

CLASSIC REPRINT SERIES

A NEW CHAMPION
of
AUTOCRACY



by
Georgi? Valentinovich Plekhanov

Forgotten Books

Georgi Plekhanov
**A New Champion
of Autocracy,**
Or
**Mr. L. Tikhomirov's
Grief**

(Reply to the Pamphlet: *Why I Ceased to
be a Revolutionary*)

(1889)

First published in Geneva in 1889 by the *Library of Modern Socialism* (ninth volume). [1]

This version according to the text of the third volume of Plekhanov's *Works* (1923-1927).

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From the Author

The present pamphlet is being published later than it should have been. Illness prevented me from finishing it in time. All the same I am publishing it because Mr. Tikhomirov's fall is still a question of actuality for many readers.

Baugy, March 3, 1889

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Note

1. The occasion for the pamphlet *A New Champion of Autocracy, or Mr. L. Tikhomirov's Grief* was Mr. Tikhomirov's pamphlet *Why I Ceased to be a Revolutionary*, which was published in Russian in Paris in 1888 and caused a great sensation.

Lev Tikhomirov, a former member of *Zemlya i Volya*, member of the Executive Committee of *Narodnaya Volya*, betrayed the revolutionary struggle and calumniated the Russian revolutionaries. After the publication of this shameful booklet he filed an appeal for pardon in 1888 and in 1889 he returned to Russia from emigration. Soon he became one of the most devoted champions and ideologists of the autocracy and a contributor to, and later the editor of the reactionary newspaper *Moskovskiye Vedomosti*.

In August 1888, as soon as Tikhomirov's booklet was published, Plekhanov wrote a review of it, saying, among other things, with great foresight: "There is the man to trust with editing *Moskovskiye Vedomosti*! Mr. Tikhomirov's creative mind would be a real find for our reactionary press."

A New Champion of Autocracy was first published in Geneva in 1889 by the *Library of Modern Socialism* (ninth volume). A second edition was put out legally in 1906 in Petersburg as an appendix to the journal *Sokol*. This was a reprint of the first edition and it bore very noticeable traces of censorship: particularly sharp points, especially in the characterization of the Russian autocrats, were considerably toned down.

In the present edition the work is printed according to the text of the third volume of Plekhanov's *Works* (1923-1927), checked with the first Geneva edition of 1889.

I

If Mr. Tikhomirov were noted for the same indiscriminate love of fame as Herostratus, he would naturally bless the day and the hour when it occurred to him to write the pamphlet: *Why I Ceased to be a Revolutionary*. For that pamphlet made him the centre of general attention. His fame, which even before was not negligible, grew enormously. But Mr. Tikhomirov is not one who can be satisfied with the fame of the insane Greek; he tries to *instruct*, *not to surprise*, or if you like, he must *surprise* his readers by the *instructiveness* of his history and the extraordinary maturity of his political tendencies, those “fully formed ideas on social order and firm state authority” which “have long made” him “notable among revolutionaries. [1] Naturally he does not refuse to scourge himself for his former revolutionary errings, Such a refusal is incompatible with the “fully formed” ritual of setting the revolutionary on the road to truth. But Mr. Tikhomirov is very skilful in the way he carries out the necessary ceremony of self-flagellation. While making an appearance that he is going to scourge himself, he, instead, manages to lash his former comrades, the revolutionaries in general and that revolutionary “groups” which were able for a time to “tie and prostrate” even such a remarkable man as he. Decency is fully observed but at the same time the self-flagellation, far from inflicting pain on our repentant author, is a pleasant exercise which gives him the opportunity to show off before the public. Another vulgar violator of basic principles repents with the coarse simplicity of a thoroughly ill-bred man. “In my rage, I frequently called the sacred person of His Imperial Majesty a fool,” said, for instance,

one of the accused in the Petrashevsky affair. That is not altogether elegant and by no means sagacious. Does it please His Imperial Majesty to hear such confessions? Is not the point to incline him to clemency? Mr. Tikhomirov behaves differently. Not without reason has he written a lot in his time: he knows how to use words. He so cunningly composes his psalm of repentance that it is at the same time a chant of victory on Mr. Tikhomirov defeating the revolutionary hydra and a hymn of praise to Russian autocracy ... and also, by the way, to Mr. Tikhomirov himself. All the moved and reconciled monarch can do is to fold the prodigal son in his august embrace, press the unruly head to his fat breast and give orders for the fatted calf to be killed for a solemn celebration. "Our brother the Russian is a rogue!" Belirisky [1*] once exclaimed. He should have said: "Our brother the writer is a rogue!"

Seriously speaking, we do not know how fat the calf is that is going to be slaughtered on the occasion of loyalty being aroused in Mr. Tikhomirov's heart. But we can see that certain preparations, are being made for the celebration from the envy that has seized the good sons of Russian autocracy who have never revolted against their tsar. This feeling was expressed in **Russky Vestnik** [2*], which obstinately refuses to be reconciled with Mr. Tikhomirov and grumbles angrily at the "Petersburg departmental offices" for their too lenient attitude to the former terrorist. So the compliments paid to Katkov have not done any good! It must be presumed that the solicitous authorities will not delay in calling the editors of the paper in question to reason by reminding them of the moral of the parable of the prodigal son. But still the sorties of **Russky Vestnik** will spoil

the pleasure of Mr. Tikhomirov's reconciliation with "firm authority."

Were it not for the **Russky Vestnik**, Mr. Tikhomirov would consider himself the happiest of mortals. He is extremely satisfied with himself and with his metamorphosis. He "invites the hesitating and the irresolute to give it great attention, and, sure beforehand of their enthusiastic approval, he presents them with a whole collection of counsels containing wonderfully original and sensible thoughts. He tells them that they must learn to think and not to be carried away by phrases, and so on. But let us imagine that we are among "the hesitating and the irresolute" and let us "give attention" to the metamorphosis our author has gone through. Its history is told in the pamphlet *Why I Ceased to be a Revolutionary*.

Footnotes

1. **Why I Ceased to be a Revolutionary**, p.11.

Notes

1*. See Belinsky's well-known letter to N.V. Gogol. (V.G. Belinsky, *Selected Philosophical Works*, Moscow 1956, p.536.)

2*. *Russky Vestnik (Russian Messenger)* – a monthly journal which became the mouthpiece of aristocratic reaction and the Russian autocracy after the sixties.

II

Here in Russia, and not here alone – Mr. Tikhomirov says – the thought has become rooted that we live in some kind of “period of destruction,” which, some people believe, will end with a terrible upheaval, with torrents of blood, dynamite explosions, and so on. After that, it is presumed, a “creative period” will begin. This social conception is entirely erroneous, and as already noted, it is merely a political reflection of the old ideas of Cuvier and the school of geological catastrophes. In actual fact, in real life, destruction and creation go hand in hand, being even inconceivable without one another. The destruction of one phenomenon originates, properly speaking, because in it, in its place, something different is being created, and on the contrary, the formation of the new is nothing else than the destruction of the old. [1]

The “conception” contained in these words is not distinguished by particular clarity, but in any case the idea can be reduced to two propositions:

1. “Here in Russia, and not here alone,” revolutionaries have of no idea *evolution*, of the gradual “change in the type of phenomena,” as Mr. Tikhomirov says elsewhere.
2. If they had an idea of evolution, of the gradual “change in the type of phenomena,” they would not imagine that “we live in some kind of period of destruction.”

Let us first see how things are in this respect *not in Russia*, i.e., in the West.

As everybody knows, there is actually in progress in the West a revolutionary movement of the working class, which aspires to economic emancipation. The question is: have the theoretical representatives of that movement, i.e.,

the *socialists*, succeeded in conforming their revolutionary aspirations to any at all satisfactory theory of social development?

Nobody who has the slightest idea of modern socialism can fail to answer that question in the affirmative. All serious socialists in Europe and America adhere to Marx's teaching, and who does not know that his teaching is first and foremost the doctrine of the development of human society? Marx was an ardent defender of "revolutionary activity." He sympathized profoundly with *every* revolutionary movement directed against the existing social and political order. One is not obliged against one's wish to share such "destructive" sympathies, but naturally one is not entitled to conclude from them that Marx's imagination was "fixed on forcible revolutions," that he ignored social evolution, slow, gradual development. Not only did Marx not forget evolution, but he discovered many of its most important laws. It was in his mind that the history of mankind was first organized into a harmonic, non-fantastic picture. He was the first to show that *economic evolution leads to political revolutions*. Thanks to him the contemporary revolutionary movement was given a clearly defined aim and a strictly formulated theoretical basis. But that being the case, why does Mr. Tikhomirov imagine that by a few incoherent phrases about social "creation" he can prove the inconsistency of the revolutionary strivings, existing "here in Russia, and not here alone." Is it not because he has not given the trouble to understand the teaching of the modern socialists?

Mr. Tikhomirov now feels repugnance for "sudden catastrophes" and "forcible revolutions." When all is said

and done that is his own affair: he is not the first or the last. But he is wrong in thinking that “sudden catastrophes are impossible both in nature and in human societies. First of all, the “suddenness” of such catastrophes is a relative concept. What is *sudden* for one person may *not* be sudden at all for another; eclipses of the sun occur “suddenly” for the ignorant but by no means for the astronomer. The same thing applies to revolutions: those political “catastrophes” happen “suddenly” for the ignorant and, the great majority of self-satisfied philistines, but very often they are by no means sudden for the man who understands the social phenomena surrounding him. Secondly, if Mr. Tikhomirov tried to consider nature and history from the standpoint of the theory he now holds, a number of overwhelming surprises would await him. He has fixed in his mind that nature does not make any leaps and that leaving the world of revolutionary fantasy and coming to the firm ground of reality one may speak “scientifically” only of slow “change in the type of phenomena,” and yet nature makes leaps without troubling herself about all those philippics against “suddenness.” Mr. Tikhomirov knows full well that “the old ideas of Cuvier” are erroneous and that “sudden geological catastrophes” are no more than the imagination of scientists. Let us suppose he lives a carefree existence in the south of France, without any hint of alarms or dangers. Then suddenly there comes an earthquake like the one that occurred there two years ago. The earth trembles, houses topple down, the terrified inhabitants flee – in a word, there is a genuine “catastrophe” which probably shows the incredible light-headedness of Mother Nature! Learning from bitter experience, Mr. Tikhomirov attentively checks all his geological concepts and comes to the conclusion that slow “changes in the type of phenomena” (in this case in the

condition of the earth's crust) do not preclude "upheavals," which, from a certain standpoint, may perhaps appear "sudden" or "violent." [2]

Mr. Tikhomirov boils water which does not cease to be water, and is not inclined to any suddenness as long as its temperature increases from 32 to 212 degrees. But when it is heated to the critical temperature – oh, horrible thing! – there is a "sudden catastrophe" – the water turns into steam as if its imagination were "fixed on forcible revolutions."

Mr. Tikhomirov *cools* the water and the same strange story repeats itself. The temperature of the water changes gradually, the water remains water. But when it is cooled down to 32 degrees, the water is changed into ice regardless of "sudden revolution" being an "erroneous conception."

Mr. Tikhomirov observes the development of some insect subject to metamorphosis. The process of development of the chrysalis goes on slowly, and for a time the chrysalis remains a chrysalis. Our thinker rubs his hands with satisfaction, saying, "everything is going on as it should. Neither the social nor the animal organism experiences any kind of the sudden upheavals whose existence I have had occasion to observe in the inorganic world. When it rises to the creation of living beings nature shows more steadiness." But soon his joy gives place to disappointment. One fine day the chrysalis accomplishes a "forcible revolution" and emerges as a butterfly. Thus Mr. Tikhomirov is compelled to admit that even organic nature is not insured against "*sudden changes*."

It will be exactly the same, if Mr. Tikhomirov seriously "gives attention" to his own "evolution"; he will certainly find in it a

similar sharp turn, or “revolution.” He will remember what particular drop filled the cup of his impressions and changed him from a more or less hesitating *defender* of the “revolution” into its more or less sincere *opponent*.

Mr. Tikhomirov and I are doing exercises in addition. We take the number *five* and like respectable people “*gradually*” .add to it one by one, making six, seven, eight ... Everything goes well up to nine. But as soon as we want to add another unit a disaster occurs: *our units*

Suddenly, without any plausible reason

are changed into a *ten*. The same unfortunate things happen to us when we pass from *tens* to a *hundred*.

Mr. Tikhomirov and I will not deal with music: there we have too many “sudden” transitions and this might put all our “conceptions” out of joint.

To all Mr. Tikhomirov’s confused arguments about “forcible revolutions” contemporary revolutionaries can successfully answer by asking the simple question: What will you do about those upheavals which have already occurred in our “actual life” and which, in any case, represent “periods of destruction”? Must we declare them *nuls et non avenues* or regard them as the works of vain and foolish people whose behaviour is not worth the attention of a serious sociologist? However you regard those phenomena, you must admit that there have been violent revolutions and political “catastrophes” in history. Why does Mr. Tikhomirov think that to admit such phenomena in the future is to have “erroneous social conceptions”?

History makes no leaps! That is perfectly true. On the other hand, it is equally true that history has made a number of “leaps” and accomplished a mass of violent “revolutions.” There are countless instances of such revolutions. What does this contradiction mean? Only that the first of these propositions has not been quite correctly formulated and that is why it is often misunderstood. We ought to have said that history does not make leaps which have not been prepared. No leap can occur without a sufficient reason, which is to be found in the previous course of social development. But as this development never stops in societies which are progressing, we may say that history is constantly engaged in preparing leaps and revolutions. It does so assiduously and unflinchingly; it works slowly, but the results of its work (leaps and political catastrophes) are inevitable and unavoidable.

The “change in the type of the French bourgeoisie takes place slowly. The burgher during the Regency is not the burgher of the time of Louis XI, but generally speaking, they both conform to the type of the old regime bourgeois. He has become richer, more educated, more exacting, but he has not ceased to be a roturier, obliged always and everywhere, to give way to the aristocracy. But then comes 1789 and the bourgeois raises his head proudly. A few years more and he becomes the master. But how? With “torrents of blood,” to the rolling of drums, and “explosions of gunpowder,” if not of dynamite which has not yet been discovered. He forces France to undergo a genuine “period of destruction” regardless of the fact that in days to come some pedant might proclaim that violent revolutions are “an erroneous conception.”

The change in “type” of Russian social relationships is slow. The separate principalities disappear, the boyars finally submit to the authority of the tsar and become ordinary members of the class serving the state. Moscow subjugates the Tatar khanates, acquires Siberia, incorporates half of southern Russia, and still it remains the old Asiatic Moscow. Peter appears and effects a “forcible revolution” in the life of Russia as a state. A new period of Russian history, the European period, begins. The Slavophiles called Peter the Antichrist because of the “suddenness” of the revolution which he carried out. They said that in his eagerness for reform he forgot evolution, the slow “change in the type” of the social system. But anybody who can think, will easily realize that Peter’s revolution was necessitated by the historical “evolution” which Russia had undergone, and by which it *had been prepared*.

Quantitative changes, gradually accumulating, become, in the end, qualitative changes. These transitions occur by leaps and cannot occur in any other manner. “Gradualists” in politics, of all colours and shades, the Molchalins [1*], who make moderation and meticulous order a dogma; cannot understand this, although it was explained long ago by German philosophy. Here, as on many other occasions, it is useful to remember the view held by Hegel, whom, of course, it would be difficult to accuse of partiality for “revolutionary activity.” He wrote: “The ordinary notion of the *appearance* or *disappearance* of anything is the notion of a *gradual* appearance and disappearance. Nevertheless, there are transformations of being which are not only changes from one quantity to another, but also changes from the qualitative to the quantitative and vice versa; such a transformation is an *interruption of ‘gradual becoming’* and

gives rise to a kind of being qualitatively different from the preceding. Underlying the theory of gradualness is the idea that that which makes its appearance already exists effectively, and only remains imperceptible because it is so very small. In the like manner, when we speak of the gradual disappearance of a phenomenon, we represent to ourselves that this disappearance is an accomplished fact and that the phenomenon which takes the place of the extant one already exists, but that neither the one nor the other is as yet perceptible ... In this way, however, we are really suppressing all appearance and all disappearance ... To explain the appearance or the disappearance of a given phenomenon by the gradualness of the transformation is absurdly tautological, for it implies that we consider as *having already appeared or disappeared* that which is actually in the course of appearing or disappearing.” [3] This means that if you need to explain the origin of the state, you simply imagine a microscopic organization of the state which, gradually changing in size, finally makes the “inhabitants” aware of its existence. In the same way, if you need to explain the disappearance of the primitive clan relations, you endeavour to imagine a small non-being of these relationships and that is all there is to it. It goes without saying that such methods of thinking will not get you far in science. One of Hegel’s greatest merits was that he purged the doctrine of development of similar absurdities. But what does Mr. Tikhomirov care about Hegel and his merits! Mr. Tikhomirov has the fixed idea that Western theories are not applicable to Russia.

Contrary to our author’s opinion on forcible revolutions and political catastrophes, we will confidently say that at the present moment history is preparing in the advanced

countries a wvolutionary change of extreme importance, which there is every reason to assume will be accomplished by force. It will consist in changing the mode in which products *are* distributed. Economic evolution has created gigantic productive forces whose practical application requires a very definite organization of production. They are applicable only in large industrial establishments founded on collective labour, on social production.

But the individual *appropriation* of the products, which grew up under quite different economic conditions in the epoch of flourishing small-scale industry and small-scale cultivation of the soil, is in flagrant contradiction to this social mode of *production*. The products of the social labour of the workers thus become the private property of the employers. It is this basic economic contradiction which determines all the other social and political contradictions observed in modern society. And this basic contradiction is becoming more and more flagrant. The employers cannot dispense with the social organization of production, for it is the source of their wealth. On the contrary, competition forces them to extend the social organization to other branches of industry where it did not exist before. The big industrial enterprises drive out the small producers thus increasing the number, and consequently the power, of the working class. The fatal denouement is at hand. To remove the contradiction between the mode of production, on the one hand, and the mode in which the products are distributed, on the other, a contradiction which is harmful to the workers, these must win political power which is now practically in the hands of the bourgeoisie. If you wish to put it thus, you may say that the workers must effect a “political catastrophe. *Economic evolution* leads as sure as fate

to *political revolution* and this latter, in turn, will be the cause of important changes in the economic structure of society. The mode of *production* slowly and gradually assumes a social character. The mode of *appropriation* of the products corresponding to it will be the result of a forcible revolution.

That is how the historical movement is taking place *not in Russia*, but in the West, of whose social life Mr. Tikhomirov has not the slightest conception, although he has indulged in “observing the powerful culture of France.”

Forcible revolutions, “torrents of blood,” scaffolds and executions, gunpowder and dynamite – these are distressing “phenomena.” But what can we do about them, since they are inevitable? Force has always been the midwife at the birth of a new society. That is what Marx said, and he was not the only one to think so. The historian Schlosser was convinced that great revolutions in the destiny of mankind are accomplished only “by fire and sword.” [4] Whence this sad necessity? Whose fault is it?

*Or is not everything on earth
subject to the power of truth?[2*]*

Not, not yet. And this is due to the difference between class interests in society. For one class it is useful or even essential to reorganize social relationships in a certain way. For the other it is useful or even essential to oppose such a reorganization. To some it holds out prospects of happiness and freedom: others it threatens with the abolition of their privileged state, and even with complete destruction as a privileged class. What class will not fight for its existence?

What class has no instinct of self-preservation? The social system that is advantageous to one class seems to it not only just, but even the only possible one. In its opinion any attempt to change that system means destroying the foundations of all human society. That class considers itself called to defend those foundations even by the force of arms if necessary. Hence the “torrents of blood,” hence the struggle and violence.

However, the socialists, in reflecting on the impending social upheaval, may console themselves with the thought that the more their “destructive doctrines spread, the more developed, organized and disciplined the working class will be, and the more developed, organized and disciplined the working class is, the fewer victims the inevitable “catastrophe” will demand.

And then, the triumph of the proletariat, by putting an end to the exploitation of man by man, and consequently to the division of society into a class of exploiters and a class of exploited, will make civil wars not only useless, but even utterly impossible. Thereafter mankind will advance by “the power of truth” alone and will not need the argument of arms.

Footnotes

1. *Why I Ceased to be a Revolutionary*, p.13.
2. Because science has rejected Cuvier’s geological doctrines it does not follow that it has proved the impossibility of geological “catastrophes” or “revolutions” generally. Science could not prove that without contradicting generally known phenomena such as the eruption of volcanoes, earthquakes, etc. The task of science is to explain Those phenomena as the product of the accumulated action of those natural forces whose slow influence we can observe on a small scale at any given time. In other words, geology had to explain the *revolutions* that affect the earth’s crust

basing itself on the *evolution* of that crust. Social science had a similar task to deal with and with Hegel and Marx as its spokesmen it has had success similar to that of geology.

3. *Wissenschaft der Logik*, erster Band, S. 313-14. We quote according to the Nuremberg edition of 1812.

4. His thorough knowledge of history apparently inclined Schlosser even to accept the geological views of Cuvier. Here is what he says about Turgot's reform projects which still make the philistines wonder: "These projects contain all the substantial advantages that France acquired later by means of the revolution. They could be achieved only by the revolution; in its expectations the Turgot ministry displayed too much of a sanguine and philosophical spirit: it hoped, contrary to experience and history, to change, by its prescriptions alone, the social structure which had been formed during the course of time and consolidated with firm ties. Radical transformations, in history *as in nature*, are impossible until all that exists has been annihilated by fire, sword and destruction." *History of the Eighteenth Century*, Russian translation, second edition, St. Petersburg, 1868, Vol. III, p.361. "What an amazing fantast that German scholar is," Mr. Tikhomirov will say.

Notes

1*. *Molchalin* – a character from Griboyedov's comedy *Wit Works Woe*, the type of the careerist, toady and time-server.

2*. Quotation from Heine's *Zum Lazarus*. "Laß die heil'gen Paraholen. Laß die frommen Hypothesen ..." Plekhanov gives the lines in a translation distorted by the censor. The correct translation by M. Mikhailov was first published in the journal **Byloye (Past)**, No.2, 1906, p.279. It runs:

"Or is not everything on earth accessible to God's will?"
(H. Heine)

III

Let us now pass onto Russia.

The socialists in the West adhere to the teaching of Marx. Until recently the socialist Narodniks have been dominant among the Russian revolutionaries. The distinction between the Western socialist, i.e., the *Social-Democrat*, and the socialist Narodnik is that the first appeals to the working class and relies only on the working class, while the second has long ceased to appeal to anybody but the “intelligentsia,” i.e., to himself, and relies only on the intelligentsia, i.e., only on himself. What the Social-Democrat fears above all is to become isolated, and, therefore, to be in a false position in which his voice could no longer reach the masses of the proletariat and would be a voice of one crying in the wilderness. The socialist Narodnik, who has no support among the people and does not suspect the falseness of his position, voluntarily goes into the wilderness and his only concern is that his voice should strike his own ears and bring joy to his heart. In the conception of the Social-Democrat the working class is a powerful, eternally mobile and inexhaustible force which alone is able now to lead society to progress; in the conception of the socialist Narodnik the people is a clumsy giant born of the earth who can remain immobile on his famous “foundations for hundreds of years. And the socialist Narodnik sees this immobility of our Ilya Muromets [1*] not as a shortcoming but as quite a considerable merit. Far from grieving over it, he asks of history but one favour – not to move the Russian giant from the foundations which have long been worn out until the fortunate time when he, the good socialist Narodnik, having dealt with capitalism, tsarism and other harmful

“influences,” appears satisfied and radiant before Ilya Muromets and respectfully announces: *Monsieur est servi!* Dinner is served! Then all the giant will need to do will be to drink off two and a half pailfuls of strong wine and sit down quietly to the social repast prepared for him ... The Social-Democrat studies attentively laws and the course of historical development. The Russian socialist Narodnik, who dreams willingly and often of the development which the people will begin to undergo some time in some other world, “on the day after the revolution,” will not hear of that economic evolution which is not a dream and which is proceeding every day and every hour in present-day Russia. The Social-Democrat swims with the current of history, but the socialist Narodnik, on the contrary, drifts with that current farther and farther away from his “ideals.” The Social-Democrat *derives support* from evolution, but the socialist Narodnik looks to all sorts of *sopl-uisms* for *support against* it.

More than that. The village community was far more enduring one or two hundred years ago than it is now. That is why the socialist Narodnik has a yearning furtively to turn the clock of history one or two hundred years back. [1]

Hence it follows that Mr. Tikhomirov’s opinion is quite correct when applied to; the Russian socialist Narodniks: they were really unable to reconcile the two concepts: *evolution* and *revolution*.

Only our author did not consider it necessary to add that he was the principal and the most prolific literary exponent of that tendency in our revolutionary party. Long and obstinately he fought in his articles against every attempt to

establish reasonable connections between the Russian revolutionaries' demands and the inevitable course of Russian social development. The village community, on the one hand; and the "intelligentsia," on the other, were for Mr. Tikhomirov extreme concepts further which his "revolutionism" never got.

But it goes without saying that the revolutionaries in a particular country cannot ignore its evolution with impunity; The Russian socialist Narodniks soon learned this by bitter experience. They did not always appeal only to themselves, they did not always place their hopes on the "intelligentsia" only. There was a time when they tried to rouse the "people," they naturally meant the peasants, the bearers of the village community ideals and the representatives of community solidarity. But as was to be expected, the peasants remained deaf to their revolutionary calls and they were obliged against their will to try to carry out the revolution with their own forces. Well, and what could they do with those forces? They never had the slightest possibility of entering openly into conflict with the government. The political demonstrations during the second half of the seventies quite convincingly brought home to the "intelligentsia" that their forces were not sufficient even for a victory over *dvorniks* and policemen. In such a state of affairs, the socialist Narodniks having the views we have spoken of, there was no other course for them but what we call terror and what Mr. Tikhomirov calls *individual rebellion*. But "individual rebellion" cannot overthrow any government. "Very rarely, I presume, are the champions of political murder aware that the present force of terrorism in Russia is the powerlessness of the revolution," our author caustically notes. That is perfectly true. Only he was wrong when he

imagined that his “creative” mind was required to discover such a simple truth. This was pointed out in the time of the Lipetsk and Voronezh congresses by those of our revolutionaries who wished to maintain the old programme of *Zemlya i Volya*. [3*] They were perfectly right when they said that without support from at least a certain section of the popular masses no revolutionary movement was possible. But as they adhered to the old Narodist views, they could not have even a vague idea of the kind of work that would guarantee our revolutionary party beneficial influence over the masses and would therefore insure it against the exhaustion they could not avoid when carrying out tire terrorist struggle. At the same time the “terrorist struggle” had one indisputable advantage over all the old programmes: it was at any rate in real fact a struggle for political freedom, a thing which the revolutionaries of the old make-up would not hear of.

Once they had entered the political struggle, the socialist Narodniks were faced with the question of *evolution*. For the socialist to win political freedom cannot be the last step in revolutionary work. The rights guaranteed to citizens by the modern parliamentary system are no more in his eyes than an intermediary stage on the road to the main aim, i.e., to the reorganization of economic relationships. Between winning political rights and reorganizing these relationships a certain time must necessarily elapse. The question is: Will Russian social life undergo a change during that time, and if it does, in which direction? Will not the constitutional system lead to the destruction of the old foundations of peasant life which are so dear to the socialist Narodniks? To answer this question satisfactorily the main propositions of Narodism had to be criticized.

It would not be difficult to notice in our revolutionary literature an ever-growing consciousness of the necessity to elucidate, at last, the connection between the Russian *revolution* and Russian *evolution*. Mr. Tikhomirov, who, as we have already said, was the most obstinate of all our revolutionaries of the old faith and zealously safeguarded the Narodnik dogma which he had adopted against incursion by any new thought – even Mr. Tikhomirov personally felt the influence of this transitory period. His pamphlet *Why I Ceased to be a Revolutionary* quite definitely indicates this. Telling the story of the transformation which he underwent, Mr. Tikhomirov mentions an article that he wrote for No.5 of *Vestnik Narodnoi Voli* but which was not approved by his colleagues on the editorial board and was therefore not printed. He says that in it he elaborated the proposition that “*only a certain evolution in the life of the people can provide ground for revolutionary activity*”; “*my revolutionism,*” he says, “*sought precisely that evolution, that historical process of change of type, in order to act in conformity with it.*” [2]

Well, what did Mr. Tikhomirov’s “revolutionism” find?

“I demand the union of the party with the country, our author proclaims. “I demand the abolition of terror and forming of a great national party . . . but then, what would be the purpose of conspiracies, revolts and revolutions? A party, such as I was striving to create would obviously have been able to work out a system of improvements which would have been quite possible and clearly fruitful, and hence it would have found strength and ability to prove this to the government, which would have asked for nothing better than to head the reform itself. [3]

Apparently, while “seeking” *evolution*, Mr. Tikhomirov’s “revolutionism”, “in its striving,” dropped *revolution*, of which there is no trace in his present views. That is sad, but it has its *inevitable logic*. It was natural for a man who refused at any price to abandon the idealization of antediluvian economic relationships in the Russian countryside to end up with the idealization of tsarism, the natural political fruit of those relationships. Mr. Tikhomirov’s present views are not more than the logical, though very uncomely, conclusion from the theoretical premises of the socialist Narodniks which he has always considered indisputable.

But, on the other hand, there can be no doubt either that this conclusion has absolutely nothing in common with any *evolution* whatsoever.

Mr. Tikhomirov sought evolution where it never existed and, where, consequently, it could not possibly be found.

What is the “union of the party with the country”? In any country which has outgrown childhood there are classes or estates whose interests are partly different and partly completely opposed to one another. No party can reconcile these interests; therefore, no party can unite with the country *as a whole*. Any party can express only the interests of a definite class or estate. This naturally does not mean that every party is confined to represent in politics only the selfish interests of this or that class. In every particular historical epoch there is a class whose victory is linked with the interests of the country’s further development. The country’s interests can be promoted only by contributing to the victory of that class. Consequently, the “union of the

party with the country” can have but one rational meaning: the union of the party with the class which at the particular time is the bearer of progress. But what Mr. Tikhomirov says means nothing of the sort. He has always denied, and all the more does he now deny, the existence of any classes whatsoever in our country.

The difference between class interests is a product of the course of social development, of *historical evolution*. To understand the difference between class interests means to understand the course of historical development, and vice versa, not to understand that difference means not to have the slightest conception of historical development; it means to remain as far as theory is concerned in the kind of darkness in which all cats are grey and perfectly alike. And if a writer who is in such darkness nevertheless speaks to you about evolution, you can be sure that he is mistaking for evolution something that is its direct opposite.

But even if we leave aside all these considerations, we cannot refrain from asking Mr. Tikhomirov the following interesting question: Why does he think that once the party succeeded in “uniting” with the country, the government “would ask for nothing better than to head the reform” demanded by that party? Our author probably remembers that exactly a hundred years ago the following fact occurred: the representatives of the third estate in a certain country voiced the interests of the overwhelming majority of the population; they “worked out a system of improvements which were quite possible and clearly fruitful.” But the government of that country did not wish to “head the reform” and began to “strive” to suppress it with the help of foreign troops. Of course, they did not prevent the reform

being carried out, but as far as the government was concerned, its “striving” was a lamentable failure. However, Mr. Tikhomirov probably thinks that the government of such an exceptionalist state as Russia would most certainly follow its exceptionalist road in such a ease, and that therefore the examples of other countries mean nothing for us.

Our author was seeking ways of uniting the party with the country and found himself by mistake on a road which led him to union with absolutism. But what has the development of Russia in common with the interests, of the autocracy?

“I regard the question of autocracy as follows,” we read on page 25 of Mr. Tikhomirov’s pamphlet. “First of all, it constitutes in Russia (as she is now) a phenomenon which is perfectly useless to discuss. It is a result of Russian history which stands in no need of acknowledgement and cannot be destroyed by anybody as long as there are tens and tens of millions in the country who neither know nor wish to know anything else in politics.”

Mr. Tikhomirov was trying to understand the meaning of Russian “evolution.” In order to succeed in that he should have made clear to himself not only *what Russia is now*, but above all *what she is becoming*, in which sense she is undergoing a “change in the type” of social relationships. Whoever ignores this side of the matter may speak only of *stagnation*, not of *development*. It was precisely this side of the matter that Mr. Tikhomirov ignored. That was why there happened to him what happens to all those of the “conservative” trend. They imagine that they are considering

the “country” “*as it is now*,” but in reality their mind’s eye is turned towards the “country” as it *was* at one time and as *it is no longer* at the present time as far as a large part of it is concerned. Their conservative “dreams” are founded on the idealization of old, already obsolete economic and political relationships.

Mention economic relationships in Russia to Mr. Tikhomirov. He will tell you: the village community is “a result of Russian history which stands in no need of acknowledgement as long as there are tens and tens of millions who neither know nor wish to know anything else in economics.” But the short phrase *as long as* contains the whole substance of the matter. A man who says high-sounding phrases about *evolution* must not be content with references to the present. If he wishes to convince us that the village community has a lasting future he must prove that the above “*as long as*” is not fated to be only a very short time, that the village community does not carry in itself and will never, or at least for a long time, carry in itself the elements of its disintegration. Similarly, if he wishes to convince us of the lasting future of the Russian autocracy, he must prove that in our social relationships there are no factors under the influence of which “tens and tens of millions” will not, perhaps very soon, want to hear anything about autocracy. “As long as” is a very vague term; it is an x which may be equal to a million, but may also be not far from nil. It was the task of our evolutionist to determine the qualities of x . But that was above his abilities. Overflowing with “exceptionalism”, he has always lived in such strained relations with science, which came to us, as we know, from the West, that it was entirely beyond his power to find a serious solution of any questions at all.

Defining the political views of the Russian people, Mr. Tikhomirov speaks of. Russia *as she is now*, or, more exactly, as she appears to him. But his gaze is fixed on the *past* when he goes on to the question whether the existence of autocracy is a hindrance to the success of Russian “culture.” It is obvious to any unprejudiced and unsophisticated person that this question can only be formulated as follows: does the contemporary autocracy, “*as it is now*,” hinder or promote Russia’s development? Mr. Tikhomirov prefers another formulation of the question. He points to absolutism *as it was*, in his opinion, at one time. “Can one be so forgetful of one’s own history as to exclaim: ‘What cultural work there was under the tsars!’” (as many people do exclaim, to Mr. Tikhomirov’s great grief). “Was not Peter a tsar? Yet has there ever been in history an epoch of more rapid and broader cultural work?” asks our author vehemently. “Was not Catherine II a tsaritsa? Was it not under Nicholas that all the social ideas according to which Russian society still lives developed? And lastly, are there many republics which carried out as many improvements in the space of 26 years as the Emperor Alexander II? In answer to such facts we only find such pitiable phrases as that this was done ‘in spite of the autocracy.’ But even if that were the case, does it matter whether it was thanks to’ or ‘in spite of’ as long as. progress – and very rapid progress – was possible?” [4]

But allow us to ask you, oh wise defender of evolution: Do you really not understand the very simple fact that the present may not resemble the past, and that the example of Peter, Catherine or even Alexander II means nothing at all for Alexander III. or Nicholas II? Peter tried to make Russia become an enlightened country; Alexander III wanted to

plunge her back into barbarity. Russia can raise twenty new monuments to Peter and at the same time find that Alexander III deserves nothing but the gallows. Why turn back to Peter the Great when it is a question of Alexander the Fat?

Besides, how are we to understand the reference to the reign of Nicholas? "It was under Nicholas that many of the ideas according to which Russian society still lives were developed." That is true, but do not be angry, Mr. Tikhomirov, and allow us to ask you what role Nicholas, "the guardsman-father of all reactions," had in this. Suppose there is a war between the cats and the mice. The mice think that the cats are a great danger to their well-being and try by all means to get rid of them. Suddenly Reynard the Fox appears and cunningly wagging his bushy tail says to the mice: "Unreasonable and imprudent mice, I really cannot understand you being so forgetful of your history as to exclaim, 'How can we be well-off with cats?' Now isn't Vaska a cat? Isn't Mashka one too? Did not your number increase so much under Vaska that the master of the house where you lived had to go to the trouble of buying new mousetraps? It is true that Vaska destroyed as many of you as he could, but all the same you multiplied, and isn't it just the same to you whether you multiplied thanks to or in spite of Vaska?" What should the mice have answered to such a sycophant?

"Great progress in literature is compatible with an Autocratic Monarchy," Mr. Tikhomirov assures us (p.26). But that is really too un... ceremonious! Or does he think that his readers do not know the history of much-suffering Russian literature? Who does not remember Novikov and Radishchev, who felt the enlightened Catherine's claws,

Pushkin's exiles under Alexander "the pious"; Polezhayev, tortured to death by Nicholas the "unforgettable"; Lermontov, exiled for a poem which contained nothing dangerous for the "foundations"; Shevchenko, condemned to waste his life as a common soldier; Dostoyevsky, at first sentenced to death in spite of his complete innocence and then "reprieved," sent to forced labour, shut tip in the "Dead House" where he was twice subjected to corporal punishment; Belinsky, whom death alone saved from the gendarmes? Does Mr. Tikhomirov think his readers have forgotten the exile of Shchapov, Mikhailov who died in Siberia, Chernyshevsky, who spent more than twenty years there; Pisarev, who spent the best years of his life in a fortress; the modern Russian writers among whom one rarely finds a man of independent mind who has not been under police surveillance or banished to more or less remote districts; and finally the fury of the Russian censorship, accounts of which people who do not know our "Autocratic Monarchy" would never believe? Merciless persecution of every living thought runs through the whole history of the Russian emperors and our literature paid a price unheard of for its development "*in spite of*" autocracy. Everybody knows that, and we advise Mr. Tikhomirov to expatiate on anything he likes, to write solemn odes on: "guns of victory, sound louder! Sing, rejoice, courageous Russ!" but to leave Russian literature in peace. The mere thought of it is enough to inspire us with burning hatred for our autocrats!

Replying to a book by Custine on Russia under Nicholas, Grech once affirmed that one could write with the same freedom in Petersburg as in Paris or in London. [4*] Mr. Tikhomirov's observations on the flourishing of Russian literature under the auspices of autocracy are nothing more

than the further development of Grech's audacious thought. On the appearance of the pamphlet *Why I Ceased to be a Revolutionary*, many people thought that Mr. Tikhomirov wanted to become a new Katkov, endowed with a more "creative intelligence" than the late editor of *Moskovskiye Vedomosti* [5*] But that was a mistake. To one who considers the matter carefully it is clear that Mr. Tikhomirov was disturbed by Grech's fame. And it must be admitted that Mr. Tikhomirov's entire manner of writing is reminiscent of Grech. Mr. Tikhomirov is not destined to be a new Katkov, but he has all that it takes to be a new Grech, in miniature, of course.

What difference does it make, says Mr. Tikhomirov, whether it is "thanks to" or "in spite of" the tsar that our social development proceeds! A great deal of difference, Mr. Tikhomirov! It is not a matter of indifference to us whether our educational establishments are under the authority of Tolstois, Delyanovs, Runiches or Magnitskys. It is not a matter of indifference to us that admission to them is restricted, that they may be closed at any time on the whim of the tsar and the youths taught in them are handed over to "sergeant-majors" in lieu of Voltaires. It is not the same to us that the northern and eastern exile regions are populated with our students and that, at the present, parents who let their sons enter a higher educational establishment consider them already almost lost. It is not a matter of indifference to us that in our autocratic, police state at least one-fifth of the inhabitants (peasants) every year are subjected to corporal punishment when the taxes are collected. It is not a matter of indifference to us that the workers are persecuted in violation of the laws by the administration for the slightest protest against the hellish conditions in the factories and, if

it occurs to our autocrat, can even be handed over to a military tribunal, as was not unfrequently the case under Nicholas. All that is far from being a matter of indifference to us. The stupid self-willedness of the autocrats costs us too great a price. There was a time too when all this was far from being a matter of indifference to you, Mr. Tikhomirov. And do you know what? If you still have the slightest drop of humanity you will, in spite of yourself and your ““ often recall that time as the noblest in your life.

In Mr. Tikhomirov’s opinion, if our student youth is surrounded with danger those to be blamed are the “inciters” who draw them into politics. “Student interference in politics is attended by the most harmful consequences in the form of various demonstrations, when, for some paltry protest against a wretched inspector, hundreds of young people, irreplaceable forces, are lost for the country in hardly 24 hours”. Let us note first that “student interference in politics” is one thing and what are called student affairs are quite another. For students there are other ways of “interfering in politics,” besides the fight against the inspectors. Secondly, we humbly ask Mr. Tikhomirov to tell us who is to blame for ruin of these really valuable and truly irreplaceable forces? Is it not the government, which is capable of destroying hundreds of young people “for a paltry protest against some wretched inspector”? It is amazing that even in Mr. Tikhomirov’s imagination our absolutism is a kind of dragon, the wisest policy towards which is merely not to fall into its claws.

Of course, it would be millions of times better “for the country” if our youth could study and develop in peace! Who will dispute that? But unfortunately they will not be able to

do so until the political system which is now ruining their young energies is filially abolished. The government will never forgive the youth their "interference in politics" and the youth will never refrain from such interference. The student youth everywhere have taken a most active part in the fight for political freedom. George Sand long ago gave the right answer to the philistines who condemn them for this: if everything that is good and noble in youth is directed against the existing system, that is the best proof that the system is worthless.

But it is not only the student youth that Mr. Tikhornirov would like to keep *away* from the political struggle. He - advises everybody, even the very oldest of his readers to ignore it and suggests as an alternative "cultural work" ... approved by the government. According to him no impediments or obstacles can *hinder* such work. "Whatever the kind of government," he says, "it can take away from the people anything but the possibility to carry on cultural work, assuming that the people is capable of such work." How gladdening! The only trouble is that we just cannot imagine what wonderful kind of "work" it is that, so to say, moths do not eat and rust does not consume, and that we can peacefully engage in it even if the government takes away from us "*anything*." The spreading of enlightenment, for example, is the most cultural of all cultural works. But the government can always "take away" from us this kind of work and Mr. Tikhomirov himself knows many examples of it having done so. Literary activity must also be recognized as cultural work. But Mr. Tikhomirov also knows full well that the government can easily forbid any of us to indulge in such work at any time. What kind of "work" does our author mean then? The building of railways, the promotion of the

success of our “national industry”? But even here everything depends on bureaucratic tyranny. The government may at any time refuse permission for your undertaking or crush it with heavy taxes, ridiculous tariffs, etc. Will we have much left, once the government “takes away” everything you like to imagine ? (To tell the truth, it is not far from doing that already.)

It seems to us that Mr. Tikhomirov should be more sincere with his readers and tell them, without any reservation, the consoling words that the stoics used to tell the slaves: your masters can take away from you everything you like to imagine, but it is above their power to take away from you the inner freedom of your “ego”; and only that inner freedom is of any value to the man of reason. Many people would probably understand all the correctness of that philosophical thought.

If the Russian, “intellectual” is fated to a stormy youth from the political point of view, and if in a riper age he wishes to rest, to live and enjoy it, he will yearn for “cultural work.” He does not even know very well himself what that work must consist of. From his confused explanations you can generally understand only one thing: a very considerable portion of his future “work” will be needed to guard and maintain his “cultured person.” But excuse me, every educated man is of value to us, the future Kulturträger will protest, avoiding that his eyes should meet yours. In other words, he is so good and respectable in his “intellectualness” that when the Russian people look at him they will be cured of many diseases without more ado, just as the Hebrews in the desert were cured by looking at the brazen serpent. And it is this “work” of figuring as a Russian brazen serpent that Mr.

Tikhomirov recommends to his readers. He who once waxed enthusiastic over the fame of Robespierre or Saint-Just now pretends to be infatuated with the splendid examples of Kostanjoglo, the model landlord, or Murazov, the angelically kind taxfarmer. [6*]

But in speaking of such work he should not have made any reference to history. Our author was very imprudent when he recalled Peter, Catherine and Alexander II. Delving down to the meaning of such examples, the reader may say to himself: however much or little “cultural work” there really was in the country during the reign of one or the other of those sovereigns, it consisted in reorganizing social relationships in accordance with the most crying needs of the time. The question is: is tsarism “as it is” now, capable of undertaking a reorganization of Russian social relationships which would be useful and conform to the needs of *our* time? It is said that the most necessary reorganization of those relationships consists in limiting the power of the tsar. Will the tsar undertake such “cultural work”? That is a dangerous thought, Mr. Tikhomirov! The reader, asking himself such a question, is not far from what today is called seditious intent. But that is not all: some readers can even go farther and indulge, for example, in the following “destructive” thinking: the reforms of Alexander II were brought about by the Crimean pogrom, which forced us to adopt a programme of transformations which were unquestionably necessary for the self-preservation of Russia as a European country. The basis of all other reforms at that time was the abolition of serfdom. The reason for it, besides general economic considerations, was that the number of peasant revolts, increasing every year, gave rise to fear of a popular rising. It apparently follows from this that when we wish to force the

tsar to undertake “cultural work” we will have to intimidate him by an uprising, and intimidate him seriously, of course, i.e., not limit ourselves to words, but prepare an uprising in actual fact. This means that revolutionary activity is that same cultural work, but considered from a different aspect. And this last type of “cultural work” is in substance profitable to the autocrats themselves. Roused by the danger of a revolt, they will very easily transform themselves into “emancipators.” For Alexander II to think of reforms Russia had to be in such a desperate condition that the only thing left for Nicholas was to commit suicide. The revolutionaries will reconcile the tsars with the inevitable perspective of “cultural work”; then the suicide of tsars may also prove superfluous.

Do you see, Mr. Grech, what a temptation you lead your readers into? How comes it that you behave so inconsiderately? And still you boast of the “imprint of positiveness” which you were always “noted” for! Why did you delve into history? Would it not have been better for you to limit yourself to exalting that “cultural work” which is so dear to you and which does not in the least concern social relationships and will repay us a hundredfold for all mishaps, even if absolutism takes away from the brave, Russians everything “you like to imagine”?

Our modern Grech himself knows how little assiduity the Russian monarchs display in the domain of historical “cultural work.” That is why he wishes to play on our patriotism by pointing out the Russian “national problems” which, in his mind, can be solved only by a “stable government.” In a certain sense our tsarism seems never to have been lacking in stability, but did that help much in

solving our cultural problems? Let us recall at any rate the history of the Eastern question, which is near enough to us.

We were told that our “national problems” demanded the liberation of Moldavia and Walachia. We fought for that liberatori, but when it was effected absolutism managed to make the Rumanians our enemies. Was arousing them against Russia’ promoting the solution of the Russian “national problems”?

We were told that the liberation of Serbia was necessary in view of our “national problems.” We contributed to it, and the tsar’s policy drove the Serbs into the arms of Austria-Hungary. Did that promote the solution of our national problems?

We were told the interests of Russia require that Bulgaria should be liberated. Enough Russian blood was shed in that cause, but now, thanks to the policy of our “firm” and “stable” government, the Bulgars hate us as their bitterest persecutors. Is that advantageous to Russia? [7*]

The solution of the national problems of any country requires first of all one condition: “stable” conformity of the government’s policy with the country’s national interests. But in our country that condition does not and cannot exist, because our policy is fully dependent on His August Majesty’s fantasy. If Elizabeth fights Frederick of Prussia, Russia is obliged to think that the war is being waged in her national interests. Then Peter HI becomes tsar-Peter, who when he was only heir to the throne, behaved treacherously towards Russia-and the Russian soldiers who until then have been fighting *against* Frederick immediately go over *to his side* and the inhabitants of Russia are obliged to think

that the change of sides is required by their national problems. Or else let Mr. Tikhomirov recall the autocratic pranks played by Paul or Nicholas, who thought that Russia's principal national problem was to play implicitly the role of gendarme of Europe. What did Russia gain from her campaign against Hungary? A few years after it the Unforgettable, in a conversation with a Pole, asked him who was the most stupid king in Poland after Jan Sobieski. And as the Pole did not know what to answer, the tsar said: "I was, because I also saved Vienna when I should not have done it." But the stupidity of His Majesty the King of Poland and Emperor of Russia was bound to have the most harmful effects on the national interests of Russia.

The most important of all our national tasks is to win freedom of political institutions, thanks to which the forces of our country would at last cease to be a toy in the hands of some crowned Kit Kitych. [8*] Speaking of Russia's national tasks, the apologists of the autocracy remind her first of all, against their will, of this task.

Our author writes that only "the desperate romanticism of our revolutionaries allows them to "treat the hereditary autocrats of Russia in a way permissible in respect of a usurper. The Russian tsar did not usurp his power but got it from his solemnly elected ancestors and to this very day the overwhelming majority of the people have not uttered a single word showing a desire to deprive the Romanovs of their powers. To set off still more the greatness of the tsars' authority, Mr. Tikhomirov stresses that the Russian Church, which is acknowledged by the immense majority of the population, "consecrates the tsar, giving him the "title of its temporal head"! [5]

Let us first make a tiny remark: it was not the Church that decided to “consecrate the Russian tsar and give him the title of its temporal head; it was the Russian tsar himself who, on his own inspiration and in the interests of his own authority, decided to confer upon himself that title of honour. That is not a great crime, but why does Mr. Tikhomirov distort history?

To continue, which Romanovs is he talking about? There was a time when in fact Romanovs sat on the Russian throne. It cannot be said that this dynasty was elected by any particularly “solemn” considerations. Some historians affirm that the boyars were in favour of “Misha Romanov” because he was “weak in the head” and they hoped to keep him under their thumb. It is said also that when the tsar was elected, he in turn made a “solemn” promise to respect the rights of the “country.” But nothing definite is known on this point and as far as the election of the Romanovs is concerned we must say with Count A. Tolstoi:

*It happened in summer,
but whether there was agreement
(between the parties concerned)
history does not say. [9*]*

Whatever the ease may be, the Romanovs were in fact elected, and the Russian tsars could claim election by the people if they really belonged to that dynasty. But that dynasty has been extinct for a long time. On the death of Elizabeth Peter Holstein-Gottorp succeeded her on the throne and no Romanovs could have issued from his union with the Princess of Anhalt-Zerbst, even if we acknowledge the legitimacy of Paul’s birth, which Catherine herself

expressly denies in her *Memoirs*. The “country” had absolutely no share in the election of Peter Holstein. It is true that in the female line he was related to the extinct dynasty, but if that is a reason for granting him and his descendants the title of Romanov, the children of the Prince of Edinburgh, for example, should also be given that name, and this does not appear to have occurred to anybody. For the Russian revolutionaries, of course, it is all the same whom they overthrow, the Romanovs or the Holstein-Gottorps, but once more, why distort history?

The Russian tsars must not be treated as usurpers! That’s novelty! We always thought they should not be treated *otherwise than as usurpers*. And our reason was that the Russian tsars themselves not infrequently treated their predecessors as usurpers. Does Mr. Tikhomirov remember the history of the eighteenth century? Does he remember the accession to the throne of Elizabeth and Catherine II? Either ces dames *usurped* the power of tsar, or, if their accession was legitimate, their predecessors were *usurpers*. Paul always called Catherine’s action *usurpation* and they say that Nicholas shared his opinion on this point. Does Mr. Tikhomirov remember the murder of Paul? Does he remember that in this matter Alexander “the pious” can be accused of at least “knowing and not revealing”? What name should we give a man who acceded to the throne by means of a plot against his father and emperor? Of course, it is all the same to the Russian revolutionaries whether they have to deal with tsars “by the grace of God” or with tsars by the grace of the “leibkantsi” [10*] and other praetorians. But, once again, why distort history? Why speak of the legitimate inheritance of power “from ancestors”? Why

indulge in “fantasy” about the holiness of the throne when it is fouled with all sorts of crimes?

Either Mr. Tikhomirov thinks that his readers do not know the history of Russia, and is therefore speculating on their ignorance, or else he does not know it himself and leaps before looking.

O, man of much experience, thy boldness is thy undoing!

And such a brave champion was not understood or appreciated by *Russky Vestnik*! The paper maintains that Mr. Tikhomirov has said nothing new. But where can we get anything new from if you, gentlemen, have absolutely exhausted all there is to say in favour of absolutism? And besides, *Russky Vestnik*'s assurance is not quite fair. Mr. Tikhomirov's pamphlet contains an absolutely new way of intimidating people to deter them from revolutionary work. Here it is the precious fruit of Tikhomirov's originality. “The influence of the way of life itself,” we see on page 18 of his pamphlet, “is extraordinarily unfavourable to the terrorist and conspirator ... His consciousness is dominated by the awareness that not only today or tomorrow, but at every second, he must be ready to die. The only way to living with such an awareness is *not to think* of many things which one must, however, think of if one wishes to remain a man of culture. Any at all serious attachment is real misfortune in this situation. The study of any question whatsoever, of any social phenomenon, etc., is unthinkable. It cannot occur to one to have any at all complicated, or extensive programme. All day long, the terrorist or conspirator must deceive every single individual (with the exception of 5-10 fellow-thinkers); he must hide from everybody and see everyone as

an enemy.” In short, the conspirator and terrorist leads the “life of a hounded wolf” and his fight against the government is a fight which “humiliates” the fighter himself.

Well, how about the metaphor? Not a bad turn of phrase? we ask with Nekrasov. Delve down to the meaning of those ar’güments and you will see that Mr. Tikhomirov is by no means as simple as he often appears to be. in Russia there is a stern and implacable force which oppresses us and takes away from us “everything you like to imagine.” We protest against that force, each singly, and it grounds us to powder. We organize to fight it systematically, and the result of this struggle which, we thought, was to free us, is our own “*humiliation.*” The moral is obvious: if you do not want to “*be humiliated,*” do not protest, submit to the authority ordained by God, “bow thy head, proud man!”

Apparently this conclusion applies directly only to the terrorists but if there is any basis for its premise, *any kind of revolutionary struggle* in Russia must be acknowledged to be “humiliating because every revolutionary without exception has to *fight* police spies and to be reconciled with the thought of his possible death “not only today or tomorrow, but at every second. But is our author right? Fortunately not, far from it; what he says is even just the opposite of the truth and it needs only a little attention on the part of the reader to blow away Tikhomirov’s sophism like smoke.

Let us begin with a small but necessary correction. The revolutionaries *fight* not police spies, but the Russian Government *which persecutes them with the help of its “eyes of the Tsar,” spies and provocators.* Such a method of

fighting against the revolutionaries is most “humiliating” for the government itself. Mr. Tikhomirov says nothing about this, but it is selfevident. [6] As for the revolutionaries, how can persecution by police spies affect them? First of all, this persecution must maintain in each of them the consciousness “that not only today or tomorrow, but at every second, he must be ready to die” for his convictions. Not everybody is able to bear such a thought at every minute. We can find in the history of secret societies in any country examples of weakness, fear, “humiliation” and even complete degradation. But unfortunately for despotism, not all revolutionaries are like that. Constant persecution has quite the opposite effect on people of stronger character; it develops in them not *fear* of persecution but complete and constant *readiness to die* in the fight for a just cause. And this readiness maintains in them a state of mind that pacific philistines who never aroused a single suspicion in any spy cannot come anywhere near to tinder- standing. Everything personal, everything selfish is relegated to the background, or rather is forgotten entirely, and all that remains is the political interest common to all, “the power of one thought alone, a single but burning passion.” [12*] Man attains the height of heroism. And there have been enough people of this kind in our revolutionary movement. See what Kennan writes when he makes the acquaintance of our exiles in Siberia. “What I saw and learned in Siberia stirred me to the very depths of my soul – opened to me a new world of human experiences, and raised, in some respects, all my moral standards,” he says in a letter quoted by Mrs. Dawes in the August 1888 issue of the American magazine *The Century*. “I made the acquaintance of characters as truly heroic in mould – characters of as high a type as any outlined in history, and saw them showing courage,

fortitude, self-sacrifice and devotion to an ideal beyond anything of which I could believe myself capable ... I went to Siberia, regarding the political exiles as a lot of mentally unbalanced fanatics, bomb-throwers and assassins ... When I came away from Siberia I kissed those same men good-bye with my arms round them and my eyes full of tears ...” [13*] What will Mr. Tikhomirov say of such people? The “humiliating” struggle against police spies apparently did not have any humiliating influence on them. Ah, Mr. Grech, Mr. Grech, what an elephant you have not noticed!

Of course, it would be far better if the revolutionaries did not need to expose themselves to persecution by police spies. But that depends on the government. Tikhomirov would be rendering us a great service if he impressed on our rulers that not all means are good in fighting the revolutionaries and that “eyes of the Tsar” are not very attractive.

As for the deception which revolutionaries are allegedly obliged to engage in “all day long,” we can answer Mr. Tikhomirov with the following arguments. We do not know whether he deceived many people when he considered himself a revolutionary. Possibly he did. His own admissions show that as long as the *Vestnik Narodnot Voli* was published, his literary work was *deception* of his readers, for even at that time he no longer believed in the cause he was defending. But from this it by no means follows, that *all* revolutionaries are obliged by the very force of *things* to deceive. Mr. Tikhomirov’s sad example means nothing for them. Revolutionary work only obliges to *secrecy*, but there is an enormous difference between *secrecy* and *deception*. Even the most truthful man who has never told a lie in his whole life can have secrets, and he has

absolute moral right to reveal those secrets *only* to his “fellow-thinkers.” Does not Mr. Grech understand that?

But here, reader, is a most amazing thing: Russian absolutism is so monstrous that even when Mr. Tikhomirov himself has engaged on the path of truth he could not remain steadfast in his role of loyal writer. After all sorts of far-stretched suppositions and sophisms that he has imagined in support of the power of the tsar, he suddenly begins to be ironical; involuntarily adopting Shchedrin’s tone. “The source of legislative and executive power according to Russian law is the sovereign of the country, “he writes. “In republican countries it is the electors. Both of these forms have their advantages, but in both of them political action, whatever be its source, is manifested only through the intermediary of definite institutions” (sometimes such “institutions” as barricades, for example, Mr. Tikhomirov). “These institutions are no less means of activity in Russia than in other countries. We have the State Council, the Senate, the ministries with various supplementary bodies such as the department of trade and manufacture and a fair number of permanent commissions” (p.31). For this caustic sarcasm we can forgive our author many transgressions against logic and common sense, but not, of course, against political decency.

Footnotes

1. By socialist Narodniks we mean all those socialists who held the village community to be the main economic basis of the socialist revolution. in Russia. In this sense the Narodovoltsi must also be considered as Narodniks. They themselves admit that they are. In the *Programme of the Executive Committee* they indeed call themselves socialist Narodniks. [2*]
2. Pp.13-14 of his pamphlet.

3. Pp.12-13 of his pamphlet.

4. P.25.

5. P.16.

6. We need only remember the burial of Sudelkin and we will see how humiliatingly near to spies our tsars are brought by their method of fighting revolutionaries. During the famous Gatchina “isolation” [11*] of Alexander III we read – we cannot remember in which paper – that the august family had arranged a Christmas tree ... for the court police officials. Her Majesty graciously deigned to distribute presents to those officials with her own hands. After such kindness to the *recognized* police nobody would be surprised if during Easter Week there was an announcement in the papers to the effect that Their Majesties had given the kiss of peace to the representatives of the *secret* police, or simply to spies; their “closest fellow-thinkers.”

Notes

1*. *Ilya Muromets* – a hero of Russian legends in the 12-16th centuries, one of the principal defenders of Ancient Rus. Tradition has it that before his famous exploits he was deprived of the use of his legs.

2*. *The Programme of the Executive Committee of Narodnaya Volya* was published in the paper **Narodnaya Volya**, No.3, January 1, 1880, pp.5-7.

3*. In connection with the sharpening of the contradictions inside the Zemlya i Volya organization on the methods of struggle, a congress of the members was convened in Voronezh in June 1879. Preparing for it, the supporters of the terrorist struggle assembled at a separate congress in Lipetsk. The Voronezh Congress adopted a half-hearted decision demanding “special development” of the terrorist struggle against the Government, as well as continuation of the work. among the people.

Plekhanov here refers to his own position at the Voronezh Congress, when he came forward as a determined opponent of terror. Getting no support he left the Congress, but set forth in writing his reasons for leaving the

Zemlya i Volya organization. In this connection, see his article *Unsuccessful History of the Narodnaya Volya party*.

4*. Plekhanov's reference is to a book by De Custine published in Paris in 1843 under the title *La Russie en 1839*. De Custine gave his impressions of a journey through Russia and severely condemned the autocracy. The reactionary journalist N.I. Grech, with the approval of the tsar and the 3rd Department, published a pamphlet in French and German, attempting to refute what De Custine wrote. (On this see Herzen's *Diary, Collected Works*, in 30 volumes, Russ. ed., Vol.II, 1954, pp.311-12 and 340.)

5*. *Moskovskiye Vedomosti (Moscow Recorder)* – a daily which began to appear in 1756. From the sixties of the 19th century it was taken over by Katkov and expressed the views of the most reactionary and monarchist elements.

6*. *Kostanjoglo and Murazov* – characters in the second volume of Gogol's *Dead Souls*.

7*. Plekhanov here alludes to the following historical events: As a result of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878, the Treaty of San Stefano recognized the independence of Rumania, which was formed in 1859 by the union of the principalities of Moldova and Walakhia. Soon, in 1883, Rumania allied with Austria-Hungary against Russia. By the Treaty of San Stefano Bulgaria and Serbia also received their independence. But the policy of the tsarist government, which was subordinate to the interests of reaction in Europe, led to a considerable drop in the prestige of Russian tsarism in those countries. At the same time, the peoples of Rumania, Serbia and Bulgaria were full of sympathy for the Russian people, who had helped them to free themselves from Turkish domination.

8*. *Kit Kitych* – distorted name of Tit Titych Bruskov, a merchant in A.N. Ostrovsky's comedy *Shouldering Another's Troubles*. He came to symbolize the petty tyrant.

9*. A.K. Tolstói, **History of the Russian State from Gostomysl to Timashev**. (Cf. **Collection of Poetry**, published by Sovietsky Pisatel Publishing House, 1937, p.364.)

10*. *Leibkampsantsi* – grenadiers of the Guards Company of the Preobrazhensky Regiment, with whose help a palace revolution was effected in 1741 and the Empress Elizabeth Petrovna was placed on the throne.

11*. Alexander III, intimidated by the increasing terror activities of Narodnaya Volya, and fearing a revolutionary outbreak, remained in his palace at Gatchina for two years in the early eighties after the assassination of Alexander II, voluntarily confining himself and his family to isolation. His contemporaries called him the Gatchina prisoner. In the Preface to the Russian edition of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1882). Marx and Engels called him a “prisoner of war of the revolution.”

12*. From the poem *Mtsyri* by Lermontov.

13*. George Kennan, an American traveller, went to Siberia in 1884-1886 by arrangement with *Century Magazine* in which he undertook to publish his observations. Since Kennan had publicly condemned the terrorists in 1882, the Russian authorities willingly allowed him to enter Russia and visit prisons and forced labour camps, in the hope that owing to his negative attitude to the Russian revolutionaries he would help to attract world opinion to the side of the Russian Government. But Kennan disappointed them. On his return from Siberia he published a number of books describing Russian prisons and the living conditions of the Russian revolutionary exiles. His books produced a powerful impression and caused his readers to censure the tsarist regime. His books were prohibited in Russia until 1905-1906.

IV

From all we have said the reader will perhaps conclude that we do not recognize any merits on the part of our despotism. That would not be quite true. Russian despotism certainly has undeniable historical merits, the chief of which is that it has brought to Russia the seed of its own downfall. It is true that it was forced to do so by reason of its proximity to Western Europe, but all the same it did it, and as a result deserves our sincerest recognition.

The old Muscovite Russia was noted for her completely Asiatic character. This strikes one in the economic life of the country, in all its usages and the whole system of state administration. Muscovy was a kind of China in Europe instead of in Asia. Hence the essential distinction that whereas the real China did all she could to wall herself in from Europe, our Muscovite China tried by every means in her power from the time of Ivan the Terrible to open at least a small window on Europe. Peter succeeded in accomplishing this great task. He effected an enormous change which saved Russia from ossifying. But Tsar Peter could do no more than was within the power of a tsar. He introduced a permanent army with European equipment and Europeanized the system of state administration. In a word, to the Asiatic trunk of Muscovite Russia the "carpenter tsar" attached European arms. "On a social foundation which dated almost back to the eleventh century appeared a diplomacy, a permanent army, a bureaucratic hierarchy, industry satisfying luxurious tastes, schools, academies," and the like, as Rambaud wonderfully describes this period in our history. The power of the new arms was of great service to Russia in her international relations but was

disadvantageous to many aspects of domestic life. Having brought Russia, as Pushkin said, into “a prance” the great tsar ground the people down under the weight of taxation and carried despotism to the degree of might unknown until then. Every state institution which had in the least restrained the power of the tsar was abolished, every custom and tradition which had in the slightest way safeguarded his dignity was forgotten and immediately on Peter’s death those pranks of the “leibkantsi” began owing to which the history of Russian tsardom for a long time was, as an Italian writer put it, a tragedy nel un lupanar. Peter’s “reform” pleased our tsars and tsaritsas chiefly because it strengthened tremendously the power of the autocracy. As for the “cultural work” which Peter began, they tried to escape it as far as was at all possible and it took shattering events to make the Russian monarchs remember Russian “culture.” Thus, the unfortunate outcome of the Crimean War forced Alexander II, as we have already said, to remember it. The Crimean pogrom showed what a terrible distance separated us from Western Europe. While we rested on the laurels we had gathered during the Napoleonic Wars, and placed all our hopes in the Asiatic patience of our soldiers and the valour of Russian bayonets, the foremost peoples in Europe managed to avail themselves of all the most up-to-date achievements in technology. Willy-nilly we had to shake ourselves up too. The state needed new funds, new sources of revenue. But for them to be found, serfdom, which was then greatly cramping our industry, had to be abolished. Alexander II did this and after February 19, 1861, it could be said that our despotism had done its utmost.

From the beginning of the sixties new social requirements began to mature in Russia and the autocracy could not satisfy them without ceasing to be an autocracy.

The fact was that the European arms were little by little exerting enormous influence on the trunk of our social organism. It started gradually to change from Asiatic into European. To maintain the institutions which Peter had introduced into Russia the need was, first, money, second, money, third, money. By the very fact of squeezing this money out of the people, the government was contributing to the development of commodity production in our country. Then, in order to maintain those same institutions, there had to be at least some kind of factory industry. Peter had laid the foundation of that industry in Russia. At the beginning, and perfectly in keeping with the character of its origin, this industry was perfectly subordinate and ancillary to the state. It was feudally bound, like every other social force in Russia, to serve the state. It maintained itself by the serf labour of peasants enlisted for work in the factories and works. Nevertheless, it did what it was meant to do, greatly helped in this by the same international relations. The success of Russian economic development from Peter until Alexander II is best seen from the fact that whereas Peter's reforms *required the serf dependence of the peasants to be intensified*, those of Alexander II *were inconceivable without its abolition*. During the 28 years since February 19, 1861, Russian industry has so rapidly forged ahead that its relations to the state have altered quite substantially. At one time perfectly *subordinate to the state*, it now strives to *subordinate the state to itself*, to place it at its own service. In one of the petitions which they almost annually present to the government, the merchants of the Nizhny

Novgorod Fair naively call the finance ministry the organ of the estate of trade and industry. Businessmen who formerly could not take a step without directions from the government now demand that the Government shall follow *their* directions. Those same Nizhny Novgorod merchants express the modest desire that measures capable of influencing the state of our industry should not be taken without being approved by representatives of their “estate.” Thus, as regards Russian economic development, absolutism has already said its piece. Far from being needed by our industry, state tutelage was even *harmful* to it. The time is not far off when our “estate of trade and industry, convinced by experience that timid remonstrations are useless, will be forced to remind tsarism in a sterner and severer tone that *tempora mutantur et nos tnutamur in illis*. [1]

Mr. Tikhomirov, who once exalted the “real” peasant as a menacing revolutionary force, now speaks of the peasant’s reactionary qualities as of something quite natural. It is precisely the peasant he has in view when he says that tens of millions among the population will not hear of anything except tsarism. Like the procurator in the comic poem *The Speech of Zhelekhovsky* [1*], he is now ready to exclaim in a voice full of emotion:

*Christ be praised,
By the peasant we’ll be saved.*

And, true enough, the peasant would save Mr. Tikhomirov and his “fellow-thinkers” if Mr. Tikhomirov and his present fellow-thinkers could save the peasant, who has been left to us by the good old times. But “no power whatever can save him now.”

The development of commodity and capitalist production is radically changing the life of Russia's working population. Our Moscow and Petersburg despotism used to rely for support on the backwardness of the rural population which lived in economic conditions dating back, according to the expression of Rambaud quoted above, almost to the eleventh century. Capitalism has completely disrupted our ancient patriarchal rural relationships. G.I. Uspensky, who in his essays portrayed the "real" peasant with photographic exactness, admits that such a peasant is fated not to exist much longer on earth, that the old peasant order is breaking up and that in the countryside two new "estates" have been taking shape, namely the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The latter are leaving the countryside as they grow and are going to the town, to industrial centres, to the factories and works.

One does not need to have studied in a seminary to know that the development of the proletariat revolutionizes social relationships. Everybody knows what kind of role the working class has had in the modern history of Europe. In modern European society, where the ruling classes present a horrifying picture of hypocrisy, falseness, perversion, deception, speculation on the Exchange and political corruption, the working class is the only buttress and the only hope of all sincere and thinking supporters of progress.

In our country the formation of this class is of still greater significance. With its appearance the very character of Russian culture is changing: our old *Asiatic* economic life disappearing, giving place to a new, *European* one. It is the working class in our country that is destined to finish the greatest work of Peter – to complete the *Europeanization of*

Russia. But the working class will impart an entirely new character to this matter, on which depends the very existence of Russia as a civilized country. Begun in the past *from above* by the iron will of the most *despotic* of Russian *despots*, it will be completed *from below*, by the *emancipation* movement of the most *revolutionary* of all classes that history has ever known. Herzen notes in his *Diary* that in Russia there is properly speaking no people, but only a prostrate crowd and an executioner. In the working class a *people* in the European sense of the word is now being created in Russia. In it the working population of our country will for the first time rise in all their might and call their executioners to account. Then the hour of Russian autocracy's doom will strike.

Thus the inexorable course of historical development solves all those contradictions which in our country are characteristic of the position not of the revolutionary "intelligentsia" alone, but of any "intelligentsia" whatsoever. The Russian "intelligentsia" themselves are the fruit, quite unintentional, it is true, of Peter's transformation, i.e., of the instruction of youth in "schools and academies" which started with that transformation. More or less European in structure, these schools instilled into the young people taught in them many European concepts which were contradicted at every step by the Russian system and mainly by the whole practice of autocracy. It is therefore understandable that a section of educated Russians not satisfied with the majestic perspective of the hierarchy system, adopted an oppositional attitude to the government. Thus there arose in our country the stratum which it is customary to call the intelligentsia. As long as this stratum existed on a social basis dating back almost to the eleventh

century, it could “revolt and be infatuated with any utopias it pleased but it could change absolutely nothing in the actual situation. In the general course of Russian life this stratum was one of the “lost generation,” the whole of it was a kind of “*intelligent superfluity*,” as Herzen described some of its varieties. With the destruction of the old economic foundation of Russian social relationships, with the appearance of the working class in our country, everything is changing. By going among the workers, bringing them science, arousing the class consciousness of the proletarians, our revolutionaries from among the “intelligentsia” can become a powerful factor of social development – they who often enough despaired and lost heart, changed programme after programme without any result just as a hopelessly sick man resorts in vain to one treatment after another. It is among the proletariat that the Russian revolutionaries will find that support of the “*people*” which they have not had until recently. The *strength* of the working class will save the Russian revolution from *exhaustion* according to the expression now used with a smile of satisfaction by Mr. Tikhomirov and his “fellow-thinkers.” Indeed, “individual revolts” are incapable of destroying any political system whatsoever (and any movement of the “intelligentsia” *alone* is nothing hut a certain number of “individual revolts”), but those individual revolts will merge with the mass “*revolt*” of the whole class as separate streams merge with a mighty river.

There is still time, *it is not yet too late*. Will our “intelligentsia” understand their position? Will They be capable of assuming the grateful role that history reserves for them?

Whether they understand or not, events will not wait for them. The absence of allies among the “intelligentsia”¹ not prevent our working class from becoming aware of its interests, understanding its tasks, bringing forward leaders from its own ranks and creating its own *working-class intelligentsia*. *Such an intelligentsia* will not betray its cause or abandon it to the mercy of fate.

It must again be noted, however, that in its fight against autocracy the working class will in all probability not be alone, although, of course, only the working class is capable of giving that fight the decisive turn. The very state of affairs will necessarily drive the whole of our bourgeoisie, i.e., our “society,” our world of trade and industry, our landlords, that petty-bourgeois nobility, and finally even the rural “third estate” to a struggle which is *within their power*.

The Kolupayevs and Razuvayevs [2*] are so absurd and conservative that at first sight they seem destined to be the future immovable foundation of “order.” In time they will indeed assume that role but they must necessarily first pass through their “period of stormy strivings.”

Our financial system is founded on the enslavement of the peasant to the state, which takes from him “everything you like to imagine, guided by the *far* from complicated consideration that “he will get it.” [3*] The all-suffering “he” long justified this assurance that was so flattering for him, but now even his amazing capacity for “getting things,” is nearing its ruin. As we already said, “he” is going through a process of differentiation, being transformed into a proletarian, on the one hand, and a kulak, on the other. As the most assiduous and vigilant chief cannot get much out of

the light-headed proletarians, the burden of taxation weighing down on the village community is falling more and more on the wealthier members. It is true that the latter endeavour to repay themselves by appropriating the plots abandoned by the proletarians, but it is not difficult to understand that when it is a case of dues and taxes they cannot be as disinterested as the good old “he” was. In his simplicity “he” dreamed only of getting an economy of his own, and when he succeeded, as he did in the great majority of cases under the old system, he could be enslaved to the state by being deprived of every kind of income, both known and unknown to economists, with the exception of his meagre wage. The kulak cannot be content with such a wage. He must give it to his hired labourer and he must make sure of a *decent profit* for himself. But this is inconceivable without radical changes in the Russian financial system, changes which only the representatives of the whole country will be able to effect. And there is no need to be a prophet to know beforehand that in this respect there will be serious unpleasantness between the kulak and his “father the Tsar.”

Thus, Russian absolutism has been and still is preparing its own downfall. The time is not far off when absolutism will become absolutely impossible in Russia and then, of course, not many educated people in our country will be sorry for it. One can argue, and it is even useful to do so, over the means by which we should strive to achieve political freedom. But among honest and educated people there cannot be doubt as to whether we require that freedom or not. “We now have enough experience to know what our old absolutism is, so no more compromising, no more hesitation, but put your thumbs in its eyesockets and your knee on its chest!” [2]

Footnotes

1. It is generally thought in our country that provided the government introduces protectionist tariffs and is not miserly as regards subsidies for this or that stock company, our bourgeoisie no longer have any reason to be dissatisfied with it. This is an entirely erroneous view. Here, as in all other matters, good intentions are by no means sufficient: *ability* is also needed, and that is what our government has not got. I.S. Aksakov, who was inspired in this case by our Moscow merchants, said, for example, in his *Rus* (October 30, 1882) that all the efforts of our merchants and industrialists to find new foreign markets for the disposal of their commodities “are not only weakly supported by the Russian administration, but can even be said to be unceasingly paralyzed by the absence of a clearly conceived general trade policy in our government. He explained this absence by the perfectly correct consideration that “such is our bureaucratic system, in which all sections of administration are divided between departments to the detriment of the whole, and each department is very nearly a state within the state.” He gives the following arguments to prove this: “The finance ministry, for example, works out and establishes a whole system of encouragements and support for Russian industry and trade, including, among other things, tariffs for foreign goods imported into Russia, and the railway departments, which are administered by another ministry, that of communications, establishes a transport tariff which reduces to nil the tariff combinations of the finance ministry and protects foreign trade to the detriment of Russian trade. And a third ministry, that of the interior, which has under its authority natural, not artificial roads, neglects and allows to become unusable the important ancient trade route, and the foreign affairs ministry suddenly concludes some kind of treaty without careful consideration of Russian trade interests (allowing, for example, in the Berlin treaty, the obligation for Bulgaria to follow the Turkish tariff, which is the most unfavourable for Russia and the most favourable for England and Austria, etc., etc.). In the

following issue of *Rus*, Aksakov stated that every safeguard of Russian industrial interests had to be obtained “by fighting, i.e., after long and obstinate insistence.” In the same issue, speaking of transit through the Caucasus, the editor of the Slavophile paper, who, we repeat, is here inspired by Moscow manufacturers, says that “our industrial world,” dissatisfied with the direction adopted in this question by Petersburg was “ashamed, embarrassed and grieved and had already lost all hope of energetic support for the Russian national (*sic!*) interests in official spheres in Petersburg.” Well, this seems clear!

2. Words of Lassalle in his speech *Was nun?* [4*]

Notes

1*. At the trial of the revolutionary Narodniks known as the “trial of the 193” (1877-1878) the State Prosecutor Zhelekhovsky made a speech which acquired ill repute for its dishonesty and lack of conviction and his obvious calumny of the accused. During the trial one of the accused wrote a poem parodying this speech. In 1883, it was published by Narodnaya Volya members in a hectographed booklet entitled *Speech for the Prosecution by State Prosecutor Zhelekhovsky at the Trial of the 193, 1877-1878*. (*Krasny Arkhiv*, 1929, Vol.3 (34), pp.228-30.)

2*. *Kolupayevs* and *Razuvayevs* – characters in several tales by Saltykov-Shchedrin (e.g. the *Poshekhon Tales*). Their names came to symbolize merchants, kulaks and other representatives of the rural bourgeoisie noted for their conservatism, vulgarity and tendency to brutal exploitation.

3*. *He will get it (yon dostanet)* – words of the merchant Razuvayev in Saltykov-Shchedrin’s *Refuge of Mon Repos*. Asked where he would get his profits from if the people become “utterly impoverished,” he answered: *yon dosta-a-net (he will get it)*.

4*. *What Now?* – Lassalle’s second speech *On the Essence of the Constitution* delivered before the parliamentary elections in Prussia in 1862.

V

To conclude, a few words about our Grech. The reader can now see what should have constituted progress in our revolutionary theories and what will constitute it. As we noted above, our socialist Narodniks of all possible groups and trends, including the Narodnaya Volya party, *did not find support* in evolution. but *sought support* against it in all sorts of sophisms. Their doctrine consisted in *idealizing* the economic system which, if it were in reality as stable and unshakable as it seemed to them, would condemn them for ever to utter powerlessness. A criticism of Narodism was therefore the first and indispensable step forward on the way to the future development of our revolutionary movement. If Mr. Tikhomirov was seriously grieved by the inability of the Russian revolutionaries to make evolution and revolution harmonize, he only had to undertake such a criticism. But he did just the opposite. He did not criticize Narodism, he only carried its main propositions to the extreme. The errors which underlay the Narodist outlook reached such gigantic proportions in his head that he can call himself a “worker for progress” (whether peaceful or otherwise does not matter in this case) only as a joke. In brief, if the Narodniks proceeded from certain erroneous propositions, Mr. Tikhomirov carries those propositions to the extent of monstrosity and now proceeds happily from the absurd. But that horse will not carry him far!

Such is the sad history of our author’s “revolutionism.” This “revolutionism” was for a long time in complete theoretical solitude, but the time came when he saw that “it was no good for him to be alone” and he deigned to contract lawful wedlock with some theory of evolution. He “sought” himself

a suitable party for a few years and finally rested his eyes in love on the theory of “unity of the party with the country.” This very modest-looking maiden, who passed herself off, so to say, as the major theory of evolution, turned out to be first a wicked woman who drove Mr. Tikhomirov’s “revolutionism” to the grave, and secondly an impostor, who had nothing in common with any doctrine of social development.

Mr. Tikhomirov thinks that this story contains a lot of instructive material! It is instructive, but in a sense not so flattering for him.

He imagines that on reading the pamphlet *Why I Ceased to be a Revolutionary* everybody will think: it is obvious that the author was a revolutionary only through the fault of others, only because all our educated people are noted by their extremely absurd habits of thinking; and Mr. Tikhomirov ceased to be a revolutionary thanks to his own outstanding features of “creative” reason and his wonderfully profound patriotism. Alas! not even *Russky Vestnik* came to that conclusion.

In Mr. Tikhomirov’s complaints about what he had to suffer from the revolutionaries because of his “evolution” one can sense proud consciousness of his own superiority. He is cleverer than the others, the others don’t understand or appreciate him and insult him terribly when they should be ready to applaud him.

But Mr. Tikhomirov is cruelly mistaken. He owes his “evolution only to his *lack of development*. Woe from wit is not his woe. His woe is *woe from ignorance*.

And this man, who understands no more about socialism than a pen-pusher in a Petersburg police station, was for a long time considered as a prophet and an interpreter of some kind of special “Russian” socialism which he liked to oppose to West European socialism! Revolutionary youth listened to his disquisitions, considering him as the continuer of the work of Zhelyabov and Perovskaya. Now they see what this would-be continuer was. Mr. Tikhomirov’s betrayal has forced our revolutionaries to direct their critical attention to his *person*. But that is not all. They, are now obliged to check critically all *that* Mr. Tikhomirov *wrote* throughout the eighties when he, although himself not believing what he wrote, thought it necessary to write in the capacity of revolutionary. [1]A lot of rubbish Mr. Tikhomirov came out with, a lot of questions he muddled during those years. And until we can clear up that muddle, even if we have broken with him and assessed him as he deserves, we shall still not free ourselves from *theoretical Tikhomirovism*. *But free ourselves we must.*

And now, good-bye, Mr. Tikhomirov. May our orthodox god grant you health and our autocratic god reward you with the rank of general!

Footnote

1. See p.8 of his pamphlet. In *Faith and Truth, by Conscience and Conviction*, Mr. Tikhomirov served the revolutionary cause only “until nearly the end of 1880.” Since that remote time all that he had was a mere “formal” loyalty to the banner. But that did not prevent him from writiné numerous disquisitions on revolutionary themes, disquisitions which, he says, fill “more than 600 pages in small type.”