To say that "the Stalinist state" allowed "cadres" and "masses" only the collective identity that it defined (p. 243) seems to me to be a starting point, not a neat conclusion. Why does no one define "state" and provide a serious theoretical discussion of it, when the word is used all the time and is supposed to mean something distinct from society? Does it? Here I mean less to skewer Andrele than to complain in general. If the dividing line between state and society was not always sharp, and collective identities in many ways reflected popular aspirations (and in many other ways did not!) into the 1970s (as the author often suggests), then Soviet history begins to look even more different from the totalitarian models rejected here by Andrele. In short, at times he does not avoid the traps he correctly sees in many other studies. One might also quibble with various items, for example his estimates of the number of dead in the famine of 1932-33. But there will inevitably be disagreements and minor errors in a long synthetic effort.

Does his book work as intended? I can imagine my students' eyes glazing over after a few pages of dense text unbroken by so much as a single photograph or even a chart. But if I could coerce my charges a bit, knowing that they will shape their own collective identity, and show them a good many slides, there could be great benefit for all concerned. Doled out a little at a time, A Social History would make useful supplementary reading. Or we teachers could mine it for data and insights. Either way, this book ties together a massive amount of material and challenges us to rethink considerable portions of familiar terrain.

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This collection of essays on the "dynamic cultural world of Russia's lower classes" (p. 5) in the late Tsarist years is a very welcome and important contribution. Though cultural history has been reshaping our understanding of European and American history for a few years now, Russian and Soviet historians are only beginning to look at the question of culture. This volume amply demonstrates the value of such an approach to give us new insights on the deepening social divisions, material and demographic transformations, and emerging public sphere of late Imperial Russia. Equally valuable is the effort by most of the authors to "grapple with problems of interpretation and theory," placing the study of Russian culture within a wider body of works now available on theories of popular culture, resistance, ritual, and the like. The bibliography of comparative and theoretical works suggests the ambition of the collection.

In their excellent introduction, Frank and Steinberg write that while the authors "do not present a uniform answer" to questions about "changes in Russian society and culture," they do "suggest patterns and trends in the development of lower-class lives and mentalities." (p. 5) Some of the most interesting essays present culture as an "arena of conflict" expressing "social hostilities," "lower-class demands for respect," and "bourgeois fears of a breakdown of moral authority." (p. 7) Frank's own article on elite fears of increasing peasant degeneration describes an educated urban preoccupation with rural "hooligans" who in their leisure time were said to take on "the likeness of beasts" in their "drunken revelries" and "rampant promiscuity." (p. 82) The perceived tenuousness of "civilization" in peasant Russia led members of the "educated
public" to try to replace the "demoralizing elements of rural fêtes with more rational pursuits," an effort to transform and regulate which, as Frank notes, has its similarities to post-revolutionary "enlightenment" campaigns. Like Frank, Joan Neuberger sees the state of Russian culture as central to the "public discourse" of turn-of-the-century Russia. (p. 192) In her excellent article (taken from her recent book on hooliganism), Neuberger focuses less on elite perceptions however, and more on the cultural behavior of hooligans themselves. She argues that both hooligans and futurists ("young thugs throwing tea out a doorway" and "artists throwing tea on spectators") used public exhibitions to express dissatisfaction with the established cultural standards of the elite. (p. 201) Challenge to subordination is evident in other forms in Barbara Alpern Engel's examination of peasant women's verbal and sometimes physical abuse of police and other officials who were seen to threaten the rural community. She suggests that the women's direct involvement in resistance prompts us to "rethink some of our assumptions about gender and the allocation of power in Russian peasant culture," but notes that the women's "language of resistance" remained the customary one of family and motherhood as they used their babies and pregnant bodies even more than they did sticks to "disarm the authorities." (p.38)

The complex engagement between the popular culture of the lower classes and the "culture of the rest of society" is a central theme. Christine Worobec challenges the common division of pagan peasant versus Orthodox clergy in her illuminating study of peasant death ritual. Peasants' practiced religion may not have met the "ideal of prescribed religion," but peasants "believed themselves" to be Christian according to Worobec. They absorbed the teachings of Orthodoxy, a process made easier by the complementarity of the "magical rituals" of the church with the peasants' popular belief systems. Similarly, the worker-authors Mark Steinberg describes in his thoughtful essay on the "cult of the person" drew upon the cultural values of other social groups (the intelligentsia, popular belles lettres, and commercial print media) to help formulate their conceptions of the "natural dignity and rights of the worker." (p. 170) At the same time, their very appropriation of this culture was an act of "social rebellion" as it "challenged the social divide that set workers apart as different." (p. 174) Robert Rothstein's article on the influences of urbanization and commercial culture on folk song and Herbutus Jahn's article on the convergence of elite and popular cultures during the First World War also examine the "blurred boundaries defining the popular." (p. 7) In what is sure to be the most controversial essay in this collection, Boris Mironov argues in contrast to all these authors that the principal elements of peasant culture (the family and the commune) remained fundamentally unchanged throughout this period, creating a rift between peasant culture and elite society, the latter of which "was being gradually transformed in accordance with European cultural standards." (p. 70) Mironov uses sociological and psychological models as much as he does history to explicate what he calls the peasants' "authoritarian personality," a personality which he says was the basis for "authoritarianism in society at large" both before and after 1917. (p. 68) While provocative, Mironov's uncritical acceptance of ethnographers' views of peasant culture as "childlike," "dogmatic," "banal," and "prejudiced" is disturbing.

Many of the essays are concerned with reconstructing the "dynamic cultural world" of the lower classes such as Albin Konechnyi's article on public amusement parks in St. Petersburg. In Daniel Brower's piece on the penny press he says, for example, that studying the boulevard newspaper opens up "a multitude of images of the daily life, beliefs, social practices, and prejudices of the Russian urban population." (p. 148) As with the best of these articles, Brower goes beyond this to tackle broader theoretical questions, in this case the relation between