

THE LAST APPEAL OF THE RUSSIAN LIBERALS.



AMONG the first questions which arise in the mind of any dispassionate student of contemporary Russian history when he reviews the events of the last twenty years are the following:

“What is the real nature and significance of the protest against authority which has recently taken so extreme and violent a form in Russia; what are its original causes, and what are the opinions, hopes, and aims of the party or class which manifests such an unconquerable spirit of rebellion and which acts with such fierce and destructive energy? Is the protesting party or class a homogeneous body, all of whose members are inspired by the same ideas, or is there a difference of opinion among its constituent units as to principles and methods of action? Is what the world calls ‘Nihilism’ a mere philosophy of negation and destruction, which does not look beyond the overthrow of existing institutions, or has it in view some ideal of social order which it hopes ultimately to realize? If the Nihilists are social reformers sincerely desirous of improving the condition of the people by changing the social and political order of things in the direction of greater freedom, how did it happen that they began their protest at the very time when such changes were being made with great rapidity, and why did they fiercely and vindictively pursue and finally murder Alexander II., the man who was granting, as fast as it seemed prudent or practicable to grant, the very reforms which they themselves demanded? In short, what do the phenomena of contemporary Russian history mean?”

These questions must be answered before any intelligent idea can be formed of the existing situation in Russia, and before any prediction can be made as to the probable outcome of the struggle which is there going on.

It has been my fortune, in the course of the last two years, to make the intimate personal acquaintance of more than five hundred members of this Russian protesting party, including not less than three hundred of the so-called “Nihilists” living in exile at the convict mines and in the penal settlements of Siberia. I can perhaps throw some light, therefore, upon the problems presented by recent Russian history, and answer some of the questions which necessarily suggest themselves to the attentive student of Russian affairs. The subject, however, is one of great extent and complexity, and it is not my purpose in the present paper to even make an attempt to deal with it

as a whole. I desire merely to correct some widely prevalent errors and then to present one phase of the Russian protest against authority; namely, the peaceful legal argumentative phase which preceded the appeal to force and out of which ultimately the appeal to force came, as the necessary and inevitable result of the failure of the peaceful protest.

There is a widely prevalent impression in America that the protesting party or class in Russia is essentially homogeneous; that its members are all “Nihilists”; that they prefer violence to any other means of redressing wrongs; that they aim simply at the destruction of existing institutions, and that there is in this so-called “Nihilistic” form of protest against authority something peculiar and mysterious—something which the Occidental mind cannot fully comprehend, owing to its ignorance of the Russian character. This impression, as I hope to show, is almost wholly an erroneous one. In the first place, the protesting party in Russia is not, in any sense of the word, homogeneous. Its members belong to all ranks, classes, and conditions of the Russian people; they hold all sorts of opinions with regard to social and political organization, and the methods by which they propose to improve the existing condition of things extend through all possible gradations—from peaceful remonstrance, in the form of collective petition, to “terroristic” activity, in the shape of bomb-throwing and assassination. The one common bond which unites them is the feeling which they all have that the existing state of affairs has become insupportable and must be changed.

In the second place, there is no protesting party in Russia to which the term “Nihilistic” can be properly applied. This may, perhaps, seem like a paradoxical statement in view of the fact that we have never heard of any other protesting party in Russia; but it is a true statement, nevertheless. There is no party in the empire which deliberately chooses violence and bloodshed as the best possible means of attaining its ends; there is no party which aims merely at the overthrow of existing institutions, and there is no party which preaches or practices a philosophy of negation and destruction. I make these assertions confidently, because my acquaintance with so-called “Nihilists” is probably more extensive and thorough than that of any other foreigner, and I have discussed these questions with them for many hundreds of hours. Liberals, reformers, socialistic theorists, revolutionists, and “ter-

rorists" I have met in all varieties, both in European Russia and among the exiles in Siberia; but a Nihilist in the proper or even in the popular signification of that word—never. Of course, if you use the term "Nihilist," as you would use the term "Know-nothing," merely to denote a certain social or political party and without reference to the original significance of the appellation, you may apply it to any body of men—to the Knights of Labor, for example; but if you use the word with a consciousness of its primary signification, as you would use the word yellow to describe an orange, you cannot properly apply it to any branch of the protesting party in Russia. There is in the empire no party, organization, or body of men to which it is applicable.

The word "Nihilist" was introduced in Russia by Turgenev, who used it in his novel "Fathers and Children" to describe a certain type of character which had then recently made its appearance in the ranks of the rising generation and which he contrasted sharply and effectively with the prevailing types in the generation which was passing from the stage. As applied to Bazaroff, the skeptical, materialistic, iconoclastic surgeon's son in Turgenev's novel, the word "Nihilist" had a natural appropriateness which the Russian public at once recognized. There were differences of opinion as to the question whether any such class as that represented by Bazaroff really existed, but there was no difference of opinion with regard to the appropriateness of the term as applied to that particular character. It was accurately descriptive of the type. The word "Nihilist," however, was soon caught up by the conservatives and by the Government, and was applied indiscriminately by them as an opprobrious and discrediting nickname to all persons who were not satisfied with the existing order of things and who sought, by any active method whatever, to bring about changes in Russian social and political organization. To many of the reformers, iconoclasts, and extreme theorists of that time the term "Nihilist" was perhaps fairly applicable—as it certainly was, for example, to Bakunin and his followers—and by some of them it was even accepted in a spirit of pride and defiance as an appellation which, although a nickname, expressed concisely their opposition to all forms of authority based on force. To the great mass of the Russian malcontents, however, it had then,

and has now, no appropriate reference whatever. It would be quite as fair and quite as reasonable to say that the people in the United States who were once called "Know-nothings" were persons who really did not know anything as to say that the people in Russia who are now called "Nihilists" are persons who really do not believe in anything, nor respect anything, nor do anything except destroy. By persistent iteration and reiteration, however, the Russian Government and the Russian conservative class have succeeded in making the world accept this opprobrious nickname as really descriptive of the character and opinions of all their opponents, from the "terrorist" who throws an explosive bomb under the carriage of the Tsar, down to the peaceful and law-abiding member of a provincial assembly who respectfully asks leave to petition the Crown for the redress of grievances. It would be hard to find another instance in history where an incongruous and inappropriate appellation has thus been fastened upon a heterogeneous mass of people to whose beliefs and actions it has no sort of applicability, or a case in which an opprobrious nickname has had so confusing and so misleading an influence upon public opinion throughout the world.

The people most misrepresented and wronged by this nickname are unquestionably the Russian liberals—the members of the protesting party who seek to obtain reforms by peaceable and legal methods. From the point of view of the Government there might perhaps be some propriety in the application of the term "Nihilist" to a conspirator like Netchaief or to a regicide like Ryssakoff; but there can be no possible reason or excuse for calling by that name a professor who opposes the inquisitorial provisions of the new university laws, an editor who disputes the right of the Government to banish a man to Siberia without trial, or a member of a provincial assembly who persuades his fellow-delegates to join in a petition to the Crown asking for a constitution. These people are not "Nihilists," they are not even revolutionists; they are peaceable, law-abiding citizens, who are striving by reasonable methods to secure a better form of government; and yet these men are removed from their official places, silenced by ministerial prohibition, arrested without adequate cause, exiled without a judicial hearing, and finally misrepresented to the world as "Nihilists" and enemies of all social order.*

* It is hardly necessary, perhaps, to say that this is not a vague, general assertion, made at random. I have particularly in mind the case of a well-known professor of the Moscow University whose name I will not give, because he is not yet in exile; the case of Constantine M. Stanikovich, formerly editor of the Russian magazine "Diello," who is now in exile in the town of

Tomsk, Western Siberia; and the case of Ivan I. Petrunkevitch, formerly a justice of the peace and a member of the provincial assembly of Chernigof, who is now in exile in one of the northern provinces of European Russia. They are all moderate liberals, and they have all been punished without a trial or even a hearing.

I do not mean to say that the Government formally and officially brands this class of its opponents with this nickname, or seriously regards it as properly applicable to them. I mean only that the Russian conservative party and the Government press have used the word "Nihilist" so persistently and so indiscriminately to characterize all sorts of malcontents, that the world has come to regard it as more or less descriptive of the whole protesting class, and has lost sight of the radical differences between the various groups of which that class is made up.

It is my purpose in the present paper to briefly describe the attitude taken toward the Government by this peaceable, law-abiding branch of the Russian protesting party, and then to allow the liberal members of that party to express in their own words the opinions which they hold with regard to the existing state of affairs in Russia, and the means which, in their judgment, should be adopted to stop oppression on one side and violent and unnatural forms of protest on the other.

Before proceeding, however, to an examination of the opinions and actions of the Russian liberals, it is necessary to sketch hastily the conditions under which the protesting class came into existence, and the nature of the wrongs and evils against which the protest was made. The sketch must necessarily be a brief and inadequate one, and the reader will, I trust, understand that it does not pretend to cover fully the ground, or even to outline the history of Russia during the period. It is intended merely to suggest the facts which are indispensable to a clear comprehension of the liberal position.

Between the years 1861 and 1866 the Russian Government, doubtless animated by a sincere desire to promote the welfare of the people, undertook a series of sweeping and far-reaching reforms, which included the emancipation of the serfs, the grant of comparative freedom to the press, the reorganization of the courts, and the establishment of a system of local self-government, by means of elective assemblies, or *zemstvos*. If these reforms had been carried out in the liberal spirit in which they were apparently conceived, they would have affected beneficially every department of Russian social and political life; they would have lightened in a hundred ways the burdens which rested upon all classes of citizens; they would have satisfied, temporarily, at least, the growing demand for greater freedom of thought, speech, and action, and would have saved the country from a long, disastrous, and exhausting revolutionary struggle. Unfortunately, however, the Government either lost faith in its own projected reforms, took alarm at

the attitude of independence assumed by some of the provincial assemblies, or became seriously apprehensive that the liberal movement, if not checked and repressed, would go beyond the limits marked out for it, and perhaps get entirely beyond control. Instead, therefore, of carrying out its reforms perseveringly and consistently, and with a feeling of confidence in the good sense, patriotism, and self-control of the people, the Government began almost at once to restrict, qualify, and abrogate the rights and privileges which it had just granted. By means of ministerial circulars and secret instructions to provincial governors, it limited freedom of discussion in the provincial assemblies, gagged again the partially enfranchised press, withdrew whole classes of important cases from the jurisdiction of the reorganized courts, restricted the right of private meeting to discuss questions of political economy, arrested persons who assembled for the purpose of considering the problems presented by Russian life under the novel conditions which the reforms had created, and in a hundred ways harried and exasperated the liberal element, which sought merely to do its part in the work of reform, reorganization, and regeneration which the Government itself had undertaken. The result of this reactionary policy was of course intense popular dissatisfaction, which at first manifested itself in outspoken protests, then took the form of determined opposition, and finally ended in open insubordination. This called forth repressive measures of still greater severity, which only increased the feeling of exasperation; and at last the younger and more impulsive members of the liberal party, finding themselves powerless to attain by open and legal methods the objects which they had in view, and believing that the Government had never been sincere in its liberal professions, undertook to act for themselves, and in their own way, by organizing in all of the larger towns secret circles which were called "Circles for Self-Instruction." These were originally little more than associations of ardent young liberals, who met frequently at private houses to talk over their grievances, and discuss methods of improving the condition of the peasants; but they were gradually transformed by repressive measures into secret centers of revolutionary activity.

About this time began that remarkable, impulsive, generous but quixotic liberal crusade which was known as "going to the people." Thousands of educated young men, fired with an ardent desire to do something to atone for the sins of their fathers toward the recently emancipated serfs, and filled with pity for the latter's ignorance and misery, went into the Russian villages, into the suburbs of the great

cities, into factories, into workshops, into all places where the peasants toiled and suffered, and sought, by sympathy, by coöperation, and by personal instruction, to help and elevate the men and women whom their fathers had bought, sold, and flogged. Hundreds of cultivated and refined young women, with that singular capacity for self-sacrifice which is inherent in the Russian character, abandoned their homes and families, put on coarse peasant dress, went into the remotest, loneliest, and dreariest villages of the empire, and, in the capacity of school-teachers, midwives, or nurses, shared the hard, prosaic life of the common people, labored with them, suffered with them, and bore their burdens, merely in order to learn how they could best be helped. Sophia Perofskaya, one of the five regicides who were hanged at St. Petersburg in 1881, began her career with this sort of missionary work; Vera Phillipova, who planned the assassination of General Strelnikof and who died of prison consumption in the fortress of Schlüsselburg last year, was another of the heroic young women who thus went "to the people"; Madame Kavalefskaya, who is now serving out a hard-labor sentence in Eastern Siberia, was a teacher in a peasant school; Anna Pavlovna Korba, who is dying by inches at the convict mines of Kara, was a Red Cross nurse, and treasurer of a local benevolent society, before she became a member of the dreaded "Nihilist" Executive Committee; and hundreds of other young women threw themselves with passionate self-abnegation and self-devotion into the work of educating, elevating, and helping the lower classes.

Something analogous to this took place in our own country soon after the close of the civil war, when educated and refined young women from the New England States went south to teach in negro schools; but the movement in the United States never became epidemic, as it did in Russia, nor was it ever characterized by the reckless, heroic self-sacrifice which illumines so many dark pages of Russian history.

Of course the "Circles for Self-Instruction" and the unprecedented movement of the youth of Russia "to the people" did not escape the vigilant attention of the Government. Both were regarded, and perhaps with good reason, as seditious in their character, and steps were at once taken to put a stop to what was believed to be nothing more than a secret revolutionary propaganda. The "Circles for Self-Instruction" were broken up; all persons suspected of disloyalty were put under strict police supervision or banished to distant provinces; educated young men and women found in peasant villages were required to satisfac-

torily explain their presence there; the more active opponents of the Government were exiled to Siberia by "administrative process," and arrests were made by the hundred in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kiev, Odessa, and all the large towns of the empire. The feeling of exasperation meanwhile grew more and more intense, and the revolutionary movement more and more formidable, notwithstanding the increasing severity of the Government's repressive measures, until at last the prisons were literally crammed with political offenders, most of them young people from the educated classes. The cruel treatment of these prisoners and of the exiles in Siberia, who were regarded by their fellow-revolutionists as martyrs in the cause of freedom, finally provoked reprisals, and in 1878 General Mezzentsef, the Chief of Gendarmes, was assassinated in the street in St. Petersburg, and General Trepoff, the Chief of Police of that city, was shot by Vera Zassulitch, for ordering the flogging of a political prisoner named Bogoeuboff.

During all this time the Russian liberals, as distinguished from the revolutionists, had been endeavoring to discourage the resort to violence on the one side, and to secure justice, consistency, and adherence to law on the other. Their efforts, however, were not successful in either direction. The revolutionists believed that the time for peaceful remonstrance had passed, and regarded further discussion as useless, while the Government resented the intermediation of the liberals as an impertinence, if not a manifestation of sympathy with the declared enemies of the State.

Such was the situation of affairs in 1878 and 1879, when the first political assassinations announced the adoption by the revolutionary party of the policy of "terror." The liberals, foreseeing that this policy would almost certainly lead sooner or later to the assassination of the Tsar, and believing that the reaction which must follow such a crime would be disastrous, if not fatal, to the cause of liberty, determined to make another effort to obtain from the Government some recognition of the evils and wrongs against which the revolutionists were so fiercely protesting, and some promise of a return to the liberal programme outlined in the reform measures of 1861-1866. In order, however, to make this attempt with any prospect of success, it was manifestly necessary to secure a temporary suspension, at least, of the destructive activity of the extreme revolutionary party. Nothing could be accomplished by peaceful methods if the "terrorists" continued to alarm and exasperate the Government with threats and deeds of murderous violence. In the early part of 1879, therefore, some of the prominent liberals of Chernigof

and Kharkoff, including Professor Gordeenko (the mayor of the latter city) and Mr. Petrunkevitch (the presiding justice of one of the new courts, and a member of the Chernigof provincial assembly), decided to open communications with the "terrorists," urge upon them the dangers of the path on which they had entered, point out to them the calamities which they might bring upon Russia by this desperate, unreasonable, murderous policy, and ascertain upon what conditions they would agree to stop committing acts of violence. In pursuance of this resolution a committee of liberals, representing several of the *zemstvos*, or provincial assemblies, of central and southern Russia, made journeys to various parts of the empire, and had personal interviews with a number of the leaders of the "terroristic" or extreme revolutionary party. The committee said to the latter:

"We believe that we can bring about reforms by peaceable and legal methods, and we desire now to make another attempt to do so, but we shall of course fail if you continue these political murders. Our object in coming to see you is to ask you to suspend your operations for a while and give us an opportunity to act. If we fail to attain our ends by reasonable and peaceful methods, and if you then think that you can accomplish something by your policy of 'terror,' proceed at your own peril; we shall disapprove and deplore your mistaken action, but we shall have nothing more to say; first, however, give us a chance."

The "terrorists" declared that their policy was not one of choice; that the Government had forced them to adopt it by closing to them all other avenues of escape from an absolutely intolerable position. They were willing, however, to listen to reason, and would solemnly promise not to commit any more acts of violence if the Government would even show a disposition to do three things — namely, first, remove the existing restrictions upon freedom of speech and of the press; second, guarantee personal rights against capricious, illegal, irresponsible action on the part of the executive authorities; and, third, allow the people to participate in some way in the national government. These, they said, were the things for which they were fighting, and if they could be satisfied that the Government would grant these demands, they as a party would refrain wholly from acts of violence and "maintain an attitude of expectancy."

The members of the liberal committee returned to their homes and held a consultation with their fellow-delegates as to the best means of carrying their plans into execution. The only basis upon which they could proceed in legal form was that furnished by the *zemstvos*, or provincial assemblies. These were legally authorized bodies, representative of the people and recognized by the Government, and it

was decided to have these *zemstvos* adopt and simultaneously forward memorials or petitions to the Crown setting forth the grievances of the people and asking for a constitutional form of government.

The first petition which went in was that of the provincial assembly of Kharkoff, which convened earlier than the others, and therefore took the lead. This address was not as clear in statement nor as definite in its demands as might have been desired, but nevertheless it produced a profound impression. The Minister of the Interior at once sent a circular letter to the Marshals of the Nobility, who presided over the provincial assemblies, directing them not to allow any memorials to be laid before the assemblies without previous submission to them (the marshals) for approval, and not to permit action of any kind upon such petitions as that from the assembly of Kharkoff. The next *zemstvo* to draw up a memorial was that of Chernigof. Its address to the Crown was respectful in form and tone, but extremely bold in expression. It declared that the Government itself was responsible for the revolutionary movement which it asked the people to oppose, because it had never executed faithfully its own laws; that by constantly violating those laws and resorting to administrative force to attain its illegal ends it had destroyed the people's respect for law, and had thus prepared the way for all sorts of anarchistic teaching; that it had not granted a single reform which on the very next day it had not tried to mutilate or nullify by administrative regulations and restrictions; that it had deprived the Russian people of the right to express its opinions, not only through the press and through public meetings, but even through the provincial assemblies; and, finally, that the only way to successfully combat revolution and anarchy was to create new national forms and adopt a constitution which would restrain illegal action not only on the part of individual citizens, but on the part of the Government.

At an informal meeting of all the delegates of the Chernigof provincial assembly this bold address was adopted with only two dissenting votes, and was then given to Mr. Ivan I. Petrunkevitch for formal presentation to the assembly at its regular session on the following day. In the meantime Mr. Petrunkevitch submitted it to the presiding officer for approval as required by the recent ministerial circular. The marshal after reading it said, "I cannot allow you to lay this paper before the assembly."

"Why?" demanded Mr. Petrunkevitch.

"Because it is forbidden."

"Can you show me any law of the empire which forbids a delegate to lay before the as-

sembly of which he is a member a perfectly respectful petition to the Crown?"

"No," replied the marshal, "but I have an order from the Minister of the Interior which has all the force of law so far as I am concerned, and I must obey it."

"If," said Mr. Petrunkevitch, "you cannot show me a law which forbids such action as that which I propose to take, I am acting within my legal rights, and I shall lay this petition before the assembly to-morrow unless I am prevented by force."

"Very well," replied the marshal, "I must then take my measures."

When, on the following morning, Mr. Petrunkevitch went to the assembly hall, he found the public for the first time excluded. There were gendarmes at the door to keep out all persons except delegates, and there were gendarmes in the hall itself. As soon as the assembly had been called to order, several members sprang to their feet and protested against the presence of the gendarmes, which they declared was a menace and an insult to a deliberative assembly. The presiding officer replied that the gendarmes were there by order of the governor. Amid a scene of great excitement and confusion, Mr. Petrunkevitch rose to present the address to the Crown, which had been almost unanimously adopted by the delegates at the informal session of the previous day. The presiding officer refused to allow it to be read or considered, and when Mr. Petrunkevitch persisted in his attempt to obtain formal action upon it, the marshal peremptorily declared the session of the assembly closed, and the hall was cleared by the gendarmes. The delegates, however, prepared copies of their address, and sent them to all the *zemstvos* in the empire, and many other assemblies—eight or ten, if I remember rightly—followed the example set by the *zemstvos* of Chernigof and Kharkoff, by drawing up memorials, and trying to get them acted upon. Their efforts, however, were rendered fruitless by ministerial prohibitions enforced by gendarmes, and on the 14th of April, 1879, this form of agitation was stopped by the attempt of Solivioff to assassinate the Tsar. Another spasm of alarm, reaction, and repression followed; martial law was declared throughout the greater part of European Russia, and executions, arrests, and the indiscriminate exile of all persons who dared to remonstrate or protest, silenced once more the voice of the Russian people. Mr. Petrunkevitch and other members of the provincial assemblies of Chernigof and Kharkoff were arrested and banished by administrative process, and, to

adopt the language of the official reports, "order was reëstablished in the disaffected provinces."

Thus ended another attempt of the Russian liberals to put a stop to violence and bloodshed, and to obtain for the people of the empire by peaceable methods the reforms which the whole protesting class demanded. Of the leaders in this temperate, courageous, patriotic movement only two are now living; one of them is in exile and the other is insane.

It is not necessary to pursue the history of the fierce conflict which took place between the "terrorists" on one side and the police and gendarmes on the other in the year 1879 and the first part of the year 1880. The liberals did not participate in that conflict, and only took the field again when on the 25th of February, 1880, the Tsar, finding that repressive measures alone were not adequate to cope with the volcanic social forces which were in operation, appointed a "Supreme Executive Commission" and put at the head of it General Loris Melikoff, an army officer, but a man who was believed to be in sympathy with the law-abiding branch of the protesting party. To Loris Melikoff the liberals determined to make a last appeal, and in March, 1880, twenty-five of the leading citizens of Moscow, including professors in the university, members of the Moscow Bar Association, a number of well-known authors and representative men from the educated classes generally, drew up, signed, and forwarded to the new Dictator of Russia a long and carefully prepared letter, in which they set forth temperately, but with great courage and frankness, their views with regard to the real nature of the evils from which the empire was suffering and the measures which, in their opinion, should be adopted to restore tranquillity to the country. I obtained from one of the signers a copy of that letter. In order to fully appreciate the weight and significance of this document the reader must bear in mind that it is not an editorial from a "Nihilistic" newspaper; it is not an anonymous proclamation intended to excite or encourage rebellion; it is not a letter designed to affect public opinion in any way, at home or abroad. It is a calm, temperate statement of facts and conclusions, written at a most critical moment in the history of Russia, signed by some of the ablest and most patriotic citizens of the empire, and carried personally by one of them to Loris Melikoff, with a request that it be laid before the Tsar. The rest of this article (except the final paragraph) is a translation of the letter:

FROM THE LIBERALS OF MOSCOW TO GENERAL LORIS MELIKOFF, CHIEF OF THE SUPREME EXECUTIVE COMMISSION.

THE unfortunate condition of Russia at the present time is due to the fact that there has arisen in Russian society a party which acts with great irrationality, and is carrying on a contest with the Government in a manner with which right-thinking people, no matter what their position or degree of education, cannot sympathize. This contest, which is seditious in its character, manifests itself in a series of acts of violence directed against the ruling authorities. The question is, How can the evil be remedied?

In order to answer this question it is necessary first to uncover the real causes of the evil. The object of the present letter is to show —

First. That the principal reason for the morbid form which the contest with the Government has taken is the absence in Russia of any opportunity for the free development of public opinion and the free exercise of public activity.

Second. That the evil cannot be eradicated by any sort of repressive measures.

Third. That the present condition of the people, many of whose most urgent needs are wholly unsatisfied, constitutes ample cause for dissatisfaction, and that this dissatisfaction, having no means of free expression, necessarily manifests itself in morbid forms.

Fourth. That the causes which underlie this wide-spread discontent cannot be removed by governmental action alone, but require the friendly coöperation of all the vital forces of society.

I.

THE unnatural form which the contest with the Government has taken is due to the absence of all means for the free and orderly expression of public discontent. Dissatisfaction cannot be expressed through the press, since the press is closely restricted in its comments upon governmental action, and such restriction is enforced by warnings, suspensions, and

heavy penalties, in the shape of the interdiction of street sales and the deprivation of the right to print advertisements, which fall upon the periodical press with crushing force. Questions of first-class importance are wholly removed by censorial prohibition from the field of newspaper discussion, and that at the very time when they most occupy public attention. Within the past year the prohibition has been extended even to educational subjects, such as the classical system of instruction and the laws regulating universities.*

Measures as important as university reform are considered secretly and kept concealed from the people. Then there are other subjects which the periodical press is directed to discuss "with especial caution and circumspection,"—a phrase which, in the language of the censors, has almost the force of a complete prohibition. Newspapers are not even allowed to publish facts, if such facts compromise or reflect in any way upon governmental organs. All remember the recent case of the newspaper "Golos," which was severely punished for merely publishing the facts with regard to the illegal imprisonment of certain dissenting prelates. † The press must, therefore, either be silent or hypocritical, or must express itself in the language of allegory — a language which demoralizes literature and which often unnecessarily excites public opinion. If the newspapers discuss governmental measures within the narrow limits to which they are confined, their readers seek for hidden meaning and unexpressed opinion between the lines. If, on the other hand, a newspaper praises the Government, it is not believed, because the commendation is regarded as hypocritical. Perfect freedom of speech is the privilege of the representatives of extreme opinions only, and we find it on the one side, for example, in the "Moscow Gazette" and kindred organs, and on the other, in the "underground" press.

Another reason for the development of "underground" activity may be found in the en-

* It may seem strange to the American reader that the Russian Government should prohibit the discussion of such questions as "Scientific vs. Classical Education"; but it must be remembered that scientific training, to use the language of the Russian censors, "excites the mind,"—that is, leads the student to think, question, and experiment,—while the study of the dead languages does not have that pernicious tendency to so great an extent. The classical system of instruction is therefore favored by the Government, and the advocacy of any other system is forbidden. Herbert Spencer's "Education," and "The Culture demanded by Modern Life," by the late E. L. Youmans, have been withdrawn from all the Russian public libraries and placed on the Index Expurgatorius.—G. K.

† A correspondent of the "Golos" at Suzdal, in the province of Vladimir, discovered that in the prison connected with the monastery at that place there were confined two bishops and an archbishop of the dissenting sect known as the "Staroversti," or Old Believers. One of the bishops had been in solitary confinement in this monasterial prison 17 years, the other 22 years, and the archbishop 26 years. The "Golos," in commenting editorially upon its correspondent's letter, suggested that these prelates had probably been put in prison for some sectarian obstinacy and had then been entirely forgotten. For publishing this letter and commenting upon it, the "Golos" was deprived for a month of the right to print advertisements.—G. K.

forced silence of public assemblies. The cases of the provincial assemblies of Pultava, Chernigof, and other provinces in 1879 show that the voices of the representatives of the people are stifled even when they are responding in accordance with their best judgment to the call of the Government.* The latter withholds its confidence more and more from the provincial assemblies and bestows it more and more upon bureaucratic institutions—submitting, for example, to the Provincial Councils for Peasant Affairs [a body of *chinovniks* † appointed by the Crown] cases and questions which it formerly referred to the *zemstvos* [representative bodies elected by the people]. The Government creates cantonal and provincial delegates, and at the same time has so little confidence in these representatives of the people that it puts them under the supervision and control of a presiding officer not by themselves chosen; and having imposed upon them such a presiding officer, in the person of a Marshal of the Nobility, the Government strives to turn the latter into a mere *chinovnik*. Many of these marshals serve only in order to obtain rank or for the sake of an administrative career.

The Government often treats with contemptuous neglect statements and petitions from sources fully competent to make them, and listens unwillingly to the representatives even of the most legitimate interests. There may be found in the reports of any provincial administration ‡ records of innumerable petitions sent by the assembly to the Government, which not only have never been granted, but have never even been answered. The voice of the press is treated with equal if not greater contempt. The newspapers and magazines have had occasion of late to discuss almost every question which relates to the administration of the internal affairs of the empire, and with regard to such questions have expressed definite opinions based upon precise scientific data, but very little respect has been paid to their conclusions. A recent illustration of this fact is furnished by the railroad tax. When, in the latter part of 1878, it was first proposed, the organs of the press almost without exception pointed out and pertinaciously insisted upon its inadequacy and its burdensome character. The tax was nevertheless imposed, only to justify the predictions which had been made with regard to it. The Government in general pays too little attention to the investigation of subjects which require exact scientific research. This is particularly the case with regard to questions of economic and financial legisla-

tion, which are least of all susceptible to bureaucratic methods of treatment.

The result of the state of things above set forth is the creation of an impression that the Government does not wish to listen to the voice of the people; that it will not tolerate criticism, however just, of its mistakes and failures; that it despises the opinions of competent advisers, and that it has in view peculiar objects not related in any way to the necessities of the people. There is undoubtedly at the present time a wide-spread belief in the existence of an antagonism between the people and the organs of government. Upon this point cultivated society is in remarkable accord with the common people. The peasant reveres the Tsar as he reveres God, but he has no confidence in the *chinovniks*, who, as he naïvely expresses it, “get around the Tsar.” In like manner the educated classes of society, while they preserve their deep veneration for their monarch, discern, in a bureaucratic mechanism, isolated from the people, the root of the existing evils. There is in this respect a complete lack of faith in the Government, and faith can never be restored while the Administration manifests neither adequate knowledge nor moral force nor conformity to any ideal. The weakness of the Government is apparent to society, and it is an added cause of irritation, because there is nothing which provokes and humiliates people more than to feel that they are in subjection to persons who can inspire neither respect nor trust. It makes no difference, under such circumstances, what means official power may take to establish its authority; its efforts will result only in exasperation. It does not help matters when the organs of the Government say, as they are inclined to say, that an attack upon them is an attack upon the Imperial power. The sophistry of such a method of dealing with the question is apparent even to the simplest intelligence, and it only intensifies the existing resentment.

The forcible repression of discontent is injurious in another way. The impossibility of speaking out frankly compels people to keep their ideas to themselves, to cherish and nurse them in secret, and to regard complacently even illegal methods of putting them into practice. Thus is created one of the most important of the conditions upon which the spread of sedition depends; namely, the weakening of the loyalty of those who, under other circumstances, would regard sedition with abhorrence.

There are in organized society self-reliant

* The reference is to the attempt of the provincial assemblies to obtain reforms by means of petitions to the Crown.—G. K.

† A *chinovnik* is any officer of the civil service.—G. K.

‡ The permanent executive bureau which attends to the official business of a provincial assembly and keeps its records.—G. K.

opinions which strive for free expression, and an accumulated fund of energy which seeks a field for activity. The more rigorously these impulses are repressed in their legal form, the sooner they will take on a form which is not legal; the more apparent will become the lack of harmony between the strivings of society and the working methods of the ruling power; and the more general and emphatic, and consequently the more infectious, will become the illegal protest. When society has no means of making known and discussing peaceably and publicly its wants and its necessities, the more energetic members of that society will throw themselves passionately into secret activity, and lose gradually the habit of trying to obtain their ends by reasonable methods. The characteristics which at first mark only the more hot-headed members of society will at last become common to people of a very different class, simply because the latter have no field in which to cultivate better qualities.

II.

At the present time, there is a prevalent opinion that the existing evils can be eradicated only by repressive measures. Many people believe that, before anything else is thought of, attention should be concentrated upon methods of repression, and that, when such methods shall have attained the results expected from them, it will be time enough to proceed with the further development of Russian social life. But the evils cannot be remedied by repressive measures; and that is not all—repressive measures not only do not cure the evils which exist, but they create new evils, because they are inevitably accompanied by administrative license.* It might be possible, under given conditions, for people to reconcile themselves to the uncontrolled exercise of power by the higher authorities; but license above creates license below. Every official—*ispravnik*, *stanavoi*, *uriadnik* or gendarme†—has his own idea of saving the country, and upon the strength of it he sets himself above all laws and institutions. The Government thus tears down with one hand what it builds up with the other, and finally undermines all respect for authority, by establishing the conviction in the minds of the people that authority does not propose to be bound by any fixed and definite rules of procedure. License, furthermore, threatens an extraordinary widening of the circle of persons to be proceeded against. It opens the way for a general appli-

cation of the rule that “he who is not for us is against us”—a rule which, when applied by the Government, is particularly dangerous, because it declares persons to be enemies of the country who are in reality peaceable and useful citizens, but who simply do not agree in all respects with the Administration.

Everybody is well aware of the shadow which has recently been cast, without any serious reason, upon some of the best elements of our society. A crusade has been declared against the educated class, and in this movement the Government itself is not altogether guiltless. It seems to be forgotten that the educated class upon which a brand is thus set is a product of Russian history; that the Government itself, since the time of Peter the Great, has been creating this unfortunate class, and that now, whatever may be its character, it embodies all the self-conscious intellectual faculties of the Russian people. Those who seek to crush these intellectual faculties rely upon the support of excited passion, forgetting that passion is a double-edged blade, which, when it has been raised and turned in one direction, cannot be restrained if, under the influence of an unforeseen impulse, it takes another. Education,—the self-conscious thinking power,—on the other hand, is the best possible support of order. It must be remembered, furthermore, that by encouraging passion, instead of intelligent reflection, administrative license strikes down the sense of lawfulness which in Russia is imperfectly developed at best. License also brings the organs of authority into collision with one another, and such collisions are extremely injurious to the processes of healthy national life. Nothing but the supremacy of law can regulate and discipline and bring into agreement with one another the organs of administrative authority.

But aside from all this, repression cannot kill human thought. Convincing proof of this fact is furnished by the last reign (1825 to 1855) as well as by more recent years. The idea of popular representation, for example, has recently taken enormous strides forward and has made its way even into the wilderness of the provinces, notwithstanding the fact that public discussion or consideration of that idea has been absolutely forbidden. In the absence of a free press there arises another medium of intercommunication in the shape of the oral transmission of ideas from mouth to mouth. Examples of the wide extension in this way of religious heresies are too well known to need reference,

* The Russian word *proizvol*, which I have here translated “license,” has no precise equivalent in English. It means action upon personal impulse—action which is not controlled by law, nor by any standard of duty or obligation external to the actor. The

word “license” is intended to have this signification wherever it occurs in the present paper.—G. K.

† These words cannot be translated into English. An *ispravnik* is a sort of local governor; *stanavois* and *uriadniks* are officers of the local rural police.

and precisely the same thing takes place in the sphere of politics. When the human mind is subjected to oppression, it becomes peculiarly acute and receptive, catching quickly at the slightest hint and attaching significance to things which under other circumstances it would pass without attention. It is this which gives so much weight to the utterances of the "underground" press. Everybody knows how quickly the newspaper "Kolokol" and other similar publications lost their influence when Russian periodicals were given even comparative freedom of speech.*

In the present unfortunate state of affairs repression is incapable of attaining even the immediate results which are expected from it, because it cannot find objects upon which to exert itself. There can be no war unless there is an enemy in the field. In a situation like the present one, opposition to the Government does not manifest itself exclusively through the actions of a few known individuals; it hovers in the air, and lurks in the hearts of a multitude of people. Severe measures may crush a few of the Government's prominent opponents, but in their places discontent sets forth new champions.

Finally, repression, by keeping the country in a state of constant alarm with warnings of impending danger and with extraordinary and ever-changing methods of prevention, diverts attention from the real necessities of the time and baffles all attempts to anticipate the future. The country lives only from day to day, when it ought to proceed at once and with vigor to its work. Whether, therefore, we regard repression as a necessary and normal feature of national life or merely as a temporary expedient useful in periods of agitation, we find that it is powerless to attain the results that are expected from it.

III.

THE most marked feature of the present situation in Russia is extreme dissatisfaction in urgent need of free expression. Educated society as a whole, irrespective of rank, position, or opinions, is intensely dissatisfied, and out of that dissatisfaction arises the existing agitation.

First. The first and most important of society's unsatisfied demands is the demand for an opportunity to act. This demand even a constantly growing bureaucracy has been unable to silence. It has been encouraged and stimulated by the intellectual movement which began in the last century and which has continued in this; and as early as the beginning of the present reign there had already taken form

in literature and in society an ideal of national life which demanded realization. That ideal was founded upon the inviolability of personal rights, freedom of thought, freedom of speech, and a system of government by which these things should be guaranteed. The reforms of the first half of the present reign gave completeness and permanence to this ideal and threw upon it the light of approval from above. At the same time, those reforms created social conditions which were so entirely new that the necessity for new national institutions to correspond with them became a necessity no longer theoretical but practical. The old mechanism of government proved to be incapable of directing the new and complex forces which were in operation. Only by the free and independent efforts of society itself could they be regulated and controlled. The striving of the people for an opportunity to act—to take part in the control of the national life—has therefore become a phenomenon which the ruling power must take into account. Unfortunately, however, it is a phenomenon which the Administration regards with hostility. At the very moment when society is aroused both by the nature of its own reflections and by the circumstances of the time and seeks to participate in the life of the State, the Administration throws obstacles in its way. If the ruling mechanism in its present form excludes from direct participation in the government a majority of those who have the first right and the strongest desire to take part in it, then that mechanism stands in need of reformation. Instead, however, of reforming it, the Government is striving to crush and strangle the very institutions intended to bring about such reformation.†

The Russian people are becoming more and more impressed with the conviction that an empire so extensive and a social life so complicated as ours cannot be managed exclusively by *chinovniks*. The provincial assemblies are educating year after year a larger and larger number of men who are capable of taking part in political life, and yet these assemblies are constantly and systematically repressed. Their legislation is subjected to the censorship of the provincial governors; their right to impose taxes for their own needs is restricted; they assemble under presiding officers whose disciplinary power is increased; their right to manage their own schools is denied; their recommendations and petitions are wholly unheeded; jurisdiction over all important questions is taken away from them and given to administrative bureaus, and the provincial governors are allowed to pass judgment upon

* The "Kolokol," or "Bell," was a radical journal published fortnightly in London by Herzen.—G. K.

† The *zemstvos*, or provisional and cantonal assemblies.—G. K.

the character of officials duly elected by popular vote. As a consequence of all this, there is great danger that the provincial assemblies, which should be the independent organs of local self-government, will be transformed into mere subordinate bureaus of the local administration. This system of forcible repression cannot crush the desire of the people for independent political activity, but it is quite enough to produce chronic dissatisfaction and to put the Administration in the attitude of serving the interests of a bureaucracy rather than the interests of the people.

Second. Another demand of society which at the present time is even less satisfied than the desire for political activity is the demand for personal security. The indispensable conditions upon which the very existence of modern society depends are free courts, freedom from arrest and search without proper precautions and safeguards, responsibility of officials for illegal detention and imprisonment, and the due observance of all the legal formalities of public and controversial trial in cases involving the infliction of punishment. In administrative limitations of judicial procedure, whatever be their nature, society cannot acquiesce. Administrative interference always creates license; it shows that the ruling power is not willing to submit to the laws which it has itself ordained, and that it seeks an opportunity to attack both the freedom of the courts and the rights of the persons with whom it is dealing. Such administrative interference, whatever may be its motives, cannot justify itself in the eyes of the people, and only serves to weaken the authority of the ruling power.

The importance of the first stage of judicial procedure in Russia is destroyed by the lack of independent examining magistrates. The law providing that judges shall not be removed from office is deprived of all its virtue by the practice of transferring them to distant posts or promoting them without reason. How little faith there is in the existing method of selecting judges, and how carelessly vacancies are filled by appointment, is shown by the fact that not long ago in Moscow people went to court as they would go to the theater, to be amused by the ignorance and clownishness of an associate judge, who had been appointed by the Minister of Justice instead of another candidate recommended by the court itself. People who take a superficial view of life are amused by such things; the more serious members of society are deeply pained by them; but in both classes there is a consequent loss of respect for the Government. Great numbers of cases are removed entirely from the jurisdiction even of such imperfect courts as we have. In the almost unlimited province of

political crime, where the features which distinguish the permissible from the forbidden are so changeable and so difficult of definition, and where, consequently, personal liberty should be surrounded by the greatest possible safeguards, there exists a state of things which is in violation of all the Russian people's ideas of judicial procedure, and in flagrant violation of the most elementary principles of justice. A robber or a murderer cannot be searched nor arrested without a warrant from an official who must answer for his acts upon complaint of the sufferer; but in cases involving political crime an entirely different order of things prevails. For the past ten years the police, upon trivial suspicion or upon a false accusation, have been allowed to break into houses, force their way into the sphere of private life, read private letters, throw the accused into prison, keep them there for months, and finally subject them to an inquisitorial examination without even informing them definitely of the nature of the charges made against them. Many persons arrested in this way by mistake, or under misapprehension, have lived through this experience and have afterward returned to their homes. In the eyes of certain people and of the Government these sufferers are not men justified by the courts and reëstablished in their rights in the face of the world; they are dangerous members of society marked with the brand of disloyalty. In the eyes of other people they are innocent martyrs, or even heroes. It often happens that the lives of such persons are wrecked forever. The dead secrecy of political trials, in contrast with the publicity of ordinary jurisprudence; the unlimited exercise of power by the secret prosecutors, in contrast with the strictly enforced legality of every step in ordinary judicial procedure, are undermining in society the sense of lawfulness, and adding fuel to the fire of exasperation which burns in the hearts not only of the persons who have the misfortune to be prosecuted for political offenses, but of a much wider circle of people. In the absence of any legislation defining political crime and limiting the power of the institutions which deal with it, not a single person belonging to the educated class can regard himself as safe from political prosecution, and consequently not one can escape from the ever-present, humiliating, and exasperating consciousness that he is entirely without rights.

Still more out of harmony with the views of the people is the system of administrative exile and banishment without examination or trial, which has been practiced upon a more extensive scale within the past five years than ever before. While the spirit of the law and the first principles of justice forbid the in-

fiction of punishment without previous trial, hundreds and perhaps thousands of persons annually are subjected to the severest punishment that can be inflicted upon an educated man; namely, banishment from home and friends, and that by a mere administrative order based upon nothing. Persons exiled in this way have no means of knowing how long their punishment will continue. They are deprived even of the consolation which every common criminal has in knowing definitely the length of time he is to suffer. Moreover, the friends of a political exile have no means of knowing the nature of the offense with which he is charged; often he himself does not know; but they both have a right to suppose that the accusation cannot be proved, since if it could be the accused would be duly indicted and tried by a court. At the time when the law relating to administrative exile was promulgated, it was explained as an unusual measure of clemency, intended to lighten the punishment of young and misguided offenders by substituting banishment to distant provinces for the much severer penalties which would be inflicted by the courts if the accused should be brought to formal trial. When, however, the Moscow Assembly of Nobles asked that every person sentenced to exile should be given the right to demand a judicial investigation of his case, no attention whatever was paid to its petition.

Third. There is in the present condition of the courts and of local self-government another cause of irritation, arising out of the grievously illogical and inconsistent policy of the Government itself. In the early part of the present reign the political ideal of the Russian people was approved not only by the highest authorities of the State, but by the supreme ruler of the empire. At the very first step, however, toward the realization of that ideal, the Administration manifested a lack of confidence in the forces of society. Immediately after the promulgation of such laws, for example, as the act providing for the organization of cantonal and provincial assemblies [*Zemskoe Polozhenie*] and the act reforming the courts [*Sudebni Ustavi*], there began a series of withdrawals and restrictions. All the limitations of the powers of the provincial assemblies which have before been enumerated; the peculiar method of dealing with political offenses; the system of administrative exile; the denial in certain cases of the right of trial by jury, and the relegation of political offenses to specially organized courts,—all these were in the nature of withdrawals or restrictions of rights and privileges once granted. These recisions began almost as soon as the new laws went into operation, and they were made in a delicately graded series, which can hardly

be regarded as accidental. Take, for example, the series of steps by which we have come, from the order of things established by the new court laws, to the present method of conducting political trials. In the beginning the courts acted independently, and had exclusive jurisdiction; then the officers of the Third Section were appointed assistants of the courts; then the balance of power was transferred from the courts to the Third Section; and finally, all authority and responsibility were concentrated in the hands of the gendarmes. These and other similar facts show what attitude the Government took toward reform. They compelled society to stand forth in defense of the institutions which it held dear, and thus in the very beginning created an abnormal situation. The Government and the people, instead of coöperating fraternally in the work of reform, took an attitude of hostility toward each other. For this the people are often blamed, and to a certain extent they are perhaps blameworthy; but those who condemn the people forget that in a country where the Government is all-powerful the Government should show most self-possession.

Fourth. That which happened to representative institutions and to the courts happened also to the press, and perhaps even in a worse form. The law of 1865 gave to our press certain rights by abolishing in specified cases preliminary censorial supervision, and by giving to the courts jurisdiction of cases where the freedom of the press was abused; but that law was soon made a dead letter by a whole series of restrictive measures. The existing system of censorial supervision which rests upon administrative discretion has one capital defect, and that is its failure to furnish any rule definitely fixing beforehand the cases in which and the extent to which an offending publication shall be proscribed. Of this defect the censors themselves complain, since they sometimes receive at the same time one reprimand for allowing the publication of books and articles manifestly innocent and another for not allowing the publication of books and articles which are as manifestly mischievous. Society is irritated by still another injustice. It often happens that even the withdrawal of a question by censorial prohibition from the field of literary discussion does not prevent the writers on one side [the Government side] from setting forth their opinions and sharply attacking their adversaries, while the latter, silenced by the prohibition, cannot reply even to the extent of explaining more clearly their own position. An illustration of this is furnished by the question of classical instruction in our schools. Restrictions of the press and limitations of free speech in general might have some

raison d'être in a country where the governing power felt itself to be weak in comparison with the people; but it is well known that in Russia the power of the Government is enormous. Limitations of the right of free speech merely weaken that power. If the Government fears publicity, then it must have something to conceal from the people; — such is the inevitable conclusion to be drawn from the present condition of the press.

The need of free speech is never so deeply felt as in periods of discontent; and even apart from discontent, that need in Russian society is extremely urgent. The Russian people are passing through an important crisis in their history — a crisis which is economic, social, and political. Nothing but the free interchange of ideas can lessen the difficulties and embarrassments of this transition period. When in dealing with such difficulties and embarrassments the Government adopts a course which society does not approve, the press is the only medium through which the consequent alarm and excitement can be tranquilized. By refusing to listen to frankly expressed opinions, the Government not only gives another proof of its want of confidence in its own power, but deprives itself of an important means of knowing with whom it has to deal. There may exist in the social organism needs and forces of which the Government is entirely ignorant and by which it is liable at any moment to be taken unawares. Of this the present state of things is a proof. The Administration up to this very hour has not been able to find out definitely who the enemies of social order are, and it is doubtful whether it even knows their working methods, because by withdrawing the light of publicity it has enshrouded such methods in an atmosphere of secrecy and obscurity. In the absence of free speech the enemies of the Government must remain unknown even to society itself. The unsatisfied demand of the people for freedom of speech is one of the chief sources of the existing discontent. Every educated man, by virtue of a law of his intellectual being, seeks to exchange ideas with others — to convince or be convinced. Conflict is the natural state of an idea, and it cannot be suppressed without a suppression of thought itself. Limiting the freedom of discussion does not weaken the energy of thought, it intensifies and concentrates it; and if there is no opportunity for an intellectual conflict, there arises a conflict which is social and political.

IV.

THE discontent which pervades Russian society, and which is the result of the mistaken policy of the Government in dealing with in-

ternal affairs, can be removed only by measures in which society shall take part. The Government cannot accomplish the desired result alone. A mere cursory glance at the state of the country is enough to convince one that it is time to call into action all Russia's healthy powers. The demands of the empire are constantly increasing. The imperial budget has more than doubled in the last twenty years, and would have been still larger than it is if the satisfaction of important imperial needs had not been postponed. The last war necessitated an extraordinary expenditure, a large part of which has not even yet been permanently covered. It is absolutely impossible for the country, under the present revenue system, to sustain even for a few years the enormous and constantly increasing burden of imperial taxation. Although new issues of paper money and the temporary stimulation of business which followed the war have enabled the Government during the past two years to strike a balance without a deficit, that favorable result cannot be counted upon in future, nor even in the current fiscal year. It is plain to every one, and was long ago admitted by the Government, that Russia's internal revenue system stands in need of a reform — not a reform confined to the working-over of certain old taxes and the invention of a few new ones, but a systematic and fundamental reform of our whole system, with capital changes in the distribution of the burdens of taxation among the several classes of the people. Even this is not enough. No possible reform in the revenue system will be of any avail unless there is an increase in the people's wealth and producing power. All persons who have had an opportunity to observe closely the domestic life of our provinces agree in declaring that the people are constantly growing poorer instead of richer. At this very moment a third of the empire is suffering from insufficient food, and in some places there is actual famine. In southern Russia the grain beetle threatens renewed desolation,* and in a whole series of provinces diphtheria and other epidemic diseases are raging unchecked.†

Our manufacturing industries, in the opinion of competent judges, are beginning to decline, and there is a prospect in the near future of another crisis. In foreign trade the competition of the United States closes to us every year more and more of our markets. Everywhere in all departments of economic life there is a morbid feeling of shaken confidence which saps the productive power of the coun-

* The damage caused by the grain beetle in 1878 exceeded 15,000,000 roubles.— G. K.

† Forty thousand persons had died of diphtheria in the two provinces of Kharkoff and Pultava.— G. K.

try. This feeling is not a mere transitory impression; it is a well-founded consciousness of the fact that our ruling mechanism does not answer to the mutability and the increasing complexity of a great empire's demands. Now, as in "the good old times," the central Government jealously excludes the people from participation in the national life and takes upon itself the difficult task of thinking and acting for them. This task was hard enough even when the life of the people went on in the long-established patriarchal way to which both society and the Government were accustomed, but that order of things has undergone in recent years more vital changes than perhaps ever came to a similar system in any country in the course of a single generation. The emancipation of the serfs has completely and radically transformed the whole economic life of the agricultural peasants and the landed proprietors as well as their relations to each other. Artificial methods of swift intercommunication and transportation have altered the time-honored routes and methods of trade and production, have created new industries and destroyed old ones, and have put the fortunes of whole provinces in the hands of the railroad authorities. Banks and financial institutions of various kinds have sprung up in great numbers and have bound widely separated regions together with meshes of mutual obligation and indebtedness. These changes, complicated and supplemented by others like them, have created everywhere a thousand questions and necessities which previously did not exist, and have so interwoven the interests of separate localities that delay or error in the settlement of a question at one point has a direct influence upon the fortunes of other places often very remote. Every local necessity or calamity, whether it be a drought, the grain beetle, the disorganization of a railroad, an epidemic disease, pleuro-pneumonia among cattle, or industrial stagnation, exerts, without losing its local significance, a wide-spread influence upon the well-being of the empire as a whole.

In an economic life thus complicated, one central administration, even though it possess superhuman wisdom and energy, cannot pos-

sibly deal with the innumerable questions and problems which, in the absence of popular self-government, necessarily devolve upon it. Whole classes of wants and demands either remain entirely unsatisfied, are inadequately appeased by methods which take no account of local interests, or are met by a series of un-systematic and mutually contradictory measures. Each of these ways of dealing with such wants and demands undermines respect for authority and inspires painful distrust.

The only way to extricate the country from its present position is to summon an independent parliament [*Sobrania*] consisting of representatives of the *zemstvos*; to give that parliament a share in the control of the national life, and to securely guarantee personal rights, freedom of thought, and freedom of speech. Such freedom will call into action the best capabilities of the people, will rouse the slumbering life of the nation, and will develop the abundant productive resources of the country. Liberty will do more than the severest repressive measures to crush anarchistic parties hostile to the State. Free discussion will show the error of their theories, and the substitution of vigorous healthful activity for epidemic discontent in the life of the people will deprive them of the field in which they carry on their propaganda.

The Russians are as fit for free institutions as the Bulgarians are, and they feel deep humiliation at being kept so long under guardianship. The desire for such institutions, although forced into concealment, and half stifled by repressive measures, finds expression, nevertheless, in the *zemstvos*, in the assemblies of the nobles, and in the press. The granting of such institutions, and the calling together of a representative body to preside over them, will give to the nation renewed strength, and renewed faith in the Government and in its own future. When the people of Russia made themselves ready for the recent war, it was with an instinctive feeling that in the great work of freeing kindred nations there was the promise of freedom for themselves. Are such expectations, hopes, and promises never to be realized?

THE above temperate, patriotic, and courageous address was laid before the Tsar, and he acted upon it; but, unfortunately, his action came too late. On the 12th of March, 1881, he signed a proclamation announcing to the people his intention to summon a national assembly and to grant a constitutional form of government. On the very next day, before this proclamation had been made public, he was assassinated.

George Kennan.