

**Russian Citizenship: From Empire to Soviet Union.** By ERIC LOHR. Pp. 278. London and Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 2012. \$59.95. Hardcover. ISBN: 9780674066342.

Eric Lohr's monograph *Russian Citizenship* is not an elucidation of the substance or meaning of citizenship in imperial Russia, but rather an historical inquiry into the Russian Empire's policy on dealing with persons and populations who were physically or conceptually under Russian sovereignty from the 1860s through the 1930s. This thoroughly researched book is the first to examine Russian citizenship policy as a whole, elements of which are illustrated with well-chosen case studies. Focusing on Russia's 'citizenship boundary', which is 'the interface between citizenries and the reach of their countries' claims to sovereignty' (p.1), allows Lohr to contextualize the citizenship discussion in its rightful international legal framework. Indeed, the international dimension highlights important stimuli and contexts for policy change throughout this period while avoiding ruminations on whether subjects of autocratic Russia can truly be 'citizens', which have already been presented and critiqued elsewhere.<sup>1</sup>

Lohr documents the evolution of Russia's citizenship policy by analysing practices that determine membership in a state - immigration and emigration, naturalization and denaturalization. Russia's citizenship policy existed along two main axes: nationality of subjects and economic modernization of the state. The book's case studies offer a broad selection of groups along the citizenship boundary: foreign merchants, skilled labourers, displaced persons, prisoners of war, emigrants, particular ethnic groups. These complicated cases challenged the government to define its position on citizenship, though it is important to remember that they are not comparable to one another. Each had what Lohr calls a 'separate deal' with the Russian government; that is, their Russian citizenships entailed varying sets of rights and obligations to the state. The difference between them is that some were desirable because they helped the state modernize, while certain ethnicities in the empire faced discrimination. Collectively and over time we see the trend of the citizenship boundary growing more permeable during the 1860s Great Reform era, hardening during World War I, and becoming nearly impenetrable in the Soviet era.

The book has six thematic and roughly chronological chapters, beginning with the pre-1860 background and ending with Soviet citizenship; the conclusion outlines Soviet and Russian citizenship policy from the 1930s through the present. Each chapter attempts to cast familiar events in Russian history in a new light. Lohr introduces an international context to imperial Russia's policies in the Great Reforms, showing how several forgotten measures can be read as incentives for immigration and

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<sup>1</sup> For discussion, see Eric Lohr, 'The Ideal Citizen and Real Subject in Late Imperial Russia', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 7 (2006), pp. 173-94; for critique, see Alexander Morrison, 'Metropole, Colony, and Imperial Citizenship in the Russian Empire', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 13 (2012), pp. 327-364.

naturalization. However, despite favourable legislation passed during the Great Reforms, which eliminated differences in rights and obligations between naturalized and natural-born subjects, there seems little evidence of foreigners choosing to naturalize in Russia. Not only was Russian citizenship not necessary to serve the Russian state, but recognition by a social or professional group proved more important than Russian subjecthood. Also, many chose to avoid conscription and retain diplomatic protection. For this reason, Lohr often qualifies what was legally and conceptually permissible with what actually happened. On the other hand, Chapter 4 lays out contradictions prevalent in Russian emigration policy, although Lohr argues that this had internal consistency. Emigration was legally all but impossible for most subjects of the Russian empire. If successful, it was coupled with an eternal ban from Russia, which was nearly impossible to enforce. However, because legal emigration was also prohibitively expensive, many subjects wishing to emigrate did so illegally, thereby circumventing the eternal bans and retaining Russian subjecthood. Russian laws, contrary to international practice, did not recognize the right to denaturalize even for subjects who naturalized elsewhere. The final chapters capture the sharp shifts in policy that began with the 1905 revolution. World War I brought restrictive measures including bans on naturalization, nationalization of enemy subject property, deportation, and internment. Lohr's decision to traverse the 1917 revolutionary divide, usually done to highlight continuity in institutions, is also significant. Although a revolution is the very definition of discontinuity in citizenship, the incoming Bolshevik government was left to deal with the aftermath of state membership questions the Old Regime left behind – prisoners of war, refugees from annexed territories, émigrés abroad, and class enemies at home – making the Soviet chapter a necessary part of the citizenship story.

The book's rich historical detail, based on a wide array of sources from five archives, is packaged in a very readable 190 pages. The pastiche of citizenship policy Lohr describes reflects many dynamics evident in the Russian Empire as a whole. The case studies reach from European Russia to the Far East, although it would have been interesting to learn how Central Asian populations fit into Lohr's reading of Russian citizenship policy. Much was exceptional about Russia's approach to citizenship, for instance its reluctance to allow denaturalization, but Russia also represents a strong assimilationist citizenship tradition comparable to other European cases. With this book Lohr makes an important contribution to the growing historiography debunking Russian exceptionalism.

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