of close ties between consumer societies and trade unions, ties which would certainly have been expanded were it not for the interference of the tsarist administration. From the time the first trade unions were organized, they called for the formation of consumer societies. The Second All-Russian Congress of Trade Unions, held in February, 1906, supported the formation of democratic cooperatives. The First Conference of Trade Unions of Steel Workers in February, 1907, called for forming independent worker consumer societies and for turning dependent factory societies into independent ones.[116]

At the same time, the central organizations of the consumer cooperative movement showed interest in the trade union movement. For example, in April, 1911, Ob'edinenie published a series of articles with statistics on trade union charters in 1906 and 1907. The statistics were taken from a publication of the Ministry of Trade and Industry, but Ob'edinenie included some commentary which was probably not included by the ministry. The journal compared the statistics on charters of unions requested by workers with those requested by employers.

TRADE UNION CHARTERS APPLIED FOR IN 1906 AND 1907[117]

	requested by workers	requested by employers
number requested	1131	105
request refused	227	13
of those approved, the number closed by December, 1907	104	1

Ob'edinenie noted that of the 13 charters applied for by employers most of the ones which were turned down were made by employers of Polish or Jewish nationality. The journal asked its readers to "remember that these figures refer to a period of relative freedom for the trade union movement."

Much sympathy towards the trade union movement was expressed at the First All-Russian Cooperative Congress. The congress passed a resolution advocating that during

times of unemployment caused by strikes or lockouts, societies should allow members to buy on credit in proportion to their share capital.[118] There was stormy applause when the worker representative Petrovskii said that:

> The granting of credit to the unemployed is a temporary measure. It cannot fundamentally harm the society and it eases the situation of the unemployed. Those who oppose this resolution show that 'a person who has had enough to eat doesn't understand hunger.'[119]

There is no question that Petrovskii was wrong in saying that credit could not fundamentally harm consumer societies. Zel'geim, who was not a member of any party but who sympathized with the socialist parties, opposed the resolution but still showed considerable understanding of the worker movement when he said:

> Unemployment is a mass phenomenon and to satisfy the needs of the unemployed from the funds of the society means knowingly to liquidate it. If some societies want to do this, then they should make a preliminary declaration at the general meeting on the liquidation of the society...[120]

In general, persons active in the consumer cooperative movement were not also active in trade unions. According to Balabanov, "Workers taking an active role in trade unions or in political struggle remained strangers to the cooperative movement." Cooperators did, however, read the newspapers published by other worker organizations.[121] A few consumer societies were founded as the result of the initiative of trade unions, as in the case of the "Economic Society of Trade Employees" founded by a trade union

of retail sales employees in Petrograd. After the revolution of 1905-7 had died down and the government closed many trade unions, persons active in the closed unions began working for consumer societies instead.[122] Occasionally consumer societies and trade unions worked together on certain projects. In 1909, the consumer society "Labor" in Baku and a union of workers in the oil industry discussed opening a workers' club for self education. The police probably did not allow this project to come to fruition. They were already keeping watch over the society and had recently arrested the society's secretary. A correspondent complained that "this disturbs the normal course of business and creates an atmosphere of perse cution."[123] Obviously, there would have been more cases of cooperation between consumer societies and trade unions if it were not for the hostility of the tsarist administration.

There was some dissatisfaction among left wing cooperators with the leadership of the MSPO. This came out at the Second All-Russian Cooperative Congress.[124] But it became more important in 1917. The First Congress of Worker Cooperatives, held in Petrograd during the first week of August, 1917, adopted a call for the organization of a separate, moral center of worker consumer cooperatives, apart from the MSPO. One of the tasks of this moral center was to be the publication of a new journal.

This was an oblique way of saying that they found Ob'edinenie too conservative. Some delegates to the congress favored not only a separate moral center but also a separate economic center, but the point of view prevailed that worker consumer cooperatives did not have sufficient economic resources to establish a separate economic center and therefore for some time into the future would have to depend on the MSPO. The idea of even forming a separate moral center was opposed by Lenskaia, whose opinion must have been influenced by the fact that she was the head of the popular propaganda department of the MSPO. But she argued, probably correctly, that it would be difficult to form a moral center without an economic one and that the separation of worker societies from village societies would be harmful for the revolution and for the cooperative movement. Nonetheless, the congress decided unanimously to form a separate moral center for worker cooperatives.[125]

The pace of events in 1917 moved quickly and a separate ideological center for worker cooperatives was never established. But the soviet government's cooperative law of March, 1919, was based on the principle of having separate consumer societies for the working class and for the rest of the population, although exactly to what extent such a system was actually established is a matter for further research.

As we have seen above, the official attitude of the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks towards consumer societies was the same: efforts should be directed towards organizing consumer societies as one of the forms of the worker movement. But there is an important difference between words and deeds and an important difference between the statements made by Social Democrats about the consumer cooperative movement and what they actually did. This difference applies particularly to the Bolshevik faction. The available evidence supports the conclusion that in practice the Mensheviks did much more than the Bolsheviks and that the Social Revolutionaries did more than either of them.

The only survey ever taken of the political affiliations of consumer cooperators is the one on instructors.[126] Instructors were highly politicized people and the percentage of instructors who were Bolsheviks was in all likelihood higher than that for any other category of consumer cooperators. But among those attending the Odessa congress only six Bolsheviks were counted, in contrast to 23 Mensheviks and 101 SRs. Social Democratic work in the consumer cooperative movement was concentrated in certain areas, including Petrograd, Moscow, Ivanovo-Voznesensk, Chita (near Lake Baikal) and in some southern cities, as Kiev and Ekaterinoslav. Much of this activity is documented by S. P. Dneprovskii.[127] But Dneprovskii neglects evidence that non-Bolshevik SDs and

SRs were active in those places as well. For example, the resolution passed in early 1918 by the consumer society "In Unity - Strength" which resolved to support the "worker, trade union and strike movements and all the socialist parties"[128] is neglected by Dneprovskii. Most of the Social Democratic delegates to the First All-Russian Cooperative Congress were Mensheviks.[129] As we shall see below, a large number of MSPO officials in 1917 were Mensheviks.

Information on SR consumer cooperators is much more scarce than on Social Democrats. This is a result of the fact that after 1917 historians were interested in documenting the pre-revolutionary activities of SDs but not of SRs. Balabanov accused SRs of making the mistake of thinking that it would be possible to build socialism through the simple expansion of the cooperative movement, that class struggle could be dispensed with.[130] This accusation has some truth to it, although the same thing can be said of most Social Democratic consumer cooperators.[131]

"Tan's" article on the First All-Russian Cooperative Congress points to a conflict between SD and SR delegates on the issue of tactics. The Social Democrats, led by Mensheviks, evidently wanted all socialists to vote in a block. "Tan" wrote that the SDs were "in no way not orthodox."

> The Central Committee carried the usual resolution: cooperatives without trade unions and political organizations hang in mid-air; worker artels in the

> capitalist structure must drag out a miserable existence. We said, 'Perhaps that is true, but for us it won't do.' They began to talk to us about iron discipline. But we announced that we could not agree. We returned to free tactics for everyone...[132]

"Tan" quoted a non-party delegate as have said with respect to SDs:

> We sympathize with them, but they only make trouble for us. They hold a referendum even when it comes to buying the slightest little thing (kolek). There's no point in that.

In summary, the socialists who worked in the consumer cooperative movement were generally of a moderate stripe. Most were SRs and Mensheviks, rather than Bolsheviks, although the ideological division between Mensheviks and Bolsheviks was not a hard and fast one. As moderate socialists, cooperators emphasized the importance of unity. The slogan "In unity - strength" was an important slogan for socialist cooperators. It was, for example, the name of the socialist dominated consumer society in Ivanovo-Voznesensk. An interesting story on the theme of unity was published by the MSPO in 1916. It was a Rip Van Winkle-type story about a man who slept for 25 years. When he awoke, he discovered a new Russia, where everyone had the food and manufactured goods that he reasonably wanted or needed and where everyone lived in an apartment with four or five rooms. When he asked what had happened to bring about this new world, he was told that the problem had been that 20 to 30 years earlier, the worker movement had

been divided into three branches: political, trade union and cooperative. When these three branches had united, everything had changed.[133]

Socialist cooperators emphasized political unity but not political neutrality. One of the few consumer cooperators who was a proponent of the concept of political neutrality was V. F. Totomiants. Totomiants was strictly opposed to any political activity on the part of the consumer cooperative movement in the present. In 1913, he wrote:

> We do not deny that an organization of consumers may, at a higher state in its development, feel that influence on politics is necessary, but that influence can never be implemented with the political program of any party or with the tactics of the trade union movement.[134]

By 1917, this "higher stage" had evidently not, in the view of Totomiants, been achieved. In that year, he was almost alone in opposing the adoption of any political resolutions by cooperative congresses.

Judging from an article that Totomiants wrote in 1906, he was originally a Menshevik. In the article, he criticized the tsarist administration and factory owners for the restrictions they put on the cultural work of consumer societies and commented approvingly on Menshevik criticism of the conservative administration of the Putilov consumer society.[135] But thereafter, he steadily lost contact with the left. Totomiants wrote countless articles covering every aspect of the consumer cooperative

movement in the West. He defended the concept of political neutrality by arguing that the Rochdale pioneers "although they were workers, did not have a narrow class point of view and consistently advocated recruiting members of all classes" and by quoting other European cooperators on the principle of neutrality.[136]

Totomiants ran into heavy criticism at the First All-Russian Cooperative Congress. Socialist cooperators were irritated not only by his ideological position, but also evidently by his pomposity. At one point, Totomiants asserted that the speeches of his socialist "comrades", who advocated the principle that consumer societies should not be run for profit were "based on complete ignorance" of the cooperative movement in the West. The response of E. N. Egorov, the Menshevik head of the MSPO's staff of instructors, was intended to puncture Totomiants' balloon. He said that while Totomiants "called us, the representatives of worker cooperatives, comrades, none of us considers him our comrade." Then, hitting Totomiants at what must have been his point of greatest pride, he said that "in his speech he shows complete ignorance of the cooperative movement of Belgium and England."[137]

In conclusion, it would be well to summarize the more important points made in this section. First, the political information available on consumer cooperators is extremely limited and conclusions can only be drawn with

circumspection. The wide variety of types of societies in the consumer cooperative movement made it possible for people of the most diverse political persuasions to take part, from socialist to reactionary. Much attention in this section has been devoted to the Social Democrats, as that is the political group on which most information is available. The point was made that there was no fundamental difference between the ideological positions of the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks with respect to the consumer cooperative movement. Before 1906, both factions were hostile towards it. Beginning in 1907, both evolved the position that Social Democrats should help build worker consumer societies. Work in cooperatives was to supplement work in trade unions and in the party itself. Despite this ideological similarity, however, the available evidence supports the conclusion that among the socialist parties, the Mensheviks were more active in consumer societies than the Bolsheviks and that the Social Revolutionaries were more active than either of them. Finally, the point was made that although socialist cooperators, as a rule, favored the principle of political unity, as expressed by the slogan "In unity - strength", they resolutely opposed the principle of political neutrality.

D. The Russian consumer cooperative movement and Ukrainian nationalism

The Russian consumer cooperative movement could not

help but be affected by the multi-national character of the Russian Empire. There are two aspects of the problem of Ukrainian nationalism which are relevant to the study of consumer cooperatives as political organizations. Both Ukrainian and Russian cooperative journals and cooperative unions spoke out in favor of greater freedom with respect to the use of the Ukrainian language. This was another aspect of the activity of the cooperative movement in the interests of the liberalization of Russian society. Secondly, Ukrainian consumer cooperators occasionally spoke out against the MSPO's economic domination of the consumer cooperative movement. This was a veiled form of left wing criticism of the Russian Empire.

In December, 1909, the Kiev Union of Consumer Societies held a meeting of representatives at which the use of the Ukrainian language in the union's journal, Nashe Delo, was discussed. It was unanimously agreed that in order to facilitate the spread of cooperative ideas, articles should be written in "simple, understandable language." It was obvious that for most of the members they wanted to reach, Ukrainian was more readily understandable than Russian.[138]

Two factors limited the use of the Ukrainian language in Nashe Delo. The first was that although all of the present editorial staff could read Ukrainian most could not write it. The editorial staff of the journal, and thus

probably also the staff of the union as well, were, unlike the vast majority of members, Russianized. In order to have the majority of articles in Ukrainian, it would be necessary to hire a Ukrainian specialist.[139]

Secondly, from 1876 to 1906, the use of the Ukrainian language had been banned, and there were still restrictions on its use. Until December, 1909, Nashe Delo used Ukrainian only for announcing the appearance of a Ukrainian book, or for giving notice of a lecture which was to be delivered in Ukrainian or in a direct quote in an article the body of which was in Russian. Beginning in December, 1909, about one article per issue was printed in Ukrainian, always either a letter to the editor or a correspondence article. This use of the Ukrainian language was evidently accepted by the government. In 1913, when a credit society in Podolia guberniia put up a sign in Ukrainian, reading "Unity and brotherhood in an honest association" the police ordered the society to remove it.[140]

The use of the Ukrainian language had definite political significance. The Kiev Union of Consumer Societies also resolved to send a congratulatory telegram to the MSPO in honor of its 19th Meeting of Representatives. The telegram was written in Ukrainian.[141] The political significance of this telegram is clearer if one keeps in mind that the Ukrainian language was probably only the second language of most of the delegates to the meeting

of representatives that sent it. The telegram was, in effect, a statement in favor of minority rights.

But relations between Ukrainian consumer societies and the MSPO were not limited to sending congratulatory telegrams. There was some bitter criticism of the MSPO on the part of Ukrainian consumer societies. Ukrainian cooperators, partly for economic and partly for nationalistic reasons, accused the MSPO of trying to dominate the entire consumer cooperative movement. In 1911, the MSPO placed a distribution point in Odessa. Some Podolia consumer societies were angry about this, implying that the purpose was to upset their own plans for their own Union of Consumer Societies. This was not necessarily a majority opinion. A conference of instructors of consumer societies in Podolia guberniia recommended that societies join the MSPO, saying that by doing so they would not weaken a future Podolia Union.[142]

This criticism was repeated at the Second All-Russian Cooperative Congress, held in Kiev in 1913. Ukrainian cooperators called for the compulsory placement of regional unions between the MSPO and individual societies. Delegates who held this position at the congress were called "federalists." Those who opposed it were called "centralists." The motivation for the federalists' demand is to a certain extent puzzling. It is obvious that the failure of Ukrainian societies to

establish regional unions and regional distribution points had nothing to do with the MSPO. It had mainly to do with shortage of funds and probably secondarily also to governmental restrictions. If only economic issues had been at stake, Ukrainian cooperators would have welcomed the expansion of the MSPO to fulfill needs which they were not able to fill by themselves. The establishment of additional distribution points by the MSPO was not necessarily profitable. One Ukrainian delegate to an MSPO meeting of representatives who favored greater decentralization pointed out that a large increase in trade expenses as a per cent of gross profit for the MSPO over the past few years was attributable to the increase in the number of distribution points.[143]

The fact that many Ukrainian cooperators did not welcome such expansion but in fact were critical of it, points to the conclusion that criticism of the MSPO, as a Russian union, was in fact a veiled criticism of the Russian domination of the empire as a whole. It is clear that the MSPO was not really guilty of trying to dominate Ukrainian consumer societies at the expense of existing or potentially existing Ukrainian unions. The innocence of the MSPO is shown by the fact that it made a number of important concessions to its critics. The very holding of the 1913 congress in Kiev was a concession of importance, allowing the federalists to hold the congress in the

area of the greatest concentration.[144] Furthermore, the proposals accepted by the congress on this issue, which called for the organization of local purchasing "not at the expense of common union capital, but at the expense of special funds of local unions" were in fact those proposed by the MSPO board member D. S. Korobov. Soiuz Potrebitelei minimized the importance of this, implying that Korobov's proposal had nothing to do with pressure being put on the union.[145] But Russkiia Vedomosti called it a major concession, and that is probably what most people thought.[146]

Criticism of the MSPO by Ukrainian cooperators was a form of left wing criticism. Evidence for this is indirect but convincing. First, the two major journals of the Ukrainian consumer cooperative movement, Nashe Delo and Potrebitel'[147] were well to the left of the center of the consumer cooperative movement. Of three deceased consumer cooperators whose obituaries appeared in Potrebitel' and Iiuzhno-Russkii Potrebitel', one was identified as a "democratic populist," one as an extreme left SD delegate to the Second Duma and the third as having had "due to circumstances beyond his control" to emigrate to the Austrian part of the Ukraine.[148]

The final and most telling evidence that criticism of the MSPO by Ukrainian cooperators was a form of left wing criticism are the positions taken by the federalists

on other issues at the 1913 congress. When a group of Ukrainian delegates complained that the list of proposed members of the presidium of the congress was composed almost exclusively of persons from central Russia and mainly from Moscow, they were satisfied when G. I. Petrovskii was added to the list. Petrovskii was a Bolshevik representative to the Third Duma from Ekaterinoslav and at the congress he was the leader of a group of representatives of worker consumer societies.[149] Furthermore, when the congress voted to set up a permanent council, the federalists called for it to have its headquarters not in Kiev, the most convenient city for Ukrainian cooperators, but in Petrograd, the city known for being the center of the left wing worker movement and even further from the Ukraine than Moscow.[150]

The expression of Ukrainian nationalism by Ukrainian consumer cooperators can best be understood as a vehicle, a vehicle for the expression of working class interests. Criticism of the domination of Ukrainian consumer cooperatives by the MSPO was a veiled way of criticizing the domination of the Ukraine by the Russian Empire. This does not mean that Ukrainian cooperators did not believe what they were saying. But at the same time, the association of Ukrainian cooperators at the Second All-Russian Cooperative congress was a veiled association of left wing cooperators.

E. The consumer cooperative movement and the war: the struggle for "popular initiative"

The reaction of the consumer cooperative movement to the First World War was a complex and an interesting one. Beginning in 1914, the liberal and moderate socialist leaders of the movement developed the idea of seeking to use the war in order to force the tsarist administration to grant more democtatic rights. They sought to pressure the tsarist administration into permitting the wider exercise of popular initiative in Russian social and political life. Cooperators used the term "popular initiative" (samodeiatel'nost') frequently in their statements. Liberals and moderate socialists active in other areas of Russian social and political life used similar tactics. The consumer cooperative movement's biggest experiment in trying to force the government to grant the right of popular initiative took place in 1915 with the formation of central and local "cooperative committees."

The editorials published by Soiuz Potrebitelei and Ob'edinenie in their respective issues for July 22, 1914, were certainly less than enthusiastic endorsements of the decision to go to war. Soiuz Potrebitelei reprinted a part of a resolution that had been adopted at the 1913 International Cooperative Congress in Glasgo, stating that "The congress welcomes all initiatives taken in the interests of peace." The journal stated its

disappointment that "the working people of Germany and Austria" had not used "all their energy to preserve peace." It concluded by quoting the words of the German cooperator El'm at the congress:

> We stand for building and not for destruction. We are striving to rebuild the world on an international basis of cooperative solidarity, to defeat capitalism and to establish in its place an organization of producers and consumers, which at the same time will be an organization of peace among the people of the whole world.[151]

Ob'edinenie's editorial was virtually identical, which is understandable in view of the fact that the editor of both journals was Zel'geim. The only difference is that Ob'edinenie quoted a different resolution of the Glasgo congress:

> The congress once again underlines that peace and agreement between peoples are the essential conditions for the development of the cooperative movement and the realization of its goals.[152]

These editorials did not directly argue against participation in the war effort, but the censorship authorities would certainly have preferred to see something else. Both issues were withheld from distribution by the government and both journals were temporarily forced to stop publication. The next issue of Soiuz Potrebitelei did not appear until September 1, carrying a bland statement to the effect that permission had been received to begin publishing again and that from now on, the journal would appear regularly.[153] The next issue of Ob'edinenie was not published until September 16, but contained no

explanation of the break.

Some cooperative journals, such as the left wing Iiuzhno-Russkii Potrebitel', made no comment on the outbreak of the war. One suspects that any comment the editors would have liked to make fell outside the boundaries of what would have been permitted by the censorship authorities. Nashe Delo of Chita, published by the Transbaikal Association of Cooperatives, a union of consumer societies with much SD influence managed to disguise its anti-war feelings in such a way as to make them publishable. The issue for August 11 contained Nicholas II's war manifesto with a patriotic sounding introduction.[154] But the following issue contained an editorial which cited a statement by the German Social Democrat Haase, arguing that the existence of Germany was tied to the destruction of Russian absolutism.[155] Apparently, it took some time before the censorship authorities understood that the implication of this quotation was that in order to defeat Germany, it was necessary to defeat Russian absolutism. Strangely enough, the next issue of Nashe Delo was allowed to appear on schedule. It contained nothing particularly sensitive; but after that issue, publication of the journal was stopped for three months, until January 10, 1915.

The temporary shutting of some cooperative journals should be seen in the context of contemporary developments within Russian society as a whole. It was part of a

policy of repression of dissent that was carried out on a wide scale during the process of mobilization. It is likely that unwelcome ideas expressed in articles in co-operative journals only served as pretexts for actions that the government would have taken anyway. General newspapers and journals were also shut down, dissidents were drafted and sent to the front and trade unions and educational societies were closed.[156]

When Soiuz Potrebitelei and Ob'edinenie reappeared in September, 1914, their new approach to the war, the idea of using help in the war effort as a means of winning the right of popular initiative, was already apparent. An article signed by Zel'geim entitled "The Consumer Cooperative Movement and the War" stated that cooperators should remember their watchwords: "popular initiative, self-help and mutual aid." Furthermore, Zel'geim directed the efforts of cooperators, not so much to the war effort itself as to the alleviation of the consequences of the war. "Consumer cooperatives must mobilize, Zel'geim continued, but what he meant by mobilization was different from what the tsarist administration meant. The field of battle for cooperators was to be the defense of the national economy against a traditional enemy, the middleman. Zel'geim went on:

> Let every cooperative be a unit of strength, attracting new warriers on the field of battle for the defense and strengthening of the national economy from the encroachments of the greedy middlemen.[157]

A statement by the Council of the Free Economic Society published in the same issue was also concerned with the development of popular initiative in the interests of softening the consequences of the war.

> Citizens! Determined work is necessary on the part of the forces of the whole country; widespread public initiative is necessary on the part of the population; a real union of zemstvos and cities is necessary with all social organizations. It is necessary to promote the free thought and free, creative work of the whole population.[158]

The Free Economic Society concluded that it was collecting money for the benefit of those wounded in the war and their families. Meanwhile, the issue of Ob'edinenie that followed its break in publication contained a list of 16 consumer societies which had already pledged help to those wounded in the war.[159]

There are some sources which indicate that cooperators actually opposed the war. In his memoirs, Shishkin wrote that although it was impossible for the MSPO to continue printing anti-war statements "that did not cause the union to change its position."[160] A police report noted that at an evening program organized for delegates to the 31st Meeting of Representatives of the MSPO in mid-1915, poetry on a patriotic theme read by the actrice Gzovskaia was met with "cat-calls and even whistles."[161] But assuming that the liberals and moderate socialists within the cooperative movement were like those in Russian society as a whole, they drew the distinction between

war until "complete victory", which most of them opposed, and war for the defense of the motherland, which most of them supported. A note in the chronicle section of Ob'edinenie subtitled "the city and merchant class on the defense of the country" quoted from the pro-war resolution adopted by the Moscow City Duma:

> The war must be carried out until the end. Peace can only be concluded after complete victory over the enemy and with unanimous agreement of all allies on the terms of peace.[162]

The way in which the statement was introduced made it clear that it was not one with which the editors agreed. This distinction between war for victory and war for defense was difficult to maintain. Cooperators tried to do so by directing their efforts towards the alleviation of the effects of the war rather than towards the promotion of the war itself.

Throughout the war, information appeared in the journals of the consumer cooperative movement on the things being done by organizations of consumer cooperators to help the victims of the war and to supply the army with food and material. In February, 1915, Soiuz Potrebitelei announced the formation of a Society of "Help to Victims of the War." The board of directors of this organization was composed of eleven well known cooperative activists, including three from the MSPO, four from the Moscow People's Bank, three from the third section and one from the general cooperative journal Kooperativnaia Zhizn'

(Cooperative Life). Those from the MSPO were Korobov, Zel'geim and A. N. Lavrukhin, respectively President and members of the board. The major purpose of the organization was to be the collection of money to help the wounded.[163] The MSPO's statement on the formation of this society focused on its significance for the development of popular initiative. "On our banner," the journal said, "is clearly underlined 'public initiative and mutual aid'."[164] In July, 1915, Soiuz Potrebitelei gave many examples of work done by consumer societies and other types of cooperatives, usually in conjunction with zemstvos, to supply grain to the army.[165]

The articles describing the war related activities of consumer cooperative organizations point again and again to their real purpose, the development of popular initiative. The first article published by an MSPO journal of which the tone was stridently nationalistic appeared on July 4, 1915.

> We all know only too well that Germany wants Russia to remain, as much as possible, an ignorant, uncultured and economically backward country... That is why we, Russian cooperators, foreign to all motives of conquest, cannot reconcile ourself to the idea of the triumph of Germany, which is striving for a world government.[166]

But this was only an introduction for the journal's real message. Soiuz Potrebitelei then set forth the argument that all obstacles hindering the complete participation of the cooperative movement in the defense of the country

should be removed. These obstacles included difficulties experienced by societies in getting their charters approved, in obtaining permission to form a union and in the organization of meetings, conferences and of cultural and educational work. An important obstacle to the participation of the consumer cooperative movement in the defense of the country, Soiuz Potrebitelei argued, was the failure to pass the all-cooperative law. The journal advised all societies to write to their representatives in the State Duma to ask them to vote for the law.

Soiuz Potrebitelei concluded by putting its argument into a wider perspective. The problem was not just obstacles restricting the work of consumer societies but obstacles restricting the work of all sorts of social organizations. The heart of the matter was that the tsarist administration was traditionally extremely distrustful of popular initiative.

> Throughout all of our Russian history, constant supervision over the people has prevented the development of popular initiative...But we will not dwell on the past, -- one can explain everything by looking there. We will think of the present.[167]

An article in Ob'edinenie had a similar message. It dealt with a conference held in Moscow in mid-July, 1915, on the problems of supplying the army and controlling inflation. The conference was organized by the Union of Cities and attended by representatives of workers' organizations, of scholarly societies and of cooperative

unions. The conference resolved that in order to supply the army special organizations should be formed "of representatives of local forces" headed by persons "enjoying complete social confidence." Ob'edinenie added to the resolutions of the conference that:

> External strength is needed, internal power is needed. Everyone agrees that it will be possible to attain that strength and power only when all the forces of the country are included--the cities, zemstvos, cooperatives, workers and peasants.[168]

Three regional conferences of representatives of cooperatives in 1915 called for the continuation of the war, one in Volokalamsk uezd (in Vladimir guberniia), one in Viatka uezd (in Viatka guberniia in the Ukraine) and one in Novgorod guberniia. But all of them linked the successful prosecution of the war to the need for governmental reform. The delegates to the Volokalamsk conference called for "the formation of a ministry enjoying social confidence." They added:

> It is necessary in the near future to resolve the question of the equalization of the rights of the peasantry with those of other social strata and to make other reforms in village life. The wide layers of the population must be brought into active participation in local zemstovs...Local organizations must be given complete freedom in the exercise of popular initiative.[169]

The Viatka conference echoed the call of the Volokalamsk conference for a ministry enjoying social confidence. The Novgorod cooperators added that for the sake of the successful defense of the country freedom of press, speech and association should be granted.

The linking by consumer cooperators of the winning of the war with the need for reform was somewhat disingenuous. The desire to defend the country was obviously not the real reason cooperators wanted social reform. But it is true that the backward and unresponsive structure of the tsarist empire was a major hindrance to the war effort. An organization wishing to begin some project to aid the war effort might have to wait for months for permission to begin its work. Another obstacle, in at least one case, was the rigid enforcement of tax laws. One consumer society which was preparing bandages for the wounded was told by the local tax inspector that it was guilty of failure to pay the required taxes on their purchases. The board of the society explained to the inspector that they were doing this without profit and that the tax represented a considerable burden, but to no avail. The tax inspector required the society to pay the tax and to pay a fine for its previous failure.[170]

The practice of the consumer cooperative movement of trying to gain social freedoms through participation in war related work should not be seen as the practice only of cooperatives but as part of the general practice of the whole social movement. Consumer societies and their unions worked as closely as possible with such organizations as the Union of Cities and the War-Industries Committees. The work of the War-Industries Committees,

central and local, was covered regularly in the cooperative press. The first meeting of a War-Industries Committee which included the representatives of consumer societies was in Revel in July, 1915.[171] In August, 1915, the Central War-Industries Committee held a congress at which the question of the participation of cooperatives in their work was discussed. The congress accepted a proposal that unions of cooperative societies should be represented in War-Industries Committees. A proposal was unanimously accepted that in view of the important work done by cooperatives in supplying the army, the State Duma should be urged to pass the all-cooperative law.[172] Shortly thereafter, in the city of Borisoglebsk seven representatives each of the zemstvo, the city administration, the stock exchange and the cooperatives entered the local War-Industries Committee. The first practical result of this action was that the task of supplying the army with canvas was transferred to the hands of the local cooperatives.[173]

The role played even by socialist cooperators in easing the supply problem did not go totally unrecognized by the army. A police report noted that A. A. Voiloshnikov, the president of the Transbaikal Association of Cooperatives and a former Social Democratic member of the Third Duma was a key figure in supplying the army with meat. He had been arrested after an incident at a meeting of the

consumer society "Economy" called to discuss the problem of inflation. Voiloshnikov had only given a speech at the meeting, but afterwards the chairman had refused to obey the order of a police officer that a resolution which the meeting was considering adopting be submitted to him first for censorship. But Voiloshnikov was freed at the request of the military official in charge of meat supplies as "a person participating directly in the filling of orders.[174]

In most cases, the war relief work done by cooperatives was carried out with little or no conflict between cooperators of varying political colors. But there was an inherent conflict between those interested in using defense work only to gain limited political reform and those interested in more substantial change. War-Industries Committees sought to avoid accepting the more radical cooperators as members. One way in which the demand for basic social change was expressed was in the demand for closer supervision of factories producing goods for the army. A congress of cooperatives in Kostroma resolved:

> Recognizing the necessity of the most complete possible utilization of large scale industry in supplying the army with military equipment, the congress considers it necessary to organize social control over industry with representation from workers.[175]

In July, 1915, a cooperative congress in Moscow guberniia demanded that "social control be placed on the government in its work on state defense."[176] A hint of the

coming revolution was already apparent in the autumn of 1915 at a congress of cooperative organizations in Tver. Alexander Kerensky read a speech in which he said that social organizations must show the people that:

> the responsibilities of the government are being carried out not by the government but by them, because the government has shown itself to be incapable of carrying them out.[177]

At times, cooperative societies and their unions petitioned for special favors. A particularly important favor was the request that employees of cooperative organizations be relieved of the obligation of military service. The Central War-Industries Committee had the right to delay military service in special cases.[178]

The consumer cooperative movement's biggest experiment in trying to attain the right of popular initiative was the formation of central and local cooperative committees. The idea of the formation of such organizations was first proposed by Zel'geim at the Union of Cities conference in July, 1915. They were to exist on the all-Russian, oblast, guberniia and uezd levels and their main purpose was to be the coordination of the work of cooperative organizations in support of the war effort. The Central Cooperative Committee was to be composed of representatives of central cooperative organizations, of oblast cooperative committees and of the cooperative section of the Union of Cities conference.[179]

The cooperative committees were largely organizations of consumer cooperators. This can be seen from a list of the members of the Central Cooperative Committee. Of its twelve officers and members, four were leaders of consumer cooperative organizations, five were members of the St. Petersburg Branch or its Committee on Village Savings and Loan and Industrial Associations, which despite its name, worked mainly with the consumer cooperatives, and three were members of the board of the Moscow People's Bank. The President of the committee was Zel'geim and the vice-presidents were Prokopovich and N. B. Chaikovskii, a member of the council of the St. Petersburg Branch. The MSPO provided most of the money. It gave the committee 2000 rubles to begin its operations and guaranteed 1000 rubles per month after that, although it hoped that the Moscow People's Bank and other unions of cooperatives would help share expenses.

At its first conference, August 1-3, 1915, the Central Cooperative Committee concentrated on the problem of helping war refugees. The committee also resolved to enter into negotiations with the Union of Cities, the Zemstvo Union and the Central War-Industries Committee for joint activity.[180]

In most respects, the central and local cooperative committees were not unlike a great many other public organizations that were being formed at the same time.

On July 27, 1914, members of the State Duma had met privately and decided to form a Provisional Committee for the relief of wounded soldiers and of civilians injured by the war. On July 30, 1914, provincial zemstvos had met in Moscow and founded the Union of Zemstvos. The official name of this organization was the "All-Russian Union of Zemstvos for the Relief of Sick and Wounded Soldiers." A few days later, the All-Russian Union of Cities was formed and in July, 1915, they formed a joint group, called the Zemgor Union. Also at the end of May, 1915, a conference of representatives of commerce and industry decided to form central and local War-Industries Committees, to coordinate the manufacture of articles needed for the war effort. For all of these organizations, like the central and local cooperative committees, their ostensible interest in promoting the war effort was combined with an interest in broader political issues. Their meetings were open forums for the discussion of political questions. One of the most important issues for these organizations was the promotion of popular initiative. As one delegate to the conference which had formed the Union of Cities said:

> The success of the war will not depend on the strength and organization of the army alone. It will depend directly upon the efficient organization of public forces, on the organization of the community.[181]

But what made the cooperative committees different from these other organizations and really revolutionary was that no attempt was made to secure governmental approval of their existence. Consumer cooperators were testing the government, seeing what would happen if they simply claimed the right of popular initiative instead of asking for it. There were also revolutionary implications involved in the idea of working together with other voluntary organizations. As a police report written in 1916 correctly noticed, cooperators were feeling their way back to the sort of role played by the Union of Unions in the revolutionary events of 1905.[182]

Only a few weeks after the first meeting of the Central Cooperative Committee, it was already working on the purchase of substantial quantities of grain from the Riga Central Agricultural Society. Four local committees had already been formed: in the city of Moscow, in Rananburg uezd (in Riazan guberniia), in Dmitrov uezd (in Moscow guberniia) and one committee for Vologda and Tula guberniias.[183] In the course of its short existance, the Central Cooperative Committee worked on such problems as the passage of the all-cooperative law, the provision of food, bandages and equipment for the army, the supply of consumer goods for the population at large and the provision of relief to war refugees.[184] At least 101 local committees were formed, including four at the oblast level,

16 at the guberniia level, 62 at the uezd level and 19 at the district level. The guberniia where the system of cooperative committees was most widely developed was Tula.[185] Delegates to the meetings of local cooperative committees were sent by credit and handicraft cooperatives as well as consumer societies.[186]

The Central Cooperative Committee was ordered closed by the governor of the city of Moscow on November 3, 1915, only about three months after its first session. The governor announced that charges were being brought against the organizers of the committee for having founded an association without proper approval, although he acknowledged that this had not been done with criminal intent. The governor told Zel'geim that if the committee would present a charter for approval he would do what he could to expedite it. The committee met and decided to submit a charter which would at the same time legalize the local committees.[187]

A few days later, the charter was submitted to the Ministry of Interior with a covering letter emphasizing the services of the committee for the "defense of the motherland."[188] But despite the promise of the governor, the charter never received approval. The Chernigov guberniia committee was also forcibly closed, following a police search of its headquarters during which a pamphlet printed by the committee, calling on cooperative organizations to work to reform the government was found.

Cooperatives were "purely popular" organizations, the pamphlet stated, which were ideally suited:

> to stand at the head of the popular movement, to express its demands and to give the people the possibility to participate in an organization promoting the defense and the reformation of the government.[189]

The Kostroma guberniia committee voluntarily disbanded itself when it heard of the closing of the Central Cooperative Committee.[190] Nothing further was heard in the press of the local committees. They evidently quietly stopped meeting. The Central Cooperative Committee met again a few times after the February Revolution, but its activities seem to have been limited to issuing declarations. Like other central cooperative organizations in 1917, it firmly supported the Provisional Government. It called on cooperators to recognize

> the necessity of uninterrupted and determined work by everyone, everywhere, to overturn the ruins that resulted from the dictatorial rule of the tsarist government.[191]

It also called on the Provisional Government not to delay raising the maximum price of grain.

In the concluding section of this chapter, we will take a look at how the tsarist autocracy was falling apart towards the end of 1916. The evidence suggests that the experiment of the central and local cooperative committees in claiming the right of popular initiative was tried only a few months too early. On the eve of the February Revolution, cooperative organizations were getting

away with infractions of the rules that were considerably greater. The story of the attempt by public organizations in Russia to obtain the right of popular initiative is another example of the potentialities and rigidities of the tsarist administration.

F. The last months of the autocracy

During the summer of 1916, a new wave of repression was launched against the consumer cooperative movement as it was against the social movement in general. With hindsight, we can see that this was a sign of the weakness of the autocracy. It was trying to regain control which it had already essentially lost. When Ob'edinenie began appearing again, after having been closed by the government the previous September, it reported on some of the measures taken by the government since the summer. Officials in the Ministry of Interior had written a report on the social movement in which much attention was given to consumer cooperators. In the report, according to Ob'edinenie, "cooperative activity was defined as revolutionary activity." In fact, all but a few cooperators were reformers rather than revolutionaries. But the tsarist administration defined reformist activity as revolutionary activity. As a result of the recommendations of the report, Lenskaia, the Menshevik head of the MSPO's popular propaganda department, was forbidden to live in Moscow and eleven employees of the union were forbidden to give lectures.

Ob'edinenie also informed its readers about censorship restrictions. For those who might not have suspected it, Ob'edinenie announced that "all of our journals have been subject to partial preliminary censorship." Ob'edinenie had been closed while Soiuz Potrebitelei and Obshchee Delo were fined for publishing the "most innocent articles" and warned that if they did not "lower their tone", they too would be closed.[192] Some issues of other cooperative journals were withheld from distribution. The censorship activities of the tsarist administration during its last months included the stenographic reports of the sessions of the State Duma. Whole speeches were delited or sometimes even rewritten.[193]

But if one books carefully at all these things, one sees that the government's actions were signs of weakness rather than strength. As Ob'edinenie said, fines were imposed "for the most innocent articles". Some of these articles were not really wholly innocent, but innocent or not, they were published and read all the same. The censorship apparatus was partially parallized, no doubt as a result of overwork. A sign of the times was that on the eve of the February Revolution, Obshchee Delo informed its readers that the Ministry of Interior had sent all governors a letter criticizing them for their "weak control of the provincial--general and cooperative--press."[194] Blank spaces in some cooperative and non-cooperative

newspapers and journals only excited people's curiosity. The tsarist government could no longer control what people thought so it was trying to control what they read, but it was not succeeding even at that.

Some not wholly innocent articles published on the eve of the February Revolution publicized attempts on the part of the government to repress the social movement. The Ministry of Interior asked governors and higher officials of the guberniia administrations to send in reports on the mood of the peasant masses.

> In particular, the most complete information possible is asked on...the extent to which the peasants are actively forming small volost groups and the extent to which priests are influential in these circles and in cooperatives.[195]

Two weeks later, Obshchee Delo reported that the Ministry of Interior had sent an order to local administrative authorities to the effect that if, in meetings of social organizations, "political resolutions" were adopted, the president of the meeting would be held responsible and that if political resolutions were adopted in private meetings, all present would be held responsible.[196] It is interesting that it was not considered necessary to qualify the term "political resolution." Liberal and socialist resolutions were considered equally criminal. Conservative political resolutions did not present a problem because good conservatives did not adopt resolutions. The same issue of Obshchee Delo announced that on

January 27 eleven worker delegates to the Central War-Industries Committee had been arrested. Their crime was that:

> Instead of devoting their attention to the defense of the country, they began to call upon the committee to recognize the demands of the workers' movement in the empire, setting as their final goal the transformation of Russia into a social democratic republic.[197]

Most daring of all, just on the eve of the February Revolution, Obshchee Delo made public the fact that lists of persons taking part in the cooperative movement were compiled in every guberniia where it existed. The governor of Moscow guberniia, the journal announced, had just finished updating his list.[198]

The revelation of such information made it clear that the authority of the tsarist autocracy was not what it had used to be. Revolution was at hand. We will turn now to the political effects of the February Revolution on consumer societies and their central organizations.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), January, 1905, pp. 1-2.

[2]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), April 19, 1906, p. 129. At that time, the Kadets were known as the party of Popular Freedom.

[3]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), November 3, 1905, p. 517.

[4]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), May 15, 1906, p. 162.

[5]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), March 31, 1905, pp. 129-132.

[6]Ibid. See also Russkiia Vedomosti (Moscow), August 4, 1905, p. 3.

[7]See above, page 16.

[8]Russkiia Vedomosti (Moscow), June 25, 1900, p. 2.

[9]Russkiia Vedomosti (Moscow), September 29, 1902, p. 2; May 26, 1903, p. 1.

[10]V. P. Fadeev, Revoliutsionnoe dvizhenie v N. Novgorode i Nizhegorodskoi gubernii v 1905-7 gg. (Gorkii: Gor'kovskoe Knizhnoe Izdatel'stvo, 1955), p. 170.

[11]Ibid., pp. 234-235. No faction was given.

[12]Ibid., p. 171. It is interesting that this document was labelled: "report by the head of the Nizhnyi-Novgorod Okhrana to the department of police on agitational work of the Committee of the RSDWP among the workers of the Sormovskii factory." In fact, the RSDWP was not mentioned in the document.

[13]Russkiia Vedomosti (Moscow), February 3, 1906, p. 3. Fadeev, Revoliutsionnoe dvizhenie v N. Novgorode i Nizhegorodskoi gubernii v 1905-7 gg., pp. 232-233, 332.

[14]Russkiia Vedomosti (Moscow), February 2, 1906, p. 3.

[15]Russkiia Vedomosti (Moscow), March 3, 1905, p. 2.

[16]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), November 30, 1906, pp. 404-406.

[17]V. T. Anofrieva, Istoriia razvitiia i deiatel'nosti potrebitel'nago obshchestva pri fabrike tovarishchestva nikol'skoi manufaktury Savvy Morozova syn i K. (Moscow: Seminariia po Politicheskoe Ekonomii pri Moskovskikh Vyshikh Zhenskikh Kursakh, 1913), pp. 55, 78-80.

[18]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), May 15, 1906, p. 162.

[19]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), February 22, 1908, pp. 119-120.

[20]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), June 28, 1908, pp. 461-462.

[21]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), June 6, 1909, pp. 499-500.

[22]Ibid.

[23]Balabanov, Istoriia rabochei kooperatsii v Rossii (1864-1917), pp. 116-117.

[24]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), July 6, 1909, pp. 499-500.

[25]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), November 16, 1911, p. 800. No information is available on the outcome of this request.

[26]"Tan", "Na kooperativnom s"ezde," Russkoe Bogatstvo, 5 (1908), p. 30.

[27]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), January 9, 1910, p. 18.

[28]See above, pages 8-9, 91-95.

[29]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), May 30, 1909, p. 480.

[30]Ibid.

[31]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), October 23, 1912, p. 707.

[32]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), August 14, 1903, p. 1.

[33]Tkachukov, Kooperatsiia s tochki zreniia okhranki, p. 16.

[34]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), August 21, 1903, pp. 1-3.

[35]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), November 16, 1911, p. 799.

[36]See above, pages 193-194.

[37]Posse, Moi zhiznennyi put', dorevoliutsionnyi period (1864-1917 gg.), p. 431.

[38]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), February 17, 1916, p. 269.

[39]Zel'geim, "Organizatsiia i praktika potrebitel'nykh obshchestv v Rossii", p. 398.

[40]Ibid.

[41]On the anti-Semitic provisions of the proposed new model code, see Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), February 14, 1911, pp. 123-127; A. V. Merkulov, "Chem grosit potrebitel'noi kooperatsii proekt novogo normal'nago ustava", Vestnik Kooperatsii, 2 (1911), pp. 21-31.

[42]Soiuz Potribitelei (Moscow), February 15, 1911, pp. 112-127.

[43]Ibid.

[44]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), November 30, 1915, pp. 1200-1203.

[45]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), August 28, 1915, pp. 817-819.

[46]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), March 5, 1916, pp. 296-299.

[47]Ibid.

[48]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), December 28, 1915, p. 1269.

[49]Ibid., p. 1268.

[50]Ibid., p. 1269. On the Central Cooperative Committee see below, pages 392-398.

[51]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), April 23, 1916, p. 491.

[52]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), September 8, 1916, p. 22.

[53]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), May 6, 1910, pp. 443-444.

[54]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), August 27, 1910, pp. 738-739.

[55]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), February 22, 1914, pp. 12-13.

[56]Russkiia Vedomosti (Moscow), August 3, 1913, p. 3.

[57]This observation is made by Prokopovich, Kooperativnoe dvizhenie v Rossii, p. 427, and is confirmed by my own findings.

[58]Obshchee Delo (Moscow), March 27, 1916, pp. 17-18.

[59]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), March 15, 1917, pp. 25-26. Ob'edinenie (Moscow), April 16, 1917, p. 18. Shishkin, Iz vospominanii kooperativnykh i politicheskikh, p. 10. Shishkin identified Zlamkin as the manager of the MSPO bookstore, but it is more likely that the identification of Ob'edinenie, which was made in 1917, rather than 1960, is the accurate one.

[60]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), July 11, 1914, p. 580. This provides evidence for the view that revolutionary momentum was building up in the months that preceeded the war and that its outbreak actually postponed the revolution.

[61]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), December 12, 1915, p. p. 1228.

[62]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), November 16, 1903, p. 1.

[63]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), April 18, 1908, pp. 298-300.

[64]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), January 28, 1908, pp. 49-52.

[65]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), February 16, 1908, pp. 108-109.

[66]Pervyi Vserossiiskii Kooperativnyi S"ezd, pp. v, 55-56.

[67]Russkiia Vedomosti (Moscow), April 17, 1908, pp. 2-3; April 18, 1908, pp. 2-3; April 19, 1908, p. 2; April 20, 1908, p. 2; April 22, 1908, p. 4.

[68]"Tan", "Na kooperativnom s"ezde", pp. 32-33.

[69]See above, page 308.

[70]Pervyi Vserossiiskii Kooperativnyi S"ezd, p. 20.

[71]Posse, Moi zhiznennyi put', dorevoliutsionnyi period (1864-1917 gg.) pp. 436-437.

[72]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), May 2, 1908, pp. 318-323.

[73]Russkiia Vedomosti (Moscow), April 22, 1908, p. 4. Pervyi Vserossiiskii Kooperstivnyi S"ezd, pp. 51-52.

[74]Pervyi Vserossiiskii Kooperativnyi S"ezd, p. 52.

[75]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), August 22, 1913, pp. 593-596.

[76]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), June 12, 1913, pp. 437-438.

[77]See below, page 378.

[78]Russkiia Vedomosti (Moscow), August 5, 1913, p. 4.

[79]The best information on the Second All-Russian Co-operative Congress and on police interference in it is found again not in the cooperative press but in Russkiia Vedomosti (Moscow), August 3, 1913, pp. 1-3; August 4, 1913, pp. 3-4; August 5, 1913, p. 4; August 8, 1913, pp. 3-4; August 11, 1913, p. 4.

[80]Pervyi Vserossiiskii Kooperativnyi S"ezd, p. iv.

[81]Russkiia Vedomosti (Moscow), August 11, 1913, p. 4.

[82]V. V. Khizhniakov, Kooperativnaia deiatel'nost' zemskikh agronomov Moskovskoi gubernii (Moscow: Moskovskoe Gubernskoe Zemstvo, 1913), p. 5.

[83]Ibid., p. 6. Information could not be obtained on some societies.

[84]Ibid., pp. 7-8.

[85]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), January 19, 1913, p. 33.

[86]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), March 5, 1911, pp. 187-189.

[87]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), April 21, 1912, pp. 280-281.

[88]See above, pages 60-69.

[89]Zemskoe Delo (St. Petersburg), January 1913, p. 33.

[90]Ibid., p. 35.

[91]Ezhegodnik MSPO, 1914 g., Pt. I, p. 1.

[92]See above, pages 296-297.

[93]Tkachukov, Kooperatsiia s tochki zreniia okhranki, p. 7.

[94]See above, page 286-287.

[95]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), September 4, 1908, pp. 635-636.

[96]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), May 20, 1908, p. 393.

[97]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), September 20, 1908, p. 696.

[98]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), August 31, 1913, p. 14.

[99]Nashe Delo (Kiev), October 15, 1909, p. 3.

[100]Prokopovich, Kooperativnoe dvizhenie v Rossii, p. 350.

[101]Vladimir Makhnovets-Akimov, "Potrebitel'noe Obshchestvo Sluzhashchikh na Varshavsko-Venskoi Zheleznoi Dorogi," Vestnik Kooperatsii, 3 (1910), p. 51.

[102]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), December 1, 1921, pp. 5-6.

[103]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), October 31, 1913, pp. 3-5.

[104]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), December, 1918, pp. 142-145.

[105]A. Bakurtsev,"Kooperatsiia i rabochii klass (k istorii Trudovogo Soiuza)", Vestnik Kooperatsii, 2 (1911), p. 35.

[106]Pervyi Vserossiiskii Kooperativnyi S"ezd, pp. 20-21.

[107]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), March 16, 1911, pp. 3-5.

[108]Ibid., and March 29, 1911, pp. 4-5.

[109]Balabanov, Istoriia rabochei kooperatsii v Rossii (1864-1917). B. P. Frommett, Russkii sotsializm i kooperatsiia (Petrograd: "Mysl'", 1919). Balabanov was a Menshevik and Frommett a liberal.

[110]B. P. Frommett, "Kak smotriat rabochie na kooperatsiiu", Vestnik Kooperatsii 6 (1911), p. 17. The information that it was Bolshevik sponsored comes from Balabanov, Istoriia rabochei kooperatsii v Rossii (1864-1917), p. 103.

[111]Balabanov, Istoriia rabochei kooperatsii v Rossii (1864-1917), pp. 103-106.

[112]Ibid., pp. 106-107. Kheisin became an important contributor to the journals of the MSPO. The brochure was written under the pseudonyms M. Minin and M. Bragin.

[113]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), December, 1923, p. 26.

[114]Balabanov, Istoriia rabochei kooperatsii v Rossii (1864-1917), p. 103.

[115]Ibid., p. 108.

[116]Ibid., pp. 98, 100.

[117]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), April 15, 1911, pp. 7-8; April 28, 1911, pp. 7-9.

[118]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), May 2, 1908, pp. 318-323.

[119]Pervyi Vserossiiskii Kooperativnyi S"ezd, p. 119.

[120]Ibid.

[121]Balabanov, Istoriia rabochei kooperatsii v Rossii (1864-1917), p. 140.

[122]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), July 17, 1909, pp. 625-628.

[123]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), July 31, 1909, pp. 667-668.

[124]See above, page 57.

[125]Izvestiia (Petrograd), August 5, 1917, p. 6.

[126]See above, pages 285-286.

[127]Dneprovskii, Kooperatory, 1898-1968 gg., pp. 107-180.

[128]See above, pages 146-147.

[129]"Tan", "Na kooperativnom s"ezde", p. 40.

[130]Balabanov, Istoriia rabochei kooperatsii v Rossii (1864-1917), p. 109.

[131]See above, pages 169-172.

[132]"Tan", "Na kooperativnom s"ezde", p. 40.

[133]V mire kooperatsii (3rd ed.; Moscow: MSPO, 1916). The story is more ironic when one considers what was really happening 25 years after 1916, in 1941.

[134]V. F. Totomiants, Teoriia, istoriia i praktika potrebitel'skoi kooperatsii (3rd ed.; St. Petersburg: M. B. Kechedzhi-Shapovalov, 1913), p. 314. Italics in original.

[135]Ibid., "Potrebitel'nyia obshchestva v Rossii i usloviia sushchestvovaniia kooperatsii voobshche," Russkaia Mysl' 7 (1906), p. 160.

[136]Totomiants, Teoriia, istoriia i praktika potrebitel'skoi kooperatsii, pp. 315-320.

[137]Pervyi Vserossiiskii Kooperativnyi S"ezd, pp. 90-92. See also above, page 80.

[138]Nashe Delo (Kiev), December 20, 1909, pp. 13-14.

[139]Ibid.

[140]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), December 31, 1913, pp. 13-14.

[141]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), December 16, 1909, pp. 1103-1104.

[142]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), April 6, 1911, p. 262.

[143]Iiuzhno-Russkii Potrebitel' (Khar'kov), March, 1915, pp. 6-9.

[144]It is interesting that despite this the proportion of Ukrainian delegates was smaller than at the 1908 congress in Moscow. Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), August 22, 1913, pp. 596-601.

[145]Ibid.

[146]Russkiia Vedomosti (Moscow), August 4, 1913, pp. 3-4.

[147]The latter, as of January, 1914, changed its name to Iiuzhno-Russkii Potrebitel'.

[148]Potrebitel' (Khar'kov), September, 1913, pp. 10-11.

[149]Russkiia Vedomosti (Moscow), August 5, 1913, p. 4.

[150]Russkiia Vedomosti (Moscow), August 11, 1913, p. 4. The congress decided by a vote of 278 to 234 to establish it in Moscow.

[151]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), July 22, 1914, pp. 601-602.

[152]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), July 22, 1914, pp. 1-2.

[153]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), September 1, 1914, pp. 629-630.

[154]Nashe Delo (Chita), August 11, 1914, p. 1.

[155]Nashe Delo (Chita), August 26, 1914, pp. 56-57.

[156]E. N. Burdzhalov, Vtoraia Russkaia revoliutsiia (Moscow: Nauka, 1967), p. 17. Burdzhalov argues that the war postponed a revolutionary crisis already gripping Russia.

[157]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), September 1, 1914, pp. 631-632.

[158]Ibid., pp. 629-632.

[159]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), September 16, 1914, p. 10.

[160]Shishkin, Iz vospominanii kooperativnykh i politicheskikh, p. 18.

[161]Tkachukov, Kooperatsiia s tochki zreniia okhranki, p. 15.

[162]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), August 18, 1915, p. 13.

[163]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), February 14, 1915, pp. 63-64.

[164]Ibid., pp. 65-68.

[165]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), July 11, 1915, pp. 632-633.

[166]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), July 4, 1915, p. 573.

[167]Ibid., p. 576.

[168]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), July 25, 1915, pp. 2-3.

[169]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), September 30, 1915, p. 917.

[170]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), September 30, 1915, pp. 11-13.

[171]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), July 11, 1915, p. 634.

[172]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), August 10, 1915, p. 717.

[173]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), August 22, 1915, p. 784.

[174]Tkachukov, Kooperatsiia s tochki zreniia okhranki, p. 10. Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), December 28, 1915, p. 1268.

[175]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), August 28, 1915, p. 13.

[176]Tkachukov, Kooperatsiia s tochki zreniia okhranki, p. 6.

[177]Ibid.

[178]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), December 12, 1915, p. 1226.

[179]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), July 25, 1915, pp. 674-675.

[180]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), August 10, 1915, p. 712.

[181]Florinsky, The End of the Russian Empire, p. 126.

[182]Tkachukov, Kooperatsiia s tochki zreniia okhranki, pp. 11-12.

[183]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), August 22, 1915, pp. 782-783.

[184]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), November 14, 1915, p. 1106.

[185]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), November 30, 1915, p. 1185.

[186]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), August 20, 1915, p. 12.

[187]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), November 14, 1915, p. 1105.

[188]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), November 24, 1915, pp. 1140-1146.

[189]Tkachukov, Kooperatsiia s tochki zreniia okhranki, p. 9.

[190]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), November 24, 1915, p. 1146.

[191]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), April 17, 1917, pp. 16-18.

[192]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), April 16, 1917, p. 18.

[193]Florinsky, The End of the Russian Empire, p. 108.

[194]Obshchee Delo (Moscow), February 23, 1917, p. 18. For more on the press on the eve of the fall of the autocracy, see above, pages 231-234.

[195]Obshchee Delo (Moscow), January 27, 1917, p. 19.

[196]Obshchee Delo (Moscow), February 10, 1917, p. 19.

[197]Ibid.

[198]Obshchee Delo (Moscow), February 23, 1917, pp. 17-18.

CHAPTER VI

POLITICS IN 1917: THE BREAKDOWN OF THE CONSUMER COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT

A. Introduction

When the February Revolution occurred, the consumer cooperative movement, for all its disparate elements, was a united movement. But just seven months later, when the Bolsheviks seized power, this was no longer the case. The change can best be understood by looking at consumer cooperators in the context of the larger group of liberal and radical social activists of which they were a part, in the context of the whole social movement. It is understandable that at the beginning of 1917, the social movement should have been more or less united. Its greatest enemy was the tsarist adminstration. But when the autocracy disappeared, the conflicts that had always existed between the various parts of the social movement, but which had been muted due to the existence of the larger enemy, broke out.

One determining aspect of the political conflict of 1917 was the position of the moderate socialist parties, the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries, that political

power must remain in the hands of the bourgeoisie. The Mensheviks seem to have arrived at this determination as the result of a strictly orthodox application of Marxism to Russia's political situation. As the Mensheviks saw it, the bourgeois revolution had finally taken place. It had to be consolidated against the danger of a rightest takeover and years of struggle would be necessary before it could be followed by a proletarian revolution. The SR decision to follow the lead of the Mensheviks seems to have resulted from a general lack of leadership. In supporting the principle of rule by the bourgeoisie, the moderate societists, tactily or actively espoused the policies of the bourgeoisie. As a result, they became discredited in the eyes of potential supporters. The bourgeois policy the acceptance of which probably did the most to discredit the moderate socialists was their support of the war effort. By the time of the Democratic Conference, in September, 1917, one has the impression that the moderate socialists were hanging onto the bourgeoisie for dear life. They were desparately trying to put some sort of coalition government back together, not knowing how a non-coalition government could possibly operate. Moderate socialist consumer cooperators were involved in this quandary.

In the political conflict that evolved in the consumer cooperate movement in 1917, cooperators did not

divide up along strict party lines. There were two large opposing groups, which might be called the "moderate center" and the "left". There never had been a real right wing in the consumer cooperative movement, with the exception of the minute number of Union of Russian People societies.

The moderate center was by far the larger group. Although it embraced people of widely different political colors, from Octobrists and Kadets to Mensheviks and SRs, the distinguishing characteristic of this group was the belief that it was of primary importance to strengthen the Provisional Government. The moderate center was more ready than the left to try to limit the revolution to a political one, to favor consolidating present achievements rather than pushing for new ones. In October, 1917, it never crossed the minds of the members of the moderate center of the consumer cooperative movement that the Bolshevik Revolution could possibly bring any good to Russia.

The left was normally referred to as the worker group. Its members felt that the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies were just as important or more important than the Provisional Government. The group was made up of other Mensheviks and SRs and a relatively small number of Bolsheviks. Most worker cooperators were willing to wait before condemning the Bolshevik seizure of power until they saw whether Lenin fulfilled

his pledge to call the Constituent Assembly. Even after the Bolsheviks disbanded the Constituent Assembly, the left was still willing to cooperate with the new government for the sake of feeding the country and in the hope of gaining some privileges and guarantees of independence.

The distinction is often made, normally by Soviet historians but often by Western ones as well, between the top (verkhushka) and bottom (nizy) of the social movement. The top was frightened by the revolution and drew back from it. The bottom continued to push to the left. The same distinction can be made in the consumer cooperative movement. The top drew back while the bottom pushed on.[1] Almost all the central cooperative organizations expressed the political sentiments of the moderate center. In the localities, however, many consumer societies and regional unions were allied with the political ideas of the left.

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first deals with the role played by consumer cooperatives in the first months after the February Revolution in setting up the new organs of power. A number of related issues are also considered, as the participation of cooperators in important posts in the Provisional Government, the reform of dependent factory consumer societies and the participation of consumer cooperators in the work of supply committees. The second section seeks to illuminate the origins and the realization of the split in

the consumer cooperative movement. The split was fully open by September, 1917, at the time of the Democratic Conference. The third part deals with a halfhearted and unsuccessful attempt to overcome the split by organizing separate lists of cooperator candidates to the Constituent Assembly. The final section of this chapter describes the reaction of consumer cooperators to the Bolshevik seizure of power.

B. Consumer cooperatives and the new organs of power

The February Revolution established the right of popular initiative temporarily in Russia. In many areas, consumer societies participated in the formation of new organs of authority. These new organs included Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, Soviets of Peasants' Deputies, Committees of Social Organizations, Committees of Public Safety and Provisional Executive Committees. Several important cooperators held important positions in the Provisional Government itself. Also as a result of the revolution, participation by consumer cooperators in the work of production committees took on new importance, as these became really powerful organizations. In short, the revolution brought political power to the consumer cooperative movement. Most cooperators used that political power in support of the Provisional Government.

A wide variety of new organs of authority appeared after the February Revolution and consumer societies helped

to found them. In general, worker consumer cooperatives founded Soviets of Workers' Deputies, while other types of consumer cooperatives founded other types of revolutionary organizations. In the first half of 1917, however, this distinction was not very important. As Burdzhalov argues, although the local Executive Committees and Committees of Public Safety which replaced the old authorities in the localities supported the Provisional Government, they were not arms of the Provisional Government. They "expressed the interests of the peasantry, often coming into conflict with the representatives of the Provisional Government."[2] Village Soviets of Peasants' Deputies and Committees of Social Organizations, Burdzhalov adds, "seem to have worked together, rather than in opposition, to each other." The initiators of both were often the same members of the village intelligensia, workers, soldiers or peasants. Frequently, Burdzhalov says, due to the fact that prior to the February Revolution, cooperatives were the only social organizations which existed in the villages, co-operators were involved in founding both types of organizations.[3] The same was true of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' Deputies and the Provisional Government. They worked together rather harmoniously during the first months of their existence. This was possible because there was relatively little questioning of the ultimate authority of the Provisional Government. Later, as there came

to be more and more questioning of that authority, there also came to be more and more conflict, both in the center and in the localities.

One of the very first soviets formed in 1917 was initiated by the Petrograd Union of Worker Consumer Societies, which had its headquarters on Nevskii Prospect. Representatives were sent by worker consumer societies and sickness funds. Several of those who attended the first meeting, on February 25, were arrested by the tsarist police that night, but needless to say, were released within a few days.[4]

On March 1, 2, and 3, social organizations were founded with the help of consumer societies in many places across the old Russian Empire. On March 1, a Provisional Executive Committee of Social Organizations was founded in Moscow. Among the committee's 150 members were representatives of the city Duma, of the Zemstvo and City Unions, of the War-Industries Committee, the stock exchange, worker organizations, employees of the city administration and cooperatives. Prokopovich was chosen president and the two vice presidents were the Kadet N. Kishkin and the Menshevik head of the MSPO's staff of instructors, Egorev. The Moscow Soviet of Workers' Deputies passed a resolution recognizing the committee as the legitimate organ of power in the city and also sent representatives to it.[5]

The Moscow Union Association, a union of 87 worker oriented consumer societies in the Moscow area, upon hearing the news of the seizure of power in Petrograd, called a meeting of the representatives of Moscow consumer societies, trade unions and sickness funds. The meeting resolved to form a Central City Committee. A second meeting was held after the seizure of power in Moscow. It passed several resolutions, including one recognizing "automatic order" in the formation of cooperative unions and advocating working to change dependent factory consumer societies into independent worker societies.[6]

Also on March 1, in the city of Samara, at the headquarters of the consumer society "Self-Help", the decision was made to form a Soviet of Workers' Deputies. This was an area with much SD influence, as is shown by the fact that the executive committee of the soviet included three Bolsheviks, one Menshevik and one member of the Bund.[7] On the same day in Tsaritsyn, a Provisional Executive Committee was formed. It was composed largely of bourgeois groups: "factory owners, financiers, building owners and representatives of cooperatives, cultural and other types of organizations."[8]

In Kiev, on March 2, a group of representatives of various social organizations, including worker cooperatives and sickness funds and the worker group of the War-Industries Committee addressed a call to the population

to remain calm and continue with their work:

> In these difficult days, the motherland expects you to devote all your energy to saving and resusitating it...Preserve order. Workers - to your stations! Citizens - everyone to his job.[9]

On March 3, the Union of Cooperatives of Kineshemsk District, made up of cooperatives of various types in the textile areas of Vladimir and Kostroma guberniias, played the central role in the formation of the Kineshemsk Revolutionary Committee of Public Safety. A. S. Kolodin, president of the Kineshemsk Union of Cooperatives, was chosen president of the committee and Ia. M. Savchenko, a union instructor who had been released from prison by demonstrators during the seizure of power, was made vice-president. A Kineshemsk Soviet of Workers' Deputies was formed at the same time, but the Kineshemsk Union of Cooperatives seems to have played no role in its formation.[10] Also in Tula, cooperative organizations played an important role in the formation of the Revolutionary Executive Committee but not in the formation of the Soviet Workers' Deputies. In Tula, some of the first information about the revolution was received on March 2 via bulletins sent by the MSPO.[11]

In Irkutsk, when the governor learned about the revolution in Petrograd, he called together representatives of the City Duma, the stock exchange, cooperatives and other social organizations and also SR and SD exiles and told them that he was ready to obey the new authorities.

A Soviet of Workers' Deputies and a Committee of Social Organizations both held their first meetings on March 3. The organizations from which the two bodies drew their members overlapped considerably. The Soviet included delegates from various worker groups and from cooperatives. The Committee of Social Organizations had delegates from the Soviet, the trade unions, the troops, the City Duma, the stock exchange, businesses, cooperatives and clergy.[12]

The first congress of cooperatives held after the seizure of power took place on March 12 in Novgorod guberniia. Most of the cooperatives represented at the congress were village consumer and credit societies. The attention of the congress was focused on the formation of new organs of authority. The congress expressed its complete support for the Provisional Government and passed a resolution stating that in its opinion the one appropriate form of government for Russia was a democratic republic. It resolved, furthermore, to sponsor the formation of Soviets of Peasants' Deputies. The soviets were to exist on the uezd and guberniia levels and were to be in charge of philanthropic aid for the families of those drafted into the army, local militias for the defense of public safety and the distribution of scarce food and consumer goods. They were also to organize cultural and educational activity.[13]

In the first days after the February Revolution, some consumer societies served as meeting places for the hitherto underground Bolshevik party. One such meeting took place on March 1 at the headquarters of the consumer society "In Unity - Strength" in Ivanovo-Voznesensk. The meeting called for a strike and demonstration in favor of the change in power.[14] In Moscow, the MSPO itself served as the first legal headquarters of the Bolshevik party. In memoirs written in 1933, R. Zemliachka described how he and other Bolsheviks went to the headquarters of the MSPO, where some party members worked. The old underground Moscow Committee had been broken up a few days earlier, and they established a new one. They also wrote the first issue of Sotsial-Demokrat.[15] As democratic organizations, consumer cooperatives were prepared to serve as headquarters for their minority of Bolshevik members.

The reaction of consumer cooperators to the February Revolution was, as one would expect, enthusiastic. Greeting the revolution, Soiuz Potrebitelei directed its attention to what the people as a whole and the individual classes could expect to receive from it.

> To the people - all power and freedom. To the peasantry - land. For workers - the eight hour day and defense of the law. To soldiers - peace and freedom from military burdens.[16]

Support for the Provisional Government was normally expressed conditionally. As the Irkutsk Association of

Consumer Societies put it:

1) We recognize the Provisional Government as legal and support it as long as it follows the demands of the people.

2) We call for the immediate organization of local Committees of Social Organizations, on the village, volost, uezd and guberniia levels.

But the requirement that the Provisional Government follow the wishes of the people was included in virtually every declaration on the Provisional Government issued by any social organization. At that time, there was no serious expectation that it would not do so.

Several distinguished consumer cooperators were invited to join the Provisional Government. Prokopovich, whose positions in the cooperative movement at that time included the presidency of the St. Petersburg Branch and of the Soviet of the All-Russian Congress of Cooperative Organizations (a permanent council created by the Third All-Russian Congress of Cooperative organizations in March, 1917) was Minister of Trade and Industry from July 25 to September 15, 1917, and from that time until the Bolshevik takeover Minister of Supplies. Evidence that he did his job fairly evenhandedly is provided by a letter written to the Minister of Finance, N. V. Nekrasov by a group of landowners in Nizhnyi-Novgorod guberniia on September 24, 1917. The landowners asked Nekrasov to prevent an uezd supply committee from carrying out its resolution to take away the landowners' prisoners of

war. The landowners stated that they had not turned to Prokopovich or to the SR president of the Executive Committee of the All-Russian Soviet of Peasants' Deputies N. D. Avksent'ev for help because it was "not possible to hope for sympathy from them."[18]

V. N. Zel'geim, the editor of Soiuz Potrebitelei and Ob'edinenie and member of the board of the Tsentrosoiuz was named Assistant Minister of Land in charge of supplies in March and retained this position until October. According to one source, he was in fact in charge of distributing supplies throughout the whole country.[19] He chose three cooperators as his assistants: D. S. Korobov, the President of the MSPO, V. I. Anisimov, the President of the Moscow Committee on Village Loan and Savings and Industrial Enterprises and A. E. Kulyzhnyi, the manager of the Trade Department of the Moscow People's Bank.[20] In addition, two Menshevik consumer cooperators, P. M. Kolokol'nikov, the director of the statistical department of the MSPO, and A. M. Nikitin, an MSPO attorney, became respectively Minister of Labor and Minister of Interior under Kerensky. An important credit cooperator who received a position in the Provisional Government was A. N. Antsiferov, who was appointed head of the Department on the Local Economy.

The Provisional Government frequently turned to consumer societies, and in particular to the MSPO, for help in trying to alleviate the goods crisis. For example,

a memorandum from the Ministry of Land written at the end of April on problems involved in the implementation of the grain monopoly commented:

> The problem is very complex and becomes more serious every day. It is necessary to enlist the help of experienced organizations, such as cooperatives, various social organizations and trade and industrial enterprises, and also private persons experienced in the business of marketing grain.[21]

In September, 1917, the Ministry of Supplies asked the MSPO to act as a contractor in the distribution of manufactured goods. Union member societies were asked to provide people experienced in manufacturing to work with the ministry and on the local level. The union accepted and, in a gesture of objectivity, stopped its own manufacture of those goods for which it would be acting as agent.[22]

The Provisional Government was sympathetic to requests made by the consumer cooperative movement for special favors. Officials sided with consumer societies when they came into conflict with local soviets and land committees.[23] Requests that cooperators who had been drafted be released in order to return to cooperative work were treated favorably.

The February Revolution stimulated the reform of many consumer societies. But this phenomenon actually reached its climax after the October Revolution. At the end of May, Ob'edinenie complained that as yet little had been done. The journal focused its attention on an

administration dominated consumer society set up by an association of factories and plants in Ivanovo-Voznesensk. The society had been formed before the war as a result of a long strike. The principle cause of the strike had been a rise in the price of bread. The factory owners had been able to resolve the strike by setting up a consumer society.[24] In May, 1917, Ob'edinenie complained:

> Such societies will not be democratic until their charters are amended in such a way as to give every shareholder the right to participate in its affairs and to have, individually and collectively, a free voice.[25]

Some progress was made by the summer. In August, Soiuz Potrebitelei wrote that factory committees were adding their pressure to the struggle to turn dependent factory consumer societies into independent ones. Furthermore, the indifference of some members of the proletariat and its leaders to the cooperative movement was being overcome by the fact that it was now possible for consumer societies to concentrate on the political development of the proletariat and to give financial and material aid to strikers. The consumer society of the Putilov factory in Petrograd had finally been reformed. This took place over the opposition of worker members, who objected to the prospect of losing a part of their dividend payments.[26]

At the beginning of July, worker members reassumed control of the consumer society of the factory of Savvy Morozov. The workers had won control earlier in 1906,

but had lost it again since then. This time employees who supported the factory domination of the society set up a new one with financial aid from the factory administration.[27] Several of the old factory consumer societies of the Urals were also reformed.[28]

Kabanov asserts that village societies also became more democratically organized. In the new boards, there was greater representation from the peasants themselves. According to Kabanov, this "presumably" occurred most frequently where the anti-landlord movement was the strongest.[29] On the basis of this information, it is not possible to say that all or even most consumer societies underwent reform of their management in 1917. Such reform seems to have been more common in the cities than in the villages.

Increasingly during 1917, consumer societies came into conflict with supply committees. Supply committees had been formed since 1915, but as a result of the February Revolution, they gained new importance. Conflict between consumer societies and supply committees had existed from the very beginning. Supply committees received goods via zemstvos out-of-turn and at lower prices on the understanding that they would distribute them impartially to other organizations and private persons. But they often did not work according to that understanding. The Supply Committee of the Petrograd

Association of Factory and Plant Owners sold sugar to worker consumer societies on the Vybourg side at inflated prices. A similar situation existed in Moscow. Consumer societies were dependent on supply committees for supplies but had to pay higher prices than private merchants for the goods they received. Factory consumer societies, however, were not discriminated against. Another means of discriminating against independent consumer societies was to refuse to extend them credit. Ob'edinenie announced in March, 1916, that in some places worker cooperatives had united to fight the supply committees.[30]

All consumer societies but particularly the more radical ones pushed for greater representation in supply committees. In December, 1916, an association of consumer societies in Chita, an area with much SD influence, demanded that the social organizations of the bourgeoisie be forced to give consumer cooperatives more than just a token share of representatives on supply committees:

> It is necessary to protest in the most decisive manner, in the name of the interests of the wide masses of the working population, against these attempts to deprive the consumer of the possibility of taking the matter of the distribution of supplies into his own hands.[31]

Under the Provisional Government, the procedure for forming supply committees was formalized. One sixth to one fifth of the members of supply committees were to be elected by cooperatives. Regulations provided for six representatives of cooperatives on guberniia level

committees (two each from consumer, credit and agricultural cooperatives), out of a total membership of 35 to 38; four representatives of cooperatives on uezd level committees (one each from consumer, credit and agricultural cooperatives and one from the zemstvo cooperative department) out of a total membership of 19 to 22; four representatives of local city cooperatives on city supply committees out of a total of 21 members; and three representatives of cooperatives on volost level supply committees (one each from consumer, credit and agricultural cooperatives) out of a total of 15 members.[32] These rules still relegated consumer cooperatives to a distinctly secondary role on a question that concerned them directly.

The conference of consumer cooperative instructors held in Odessa in August, 1917, commented favorably on the influence of consumer societies on the work of supply committees. The conference was dominated by SRs and SDs and therefore its resolutions can be assumed to express the point of view of left wing cooperators. The conference declared that although work on supply committees had the disadvantage of taking people away from cooperative work, which was already short of personnel, it had the advantage of directing the work of supply committees in a beneficial direction.

> Cooperators have had an influence on the fact that supply committees, which in some places had not

> had any contact with cooperative organizations, recently have begun to turn to consumer societies more frequently for help in distributing goods among the population and have stopped dealing with private merchants.[33]

The conference concluded that cooperators on supply committees should try to see that the distribution of goods was handeled only through consumer societies. Supply committees should not buy and distribute goods themselves, nor should they distribute them through private merchants.

The MSPO board member Rzhevskii wrote in Soiuz Potrebitelei in September, that "most of the disagreements between supply committees and cooperatives are at the volost level." According to Rzhevskii this was due to the low level of consciousness of the members which often included "merchants and various dark elements." On the other hand, most guberniia level supply committees understand the necessity of working together with cooperatives.[34] Local production committees tended to be dominated by local merchants. In such committees, the demand of cooperators that all distribution be carried out through them was bound to fall on hostile ears. Also, in the course of 1917, a situation developed where local committees of every sort tended to be more radical than central ones. This was probably both because they were closer to expressing the real wishes of population and because they had fewer hesitations in going against

the people who had formerly been in authority. It is likely, therefore, that another reason why most disagreements between supply committees and cooperatives occurred at the local level was that representatives of cooperatives on local supply committees tended to make more radical demands than representatives of cooperatives on guberniia or central supply committees.

As the material presented in this section indicates, consumer societies assumed new political importance in 1917. They were influential in setting up new organs of authority, including the Provisional Government itself. In supply committees, they gained new ability to influence decisions concerning their own activity, that of providing the population with food and other goods. In most cases, consumer cooperators used their new political power firmly in support of the status quo, in support of the Provisional Government.

C. The origins and realization of the split

The story of the origins and realization of the split in the consumer cooperative movement can be divided into three parts. During the first part, from March through the beginning of September, cooperators were becoming aware of the divisions between them. During the second, which included the preparation of cooperators for the Democratic Conference and the conference itself, the division between the moderate center and the left came into the open. A

final period can be discerned between the end of the Democratic Conference and the disbanding of the Constituent Assembly. The unity of the consumer cooperative movement was long gone. There was a halfhearted attempt to regain it, via the organization of lists of cooperator candidates as delegates to the Constituent Assembly, but the attempt never got off the ground. During this final period, cooperators were losing their ability to analyze the events that were occurring around them.

The split in the consumer cooperative movement was a political split. It did not have to do with how consumer societies should be operated, although differences on that score continued to exist. It did not have to do with differences in how cooperators hoped the revolution would affect the movement. In a narrow sense, the split was over whether or not the Kadet party should be included in the government of Russia. In a larger sense, it was over the nature of the present revolution. The question was whether the present revolution should be seen as a bourgeois revolution or whether it could be or should be made into something more radical.

As soon as the tsarist government was out of the way, the cooperative movement, like virtually all other existing groups and professions, started planning its first "free" all-Russian congress. It met March 25 to 28 in Moscow. The congress was visited on its first day by Khinchuk, the

President of the Moscow Soviet and by the elderly E. Breshko-Breshkovskaia and greetings were sent by the Provisional Government's Ministers of Trade, Finance and Justice. This was a tribute to the importance of the co-operative movement as a part of the social movement. Delegates to the congress repeatedly expressed the commitment of the cooperative movement to do everything in its power for Russia and the Provisional Government. Cooperators saw their main contribution as the alleviation of the goods crisis. A metaphor contrived by Zel'geim on how the "ship of state" needed help in order "to speed up the stream of the production crisis" received a prolonged ovation.[35]

The questions addressed by the congress were largely political in nature. Even the stimulation of production was, in 1917, a political problem. At one point, a delegate made a proposal to address a call to workers and their organizations to help relieve the production crisis by working harder. This led to an objection by a representative from a worker society, Tsederbaum, who said that production was being slowed by the industrialists and not by the workers.[36] The production problem was also made a political problem by the fact that the stability of the Provisional Government depended on its resolution.

A heated debate took place over the best form of political organization for the peasantry. The majority of those at the congress were in favor of aiding the formation of Soviets of Peasants' Deputies, although a minority wanted to revive the Peasant Union. In 1917, the Peasant Union emerged as a less important and more conservative organization than peasant soviets. There was much protest when one unidentified delegate said that the peasantry did not support the Petrograd Soviet because it did not support the Provisional Government. The Congress sent a telegram of greetings to the Petrograd Soviet.[37]

The prolongation of the war was also a subject for debate. E. L. Gurevich spoke in favor of continuing the war until victory, saying that "in winning the war, we will win the revolution."[38] Russkiia Vedomosti commented that the congress as a whole was not adverse to dreams of national agrandizement.

> Although calls for peace are heard more frequently now in the country the congress was definitely not in favor of a separate peace and was not afraid of the idea of correcting geographical boundaries in the interests of Russia.[39]

It is likely that this assessment did not wholly reflect the views of many consumer cooperators. Most consumer cooperators probably maintained the view that the war should be continued not for the sake of conquest but only to defend Russia. Cooperators who held this view sought to use the international influence of the cooperative

movement in order to work out a settlement acceptable to all beligerants. For example, at the end of April, the Petrograd Union of Worker Consumer Societies resolved to call upon the MSPO and the Council of All-Russian Co-operative Congresses to organize an international cooperative congress "in order to support the socialist movement in its attempt to end the war."[40]

A resolution was passed on political power which emphasized the cooperative movement's support for the Provisional Government.

> The opinion of the country's social organizations is that it is necessary to have a single authority, and to the extent that the Provisional Government carries out the democratic program which it has proclaimed all cooperative organizations should show it complete, conscious support.[41]

The composition of the Provisional Government would change and disagreements would come to exist over what its composition should be. But the commitment of the consumer cooperative movement, both moderate center and left, to support it would not change. The congress laid responsibility for all problems squarely on the shoulders of the former tsarist administration. Cooperative organizations assured the people that if only they maintained order, all their problems would soon be solved.

These themes were re-emphasized in April, 1917. Zel'geim, Korobov and A. E. Kulyzhnyi, President of the Moscow People's Bank, were among the signers of a pamphlet addressed to the peasantry. The peasants were asked to

"help the motherland to free itself from the heavy inheritance of the old order," and were told to continue tilling their fields and to trust the Provisional Government.

> Calm, dedicated labor is the responsibility that calls you. This is what will save the motherland. Your heavy life, your need for land - these are indisputable. The new government is already taking measures toward the preparation of the resolution of the land question. The final resolution will be made by the chosen representatives of the people. ...Disorders with respect to the land are not permissible. They are ruinous for the country and for its freedom...This will be a new step towards hunger and unhappiness for the country and the army. Do not permit it. Maintain calm. The good of the motherland depends on this.[42]

Cooperators adopted a position of support for the status quo. Later, during the July Days, the Council of the All-Russian Cooperative Congresses sent a telegram to the Provisional Government in its own name and in the names of the central unions of cooperatives, including the MSPO, expressing the readiness of the Russian cooperative movement "to support the government in its struggle against anarchy and counter-revolution." It urged the Provisional Government to establish firm authority."[43]

The MSPO welcomed the inclusion of socialist ministers in the Provisional Government. On May 31, Obshchee Delo editorialized:

> It is evident now that the government is revolutionary: it will fulfill the will of the people and six representatives of the socialist parties have gone into it. If this government suffers defeat, that defeat threatens the whole country and above all, it threatens the freedom which has been won with such difficulty.[44]

Cooperative organizations urged the people to support the Provisional Government by, among other things, contributing to the Liberty Loan. The MSPO itself contributed 500,000 rubles.[45]

To find statements by consumer cooperators critical of the Provisional Government one has to look outside the MSPO. As early as April, 1917, the Kiev Union of Consumer Societies showed its hostility to the Kadet and Octobrist parties. The union's journal, in an article on the duel power of the Provisional Government and the soviets (dvoevlastie), defined the parties of the left (Trudoviks, SRs and SDs) as ones defending the interests of the working classes and the parties of the right (Kadets and Octobrists) as ones which could not be trusted. Of the parties of the right as a group it said: "That party must be called the party of the political and economic persecution of the people."[46]

Whereas the central cooperative organizations in general felt that it was of key importance to bolster the authority of the Provisional Government, it was common for individual societies to have at least an equal commitment to the soviets. For example, on the third day of Easter, a society in a village in Moscow guberniia passed the following three political resolutions:

1] We greet the Provisional Government and promise to support it to the extent that...its actions are in accord with the wishes of the Soviet of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, and

we call for the soonest possible convocation of the Constituent Assembly.

2) We greet the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies and hope they will work arm in arm with the Soviet of Peasants' Deputies which will soon be formed.

3) The one means of solving the land question is the immediate abolition of private ownership of land, the transfer of all land to the jurisdiction of the government without compensation and its redivision only among those who personally work it.[47]

The most conservative consumer cooperative journal in 1917 was Obshchee Delo. As has been mentioned above, Obshchee Delo was in principle the MSPO's peasant oriented journal. But Obshchee Delo's more conservative stance should be seen not as a reflection so much of the peasantry but of the journal's editorial board. Just as Ob'edinenie was allowed to express the more radical opinion in the MSPO, Obshchee Delo was allowed to express the more conservative opinion. The editor of Obshchee Delo was the Kadet Merkulov and the political position of the journal in 1917 could be said to be a mixture of Kadet and right SR.

A good illustration of the conservative tone of Obshchee Delo in 1917 is the contrast between its treatment of the July Days and the Kornilov rebellion. The July Days were described as an armed demonstration "by Bolsheviks" to support their demand for all power to the soviets. The demonstration had led to the:

> shooting of peaceful citizens and to pograms...When armed Bolsheviks went onto the streets, they were joined by anarchists, black hundreds and German spys. Enemies of the revolution turned the demonstration into a pogram. Disorderly shooting took place and demonstrators tried to arrest socialist ministers and take over some government establishments.[48]

The Kornilov rebellion, on the other hand, was treated as a rather less serious threat to the revolution. The revolution was saved primarily because the Provisional Government "immediately took decisive measures" and also "thanks to the support of revolutionary groups at the front and in the rear."[49]

In contrast, although Ob'edinenie also opposed the July Days, the tone of its statement was far more reasonable.

> The events of July 3-5 in the cities and the breakdown of discipline at the front have resulted in fear on the part of the wide masses of the population of the outbreak of civil war and military collapse and have created the basis for the development of counter-revolutionary forces.[50]

But upon the occasion of the Kornilov rebellion, Ob'edinenie said: "Counter-revolution has openly lifted its head."[51]

The consumer cooperative movement was very active in supporting the formation of Soviets of Peasants' Deputies, both in the center and in the localities. Obshchee Delo did not hesitate to take credit, in the name of the cooperative movement, for the formation of peasant soviets. At the beginning of May, in announcing the opening of the All-Russian Soviet of Peasants' Deputies, the journal boasted:

> It is possible to say without exaggeration that the very idea of forming these soviets, the organization of congresses and elections and the opening of the All-Russian Soviet of Peasants' Deputies, - all was attained thanks to the cooperative movement and its best workers.[52]

The central cooperative organizations contributed substantial sums to the All-Russian Congress of Peasants' Deputies. The MSPO gave 100,000 rubles, the Moscow People's Bank gave 50,000 rubles with a promise of more in the future and the Central Association of Flax Producers gave 50,000 rubles. Central cooperative organizations also financed SR political work among the peasantry.[53] The MSPO and the Moscow People's Bank subsidized the publication of the journal Vlast' Naroda (Power of the People).[54] Allocations for political work were also made by individual societies and local unions. In May, 1917, the Iaroslav Union of Consumer Societies allocated 35,000 rubles for political work to prepare the population for the Constituent Assembly.[55]

In August, 1917, representatives of worker consumer societies held their own all-Russian congress. The worker movement as a whole in Russia was moving to the left in 1917 and worker consumer cooperatives followed suit. Of 129 delegates to the All-Russian Congress of Worker Cooperatives in August, 1917, almost two thirds were Social Democrats.

PARTY AFFILIATION OF DELEGATES TO THE ALL-RUSSIAN CONGRESS OF WORKER COOPERATIVES[56]

party	number	per cent
Social Democrat	83	64.3
Social Revolutionary	23	17.8
Republican-Democratic Party	1	.8
non party	22	17.1

Although a breakdown of the SD delegates by faction is not available, there were undoubtedly fewer Bolshevik worker cooperators than Menshevik. The president and vice-president of the presidium of the congress, E. N. Egorov, and I. G. Volkov, were both Mensheviks, although a few memebers of the presidium were probably Bolsheviks.[57] On the second evening of the congress, Volkov delivered a talk in which he stated that although the independent worker cooperative movement was not socialism, it was an important means of attaining socialism. The principles most debated at the congress were whether or not societies should sell to non-members and what a society should do with its profits. Some delegates argued that selling to non-members was a form of exploitation, but most argued that it was permissible. The congress adopted the position that there should be no distribution of profits, all of which should be used for the improvement of the position of the working class.[58]

Much time was spent at the congress discussing what the relationship should be between worker consumer

cooperatives and other forms of the worker movement. It was resolved that consumer societies should help trade unions in their struggle against employers, that all members and employees of worker consumer cooperatives should be members of trade unions and all members of trade unions should be members of cooperatives. The propaganda of worker cooperatives was to be socialist but it was not to be affiliated with a single political party. The congress adopted four resolutions on the relationship between the worker cooperative movement and the political parties:

1) The worker cooperative movement must not be affiliated with a single political party.

2) The worker cooperative movement must not be indifferent to political life.

3) The worker cooperative movement, although non-party, must at the same time, in connection with the political activity of the proletariat, be represented in the central cooperative organizations.

4) The worker cooperative movement must educate its members in the spirit of socialism.[59]

Worker cooperators were open to the idea of a coalition of the various socialist parties. The Mensheviks, Bolsheviks and SRs active in the worker cooperative movement continued to work together rather harmoniously. But they began to have more and more difficulty getting along with the rest of the cooperative movement.

This conflict began to come into the open at the beginning of August, 1917, at the Moscow State Conference. The cooperative movement was given 300 places

at the State Conference, of which 75 were allocated to members of worker consumer societies. The cooperative delegation was dominated by the moderate center. Izvestiia wrote:

> One cannot help but notice that among the cooperative delegates there is a clear and definite inclination - an inclination against deepening the revolution and furthering its achievements and in favor of strengthening what it has already accomplished.[60]

The newspaper added that the 75 delegates from worker consumer societies were more democratic and more revolutionary than the cooperative delegation as a whole.

Conflict between the worker group and the delegation as a whole surfaced over the choosing of speakers. The cooperative delegation was allowed to have three speakers present their point of view before the conference. The delegation turned down the request of the worker group that it be given one of those places. Only after long debate was the platform of the State Conference passed by the cooperative section.[61]

In the context of discussing the State Conference, it should be noted that several of the resolutions which it adopted dealt with the role to be played by the consumer cooperative movement in alleviating the goods crisis. The resolutions assigned an important role to cooperative organizations in preparing and distributing food and consumer goods. The conference resolved that it would be "senseless" to try to get along without the "very widest

participation" of "all forms of cooperatives, under the general leadership of governmental production organs." At the same time, the State Conference did not call for the abolition of private trade, although it did say that it should be carefully supervised.[62]

The conflict between the moderate center and the left of the consumer cooperative movement came fully into the open at the Democratic Conference, which met in Petrograd on September 15. On the eve of the conference, between September 11 and 13, the cooperative movement held a congress in Moscow. Officially, the congress was to determine whether or not the cooperative movement would participate in the conference and, if so, what positions it would take.

The participation of the cooperative movement in the Democratic Conference was of interest to non-cooperators as well. The organizers of the conference meant for it to provide support for the Provisional Government and for the policy of coalition government. If the cooperative movement had refused to participate, the resolutions of the conference would have been felt to carry less weight, not just because of the large percentage of Russia's population that were members of cooperatives, but also because there was a commonly accepted idea that the cooperative movement represented "the people."

The feeling that the cooperative movement represented "the people" was expressed at the cooperative congress of March, 1917. At the first session of the congress, Shingarev made a speech in which he called upon the cooperative movement to lend its support to the Provisional Government. The delegate Pekarskii came to the podium to respond: "The calloused, laboring hand of the Russian cooperator is at your service." This remark was followed by a tremendous ovation. It is unlikely that more than a small percentage of the delegates to the congress, most of whom were sent by central cooperative organizations, had callouses on their hands. Nonetheless, they responded enthusiastically to Pekarskii's statement because that was how they liked to think of themselves and their movement. They liked to think that they were workers and that their movement was a movement of workers.[63] Furthermore, people outside the cooperative movement agreed with this assessment. Summing up the results of the congress, Russkiia Vedomosti said that studying the cooperative movement was the "best way to learn the actual mood of the population." The congress was "the true voice of the whole country."[64]

The political complexion of the September cooperative congress was more conservative than that of the cooperative movement as a whole. It was officially a congress of unions of cooperatives rather than of cooperatives themselves and at that time central organizations

were more conservative than local organizations. Furthermore, Ob'edinenie complained that the congress was not organized far enough in advance. Only a portion of consumer societies and unions were represented and few of them had time to hold general meetings to choose their representatives. Thus most delegates were chosen by the societies' boards. According to Ob'edinenie this resulted in the choosing of more conservative, less politicized members as delegates.

> It is obvious that in most cases, the boards sent their own (svoikh) people to the congress, choosing those who concentrated on the economic side of activity, not those who led the membership in political action.[65]

By the time the congress met, it was clear that it would vote to participate in the Democratic Conference. Most of the time of the congress was therefore devoted to the composition of the Provisional Government. Only a small minority of those present opposed the principle of coalition government. This minority consisted mainly of the delegates of worker consumer societies. They were joined by the representatives of some reformed railroad societies and a few village consumer and credit societies.

The majority of the speeches at the congress favored coalition, and many of these explicitly blamed the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies and the workers themselves for the economic problems from which Russia was suffering. Soiuz Potrebitelei covered that side of the

congress completely but neglected the speeches of the representatives of worker societies which opposed them. Thus Soiuz Potrebitelei clearly showed its support for the moderate center position.

The position of the moderate center of the consumer cooperative movement was stated most fully by Merkulov.

> The suffering of the motherland, the possibility of its destruction, these are the reasons why the cooperative movement must protest against the powerlessness of the authorities, must demand the reconstruction of the Provisional Government on the principle of the coalition of all the living, active forces of the country.[66]

After arguing that the Provisional Government must again be reconstructed, Merkulov complained that the government failed to accomplish anything because it was spending all its time trying to form a cabinet. It seems that no one bothered to point out that there was a contradiction here. Merkulov stressed that the Provisional Government must be able to act in order to avoid the "danger of losing territory." According to Merkulov, the socialist parties did not represent the real interests or the real wishes of the working classes. He interrupted prolonged applause to say:

> We have certain political parties and a Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. Do they express the will of the people? People do not become socialists in the course of a few days. I think that it is clear enough to all of you that the soviets in no way express the will, mood and wishes of the popular masses, that these political organizations only skim over the surface and do not deeply touch the millions. This is a game of tens, hundreds or perhaps thousands of people, but that is all.[67]

Other speeches in favor of coalition government followed. The credit cooperator M. P. Avsarkisov pointed to the danger of financial collapse. The Menshevik consumer cooperator A. M. Berkengeim, a member of the board of the MSPO, argued that coalition government was the one means of saving the country from starvation. Prokopovich warned that a government formed only of socialists would be powerless.

It is surprising indeed that socialists could agree with the assessment of the socialist parties given by Merkulov, but many did. The terror and confusion of many socialists was expressed by Skobelev, the Menshevik former Minister of Labor and long-time supporter of the cooperative movement in the State Duma. As Soiuz Potrebitelei noted, he "spoke in an entirely different tone than he had when he had been minister."

> If the Russian bourgeoisie could take power into its hands and hold it, I would get down on my knees to it. Democracy would have achieved its purpose.[68]

On the question of social revolution, he said:

> If my friends on the left think that our revolution is the prologue to the social revolution, then I think that it is only the prologue to the prologue.[69]

Skobelev called for a gradual transition to socialism under a democratic order. He envisaged the government gradually limiting the profits of business owners until at a given point they would "voluntarily hand over their rights to

the nation." But this could only take place in a situation of complete social tranquility.

A mandate was passed by the congress which all cooperative delegates to the Democratic Conference were supposed to follow. The mandate encharged the delegates to:

> form a provisional block of cooperative organizations with those factions of the socialist parties which have striven and are striving to strengthen the achievements of the revolution and for social reforms.[70]

The mandate continued that the delegates from the cooperative movement should support the principle of coalition government:

> A national coalition government should be formed, with the participation of the representatives of various social groups, from revolutionary democracy as well as the bourgeoisie, provided they are prepared to subordinate their private and class interests to the general state interests.[71]

The worker group at the congress made a separate proposal. It was rejected by the congress as a whole, but served as a statement of principle for the worker group:

> The cooperative movement, as a movement of the working classes, sets itself the task at the Democratic Conference of facilitating the uniting of all democratic forces around the goal of forming a strong, revolutionary authority, capable of bringing to life the program enunciated by Chkheidze at the State Conference and of uniting around it all democracy.
> Those elements which supported the Kornilov uprising and declared themselves to be counter-revolutionaries cannot be included in the formation of a government capable of bringing that program to life...
> The government formed on that basis must be responsible before organized democracy.[72]

Although the Kadets had not openly supported Kornilov, they were widely, and probably correctly, thought to have done so covertly. In the eyes of the worker group, the Kadet party was too discredited for any of its members to be included in the government.

Most cooperators hoped that somehow the split that had been seen at the congress could be overcome. Kheisin commented:

> We still do not know whether this separation of worker consumer cooperatives from the rest of the movement will be permanent or only temporary.[73]

It turned out to be permanent. There were 120 places allocated to the cooperative movement at the Democratic Conference. The cooperative congress allocated 30 of these places to the worker group. The very allocation of a fixed number of places to worker cooperators was a recognition of the division that now existed. No one felt any need to allocate a set number of places to any other group within the cooperative movement. Many cooperators were deeply disappointed by the disagreements which the congress had shown. Zel'geim was one. He pointed out that the essential cause of the break was the fact that the cooperative movement was now trying to influence political life.

> The congress showed the damage that threatens the cooperative movement if it does not limit itself simply to supporting the socialist parties but instead begins to try to influence the direction of government policies independently. When that

> happened, all its parts, which had worked together peacefully, united by their economic activity, split sharply into enemy camps.[74]

The democratic Conference confirmed the split in the consumer cooperative movement and deepened it. When the conference opened on September 15, the worker group was still undecided as to precisely how it would express its disagreement with the moderate center. The majority of the left, led by Kheisin, Levin and Prifonov, were in favor of doing this in such a way as to avoid a complete break with the rest of the movement. They decided to limit themselves to the following declaration:

> In view of the existence within itself of differing tendencies, the worker group has decided not to make a political statement. It extends to all its members the right to participate in the work of the conference by parties and fractions, according to their political convictions.
> The declaration read in the name of the entire cooperative movement does not represent the opinion of the worker group.[75]

Later, the presidium of the conference decided that delegates would be grouped not by political faction but by social organization. The worker group gave its members the right to vote either for or against coalition.

Of 25 delegates of worker cooperatives present at the Democratic Conference, 15 opposed coalition government and ten favored it. Of the cooperative delegation as a whole, 140 favored coalition government and 23 opposed it. If we subtract the figures for the worker group from those from the entire cooperative delegation, we arrive at the figures for the non-worker cooperative

movement. While 130 non-worker cooperators favored coalition government, only eight opposed it. Below, we see how the cooperative movement compared with other groups at the Democratic Conference.

THE VOTE BY THE DEMOCRATIC CONFERENCE ON THE QUESTION OF COALITION GOVERNMENT[76]

	for	against	abstain
soviet groups	83	192	4
soviets of peasants' deputies	102	70	12
city governments	114	101	3
zemstvo and guberniia committees	98	23	2
economic organizations	34	16	2
trade unions	32	139	2
cooperative	140	23	1
military organizations	64	54	7
national organizations	15	40	0
miscellaneous groups	84	30	1
total	766	688	34

Even with the votes of the worker group included, the cooperative delegation had by far the greatest prepondenence of votes in favor of coalition. But trade unions, soviet groups and national organizations were the only groups with a larger proportion voting against coalition than the worker group taken alone.

These figures are puzzling for a number of reasons. First, the numbers do not add up as they should. The cooperative movement as a whole was supposed to have 120 delegates and the worker group was to have 30 of these, but the Trud's figures show 164 cooperative delegates,

including 27 from the worker group. (According to Trud, two members of the worker group abstained.) Second, the figures on abstentions are obviously wrong, since if the cooperative movement as a whole had only one abstention then it is impossible to see how the worker group alone had two. There is also, of course, the question of what the conference meant by "coalition", given the fact that it later voted 595 to 793 that the coalition was not to include the Kadets. All the same, these figures can be taken as an indication of tendencies on the problem of whether or not Kadets should be included in the government.

Finally, it is puzzling that although the worker group strongly felt itself separate from the movement as a whole, ten of its 25 delegates voted along with non-worker cooperators on this issue. The answer must be that the issue involved in the vote was larger than merely whether or not Kadets should be permitted to participate in the government. The fundamental issue was the direction of the revolution, whether it should remain a political revolution or be extended to a social revolution. In the political terminology of the time, the question was whether it should remain a bourgeois revolution or be extended to a socialist one.

At the Democratic Conference, three cooperators spoke on the question of coalition government. Most of what they said was directed not towards the narrow issue of coalition government but to the broad issue of the direction of the

revolution. The Menshevik Egorov spoke for those members of the worker group who opposed coalition, arguing that there was "a complete difference in programs between democracy and the propertied elements." Kolokol'nikov, the Menshevik cooperator who was Minister of Labor, spoke for the minority of the worker group which favored coalition. He argued that economic chaos made coalition necessary. Unfortunately, the economy could not be brought under control without the help of "the magnates of capital" and they would only cooperate under the condition of a coalition government.[77]

The Menshevik Berkengeim, speaking for the majority of the moderate center group, gave what was probably the most impassioned speech. Berkengeim first related the political question at hand to the actual position of the consumer cooperative movement. He pointed out that Russian peasants and workers were not, in general, capable of organizing and running their consumer societies without the help of the bourgeoisie. They could not get along for any length of time without its expertise or its financial aid. Berkengeim said "Russia is culturally too poor to throw away those classes rich in the capital of knowledge and management." In the opinion of Berkengeim and of those who thought like him, what was true for the cooperative movement had to be true for Russia as a whole.

"But there is still a deeper social reason why we stand for coalition," Berkengeim went on to say. This reason was his belief that the present revolution could not be and should not be made into a social revolution. In the course of his comments on this point, Berkengeim was interrupted many times by statements both of approval and disapproval. The interjections show that this was at the heart of what divided the Democratic Conference and the cooperative movement:

> We are deeply convinced that our revolution is a bourgeois revolution (Cries: "Not true." Voices: "Correct." Applause.)...and its task is to confirm those beginnings of democratic and social reforms which are part of the bourgeois order. (Voices: "Correct.") Whether we want it or not, the bourgeoisie is the class to which, according to the unalterable and eternal laws of sociology and history, power must belong...If you value the motherland, if you wish to give it freedom from the approaching Germans, for you there is no other path than coalition.[78]

The split in the consumer cooperative movement was now complete. In the following section, we will deal with the one attempt made to overcome it.

D. Separate cooperative lists for the Constituent Assembly

The attempt that was made to put the consumer cooperative movement back together was the organization of lists of cooperator candidates to the Constituent Assembly. After the Democratic Conference, the desire for unity was not particularly widespread among consumer cooperators.

Support came only from a specific group of people. The originator of the idea was Merkulov. Its main supporters were evidently, like Merkulov, liberal cooperators. The purpose was to make the cooperative movement a political force that would outbalance the socialist parties. As such, it was firmly rejected by socialist cooperators.

What Merkulov hoped to do, evidently, was to break the loyalty of the working classes to the socialist parties. As Merkulov had said at the September, 1917 cooperative congress,[79] it was a new loyalty, and Merkulov was convinced that it was neither deep nor in the real interests of those who held it. Merkulov proposed to transfer this loyalty to the cooperative movement. He felt that this would be possible due to the large number of people in Russia who were members of cooperatives. Merkulov estimated that one fifth of those with the right to vote were members of cooperatives. If one included their spouses, assuming that most were married to non-members, the figure was much higher.[80] It was becoming clear that the vast majority of these people were prepared to vote for one of the socialist parties, in most cases the Social Revolutionaries. Surely, Merkulov must have reasoned, the loyalty of the people to the cooperative movement was essentially stronger than their loyalty to the socialist parties, and more in the interests of the nation.

Merkulov was surely aware of the fact that the Kadet party had been hopelessly compromised by its role in the

Kornilov rebellion. As far as Merkulov himself was concerned, the moderate socialist parties had been hopelessly compromised by their role in the soviets. He was probably aware of the fact that for many other people, the moderate socialist parties were compromised by their participation in the Provisional Government and support for the war. He must have reasoned that a cooperative party was potentially an uncompromised party, to which disillusioned people could shift their loyalty.

It was a grand strategy but it did not work. Few people were interested in supporting cooperator candidates to the Constituent Assembly. Loyalty to the socialist parties was indeed fast. The fact that cooperators did not have a unified point of view on political issues, and that therefore when one voted for a list of cooperator candidates one would not know exactly what one was voting for, might have been an obstacle to Merkulov's plan.[81] One suspects that Merkulov wished to make use of this ambiguity to obtain votes which would otherwise have gone to more radical parties.

At the beginning of October, Merkulov and some others went to Tver to try to persuade a guberniia congress of cooperatives, consisting mainly of representatives of consumer societies, to support their candidature for the Constituent Assembly. They failed. The proceedings of the congress show the mood of many cooperators at that time.

The Tver congress met October 8 and 9 to discuss the election of delegates to the Constituent Assembly. Merkulov and E. E. Kuskova outlined their argument in favor of separate cooperative lists.[82] Their main points were directed against the socialist parties. What they held against them was their "fractionalism..., their bankruptcy on the question of saving the country and the demagogy and separation of the leaders of these parties from the masses."[83] Their own vague program betrayed its Kadet origins. Soiuz Potrebitelei summarized it as follows:

> What is necessary in order to save the motherland is "business-like people" who, without any prejudice and "according to their conscience" will solve the problem of saving the country and establish a solid government of law and order which will rule for a long time (approximately 200 years).[84]

Few of the delegates at the guberniia congress were interested in what Merkulov proposed. According to Soiuz Potrebitelei, when a telegram from the Political Bureau of the All-Russian Soviet of Cooperative Congresses was read to the delegates, suggesting that they 'facilitate the sending to the Constituent Assembly of Merkulov, Kuskova, and Zatova' they were "puzzled and confused." There was a great deal of "personal arguing" which the president of the congress stopped. Evidently what the Political Bureau of the Soviet of Cooperative Congresses had in mind was that the Tver congress would be inspired by Merkulov's talk to organize a list of cooperator candidates to the Constituent Assembly from Tver. It probably tried to do the same thing in other places.

Most of the delegates to the Tver congress were sent with instructions from the general meetings of their societies. Many announced the instructions of their electors, saying, for example, "they sent us to vote for SRs" or "in our society there is a majority of workers, so we are going to vote for Bolsheviks." The majority were planning to vote for SRs. This corresponds to the results of the election, in which the SRs had an overwhelming majority. Merkulov's ideas were passed over and the congress adopted a series of resolutions, including one instructing cooperators to vote for the socialist party of their choice:

> --The Tver Cooperative Congress rejects the idea of a separate list in the Constituent Assembly elections as inadmissible and impracticable.
>
> --Since the cooperative movement embraces the wide working classes, the congress calls upon cooperators to vote for the socialist parties.
>
> --The congress calls upon cooperative organizations to strengthen their political enlightenment work directed towards explaining the goals and tasks of the Constituent Assembly, acquainting the wide working masses with the programs of political parties, the techniques of the election campaign, etc.
>
> --Because the effort of all is necessary in order to save the country from ruin, cooperatives should strengthen their economic activity.[85]

Merkulov's proposal did get some support from another quarter. On October 12, the Rzhevskii Union of Credit Cooperatives, in Tver guberniia, dissatisfied with the results of the guberniia congress, held a district conference of cooperatives. The initiators of the conference

had prepared a list of cooperator candidates for the Constituent Assembly. The list was headed by Aleksinskii, Merkulov and Kuskova. The others were local cooperators, mainly leaders of the credit union. But it was felt necessary to round up more support for the list. Due to the fact that the district conference "was not particularly well attended" it was decided to collect signatures in favor of the list.[86]

In summary, the idea of a separate list of candidates for the Constituent Assembly did not go far. A special All-Russian Cooperative Congress was called to discuss the question. There were only 200 delegates present, showing that the idea did not attract a great deal of interest. The idea was opposed by the worker group, as well as by other socialist cooperators who had sided with the non-worker group at the Democratic Conference. The special cooperative congress, which was held October 4 to 6, adopted a resolution urging cooperators to form blocks with political parties "standing in the state point of view." Where agreement could not be reached with them, cooperators were to form alliances with other parties and fractions. Only where no agreements could be reached, should cooperators present their own lists. Thus, essentially, the congress told societies to do whatever they wished. Only in Moscow did a list of cooperator candidates headed by Prokopovich receive over 35,000 votes, which

was just short of what was needed to send a cooperator delegate to the Constituent Assembly.[88]

E. Consumer cooperators and the Bolshevik seizure of power

Virtually all consumer cooperators opposed the Bolshevik seizure of power. Many societies and unions passed resolutions of protest and some, as the Union of North Siberian Cooperatives, recommended that cooperatives bring down the Bolsheviks by halting all transport of grain.[89] Of the major cooperative journals, Obshchee Delo was the most hostile. The language in its first issue after the revolution was inflamatory:

> Concluding with the Germans a disadvantageous external peace, the Bolsheviks are at the same time waging war and making attacks on the internal Russian front: they have declared war on the Cossacks and the Ukraine...
> Instead of bread and manufactured goods, the cities will receive hunger. Instead of land the peasants have received a decree authorizing arbitrary seizures. The result of that decree has been pogroms, plundering, killing and hatred among the peasants themselves.[90]

Later Obshchee Delo complained that the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk had turned Russia into "a third rate power on the order of Bulgaria."[91]

According to Soiuz Potrebitelei, the revolution had created a situation of great unrest. An MSPO instructor, Alexander Zhingarev, wrote about his trip to attend a meeting of a group of consumer societies in an uezd in Moscow guberniia. At many of the railroad stations through

which he passed, he heard reports of unrest. In one place there had been much destruction of property on the estates of surrounding landlords. Elsewhere he heard the rumour that peasants from six villages were on their way to the town to destroy the store of the local merchant, the consumer society and the railway station itself. At one large station, people asked Zhingarev what was happening in Moscow. He wrote that "neither excitement nor sympathy with what was going on was visable. A sort of deep apathy was written on many faces." But it was obviously not apathy that he was worried about. Someone told him that for the present, all was quiet, but the peasants were "starting confusion about the land." The instructor had to admit that some constructive work was still going on. More than 40 delegates came to a meeting called to form a union of consumer societies and business was carried out in an orderly way.[92]

Ob'edinenie took the left wing position on the Bolshevik seizure of power. It did not condemn the revolution outright but waited to see if the Bolsheviks would fulfill their promise to convene the Constituent Assembly. Even after the Bolsheviks disbanded the assembly, the journal still spoke out in favor of cooperating with them to whatever extent possible. The editorial in the issue of Ob'edinenie that followed the coup stated that the Bolshevik action was understandable in terms of the failure of

the Provisional Government. The coalition government had been "without strength and indecisive."

> Workers and soldiers, having lost faith in the policies of the coalition government, which failed to give the people long awaited peace, did not organize industry and failed to solve the land question, have gone over to the Bolsheviks, who have promised the people: peace, bread and land.[93]

The seizure of power was still unjustified. Ob'edinenie pointed out that the Council of the Republic had agreed to immediate peace negotiations and the transfer of all land to the land committees. The Bolsheviks should have "united all democracy around these slogans." Instead they had formed a government with the support only of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies and with a Council of Ministers made up only of Bolsheviks. But the situation was not totally hopeless, partially because, in the opinion of Ob'edinenie, the Bolsheviks would be unable to take complete control of the governmental apparatus, due to the opposition of the employees of the government.[94]

The following month, Ob'edinenie was more hostile. It complained that "the road to the Constituent Assembly was threatened by the Bolsheviks with more and more obstacles."[95] Furthermore, the Bolsheviks were beginning to interfere in the work of supply committees. Many people formerly active in production work had been forced out. The members of production committees themselves were turning them into "weapons of party struggle" and were

"leaving supply work itself to the whim of fate." In some places, the Bolsheviks had formed their own supply committees.[96] Disillusionment with the Bolsheviks was complete in January, 1918, when the Bolsheviks disbanded the Constituent Assembly. Ob'edinenie assessed the situation accurately:

> When it became clear to the Bolsheviks that the Constituent Assembly would not support them, would not recognize the authority of the Council of People's Commissars -- the fate of the Assembly was already decided.[97]

Relations between consumer cooperators and the Bolshevik government grew more hostile later that month when Commissar for Supplies Shlikhter made public a project decree on consumer societies. Among the provisions of the decree were that consumer societies were henceforth to be called "consumer communes", that they were to be nationalized and required to include in their membership the entire population of the area in which they were located and that every person could only buy goods from the consumer society of which he was a member.[98] The fact that the project decree was not implemented by no means eliminated the hostility.

Worker cooperators still sought to reach an agreement with the Bolshevik government. The majority of those present at the First All-Russian Conference of Instructors in Worker Cooperatives, held in Moscow, at the end of January, 1918, passed a resolution calling on worker cooperators, "in the interests of overcoming the current

economic crisis, to establish contact with the Soviet government (both in the center and the localities) on questions of economic activity." They decided to send representatives to the department of the Supreme Soviet of the National Economy (VSNKh) dealing with the consumer cooperative movement and to officials in Petrograd "to explain the position of the cooperative movement with respect to the proposed decree on the nationalization of cooperatives."[99]

There is much evidence that in the course of 1917, cooperators were losing their ability to understand the events that were going on around them. This is shown in part by the fact that after the early summer of 1917, articles on political developments began to disappear from the MSPO's journals. Cooperative journals devoted less and less attention to political developments. A strike by type setters caused a break in the publication of Soiuz Potrebitelei from May 31 to August 3, 1917. Articles on political developments disappeared from its pages shortly thereafter. The front covers of Obshchee Delo and Ob'edinenie no longer carried pictures of deceased cooperators. But the only living person whose picture ever appeared on the cover of a cooperative journal was Victor Chernov in May, 1917.[100] In the last several months of 1917 and in 1918, it was most common for the covers of Ob'edinenie and Obshchee Delo to show pictures of writers,

as Tolstoy and Gorky, or reproductions of well known paintings, as "The Morning of the Execution of the Streltsy." Often the journals carried articles on the political movements of the last centuries, on the Populists or the Decembrists. The height of irrelevancy was reached by Obshchee Delo in July, 1918, with an article on dinosaurs.[101]

One would think that at the end of 1917 and beginning of 1918, the readers of cooperative journals would have been interested in articles interpreting political developments in the cooperative movement. But none of the MSPO's journals contained complete coverage of the crucial September cooperative congress. For that it is necessary to turn to the relatively minor left wing cooperative journal Trud. In some journals, as in Potrebitel' for example, one searches in vain for any direct comment on the Bolshevik seizure of power. The coup was not mentioned in any way in the issue of Soiuz Potrebitelei which appeared October 30, 1917. The next issue, which did mention the revolution, only appeared November 30.[102]

Detailed accounts of meetings of consumer societies adopting political resolutions only appeared months after the meetings had taken place. An article on meetings in Tver guberniia in late September and early October did not appear in Soiuz Potrebitelei until November 30.[103] Soiuz Potrebitelei carried an account of meetings that had

taken place November 8 and 9 and December 20 only on March 14 (March 1), 1918. The issue for December 24 had a lead article on the necessity of increasing financial aid to consumer societies and contained timely pieces on the organization of a central bookkeeping system, on collective contracts for the employees of consumer societies and the fourth in a series of articles on the production of goods by the MSPO and its member societies, all without a word on current political developments.

One reason for the lack of articles on the contempory political situation was loss of editorial personnel. Many cooperators, including Zel'geim for example, were working for the new organs of authority, and it must have been difficult to replace them completely. It is possible that fear of offending the Bolsheviks played a role in the shortage of political articles, but this would not explain why they began to disappear well before the Bolshevik seizure of power. Also, it should be kept in mind that it was not unreasonable to continue publishing articles on the ongoing operations of cooperatives. Most people assumed that Bolshevik power would be short lived and in general the Bolshevik government did not interfere, initially, in the operations of consumer societies.

But the most important reason why few articles on the contemporary political situation appeared in cooperative journals was that cooperators were losing their ability to

interpret what was happening. In the course of 1917, the political situation in Russia had changed quickly and totally and it had changed in a direction that social activists in general and cooperators in particular had not predicted and could not understand. They could not understand the thorough radicalization of the political situation.

The key to what cooperators could not understand, as well as the key to the radicalization of the political situation, was the power of the Bolshevik slogan, "Peace, bread and land." When, for example, at a meeting of the Saratov Union of Consumer Societies, held December 20, 1917, to discuss the closing of the Moscow People's Bank by the Bolshevik government, a group of peasant-soldier delegates came to the defense of the Bolsheviks, saying that they had, in any case given the people peace, Soiuz Potrebitelei could only comment:

> It is of interest that the soldiers, who had not yet taken off their heavy flannel overcoats, gave very peculiar reasons for their conclusions, arguing that the party which gave the country peace and let the soldiers go home could not make mistakes in other areas.[104]

Soiuz Potrebitelei had taken over three months since the date of the meeting to think the matter over and draw this conclusion.

An excellent example of just how poorly cooperators understood what was happening is found in the first issue of Soiuz Potrebitelei of the year 1918. The first issue

of every year contained a long article on important developments in the consumer cooperative movement. This year's article was written by Merkulov. Its message was that everything had been going fine until the Bolsheviks had taken over. Consumer societies had been under great pressure during the last months of the tsarist administration, Merkulov recounted, but the revolution had changed all that. The Provisional Government had actively promoted the cooperative movement. It was true that cooperative organizations had begun to "fall under the attack of local organs os power" as, according to Merkulov, "production committees, police and commissars." But by "the second half of 1917", this had been "lived out," only to return again as a result of the October coup. Merkulov concluded that the position of the consumer cooperative movement was now once again very serious.[105]

Merkulov was a prominant cooperative publicist. He was the editor of Obshchee Delo. Articles that he wrote before and after 1917 were quite reasonable. But in this article, Merkulov showed a surprisingly short memory. The cooperative movement did indeed fall under the attack of local organs of power in 1917, although soviets and land committees would have been better examples than "police and commissars." But the problem, far from having died out by the second half of 1917, grew steadily. Merkulov, and other cooperators, lost their ability to interpret

political developments in 1917 because changes were taking place too quickly and because the nature of these changes was far different from what their preconceptions, Kadet, Social Democratic or Social Revolutionary, had led them to expect.

One would think from Merkulov's comments that the Bolshevik Revolution had come out of nowhere and had no relationship to the events that preceded it. But the Bolsheviks' seizure of power was very much related to the events that preceded it. These were events which, as this dissertation has shown, also affected the consumer cooperative movement and upon which it, to a smaller extent, had an influence. This study of the consumer cooperative movement from 1897 to 1917, has, in part, sought to illuminate the social and political context in which the revolutions of 1917 occurred.

The key to this context was the goods crisis, which had been caused by the war. The goods crisis stimulated the formation of public organizations to deal with it. It stimulated the spread of consumer societies and the initiation of a wide range of new types of social organizations, initially War-Industries Committees and production committees and later soviets and land committees. Eventually the goods crisis stimulated two revolutions, which in turn intensified it. Before the goods crisis, consumer societies were virtually the only democratic social organizations

in Russia. As a result of the goods crisis, they were virtually submerged by a wide range of other social organizations, most of which were far more radical than they. But all these social organizations were able to do relatively little about the goods crisis that had engendered them. The Bolsheviks came to power because they promised "Peace, bread and land", because they promised to solve the goods crisis.

FOOTNOTES

[1]See Kabanov, Oktiabr'skaia revoliutsiia i kooperatsiia (1917 g. - mart 1919 g.), p. 110 for his application of this analysis.

[2]E. N. Burdzhalov, Vtoraia Russkaia revoliutsiia (Moskva, front, periferiia) (Moscow: Nauka, 1971), pp. 396-397.

[3]Ibid., p. 410.

[4]Burdzhalov, Vtoraia Russkaia revoliutsiia, p. 209.

[5]Burdzhalov, Vtoraia Russkaia revoliutsiia (Moskva, front, periferiia), p. 45.

[6]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), April 16, 1917, pp. 21-22. See above, page 10, on the meaning of "automatic order."

[7]Burdzhalov, Vtoraia Russkaia revoliutsiia (Moskva, front, periferiia), p. 202.

[8]Ibid., p. 211.

[9]Ibid., p. 240.

[10]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), April 16, 1917, pp. 22-23.

[11]Ibid., pp. 23-24.

[12]Burdzhalov, Vtoraia Russkaia revoliutsiia (Moskva, front, periferiia), p. 314.

[13]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), May 10, 1917, pp. 25-26.

[14]Burdzhalov, Vtoraia Russkaia revoliutsiia (Moskva, front periferiia), p. 180.

[15]Ibid., p. 13. This information comes from R. Zemliachka, "Tverdokamennyi Bol'shevik (vospominaniia)", Pravda May 10, 1933. It is interesting that this was published in 1933. During collectivization the cooperative movement was treated virtually as an enemy of Soviet power.

[16]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), March 15, 1917, p. 3.

[17]Ibid., pp. 19-20.

[18]A. M. Anfimov ed., Ekonomicheskoe polozhenie Rossii nakanune velikoi oktiabr'skoi sotsialisticheskoi revoliutsii (Leningrad: Nauka, 1967), vol. III, p. 71.

[19]A. D. Bilimovich, Kooperatsiia v Rossii do, vo vremia i posle bol'shevikov (Frankfurt-Main: "Posev", 1955), p. 39.

[20]Obshchee Delo (Moscow), March 29, 1917, p. 21.

[21]Anfimov, Ekonomicheskoe polozhenie Rossii, p. 192. The memorandum was probably written by Zel'geim.

[22]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), September 20, 1917, p. 17.

[23]See above, page 154.

[24]Obshchee Delo (Moscow), December 6, 1916, pp. 24-25.

[25]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), May 23, 1917, p. 17.

[26]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), August 3, 1917, pp. 34-35.

[27]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), November 25, 1917, pp. 19-20.

[28]Ibid., pp. 17-18.

[29]Kabanov, Oktiabr'skaia revoliutsiia i kooperatsiia (1917 g. - 1919 g.), pp. 105-106. Kabanov bases this conclusion on a study made by a "cooperative specialist" for the government in 1919. Unfortuantely, I have not had access to this document, which is found in TsGAOR SSSR f. 130, op. 3, d. 307, l. 73.

[30]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), March 28, 1916, pp. 14-16. Balabanov, Istoriia rabochei kooperatsii v Rossii (1864-1917), p. 204.

[31]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), December 7, 1916, pp. 1527-1528.

[32]V. N. Zel'geim, Uchastia kooperativnykh organizatsii v prodovol'stvennom dele (Moscow: Sovet Vserossiiskikh Kooperativnykh S"ezdov, 1917), pp. 14-16. This is from a report delivered before the All-Russian Cooperative Congress, held March 24-27, 1917.

[33]Zhurnal i postanovleniia, pp. 15-16.

[34]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), September 8, 1917, pp. 14-17.

[35]Russkiia Vedomosti (Moscow), March 28, 1917, p. 6.

[36]Ibid.

[37]Russkiia Vedomosti (Moscow), March 29, 1917, p. 6.

[38]Ibid.

[39]Russkiia Vedomosti (Moscow), March 30, 1917, p. 3.

[40]Izvestiia (Petrograd), April 30, 1917, p. 6.

[41]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), April 16, 1917, pp. 17-18.

[42]Anfimov, Ekonomicheskoe polozhenie Rossii, pp. 218-219. Zel'geim signed in the capacity of the President of the Central Cooperative Committee and Korobov as President of the MSPO. The other signers were S. P. Mazurenko, of the All-Russian Peasant Union, N. V. Chaikovskii, President of the Free Economic Society, S. Ermov, President of the Petrograd Central Agricultural Society and A. Shingarev, signing both in the capacity of the President of the Supply Commission of the Committee of the State Duma and the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies and in the capacity of Minister of Land.

[43]V. V. Khizhniakov, Istoriia i organizatsiia soveta vserossiiskikh kooperativnykh s"ezdov (Moscow: Sovet Vserossiiskikh Kooperativnykh S"ezdov, 1919), p. 25.

[44]Obshchee Delo (Moscow), May 31, 1917, pp. 1-2.

[45]Ibid., p. 21.

[46]Iiuzhno-Russkii Potrebitel' (Khar'kov), April, 1917, pp. 20-22.

[47]Obshchee Delo (Moscow), May 5, 1917, p. 25.

[48]Obshchee Delo (Moscow), July 20, 1917, pp. 4-9. Note that the journal did not say that the demonstration was sponsored by the Bolshevik party.

[49]Obshchee Delo (Moscow), September 20, 1917, pp. 3-4.

[50]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), July 31, 1917, p. 1.

[51]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), September 20, 1917, p. 1.

[52]Obshchee Delo (Moscow), May 5, 1917, pp. 12-13.

[53]Kabanov, Oktiabr'skaia revoliutsiia i kooperatsiia (1917 g. - mart 1919 g.), p. 111.

[54]M. L. Kheisin, Istoricheskii ocherk kooperatsii v Rossii (Petrograd: "Kooperatsiia", 1918), p. 127.

[55]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), May 31, 1917, pp. 35-36.

[56]M. L. Kheisin, Istoriia kooperatsii v Rossii (Leningrad: Vremia, 1926), p. 250.

[57]Izvestiia (Petrograd), August 2, 1917, p. 3.

[58]Izvestiia (Petrograd), August 4, 1917, p. 3.

[59]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), August 25, 1917, pp. 19-20.

[60]Izvestiia (Petrograd), August 15, 1917, p. 8.

[61]Trud (Petrograd), September, 1917, pp. 27-28.

[62]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), August 24, 1917, p. 25.

[63]Russkiia Vedomosti (Moscow), March 28, 1917, p. 6.

[64]Russkiia Vedomosti (Moscow), March 30, 1917, p. 3.

[65]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), September 30, 1917, pp. 5-7.

[66]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), September 30, 1917, p. 13.

[67]Ibid., p. 14.

[68]Ibid., pp. 16-17.

[69]Ibid.

[70]Trud (Petrograd), October, 1917, p. 16.

[71]Ibid.

[72]Ibid. Italics in original.

[73]Ibid., pp. 4-5.

[74]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), September 30, 1917, pp. 5-7.

[75]Trud (Petrograd), October, 1917, p. 17. Italics in original.

[76]Ibid., pp. 17-18.

[77]Ibid.

[78]Ibid.

[79]See above, pages 447-450.

[80]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), September 30, 1917, p. 14.

[81]Given what we know about American politics, however, it should not have been an insurmountable obstacle.

[82]Kuskova was a liberal who had once been a member of the Economist wing of the Social Democratic party. She was married to Prokopovich.

[83]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), November 30, 1917, p. 63.

[84]Ibid.

[85]Ibid., pp. 65-66.

[86]Ibid., p. 66.

[87]Kheisin, Istoricheskii ocherk kooperatsii v Rossii, pp. 138-139.

[88]Khizhniakov, Istoriia i organizatsiia soveta vserossiiskikh kooperativnykh s"ezdov, p. 37.

[89]Kheisin, Istoricheskii ocherk kooperatsii v Rossii, p. 140.

[90]Obshchee Delo (Moscow), November 30, 1917, pp. 3-4.

[91]Obshchee Delo (Moscow), March 31 (March 18), 1918, pp. 3-4.

[92]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), November 30, 1917, pp. 49-50.

[93]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), November 25, 1917, pp. 1-2.

[94]Ibid.

[95]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), December 20, 1917, pp. 1-2.

[96]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), December 20, 1917, pp. 4-7.

[97]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), January 25, 1918, pp. 3-4.

[98]Ibid., p. 25.

[99]Ob'edinenie (Moscow), February 28 (February 15), 1918, pp. 4-8.

[100]Obshchee Delo (Moscow), May 31, 1917, front cover.

[101]Obshchee Delo (Moscow), July 25 (July 12,), 1918, pp. 11-14.

[102]See above, page 462. Normally issues appeared one to two weeks apart.

[103]See above, pages 458-460.

[104]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), March 14 (March 1), 1918, pp. 46-47. The closing of the bank turned out to be temporary.

[105]Soiuz Potrebitelei (Moscow), January 15, 1918, pp. 10-15.

CONCLUSION

Consumer societies in tsarist Russia were democratic organizations under a non-democratic government. As a result of this anomalous position, they illustrate the fragile potentialities for gradual, democratic social change that existed in pre-revolutionary Russia. They also show the brutal realities working against it.

Consumer societies and their central organizations engaged in a wide variety of social and political activities dedicated to the democratization of Russian society. Their social activities included the attempt to involve less educated members in the management of the society. Co-operators tried to raise the cultural and educational level, and to whatever extent possible the political level, of Russia's workers and peasants. Through the publication of its own journals, books and pamphlets, the cooperative movement tried to spread cooperative ideals. Consumer cooperative organizations championed equal rights for women and for minority nationalities, as Ukrainians and Jews. On the political front, most of the work of the consumer cooperative movement was directed towards the passage of a new cooperative law. Cooperators desired a law which would cover all types of cooperatives at once,

would assure the speedy approval of their charters and would bring an end to governmental interference in their social activities.

Consumer societies were by no means all alike. There were important differences between the five basic types of consumer societies: city, factory, railroad, village and independent worker societies. There were also important differences within each type. The class composition of the membership of consumer societies differed tremendously, as did the extent to which the attempt was made to manage them democratically. Most cooperative leaders were liberals or moderate socialists, but the most left wing and the most right wing parties were also represented. Consumer societies were as complex and varied as Russian society itself.

In their social and political work consumer societies had some success. But it is almost impossible to think about their successes without thinking about their failures. There is evidence that a process of education was taking place in many consumer societies. Working class and peasant members were learning, or trying to learn, to play an intelligent, active role in the business of their societies. It was hoped that they would be able to apply this knowledge to the larger world around them. But such successes as were achieved were necessarily limited by the enormity of the task at hand. The job

required time, and after 1914, time was running out. By 1917, the consumer cooperative movement had probably made a substantial impact on those who had been members for a number of years, but it can hardly have been expected to have had much influence on the vast majority, who had joined after the beginning of the goods crisis.

The potential impact of consumer societies as political organizations was equally stunted. During the First World War consumer societies found that they were able to avoid many governmental restrictions which they would not have even thought of violating prior to 1914. For example, many persons founding consumer societies did not bother to go through the long process of submitting a charter for governmental approval. Consumer cooperative journals were actually able to publish articles on government attempts to restrict the social movement. In 1916, the State Duma passed a new cooperative law based on the suggestions of the cooperative movement. But under the tsarist administration the cooperative movement fell short of attaining the right of popular initiative, the right to form organizations and undertake actions without first seeking governmental approval. The Duma's cooperative law did not go into effect, despite all the effort spent in writing it and securing its passage, because the State Council never gave its approval.

An important reason why the fragile potentialities for democratic social and political change were not realized was the opposition of the tsarist administration. But this was certainly not the only reason. Equally important in preventing progressive change was the backwardness of Russian society. The consumer cooperative movement was locked into the social fabric of pre-revolutionary Russia and social and economic constraints limited the freedom of action of consumer societies as much as political ones. The most important constraint was the poverty and illiteracy of the urban and rural working classes from which consumer societies drew the majority of their members. One of the effects of their poverty was that it forced most consumer societies to sell on credit. Consumer societies that did not sell on credit found that they lost members to private merchants who did, even though the merchant charged higher prices. But selling on credit prevented consumer societies from accumulating financial resources, without which they could not distribute literature, pay significant dividends, set up strike funds or otherwise combat the status quo.

After the fall of the autocracy the cooperative movement was actually weakened as a political force. Co-operators of different political persuasions who had worked together in relative harmony prior to 1917 now quarrelled. Differences in program which previously had been merely theoretical were now crucial. Just at the time when the

consumer cooperative movement might have been expected to have become a real force in Russia, cooperators split into sharply opposing factions on the issue of political power.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. General Works

Anfimov, A. M., ed. Ekonomicheskoe polozhenie Rossii nakanune velikoi oktiabr'skoi sotsialisticheskoi revoliutsii. vol. III. Leningrad: Nauka, 1967.

Anfimov, A. M. Rossiiskaia derevnia v gody pervoi mirovoi voiny. Moscow: Nauka, 1962.

Barchugov, P. V. Revoliutsionnaia rabota bol'shevikov v legal'nykh rabochikh organizatsiiakh (1907-1911gg.) Rostov: Rostovskii Universitet, 1963.

Berg, Ab. "Iz oblasti statistiki otchetnykh i neotchetnykh predpriiatii." Vestnik Finansov, Promyshlennosti i Torgovli, 15 (April 11, 1910), 50-58.

Burdzhalov, E. N. Vtoraia Russkaia revoliutsiia. Moscow: Nauka, 1967.

Burdzhalov, E. N. Vtoraia Russkaia revoliutsiia (Moskva, front, periferiia). Moscow: Nauka, 1971.

Diakin, V. S. Russkaia burzhuaziia i tsarizm v gody pervoi mirovoi voiny. Moscow: Nauka, 1967.

Dikhter, G. A. Vnutrenniaia torgovlia v dorevoliutsionnoi Rossii. Moscow: Nauka, 1960.

Elwood, Ralph Carter. Russian Social Democracy in the Underground, a study of the RSDWP in the Ukraine, 1907-1914. Assen: Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis, 1974.

Fadeev, V. P. Revoliutsionnoe dvizhenie v N. Novgorode i Nizhegorodskoi gubernii v 1905-7 gg. Gorkii: Gor'kovskoe Knizhnoe Izdatel'stvo, 1955.

Florinsky, Michael T. The End of the Russian Empire. New York: Collier, 1974.

Grave, B. K istorii klassovoi bor'by v Rossii. Moscow and Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo, 1926.

Hosking, Geoffrey A. The Russian Constitutional Experiment. London: Cambridge University Press, 1973.

Kniazeva, G. B. Bor'ba bol'shevikov za sochetanie nelegal'noi i legal'noi partiinoi raboty v gody reaktsii (1907-1910 gg.). Leningrad: Leningradskii Gosudarstevennyi Universitet, 1964.

Koz'minyi-Lanin, I. M. "Fabrichno-zavodskii rabochii Moskovskoi gubernii." Vestnik Finansov, Promyshlennosti i Torgovli, 14 (April 4, 1910), 23-24.

Lane, David. The Roots of Russian Communism. Amsterdam: Internationaal Instituut voor Sociale Geschiedenis, 1968.

Letunovskii, N. I. Leninskaia taktika ispol'zovaniia legal'nykh vserossiiskikh s"ezdov v bor'be za massy v 1908-1911 godakh. Moscow: Moskovskii Universitet, 1971.

Levin, Alfred. The Second Duma. 2nd ed. Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1966.

Losovskii, A., ed. Rabochee dvizhenie v gody voiny. Moscow: Tsentrarkhiv, 1926.

Pavlovsky, George. Agricultural Russia on the Eve of the Revolution. New York: H. Fertig, 1968.

Pazhitkov, K. "Dorogovizna zhizni i Moskovskii s"ezd 11-13 iiulia." Sovremennyi Mir, 8 (1915), 156-170.

Pershin, P. N. Agrarnaia revoliutsiia v Rossii. Moscow: Nauka, 1966.

Posse, V. A. Po Evrope i Rossii, 1889-1909. St. Petersburg: Novyi Zhurnal dlia Vsekh, 1909.

Posse, V. A. Moi zhiznennyi put', dorevoliutsionnyi period (1864-1917 gg.). Moscow and Leningrad: Zemlia i Fabrika, 1929.

Rosenberg, William G. Liberals in the Russian Revolution: the Constitutional Democratic Party, 1917-1921. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974.

Tiukavkin, V. G. Sibirskaia derevnia nakanune oktiabria. Irkutsk: Irkutskii Gosudarstvennyi Pedogogicheskii Institut, 1966.

B. Secondary Sources on the Consumer Cooperative Movement

Anofrieva, V. T. Istoriia razvitiia i deiatel'nosti potrebitel'nago obshchestva pri fabrike tovarishchestva nikol'skoi manufaktury Savvy Morozova Syn i K. Moscow: Seminariia po Politicheskoi Ekonomii pri Moskovskikh Vyshikh Zhenskikh Kursakh, 1913.

Balabanov, M. Istoriia rabochei kooperatsii v Rossii (1864-1917). Moscow: Ekonomicheskaia Zhizn', 1925.

Baykalov, A. V. "A Brief Outline of the Russian Cooperative Movement." Slavonic Review, vol. I (1922), 130-142.

Bilimovich, A. D. Kooperatsiia v Rossii do, vo vremia i posle bol'shevikov. Frankfurt-Main: Posev, 1955.

Blanc, Elsie Terry. The Cooperative Movement in Russia. New York: Macmillan Co., 1924.

Blank, G. Ia. Osnovy teorii i istoriia potrebitel'skoi kooperatsii SSSR. Moscow: Tsentrosoiuz, 1963.

Blank, G; Bykov, A.; and Gukasyan, V. The Consumer Cooperative in the USSR. Moscow: Centrosoyus, 1966.

Carr-Saunders, A. M.; Sargent, P.; and Florance and Robert Peers. Consumers' Cooperation in Great Britain. London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1938.

Chambre, Henri. Les co-operatives de consomation en URSS. Paris: 1969.

Dneprovskii, S. P. Kooperatory, 1898-1968 gg. Moscow: "Ekonomika", 1968.

Dunaev, V. Dva goda zhizni obshchestva potrebitelei "Kooperatsiia" v Moskve. Moscow: Obshchestvo Potrebitelei "Kooperatsiia", 1918.

Elliot, Sydney R. The English Cooperatives. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937.

Farutin, I. A. Iz istorii bor'by KPSS za reorganizatsiiu burzhuaznoi kooperatsii v sotsialisticheskuiu (1919-1920 gg.). Kalinin: Kaliningradskii Gosudarstvennyi Universitet, 1970.

Fomin, Anatolii Petrovich. Marksizm-Leninizm o roli kooperatsii v klassovoi bor'be proletariata i leninskaia taktika ispol'zovaniia rabochei kooperatsii Rossii v revoliutsionnym dvizhenii v period 1905-1917 gg. (Avtoreferat). Moscow: Ministerstvo Vyshego i Srednego Spetsial'nogo Obrazovaniia RSFSR, 1973.

Frommett, B. P. Russkii sotsializm i kooperatsiia. Petrograd: "Mysl'", 1919.

Gritsenko, I. F. and Merkulov, A. V., eds. Sistematicheskii ukazatel' Russkoi literatury po kooperatsii 1856-1924. Moscow: Kooperativnoe Izdatel'stvo, 1925.

Kabanov, V. V. "Oktiabr'skaia revoliutsiia i kooperatsiia (1917 - mart 1919 g.)." Istoricheskie Zapiski, vol. 82 (1968), 3-39.

Kabanov, V. V. Oktiabr'skaia revoliutsiia i kooperatsiia (1917 g. - mart 1919 g.). Moscow: Nauka, 1973.

Kayden, Eugene M. and Antsiferov, Alexis N. The Cooperative Movement in Russia During the War. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1929.

Kheisin, M. L. Istoricheskii ocherk kooperatsii v Rossii. Petrograd: "Kooperatsiia", 1918.

Kheisin, M. L. Istoriia kooperatsii v Rossii. Leningrad: Vremia, 1926.

Khizhniakov, V. V. Istoriia i organizatsiia soveta vserossiiskikh kooperativnykh s"ezdov. Moscow: Sovet Vserossiiskikh Kooperativnykh S"ezdov, 1919.

Kistanov, Ia. A. Potrebitel'skaia kooperatsiia SSSR. Moscow: Tsentrosoiuz, 1951.

Odnobliudov, V. Pushkinskoe raboche-kresk'ianskoe potrebitel'noe obshchestvo, 1900-1925. Moscow: MSPO, 1926.

Ol'khovaia, L. V. "Iz istorii kooperativnogo dvizheniia na Urale v 1905 - 1914 godakh." Voprosy Istorii Urala (1966), 251-257.

Ol'khovaia, L. V. "Rabochaia kooperatsiia kak forma organizatsii proletariata." Rossiiskii proletariat: oblik bor'by gegemonii. Edited by L. M. Ivanov. Moscow: Nauka, 1970.

Orlov, A. S. Kooperatsiia v Rossii nakanune i vo vremia voiny. Moscow: T-vo I. N. Kushnerev i K, 1917.

Ozerov, Ivan Khristoforovich. Obshchestva potrebitelei. 2nd ed. St. Petersburg: Narodnaia Pol'za, 1900.

Pazhitkov, K. "Ocherk razvitiia rabochei potrebitel'skoi kooperatsii." Arkhiv Istorii Truda v Rossii, I (1924), 205-214.

Petersen, Anita Brendahl. "The Development of Cooperative Credit in Rural Russia, 1871-1914." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, 1973.

Prokopovich, S. N. Kooperativnoe dvizhenie v Rossii. 3rd ed. Moscow: Sovet Vserossiiskikh Kooperativnykh S"ezdov, 1918.

Rozenfeld, M. Mirovaia kooperatsiia v tsifrakh (potreb-kooperatsiia). Moscow: Tsentrosoiuz, 1926.

Totomiants, V. F. Teoriia, istoriia i praktika potrebitel'-skoi kooperatsii. 3rd revised edition. St. Peters-burg: M. B. Kechedzhi-Shapovalov, 1913.

Tugan-Baranovskii, M. I. K luchshemy budushchemy. St. Petersburg: Energiia, 1912.

Tugan-Baranovskii, M. I. Sotsial'nyia osnovy kooperatsii. Berlin: Slovo, 1921.

C. Popular and Instructional Literature for Consumer Cooperators

Anofriev, V. I. Kak mozhno deshevo zhit' v skladshchiny. 2nd ed. Moscow: MSPO, 1903.

Anofriev, V. I. Osnovye voprosy deiatel'nosti potrebitel'-nykh obshchestv. Moscow: MSPO, 1902.

Armand, L. Dusha kooperatsii. Moscow: MSPO, 1917.

Armand, L. Kooperatsiia i narodyne doma. Moscow: MSPO, 1915.

Armand, L. and Evdokimov, A. Narodnyi teatr i kooperatsiia. Moscow: "Trud", 1917.

Bashkirov, K. Kak ukrepit' potrebitel'skie kooperativy. Petrograd: "Kooperatsiia", 1917.

Berg, E. Zhizn' v glushi. Mozir (Minsk guberniia): S. B. Kozel, 1914.

Bezymiannaia, M. Zovite zhenshchiny. 3rd ed. Moscow: MSPO, 1917.

Boikov, N. S. Kak otkryt' i vesti potrebitelnoe obshchestvo v derevne. Kiev: Kievskoe Gubernskoe Zemstvo, 1911.

Bondarev, S. I. Chastnaia torgovlia i potrebitel'skaia lavka. 2nd ed. Moscow: MSPO, 1917.

Borob'ev, M. P. Pochemy zhiznennye produkty progresivno dorozhaiut. St. Petersburg: By the Author, 1912.

David, Gertrud. Chto daet potrebitel'noe obshchestvo zhene rabochego. Moscow: MSPO, 1916.

Iz praktiki kul'turno-prosvetitel'noi raboty kooperativov. 2nd ed. Moscow: MSPO, 1917.

Kancher, Evsevii St. Rukovodstvo po sel'skoi kooperatsii. St. Petersburg: Spb. Otdeleniia Komiteta, 1913.

Kekuatov, Prince K. V. Dogovornyia ob'edineniia kooperativov. Moscow: Moskovskoe Obshchestvo Sel'skago Khoziastva, 1914.

Kheisin, M. L. Kooperativnoe zakonodatel'stvo v Rossii. Petrograd: Nash Vek, 1915.

Kheisin, M. L. Pis'mo k potrebiteliam. 6th ed. Petrograd: "Kooperatsiia", 1917.

Kil'chevskii, V. A. Kooperatsiia i revoluitsiia. Moscow: Sovet Vserossiskikh Kooperativnykh S"ezdov, 1917.

Kooperativnyi sel'skii kalendar na 1918 god. Moscow: MSPO, 1917.

Kooperatsiia na vserossiiskoi vystavke 1913 g. Kiev: Biuro Kooperativnoi Sektsii Vystavki, 1914.

Kulyzhnyi, A. E. Derevenskaia kooperatsiia. 2nd ed. Moscow: Vzaimnaia Pomoshch', 1913.

Manukhina, A. Schetovodstvo i otchetnost' mel'kikh potrebitel'nykh obshchestv. Tver: Tverskoe Uezdnoe Zemstvo, 1914.

Maslov, Sergei. Mirskoi chelovek. Iz zhizni sovremennoi krest'ianskoi intelligentsii. Moscow: Komitet o Sel'skikh Ssudo-sberegatel'nykh i Promyshlennykh' Tovarishchestvakh pri Moskovskom Obshchestve Sel'skago Khoziastva, 1916.

Merkulov, A. V. Istoricheskii ocherk potrebitel'noi kooperatsii v Rossii. Moscow: MSPO, 1915.

Merkulov, A. V. Rochdel'skie zachinatel'i. 2nd ed. Kiev: "Mysl'", 1920.

Moller, A. I. Moi besedy s potrebitelem. Morshansk: V. I. Kholuianov, 1914.

Organizatsiia mestnykh kooperativnykh s"ezdov. Moscow: Moskovskii Gorodskoi Narodnyi Universitet imeni A. L. Shaniavskago, 1917.

Ot malago k bol'shomy. Moscow: MSPO, 1916.

Ozerov, Ivan Khristoforovich, Chto takoe obshchestvo potrebitelei, kak ego osnovit' i vesti. 3rd ed. Moscow: 1909.

Podol'skii, I. M. Kratkoe rukovodstvo dlia slushatelei i ustroitelei kursov i chtenii po kooperatsii v Rossii. Petrograd: Spb. Otdelenie Komiteta, 1915.

Predvaritel'nyia ukazaniia uchreditelam potrebitel'nykh obshchestv. Moscow: VTsSPO, 1917.

Shadrin, I. G. Kooperator naiznanky. Moscow: MSPO, 1916.

Slobozhanin', M. (E. D. Maksimov) Smotr' kooperativnym' silam'. Po pechatnym' materialam' i lichnym' vpechatleniiam' na pervom' vserossiiskom' s"ezde kooperativov. St. Petersburg: "Narodnyi Politekhnikum'", 1909.

Suzdal'tsev, K. K. Kooperatsiia i prosveshchenie. Moscow: "Kooperativnaia Zhizn'", 1915.

Suzdal'tsev, K. K. Kopeika rubl' beregset. 6th ed. Moscow: MSPO, 1917.

Totomiants, V. F. Kooperatsiia i bor'ba s dorogoviznoi. Moscow: MSPO, 1916.

Totomiants, V. F. "Potrebitel'nyia obshchestva v Rossii i usloviia sushchestvovaniia kooperatsii voobshche." Russkaia Mysl', vol. 7, part 2 (1916), 136-166.

V mire kooperatsii. 3rd ed. Moscow: MSPO, 1916.

Zel'geim, V. N. Kredit i potrebitel'skaia kooperatsiia. Moscow: MSPO, 1910.

Zel'geim, V. N. "Organizatsiia i praktika potrebitel'nykh obshchestv v Rossii." Kursy po kooperatsii. Edited by A. A. Manuilov. Vol. II, 239-557. Moscow: Moskovskii Gorodskoi Narodnyi Universitet imeni A. L. Shaniavskago, 1912.

Zel'geim, V. N. Organizatsiia i praktika potrebitel'nykh obshchestv v Rossii. Odessa: VTsSPO, 1919.

D. Reports, Yearbooks and Memoirs

Doklad pravleniia obshchestva "Trudovoi Soiuz" chrezvychainomy obshchemy sobraniiu, 2 marta 1908 goda. St. Petersburg: Trudovoi Soiuz, 1908.

Doklady i materialy k tridtsat-pervomy sobraniiu upolnomochennykh MSPO. Moscow: MSPO, 1916.

Ezhegodnik MSPO, 1911 g. Moscow: MSPO, 1911.

Ezhegodnik MSPO, 1912 g. Moscow: MSPO, 1912.

Ezhegodnik MSPO, 1913 g. Moscow: MSPO, 1914.

Ezhegodnik MSPO, 1914 g. Moscow: MSPO, 1916.

Gibner N. P. Normal'nyi ustav potrebitel'nykh obshchestv s prilozheniem. Moscow: MSPO, 1898.

Khizhniakov, V. V. Kooperativnaia deiatel'nost' zemskikh agronomov Moskovskoi gubernii. Moscow: Moskovskoe Gubernskoe Zemstvo, 1913.

Kooperativnyi zakon i primernye ustavy potrebitel'nykh obshchestv i soiuza potrebitel'nykh obshchestv. Moscow: MSPO, 1917.

Normal'nyi ustav potrebitel'nykh obshchestv s prilozheniem ukazanii dlia ikh uchreditelei. St. Petersburg: S. Peterburgskoe Otdelenie Komiteta, 1898.

Otchet za 1915 g. Moscow: MSPO, 1917.

Pervyi Vserossiiskii Kooperativnyi S"ezd (16-21 aprelia, 1908 g.), Trudy. Moscow: MSPO, 1908.

Postanovleniia vserossiiskago s"ezda instruktorov po kooperatsii, 28-31 maia i 1-2 iiunia 1917 g. v Moskve. Moscow: Sovet Vserossiiskikh Kooperativnykh Soiuzov, 1917.

Reitlinger, N. A. Obzor polozheniia i deiatel'nosti potrebitel'nykh obshchestv v Rossii po dannym 1897. St. Petersburg: Postoiannaia Kommissiia, 1899.

Spisok kooperativnykh soiuzov i ob'edinenii. Dekabr' 1916 g. Moscow: Vestnik Kooperativnykh Soiuzov, 1917.

Shishkin, M. D. Iz vospominanii kooperativnykh i politicheskikh. New York: Inter-University Project on the History of the Menshevik Movement, 1960.

"Tan". "Na kooperativnom s"ezde." Russkoe Bogatstvo, 5 (1908), 30-50.

Tkachukov, I. P., ed. Kooperatsiia s tochki zreniia okhranki. Saratov: Soiuz Potrebitel'nykh Obshchestv Saratovskago Kraia, 1917.

Vtoroi vserossiiskii s"ezd po kooperatsii v g. Kieve, 1-7 avgusta 1913 g. Kiev: MSPO, 1913.

Zel'geim, V. N. Uchastie kooperativnykh organizatsii v prodovol'stvennom dele. Moscow: Sovet Vserossiiskikh Kooperativnykh S"ezdov, 1917.

Zhurnal i postanovleniia pervago soveshchaniia deiatelei po potrebitel'skoi kooperatsii XII raiona vserossiiskago Tsentral'nago (Moskovskago) Soiuza Potrebitel'nykh Obshchestv (Tsentrosoiuza), sozvannago instruktorskoi Odesskago otdeleniia Tsentrosoiuza v g. Odesse 14 i 15 sentiabria 1917 g. Odessa: Odesskoe Otdelenie Tsentrosoiuza, 1917.

E. Cooperative Journals and General Newspapers

Iiuzhno-Russkii Potrebitel' (South-Russian Consumer)

Izvestiia (News)

Kooperativnyi Mir (Cooperative World)

Kooperativnaia Zhizn' (Cooperative Life)

Nashe Delo (Our Cause), Chita

Nashe Delo (Our Cause), Kiev

Ob'edinenie (Union)

Obshchee Delo (Common Cause)

Potrebitel' (Consumer)

Russkiia Vedomosti (Russian News)

Sberezhenie (Savings)

Soiuz Potrebitelei (Union of Consumers)

Trud (Labor)

Trudovoi Soiuz (Laboring Union)

Truzhenik (Toiler)

Valuiskii. Zemskii Listok (Valuiski Zemstvo Journal)

Vestnik Kooperatsii (Bulletin of Cooperation)

Zemskoe Delo (Zemstvo Affairs)