



Liberals under Autocracy: Modernization and Civil Society in Russia, 1866-1904

Anton A. Fedyashin

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With its rocky transition to democracy, post-Soviet Russia has made observers wonder whether a moderating liberalism could ever succeed in such a land of extremes. But in *Liberals under Autocracy*, Anton A. Fedyashin looks back at the vibrant Russian liberalism that flourished in the country's late imperial era, chronicling its contributions to the evolution of Russia's rich literary culture, socioeconomic thinking, and civil society.

For five decades prior to the revolutions of 1917, *The Herald of Europe* (*Vestnik Evropy*) was the flagship journal of Russian liberalism, garnering a large readership. The journal articulated a distinctively Russian liberal agenda, one that encouraged social and economic modernization and civic participation through local self-government units (*zemstvos*) that defended individual rights and interests—especially those of the peasantry—in the face of increasing industrialization. Through the efforts of four men who turned *The Herald* into a cultural nexus in the imperial capital of St. Petersburg, the publication catalyzed the growing influence of journal culture and its formative effects on Russian politics and society.

Challenging deep-seated assumptions about Russia's intellectual history, Fedyashin's work casts the country's nascent liberalism as a distinctly Russian blend of self-governance, populism, and other national, cultural traditions. As such, the book stands as a contribution to the growing literature on imperial Russia's nonrevolutionary, intellectual movements that emphasized the role of local politics in both successful modernization and the evolution of civil society in an extraparliamentary environment.

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