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ABSTRACT

A. S. SUVORIN AND HIS "MALEN'KIIA PIS'MA": A PUBLISHER'S PUBLIC COMMENTARY ON TSARIST RUSSIA, 1900-1906

By

Robert Anthony Bartol

While the Russian revolutionary press has been the subject of considerable scholarly attention, the Russian legal press has been largely neglected as an area of study. The present research examines the published opinions of Aleksei Sergeevich Suvorin, wealthy publisher of Tsarist Russia's largest legal newspaper Novoe vremia. The study focuses on the views of Suvorin as expressed in his Novoe vremia column "Malen'kii pis'ma" during the years 1900-1906, a particularly turbulent period of Russian history. As owner and publisher of Novoe vremia, Suvorin held a unique position from which to acquire information and express his personal commentaries on Russia's major foreign and domestic issues. The study, therefore, has three main purposes: first, to examine a major viewpoint being disseminated to the Russian public; secondly, to lay the basis for the analysis of the relationship between Suvorin's opinions and the entire spectrum of political and social thought

of the era; and, finally, to contribute to the understanding of the reactions of the wealthy classes as they faced foreign defeat and domestic upheaval.

At the beginning of 1900, Suvorin endorsed Russia's foreign policies aimed at peaceful expansion in the Far East. But when the Boxer Crisis in the summer of 1900 threatened Russia's railway interests, Suvorin modified his views to defend Russia's military intervention and occupation of Manchuria. Suvorin's support for Witte's foreign policies coincided with his endorsement of Witte's domestic programs which attempted to industrialize Russia and assure its future economic progress. In conjunction with Witte's system, Suvorin urged progressive reforms which he believed vital to Russia's strength and progress. He especially championed educational reforms designed to extend educational opportunities and preserve Russian culture. When Witte was forced to resign, Suvorin shifted his support to the zemstvo movement, which he believed would bolster Russian nationalism and bring reforms "from above" to overcome Russia's backwardness.

When Japan's attack on Port Arthur initiated hostilities, Suvorin abandoned opposition to war against Japan. Instead, he urged the Russian population to temporarily suppress desires for reform and to support the war effort until victory. However, repeated defeats exposed Russia's domestic weakness and forced Suvorin to demand certain domestic reforms

which he regarded as vital to victory. As popular discontent with the government's failure to initiate effective domestic reforms mounted, Suvorin called for the convocation of a representative Zemskii Sobor to resolve the war issue and to reunite the people with the Tsar. The Tsar's decision to negotiate peace disappointed Suvorin, who continued to advocate military victory as the only acceptable conclusion of the war with Japan. Consequently, he regarded the Treaty of Portsmouth as a serious blow to Russia's international prestige; but he resigned himself to the war's outcome, hoping peace and the Tsar's concession to summon an Imperial Duma would result in progressive reforms.

Instead of peace and reform, the end of the war was followed by increased revolutionary upheaval which forced the Tsar to issue the October Manifesto granting political freedom to the Russian people and legislative powers to the Imperial Duma. Since the October Manifesto embodied the basis for the progressive reforms desired by Suvorin, he supported the document, as well as the new Witte government simultaneously formed by the Tsar. At the same time, he advocated use of strong measures against revolutionary elements which sought a constituent assembly and an end to the autocracy. Suvorin urged an immediate calling of the Duma and hoped the noble and bourgeoisie classes would assume leadership. Although he himself was not a member of a particular party, among the existing parties he favored the

Octobrists. Even though the impressive election victories of the Kadet Party disappointed him, Suvorin continued to support the Imperial Duma, believing that it would reunite the Russian people. Suvorin's sympathy for the Octobrist Party reflected the general theme of his "Malen'kiia pis'ma" which was based primarily on a nationalistic philosophy and a desire for progressive reforms of the autocracy.

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INTRODUCTION

At the turn of the nineteenth century, Aleksei Sergeevich Suvorin, a self-made millionaire, owned and published Tsarist Russia's largest newspaper, Novoe vremia. In this capacity, Suvorin had control over one of the main sources of information during a particularly turbulent period in Russian history, 1900-1906. Between 1900 and 1906 Russia faced both foreign and domestic crises. The Boxer Rebellion and the Russo-Japanese War embroiled the country in conflict in the Far East while increasing discontent at home culminated in a revolution which marked the end of strong autocratic rule. During this era, a series of articles which Suvorin wrote and published in a Novoe vremia column, "Malen'kiia pis'ma," provided a rare continuous and widely-circulated commentary on major issues. Yet, in spite of his unique position virtually no research has been conducted on the opinions which Suvorin was disseminating to his readers. Considered a conservative and, undoubtedly because of his wealth alone, an influential member of society, he represents an element which has been neglected during the heavy concentration of research on Russia's revolutionary movements.

The purpose of the present research is threefold.

First, it examines a major viewpoint being disseminated to the Russian public during a crucial period in Russian history. Secondly, the research lays the groundwork for the study of Suvorin's opinions as they fit into the entire spectrum of political and social thought of the era. Finally, the present study contributes to the understanding of the position of the wealthy classes as they faced foreign defeat and domestic upheaval.

CHAPTER I

FROM PEASANT TO JOURNALIST

On February 27, 1909, hundreds of prominent Russian citizens thronged the day-long events celebrating the 50th jubilee of Aleksei Sergeevich Suvorin's literary career. Throughout the festivities numerous speakers lavished praise on the publisher of St. Petersburg's Novoe vremia, lauding his literary and philanthropic contributions. The homage paid to Suvorin on that occasion was all the more remarkable because his rise to a position of tremendous wealth and power was extraordinary for a man of such humble origins as his.¹ For, Aleksei Suvorin entered the world on September 11 (O.S.), 1834, in the peasant village of Korshevo, district of Voronezh, the birthplace of his father. He was the first of nine children born to Sergei Dmitreevich Suvorin (1784-1855), a former state serf and retired military officer, and Aleksandra L'vovna Sokolova, the daughter of a local priest and Sergei's second wife. At the time of his second marriage, Sergei was 49 years old and more than twenty years

¹G. L. I., "Piatidesiatiletanii iubilei Alekseia Sergeevicha Suvorina," Istoricheskii vestnik, CXVI (January-April, 1909), 193-208.

his wife's senior. He had just retired from a military career which began in 1807 when he was called into the Imperial Russian army at the rank of private and assigned to the Preobrashchenskii Regiment. Here he was fortunate to meet a companion, "Uncle," who taught him to read and write, utilizing an ABC book which Sergei bought at a flea market. As a result the peasant Sergei later saw that his sons learned the reading and writing which were to play so crucial a role in Aleksei's future career.²

After recovering from wounds suffered in the vicinity of the battle of Borodino in 1812, Sergei was made an officer. He became quartermaster and paymaster in the Kostromskii infantry regiment, rose to the rank of staff captain and received a silver medal for his participation in the war with Turkey. In 1829 he was promoted to captain, a rank which also gave him a patent of nobility and which was probably a factor in later enabling Aleksei to enter a military academy. After the 1832 Polish campaign, Sergei retired to his native village with some savings and a 600-ruble pension. Within a short time his first wife and the mother of their two daughters died of cholera. Soon after, Sergei married Aleksandra and began the second family which

²"Roditeli A. S. Suvorina," Istoricheskii vestnik, CXXXIV (August-December, 1913), 553; B. B. Glinskii, "Aleksei Sergeevich Suvorin, Biograficheskii ocherk," Istoricheskii vestnik, CXXXIV (January-March, 1912), 4-5. Hereinafter referred to as "Suvorin."

would produce one of Russia's foremost publishing magnates. Sergei was a well-liked and respected member of the local community, sought by his neighbors as an adviser and friend. In 1845 he served in the Voronezh Gubernia Noblemen's Assembly.³

Sergei settled his family on farm land, renting out part of the land and planting oats and rye on the remainder. Aleksei's childhood, therefore, was spent in a rural peasant environment under the somewhat militaristic discipline of his father who referred to him as "a little soldier." Suvorin's adult comments reveal a deep respect for his father whom he described as strong, courageous and extremely active. His mother "also always bustled about" and Suvorin noted that although she was illiterate she took good care of the children, none of whom died during childhood or adolescence. Suvorin's feelings about his parents appear to have encouraged his later publishing efforts to enlighten the Russian peasants.⁴

The family lived in a two-building izba with a thatched roof. The furnishings were carved by Sergei himself. Adjacent to the izba, the industrious Sergei planted a grove of fruit trees and built a grain mill to

³"Roditeli A. S. Suvorina," p. 553; Glinskii, "Suvorin," p. 4.

⁴Glinskii, "Suvorin," pp. 5-6.

contribute to the support of his large family. Ordinarily the family ate in the kitchen with the workers hired by the father. Meals consisted mainly of bread and cabbage eaten from a common bowl with wooden spoons. On Sundays and holidays the fare included tea and the family ate by themselves in one of the "rooms." As an adult Suvorin recalled that they made no use of individual tableware and napkins--a deep contrast to his later luxurious life style.⁵

As a child, Aleksei received part of his education roaming the fields and forests which surrounded his home and playing on the banks of the Bitiug River. This small radius of activity gave him a rather limited range of experience. Workers who helped build his father's mill dined with the family and gave the young Suvorin his first exposure to such things as separate eating utensils, "Old Believers" and "dining rooms." Until he began to learn to read, the only book Aleksei had ever seen was his father's Bible. Aleksei's father prayed a great deal but did not force the children to join him, although he read to them from the Bible. Here also he apparently influenced his son Aleksei who remained deeply religious throughout his life, often quoting biblical passages in his writings.

When Aleksei was seven, he and one of his

⁵ Ibid., pp. 4-7; "Roditeli A. S. Suvorina,"
p. 553.

brothers began to study reading and writing, learning "willingly" under the direction of a young fellow who lived in the village. They continued their studies with the sexton Pavel Petrovich Ermolaev, the husband of their stepsister Nataliia. Since he was rarely at home, their stepsister supervised their work by having them repeat the lessons aloud. Thus, Suvorin later recalled, they memorized their arithmetic problems with no understanding of the steps involved. After about two years, the brothers were sent to the district school at Bobrov, where the teachers were apparently no better. Two months later Aleksei took an exam for the new Mikhailovskii Cadet Corps School in Voronezh and on petition was accepted. The school offered a general education program which included the dramatic arts, dancing and music; this program was to play a crucial role in Suvorin's educational development and future career.⁶

Coming to Voronezh in 1845, Suvorin moved from a small rural village atmosphere into a different and challenging environment. "I found myself in totally new conditions," he wrote reminiscing some years later. Even the beds with their clean linens astounded the peasant boy. He also found that most of the students had much better educational backgrounds than he. Many of them could even speak French while he found to his chagrin that he spoke

⁶Glinskii, "Suvorin," p. 7; "Roditeli A. S. Suvorina," pp. 556-57.

the folk Russian of his mother. At first his fellow cadets of more prestigious backgrounds teased Aleksei for his peasant manners and origin. However he diligently committed himself to study and quickly adapted to his new environment, giving up his village ways.⁷

Attending school in the provincial capital provided exciting cultural and social opportunities for Suvorin.⁸ In his memoirs he recalled being invited to the homes of his teachers and fellow students, where he first became familiar with secularized dramatic arts, literature, dancing and music. He describes reading with passion his first secular book, Iurii Miloslavskii. In his teachers' homes he secretly became familiar with the works of the Russian poet A. S. Pushkin including Ruslan i Liudmila and Bakhchisaraiskii fontan; and memorized such banned works as Petr Veliki v Ostrotozhske.⁹

Through a cadet friend, Kolin, Aleksei at age fourteen saw his first stage production, Novichki v liubi.

⁷Glinskii, "Suvorin," p. 8.

⁸Baron von Haxthausen, The Russian Empire: Its People, Institutions and Resources, trans. by Robert Faire, (London: Frank Cass and Co., Ltd., 1968), 383-90. This is a reprint of Baron von Haxthausen's earlier work describing his travels in Russia during the mid-nineteenth century. The narrative of his visit to the city of Voronezh and town of Bobrov, in 1843, provides an interesting account of the economic and cultural developments of this region where Aleksei Suvorin was living and studying.

⁹Glinskii, "Suvorin," pp. 10-11.

He was so intrigued that he became a devotee of the numerous dramatic productions at the newly-built Voronezh theater. In later life drama-patron Suvorin fondly recalled his attendance at the performance of such productions as Velizarii, Materinskoe blagosloven'e, Skopin-Shuiskii, and Tsarstvo Zhenshchin. Here he became acquainted with famous performers like Shvan, Vasil'ev, Lenskii and his wife, Mochalova, and Priakhina. Suvorin even attempted at this early age to write his own stage plays and joined in the formation of a school theatrical society through which he played the comic role of a drunken soldier in Vecher iz zhizhi velikago gosudaria and also performed in other productions. These experiences marked the beginning of a life-long association with the Russian theater. Reflecting on his education at the Mikhailovskii Cadet Corps School and his social activities in the city of Voronezh, Suvorin acclaimed the discipline and training at the school and the wealth of cultural opportunity opened to him.¹⁰

In 1851, after completion of his cadet corps studies, Aleksei entered special classes in the Dvorianskii Regiment, later called the Konstantinovskii Military School. While with the regiment, he completed as far as "Predstaviv" a biographical dictionary of outstanding persons which he modeled on a similar work of the French historian Bouillet.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 10-11.

This early literary composition evoked a reprimand from his military superiors, who scolded him for quoting the Russian writer V. G. Belinsky and for treating such "free thinkers" as Byron and Voltaire in a sympathetic manner. In 1853 Suvorin graduated from the Dvorianskii regiment in combat engineering but declined to enter the military service, believing that he could not adjust to the rigors of military life. Instead he sought entrance to a university but a lack of finances prevented him from continuing his formal education.¹¹

Soon after, Suvorin passed the test for teacher of a district school and returned to Bobrov. Here he became a schoolmaster, tutor and later a teacher of geography in the district school, earning a meager salary of less than fifteen rubles. To supplement his earnings, Suvorin engaged in preparing articles for local periodical publications and other literary enterprises. In 1858 he produced his first literary piece of significance, a Russian translation of The Captive, by the French writer, Pierre-Jean de Beranger. Subsequently, Suvorin succeeded in publishing translations of verse and a series of humorous sketches of country life which appeared in the periodical publications Moskovskii vestnik, Vaza, Vesel'chak

¹¹S. Vemerov, "A. S. Suvorin," Ensiklopedicheskii slovar' (St. Petersburg, 1901), XIII, 894; Glinskii, "Suvorin," pp. 13-14.

and Russkii dnevnik. These literary successes attracted the attention of a Count Ferzen, in the province capital Voronezh, who invited Suvorin to become a private tutor there. Later Suvorin obtained a position as a teacher of geography and history at the Voronezh district school and also taught at two girls' boarding schools in the area.¹²

Cultural and literary life in the city of Voronezh proved exciting and interesting for Aleksei. Soon after arriving in the city he was in regular contact with the local literary circle headed by M. F. de-Pule, Suvorin's former Russian language teacher at the Mikhailovskii Cadet Corps. He also made the acquaintance of the poet I. S. Nikitin. Through these literary contacts Suvorin became a regular reader of Poliarnaia zvezda and Alexander Herzen's Kolokol and was stimulated to continue his literary pursuits.¹³ He also contributed to a local publication, Voronezhskaia beseda, edited by de-Pule and to the Moscow weekly Ruskaia rech', under the pseudonym "V. Markov."¹⁴

¹²Vladimir Yermilov, Anton Pavlovich Chekhov: 1860-1904 (Moscow, 1960), p. 199; Glinskii, "Suvorin," p. 14; Vemerov, "A. S. Suvorin," p. 894.

¹³Glinskii, "Suvorin," pp. 14-15.

¹⁴Vemerov, "A. S. Suvorin," p. 894; "V. Markov" was the first of numerous pseudonyms utilized by Aleksei S. Suvorin during his long career. For a complete list see I. F. Masanov, Slovar' psevdonimov russkikh pisatelei i obshchestvennykh deiatelei, IV (Moscow, 1960) 458.

His articles proved to be popular and Suvorin's talent as a journalist soon began to gain recognition.

Some of Suvorin's contributions to Russkaia rech' attracted the attention of the journal's publisher, Count Sal'ias, who invited Suvorin to come to Moscow. The decision was a difficult one because of the uncertainty which lay ahead. Nevertheless, in July, 1861, too poor to pay for transportation, Suvorin traveled on foot to a peasant's hut in a town some eight or nine miles away from Moscow. Before long he gained a permanent position on the staff of Russkaia rech'. Thus began the main thrust of Suvorin's journalistic career. Through the social opportunities made available by Count Sal'ias, Suvorin was able to gain entry into the leading literary circles of Moscow, which included the young rising writers N. S. Leskov, V. A. Sleptsov and A. I. Levitov. Within a short time Suvorin's circle of acquaintances included such noted literary figures as A. N. Ostrovskii, M. E. Saltykov, N. A. Nekrasov, Count L. N. Tolstoi and I. S. Turgenev. At the home of I. S. Aksakov he met members of Moscow's Slavophile circles. Here he witnessed arguments among the city's Slavophiles and Polish and Lithuanian visitors over the status of the western and southwestern regions. It is probable that these experiences influenced his later

Pan-Slavist approach to many of Russia's problems.¹⁵

In early 1862, Russkaia rech' ceased publication and left Suvorin in a difficult financial position. His writings had, however, come to the attention of N. G. Chernyshevskii, radical editor of Sovremennik, who invited Suvorin to become a regular contributor. Such works as "Soldat i soldatka" written under the pseudonym "Neznakomets" gained popularity with the liberal Russian reading public who viewed him as an earnest progressive liberal writer. Such popularity also attracted the suspicious attention of the oppressive government censors; but with great skill Suvorin adapted his writings to circumvent the whims of Tsarist censors. This successful relationship with the censors in Moscow facilitated diverse literary activities. At the invitation of Count Tolstoi, Suvorin composed and published brief booklets and pamphlets for the peasants at Tolstoi's estate, Yasnaya Polyana.¹⁶

Suvorin's dedication to making cheap literary editions available to the Russian population, a goal he would pursue on a large scale when he became a wealthy

¹⁵Vemerov, "A. S. Suvorin," p. 894; Yermilov, Anton Pavlovich Chekhov: 1860-1904, p. 200; Glinskii, "Suvorin," pp. 16-18.

¹⁶Yermilov, Anton Pavlovich Chekhov: 1860-1904, p. 200; Vemerov, "A. S. Suvorin," p. 894; Masanov, II (Moscow, 1957), 257.

publisher, inspired him actively to support the Moscow-centered Obshchestvo rasprostraneniia poleznykh knig. For this society, which published books for peasants, Suvorin produced three works: Ermak, pokoritel' Sibiri, Boiarin Matveev, Istoriia smutnago vremeni. The last work failed to gain the censor's approval and had to be published later in Suvorin's career. Subsequently, the harassment of the Tsarist censors extended into Suvorin's other journalistic ventures. For example, his article "Alenka" intended for Fedor Dostoevskii's journal Vremia was prevented from publication by the censors. Instead, Suvorin managed to publish the article in another journal, Otechestvenny zapiski, where he became a regular contributor.¹⁷

In 1863 Suvorin's patrons in Moscow's literary circles, Count Sal'ias and his wife, encouraged the young journalist to pursue his literary career in the Russian empire's capital city, St. Petersburg. At this same time Suvorin's writings had come to the attention of V. F. Korsh, the liberal editor of the S.-Petersburgskiiia vedomosti, one of the capital city's moderately liberal newspapers. Suvorin, therefore, accepted an offer of a position on Korsh's editorial staff and moved to St. Petersburg. Within a few months his literary talent and expertise in dealing with the censorship officials won him the position of

¹⁷Vemerov, "A. S. Suvorin," p. 894; Glinskii, "Suvorin," p. 18.

chief sub-editor and final copyreader at a salary of 2,000 rubles a year. The S.-Peterburgskiiia vedomosti under Korsh voiced a moderately liberal editorial policy, supporting the reforms of the 1860's--particularly the controversial peasant land and Polish questions. Because of this liberal orientation, the newspaper and its final proofreader were constantly under careful scrutiny by the government censors. Suvorin was, however, quite successful at piloting the newspaper through the censor's narrow bounds. In the process he garnered increasing skill in pleasing the censor's eye, an invaluable talent he later perfected in the management of his own publishing enterprises.¹⁸

The income from his position on the S.-Peterburgskiiia vedomosti proved inadequate and the young journalist sought additional financial resources by writing reviews for the Russian journal Russkii invalid under another pseudonym "A. I-n." In addition, Suvorin continued as a regular contributor to Chernyshevskii's journal, Sovremennik. Here, under the pseudonym "Neznakomets" he published sketches of peasant life which helped establish him as a gifted and popular writer. Contemporary readers saw in Suvorin a witty satirist, especially appealing to the

¹⁸ Nina A. Toumanova, Anton Chekhov: The Voice of Twilight Russia (New York: Columbia University Press, 1937), p. 51; Glinskii, "Suvorin," p. 19; V. M. Chernov, "Chekhov i Suvorin," Novii zhurnal (New York), XI (1945), 246-47.

emerging populist liberal thought of his readers in this era of reforms.¹⁹

The reform-minded elements of St. Petersburg's literary circles embraced the young journalist as the son of a peasant who had personally experienced the poverty and misery of the peasant world. To the literary circles he was a plebian "raznochinets," who disclosed in his writing a sensitivity to the life and attitudes of Russia's lower rural classes. Even in the midst of such talented contributors as K. D. Kavelin, A. I. Koshelyov, N. I. Kostomarov, and A. D. Gradovskii, Suvorin's Sunday feuilletons were applauded. Under the editorship of Korsh, these regular contributors, and especially Suvorin, became a leading element in the moderate liberal movement which criticized contemporary Russia's backwardness and supported the reforms of the 1860's. Suvorin and his colleagues issued caustic and resolute denunciations of the officials and persons responsible for both the slowness in carrying out the reforms and for the stagnant policies guiding Imperial Russia's political, social and literary life. The Russian bureaucracy did not remain idle in the face of this criticism and its censors constantly reviewed and pressured Suvorin. But his skill in circumventing the censorship prevailed, and his Sunday

¹⁹Vemerov, "A. S. Suvorin," p. 895; Glinskii, "Suvorin," p. 19.

feuilletons, "Nedel'nye ocherki i kartinki" under the pseudonym "Neznakomets," earned him the title, "King of the Feuilleton."²⁰

It was this reputation which eventually made him a prime target in the reactionary wave that swept Imperial Russia after the abortive assassination attempt on the life of Tsar Alexander II by the terrorist D. V. Karakozov, in April, 1866. Suvorin was the first liberal writer to be tried under the new "Temporary Censorship" regulations. His book, Vsiakie: Nechto v rode povesti, was published the same week as the assassination attempt and served as the basis of the charges brought against Suvorin. The book contained previously published articles from his daily columns in the S.-Peterburgskiaia vedomosti which featured lampoons of many public figures and government officials as well as scathing commentaries on contemporary Russia. But because Suvorin had included some new critical articles and because his pseudonym "A. I. Bobrovskii" was mistakenly linked to revolutionary circles, the chief censor in St. Petersburg, N. A. Nekliudov, ordered the 1500 copies of the book seized and the author investigated by the oppressive Third Section for "anarchist propaganda threatening the

²⁰ Chernov, "Chekhov i Suvorin," pp. 245-47; Vemerov, "A. S. Suvorin," p. 895.

security of the Tsar."²¹

At his censorship trial, the Third Section introduced Suvorin's correspondence with N. G. Chernyshevskii and A. N. Pleshcheev as evidence. These letters, seized in a night raid on Suvorin's home, were used to support the charge of "treasonable disrespect towards the established institutions of the realm." This was to be the common charge leveled during the next four decades against numerous other writers who dared to criticize Russian conditions. Although the attorney K. K. Arsen'ev did not prevent Suvorin's conviction, he did succeed in getting the sentence reduced from three months in prison to three weeks' detention in the guardhouse at Staryi arsenal in St. Petersburg. In addition to sentencing Suvorin to guardhouse confinement from February 27 to March 20, 1867, the court ordered all copies of Vsiakie burned. In May, 1867, about 1462 copies were burned and the remaining copies were confiscated by the censorship office for its records. In 1909, when the repressive censorship regulations were revised, Suvorin revived this earlier work to provide insight into the theoretical basis of the "new trends" shaping

²¹Alexander Kornilov, Nineteenth Century Russia, ed. by Alexander S. Kaun, trans. by Robert Bass (New York: Capricorn Books, 1966), p. 345; G. L. I., "Vsiakie. Ocherki sovremennoi zhizni A. S. Suvorina," review of Vsiakie, by A. S. Suvorin, in Istoricheskii vestnik, CXVI (January-April, 1909), 700-701; Glinskii, "Suvorin," pp. 24-26.

Russian journalism and institutions in the 1860's.²²

The trial and prison experience did not extinguish Suvorin's journalistic and literary zeal. He resumed his position at the S.-Peterburgskiiia vedomosti, where his celebrated Sunday feuilletons continued to be a leading attraction. As before, Suvorin's articles were sharp polemics on contemporary questions. The sting of his fine wit and candidness directed against public figures engendered the hostility of reactionary personalities. His column included biting criticism of such prominent men as Ivan Aksakov, M. N. Katkov, Prince V. P. Meshcherskii and Skerystin for their reactionary attitudes, political intrigues and especially their corrupt railroad schemes. He concentrated his criticism especially on M. V. Katkov, editor of the Moskovskiiia vedomosti, whose editorials supported the narrow-minded nationalism and reactionary conservatism of the Tsarist government.²³ Suvorin's liberal commentaries made him a leading contributor to the success of the S.-Peterburgskiiia vedomosti; and, in turn, broadened the prospects for a successful journalistic career.

In the latter half of the 1860's, Suvorin expanded his journalistic activities to the highly respected monthly

²²Ibid.

²³Vladimir Petrovich Meshcherskii, Moi vospominania, II (St. Petersburg, 1865-81), 158; Vemerov, "A. S. Suvorin," p. 895; Glinskii, "Suvorin," pp. 27-28.

"thick" journal Vestnik Evropy; and in the years 1869 to 1872 he became a regular contributor. His leading articles in Vestnik Evropy included: "Novii roman Viktora Giugo" in 1869; "Frantsuzskoe obshchestvo v novom roman Flobera" and "V gostiakh i doma (Zametki o German'i)" in 1870; and "Russkaia dramatich stsena" and "Istoricheskaia satira (Istoriia odnogo goroda Shchedrina)" in 1871. During this period Suvorin continued to be the leading feuilleton writer on the S.-Peterburgskiiia vedomosti, where the liberal polemics of its writers incensed the reactionary circles to the extent that they demanded the termination of Korsh's editorship.

The opportunity to stifle Suvorin thus came in 1874, when Korsh was forced to surrender control of the newspaper to the Russian banker Baimakov. Under Baimakov's management, an editor with conservative views was appointed for the S.-Peterburgskiiia vedomosti. Suvorin's services were no longer desired and his affiliation with the S.-Peterburgskiiia vedomosti terminated, but his journalistic career was not ended.²⁴

Fortunately for Suvorin, he retained his position with the journal Vestnik Evropy and accepted a position as theatrical critic and agricultural affairs

²⁴Chernov, "Chekhov i Suvorin," p. 247; Vermerov, "A. S. Suvorin," p. 895; Glinskii, "Suvorin," p. 27; Meshcherskii, Moi vospominania, II, 247.

commentator for the journal Molve. In the meantime his financial position had improved through a successful publishing venture begun in 1872. It was in this year that he began the annual publication of the Russkii kalendar, an almanac that was to enjoy popular use throughout Russia. Revised and published annually, this almanac offered a great wealth of information and was to enjoy forty-five years of publishing success. Its volumes contained general and statistical information on religion, geography, population, financial affairs, trade, agriculture, means of communication, insurance, and all branches of government and departments of state service in Imperial Russia. The volumes also included chronicles of both foreign and Russian events and a necrology containing interesting biographical notes.²⁵ The Russkii kalendar was an immediate success and afforded him some long-awaited financial stability and independence.

Thereafter, his monetary position continued to improve. In the year 1875 Suvorin was again writing his popular Sunday feuilletons--this time for the publication Birzhevaia vedomosti. That same year he published two books of essays which enjoyed good sales records.²⁶ With the combined financial resources of these activities,

²⁵Glinskii, "Suvorin," p. 29.

²⁶Vermerov, "A. S. Suvorin," p. 895.

Suvorin could explore new horizons. From this time forward his career in journalism assumed a national significance that was to overshadow the numerous accomplishments of his early career. His major contributions to the Russian newspaper world were yet to come. Aleksei was about to establish his own publishing empire.

CHAPTER II

MOGUL OF THE RUSSIAN PUBLISHING WORLD

On February 16, 1876, the adventurous Suvorin risked the savings from his journalistic writings and the profits from his highly successful Russkii kalendar' to purchase two-thirds interest in a faltering St. Petersburg daily newspaper and publishing house, Novoe vremia.¹ This acquisition, in partnership with a prominent St. Petersburg attorney, V. I. Likhachev, was perhaps the most important step in the talented writer's career.² As a journalist turned publisher, during the next three decades Suvorin became a major disseminator of information in Tsarist Russia, as well as an extremely wealthy Russian entrepreneur. His success in building Novoe vremia into a publishing empire can be attributed mainly to exceptional managerial talent. He displayed an unusual ability to grasp how popular and emotionally-charged issues could be utilized to help increase his newspaper's circulation, while skillfully

¹Novoe vremia, March 27 (April 9), 1906, p. 2.

²"V. I. Likhachev," Entsiklopedicheskii slovar' (St. Petersburg, 1897), XXI, 848.

gauging the direction and bounds of government censorship. In addition he made continual efforts to incorporate the latest newspaper technology, making his publishing methods the best and most advanced in Russia. His continued receptivity to new publishing opportunities increased his holdings, which in turn greatly enhanced his wealth and position in Russian society. Finally, personal persuasion and the promise of wealth and fame enabled him to attract and patronize some of Russia's finest literary and artistic talent.

At the time of his purchase of Novoe vremia, Russian newspaper and publishing firms were in general not reliable business ventures. With the exception of Mikhail Katkov's Moskovskiiia vedomosti, few of Russia's newspapers had managed to avoid violations of the censorship policies and become financially successful. Until Suvorin acquired it, Novoe vremia, originally founded in 1868 to serve as a literary organ for the political views of Polish landowners, had been a feeble publication with a small circulation and a poor business reputation.³ During the two weeks after the formal purchase, Suvorin anxiously prepared the first edition of his newspaper in offices on Nevskii prospekt. When Suvorin's first Novoe vremia edition of one page with six columns appeared on Sunday, February 29, 1876, the 13,300

³ "Novoe vremia," Ibid., p. 278.

copies were eagerly snapped up by St. Petersburg readers.⁴ This enthusiastic reception encouraged the new publisher to believe that under his management Novoe vremia would be a thriving daily newspaper.

Initially, Novoe vremia's readers and regular subscribers were attracted by the new publisher's progressive reputation and past journalistic achievements. St. Petersburg's progressive literary circles were particularly hopeful that the popular journalist who championed "outspokenness" and "frankness" in editorial policies would revive the spirit of V. F. Korsh's liberal S.-Peterburgskiiia vedomosti of the earlier seventies.⁵ The appearance of two eminent figures of St. Petersburg's liberal literary circles--the satirist, M. E. Saltykov; and the poet, N. A. Nekrasov--as featured contributors in the first edition seemed to support these liberal expectations.⁶ Based on the editorial intentions and views voiced in the first edition and in succeeding weeks, St. Petersburg's liberal circles welcomed A. Suvorin and Novoe vremia into the progressive camp. The enthusiasm of St. Petersburg's liberal circles for Suvorin

⁴Novoe vremia, February 28 (March 13), 1901, p. 2.

⁵N. I. Abramovich, Novoe vremia i soblaznennye mladentsy, Biblioteka obshchestvennykh i literaturnykh pamfletov, No. 3 (Petrograd, 1916), p. 19. Hereinafter referred to as Novoe vremia.

⁶Ibid., p. 18.

and his newspaper was, however, to be short-lived. When Novoe vremia circulation failed to increase significantly in the first two months of publication, Suvorin, realizing circulation could be boosted by capitalizing on the Russian newspaper readers' interest in the rebellious disturbances of the South Slavs in the Balkans, altered Novoe vremia editorial policies.⁷ The newspaper began to exploit the unprecedented outburst of Pan-Slavist and nationalist sentiment for the South Slavs' anti-Turkish revolts.

The uprisings of the South Slavs in Bosnia, Bulgaria and Herzegovina, beginning in June, 1875, encouraged Russian newspapers to vie in their denunciations of Turkish misrule. The ferocity with which the Turks suppressed the Bulgarian rebellion in May, 1876, provided Novoe vremia the opportunity to join with other Russian newspapers in unfurling a rallying banner of Pan-Slavist and nationalist sentiment. Riding on the wave of "Slavic excitement," Novoe vremia's editorials and articles began extolling Pan-Slavist sympathies.⁸ This new direction in editorial policy improved the circulation of Novoe vremia and the St. Petersburg daily began the rise to prominence.⁹

⁷ Glinskii, "Suvorin," p. 31.

⁸ Novoe vremia, February 28 (March 13), 1901, p. 3.

⁹ Abramovich, Novoe vremia, pp. 18-19.

In its editorials and articles Novoe vremia supported Russian Pan-Slavist efforts to alter official Russian government policy which sought to localize the conflict and avoid Russia's involvement. When the Russian government remained firm in its rejection of Pan-Slavist appeals, Suvorin, in a Novoe vremia article, "Imeet pravo na vozstanie," continued his attempts to induce a policy change, declaring:

Whatever the government is like, I am ready to sacrifice my soul to it if it proceeds to liberate the Slavs and drive the Turks from Europe. . . . That is why I seek to arouse the public: I am seeking to separate its aspirations from official ones; I want it to demonstrate its independence.¹⁰

In his desire to support militant Pan-Slavist and nationalist positions, Suvorin recruited new contributors for the newspaper's editorial staff. Among these were such well-known chauvinist and Pan-Slavist champions as K. A. Skal'kovskii, S. N. Syromiatnikov, and I. N. Potapenko.¹¹ With the addition of these journalists, jingoist and Pan-Slavist views increasingly dominated; and Novoe vremia passionately campaigned for a deeper involvement of the Russian people in aiding the South Slavs, even in the absence of the Russian government's assistance.

¹⁰ S. A. Nikitin, Slavianskie komitety v Rossii v 1858-1876 godakh (Moscow, 1960), p. 327.

¹¹ Abramovich, Novoe vremia, p. 19.

In May, 1876, Serbia began preparations for war with Turkey and requested Russian government support. When the Russian government refused to become involved, Russian Pan-Slavist organizations appealed directly to the Russian people for volunteers and financial assistance for the Serbians. In support of the Russian General M. G. Cherniaev's call for volunteers, Novoe vremia stated:

We express our sincere sympathy to all Russians not bound by duties of service who set forth to fight for the holy cause of the liberation of Slavdom from the Turkish yoke. There in the common struggle with the Ottomans will be forged the firmest bonds between Russian society and the self-liberating Slav world.

The opening of hostilities against Turkey in June 1876 by Serbia and Montenegro saw Russian Pan-Slavist and nationalist agitation reach a high pitch. In militant tones Novoe vremia hailed the Serbians' dramatic struggle against Turkish rule. Novoe vremia zealously exalted the Serbians for their gallant defense of their borders and protection of Serbia's trade. In the newspaper's view these South Slavs were heroically fighting to guarantee human rights, while defending Slavic civilization and orthodoxy. After the Russian government, maintaining its policy of non-intervention, refused a loan to Serbia, Novoe vremia dramatically outlined the "obligation" of the Russian people as individuals to help, stating:

Upon Russian society there lies a sacred obligation to assist these heroic fighters with all its means, principally with money. The Serbian loan must be subscribed by our

resources so that in the history of this struggle the Russian name will play the proper role even if Russia itself does not take a more active part in it . . . Nothing can prevent noble sacrifices on the part of society itself if only it can be profoundly inspired to help the fighters for freedom. We helped Garibaldi and the Italians; can we not even help the Slavs free themselves from slavery? I am convinced that Serbia will not be allowed to perish even if Turkey should turn out to be the victor.¹²

Throughout the summer of 1876, as Serbia's war with Turkey waged on, Novoe vremia continued to press for a change in government policy and recommended the direct military involvement of Russia in the Balkans. Novoe vremia asserted Russia's future as a world power was at stake. In keeping with the Russian Pan-Slavist belief that it was Russia's historic mission to liberate the South Slavs, Novoe vremia proclaimed that only when Constantinople was in Russia's control, could Russia become a true world power. Only under Russia's leadership and military assistance could Turkey be defeated and the Slavs be united into a great federation.¹³ The propagation of these Pan-Slavist views in the excited atmosphere of a newspaper readership vitally concerned with the fate of the South Slavs produced increasing

¹²

Novoe vremia, June 28 (July 10), 1876, p. 1; Novoe vremia, June 27 (July 9), 1876, p. 1, cited by David Mackenzie, The Serbs and Russian Pan-Slavism: 1875-1878 (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1967), pp. 97-98, 110.

¹³ Ibid., pp. 111-112.

circulation for Suvorin's newspaper.

To assure his newspaper of immediate and suitable coverage of the struggle in the Balkans, Suvorin himself traveled to the field of conflict as the first Russian correspondent for Novoe vremia. Journeying through the Balkans, Suvorin observed the general strife and issued graphic dispatches from Constantinople, Bucharest and Serbia. His reports clamored for Russia to liberate the South Slavs from Turkish misrule. Especially after the crushing defeat of the Serbs in August, 1876, Suvorin and Novoe vremia joined in the loud outcry for vigorous action by the Russian government in obtaining an armistice to save the Serbs from annihilation.¹⁴

During Russia's operations against Turkey on behalf of the Serbs and South Slavs in 1877, Suvorin was in an advantageous position to report Russian army operations. He managed to associate himself with the staff of the colorful Pan-Slavist Russian commander, General Cherniaev.¹⁵ Since Suvorin's early cadet school training and military service almost immediately earned him the welcome and hospitality of the Russian military men, he procured open access to first-hand information on the Russian army's exploits.¹⁶

¹⁴ Glinskii, "Suvorin," pp. 29-30.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 31.

¹⁶ Novoe vremia, February 28 (March 13) 1901, p. 3.

Shrewdly capitalizing on these abundant opportunities, Suvorin dispatched vivid reports of the heroic deeds of the Russian troops. His picturesque and exciting articles appearing in the St. Petersburg daily contributed to its increasing popularity, and the aggressive Russian nationalist tone of Suvorin's articles established the publisher and his newspaper as leading proponents of Pan-Slavism and Russian nationalism. His zealous commitment to these extreme views remained a permanent basis for his newspaper's editorial policies. In fact these positions caused Suvorin to become sole owner of the St. Petersburg daily and publishing firm. Likhachev, taking serious exception to Novoe vremia's newly-found biases and the courting of readers on the basis of extreme emotionalism, dissolved the partnership in 1877.¹⁷

Suvorin's complete ownership henceforth caused liberal critics directly to attribute Novoe vremia's editorial practices to the publisher's personal attitudes and management. To St. Petersburg's liberal circles, these new Pan-Slavist and nationalist editorial views marked an abandonment of the liberal editorial intentions expressed in the first edition.¹⁸ The circles' immediate disappointment resulted in overt hostility and in an ever-increasing criticism

¹⁷ Novoe vremia, March 27 (April 9), 1906, p. 2.

¹⁸ Abramovich, Novoe vremia, pp. 13-14, 19.

of Novoe vremia's convictions. Novoe vremia's editorial practices were judged to be an opportunistic effort to expand circulation for the sake of financial remuneration. Suggesting this motive, Nevin Winter wrote: ". . . liberalism did not 'pay' as he learned in his earlier struggles, and Suvorin wanted money."¹⁹ Suvorin's practice of balancing editorial policies to woo readers and at the same time to conform to government restrictions caused liberals, and especially radicals, to regard him as a traitor to his earlier views. To characterize Suvorin's attitudes and Novoe vremia's editorial tone, Saltykov coined the phrase, "At your service."²⁰ While it is difficult to assess motives, the sensationalism with which news of the Balkan crisis was handled and the care with which Suvorin avoided stands offensive to the government suggest that he gave high priority to remaining in business.

The increasingly repressive newspaper censorship accompanying Alexander III's reactionary reign influenced Suvorin's cautious management of his newspaper's editorial policies. Publishing under the terms of the Temporary Press Law of 1866, which now were even more stringently and arbitrarily enforced, constantly subjected Novoe vremia to

¹⁹Nevin Winters, The Russian Empire of Today and Yesterday (London: Simpson, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co., 1914), p. 286.

²⁰V. L. Rogachevski, Noveishaia russkaia literatura (Moscow, 1923), p. 97.

the whims of government censorship. Numerous newspapers, unable or unwilling to satisfy the demands of the censors, were suppressed.²¹ Novoe vremia was one of the newspapers which survived by continually altering its views to comply with the dictates of press censorship. Suvorin's past experience in satisfying the government censors helped him keep his newspaper alive. Controversial topics and editorial views which would invoke the fatal wrath of the censors were carefully avoided. The newspaper specialized in reporting foreign news, taking care to conform to the official foreign policies of the government. Caution in reporting domestic news proved particularly challenging, since the newspaper had received two "warnings" from the censors on January 6, 1879, and October 2, 1880.²²

These two "warnings" periled the newspaper's existence. Even though the daily was one of two privileged St. Petersburg newspapers permitted to publish its editions without prior censorship, a third "warning" issued by the censors for having published news offensive to the government would have brought about the extinction

²¹For a detailed analysis of the difficulties encountered by Russian journalists see Benjamin Rigberg's two articles: "The Tsarist Press Law, 1897-1905," Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas, XIII (1965), 331-43; and "The Efficacy of Tsarist Censorship Operations, 1894-1917," Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas, XIV (1966), 327-46.

²²Novoe vremia, February 28 (March 13), 1901, p. 2.

of the newspaper.²³ In a discussion with the famous English journalist, W. T. Stead, the publisher of Novoe vremia discussed the circumstances of his newspaper's two "warnings." Suvorin began by explaining the incident which provoked the first warning:

I was away from the office. My locum tenens wrote a New Year's article of the usual kind, retrospective and speculative. He wound it up by a flourish in which he expressed a hope that New Year would bring Russia good things in its train--peace, prosperity, and a little liberty. For that innocent aspiration the Novoe vremia received its first warning.

When Stead commented in surprise, "Merely for hoping the New Year would bring Russia a little liberty?" Suvorin replied:

Precisely; that was the only offense. The second was even more extraordinary. You may remember during General Loris Melikoff's Ministry, General Greig, then Finance Minister, made a provincial tour in which he made some curious speeches.

Stead affirmed, "I remember it perfectly."

Suvorin continued:

Well, General Greig was utterly wrong in these speeches, and the Novoe vremia pointed out in one or two trenchant articles that the Minister's figures did not correspond to the facts, and that he was obviously unfit for his place.

"That was rather strong, was it not?" asked Stead.

²³The fundamental law of press censorship was the "Ustav o cenzure i pechatii," Svod zakonov rossiiskoi imperii, 3rd ed., XIV, Article 140 (St. Petersburg: 1902). Promulgated in 1873, the law permitted the Chief Administration for Press Affairs to prohibit discussion of questions considered important to the government.

The publisher of Novoe vremia replied:

Yes, but it was perfectly true, and the proof of that was that in a few days General Greig was compelled to resign.

The amazed Stead asked, "Then, why were you warned?"

Suvorin offered the following explanation:

Oh, that was in order that Loris Melikoff might clear himself from the suspicion of having inspired the articles. Loris Melikoff notoriously wanted to get rid of General Greig, and therein he was quite right. But he did not wish people to say that he had set on the Novoe vremia to attack his colleague, and so he issued the second avertissement.

Stead inquired further:

But that was absurd. Surely, when General Greig fell, and the justice of your criticism received the strongest possible confirmation, the warning was withdrawn?

To this query, the publisher responded:

By no means; it is still on record against me. And any day I may receive a notice that, owing to some paragraph or other which offends someone in the Ministry of the Interior, my third warning has been issued, and my property is ruined.

When the eminent English journalist inquired why the Russian publisher did not appeal this injustice to the Tsar, he received this reply:

He (Suvorin) could write to the Emperor, no doubt; but what would be the result? The Emperor would naturally of necessity lay his complaint before the Minister of the Interior. The more entirely the Emperor took Suvorin's side, the more indignant would be the Minister that the matter had been taken over his head

to the Emperor. If the Emperor was determined, his immediate petition might be gained, but he would probably be marked down for vengeance at the first opportunity. The Minister would bide his time, but he would take good care that someone suffered for my temerity in appealing to the Emperor against his Department.²⁴

To avoid the disaster of a third "warning," Novoe vremia carefully conformed to the dictates of the "secret circulars" promulgated under article 140 of the censorship law.²⁵ Article 140 forbade editors to touch upon any topic withdrawn from discussion by secret circulars or verbal prohibitions. Even the newspaper's advertisements could be censored. Subject to the whimsical enforcement of these censorship practices, the publisher of Novoe vremia and his staff judiciously sought to cultivate cordial relations with the government and especially with the Ministry of Communication and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the agencies which exercised control over Novoe vremia's vital access to foreign news telegrams.²⁶ These telegrams were the prime source for the invaluable foreign news published in Novoe vremia's editions. The professed Russian nationalism and the support Novoe vremia evidenced for the

²⁴W. T. Stead, Truth About Russia (London: Cassell & Co., 1888), pp. 216-17.

²⁵For a study of these secret circulars consult: Rigberg, "The Tsarist Press Law, 1894-1905," pp. 335-41.

²⁶Scythicus, "The Russian Press," The National Review (London), XXXV (April, 1900), 311-12.

government's foreign policies enhanced the St. Petersburg newspaper's position with the government and its censors.

Throughout the eighties and nineties, Novoe vremia's extreme Russian nationalist editorial positions aligned with government policies. In supporting Russia's foreign policy in the Balkans following the diplomatic defeat of Russia at the hands of Germany, Novoe vremia's editorial position expressed vigorous anti-German and anti-Austrian views opposing the interests of these countries in the Balkans.²⁷ Novoe vremia became notorious for its anti-German attitudes that even carried over into regular editorial criticism of the numerous Russian government officials with German names.²⁸ In support of the Russian government's position against England's involvement on the Afghanistan border in 1884, Novoe vremia editorials raised chauvinist cries and continued their anti-English tones into the twentieth century.²⁹ Although these positions characterized

²⁷John F. Baddeley, Russia in the "Eighties" (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1921), pp. 122, 200; Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu, The Empire of the Tsars and the Russians, II (New York: E. P. Putnam's Sons, 1894), 446; Louis Levine, "Pan-Slavism and European Politics," Political Science Quarterly, XXIX (December, 1914), 678.

²⁸Hans Heilbronner, "The Administrations of Loris-Melikov and Ignatiev, 1880-1882" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of History, University of Michigan, 1954), p. 528.

²⁹Baddeley, Russia in the "Eighties," pp. 213-14; Vladimir I. Gurko, Features and Figures of the Past: Government and Opinion in the Reign of Nicholas II (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1939), p. 374.

Novoe vremia's main editorial tenets, it was not uncommon for the newspaper to alter or completely reverse an editorial stand to accommodate a change in government policies.³⁰

Novoe vremia's views on Russia's domestic issues were equally supportive of the government's reactionary doctrines, "Russia for the Russians" and "law and order." In promulgating these ideas, Novoe vremia editorials were noted for their anti-Semitic, anti-Polish and anti-Finnish tones and for their strong opposition to autonomy and political equality for these minorities.³¹ Zealous editorial support was also given to government Russification. In return, Novoe vremia shared in the government's indirect subsidization of "loyal" papers. These subsidies were in the form of official advertisements placed in Novoe vremia. The newspaper's reputation for accepting these subsidies and altering editorial policies to suit the government earned it the nickname "Weathercock" and criticism for being a semi-official paper.³² Nevertheless, the publisher of the newspaper, cognizant of the reactionary atmosphere prevailing, pursued editorial policies assuring his newspaper's

³⁰For several examples see Irene Grüning, Die russische öffentliche Meinung und ihre Stellung zu den Grossmächten 1870-1894 (Berlin and Königsberg, 1929), pp. 119-137.

³¹Scythicus, "The Russian Press," p. 314.

³²Rogachevski, Noveishaia russkaia literatura, p. 96.

continued operation. Under Suvorin's guidance, the newspaper avoided receiving the fatal third "warning" and it flourished. Since his newspaper could not safely prosper on the basis of editorial appeals which might offend the censors, Suvorin concentrated his attention on transforming the St. Petersburg daily into a first-rate news service.

To direct the modernization of his newspaper, the energetic and ambitious publisher personally guided the daily operations of Novoe vremia from his private living quarters and ornate offices above the publishing firm on Nevskii prospekt.³³ Suvorin regularly worked late into the night, giving close attention to the details of publishing the newspaper's editions. Under his supervision, advanced newspaper techniques were implemented; and the St. Petersburg daily earned a reputation for modern methods unrivaled among Russian newspapers.³⁴ Novoe vremia's organizational structure was a major aspect of the newspaper enterprise to benefit from Suvorin's attention. To improve the functioning of Novoe vremia, Suvorin created an editorial board with himself as chairman. This editorial board was composed of the editors responsible for the supervision of the various departments and sections of

³³V. Gribovskii, "Neskol'ko vstrech s A. S. Suvorinym," Istoricheskii vestnik, CXIX (October, 1912), 181.

³⁴Abramovich, Novoe vremia, p. 12.

Novoe vremia's editorial and publishing operations. The division into departments and sections was another alteration of Suvorin's, intended to foster an efficient and rapid news-gathering and reporting system. In his role as chairman of the editorial board, Suvorin tactfully coordinated and guided the various editors in the shaping of Novoe vremia's editorial policies. The result was an editorial unity unusual for a Russian newspaper.³⁵ Suvorin, who took pride in the daily's organizational structure, characterized Novoe vremia as a "parliament"³⁶ where journalists with various shades of views on foreign and domestic affairs were represented. Within the operational framework of the organizational structure, the editors, writers and contributors were allowed a certain degree of what they termed "cossack freedom."³⁷ Although the "cosseck freedom" may have permitted staff members to have mixed views, the published contents did not reflect controversial stands that might offend the censors. Nevertheless, Suvorin's innovativeness and Novoe vremia's prosperous growth despite the obstacles of censorship enabled the publisher and his newspaper to attract some of the best Russian writers and editors

³⁵ Ibid., p. 11.

³⁶ E. J. Simmons, Chekhov: A Biography (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1962), p. 105.

³⁷ Chernov, "Chekhov i Suvorin," p. 249.

receptive to Suvorin's views.³⁸

Among the numerous conservative editors and journalists joining the Novoe vremia's staff, the most renowned were V. P. Burenin, M. O. Men'shikov and V. V. Rozanov. The first, V. P. Burenin, joined the publisher's editorial staff in the first few months of Suvorin's ownership. Burenin was at that time already an old friend and close confidant of the publisher. Their friendship dated back to 1862, when Burenin, as a senior editor of the journal, Otechestvennyia zapiski, made an urgently-needed financial loan of 15 rubles to the young and struggling feuilleton-writer Suvorin. This act of kindness sparked a life-long friendship and Burenin was one of the first recruited as an editor of Novoe vremia. In the first year, when Novoe vremia's editorial policies were shifted to pan-Slavist and nationalist tones, it was Burenin who assisted Suvorin in this changeover. During the time the publisher was traveling in the Balkans in 1876 and 1877 as a special war correspondent, he entrusted Burenin with the publication of Novoe vremia and Suvorin's Balkan reports. Through the years Suvorin relied heavily and continually on his friend. The unquestioned confidence in Burenin was returned by his devotion to Novoe vremia's publisher.³⁹

³⁸Abramovich, Novoe vremia, p. 35.

³⁹Chernov, "Chekhov i Suvorin," p. 245.

In return for his devoted services and friendship, Suvorin permitted Burenin to enjoy an influential role in Novoe vremia's management. The publisher made his old friend a member of Novoe vremia's editorial board and allowed Burenin freedom to write numerous articles expressing extremely conservative and nationalist views. Although Burenin's extreme positions invoked criticism and controversy, Suvorin did not restrain him. Before Anton Chekhov, Suvorin's literary protégé, realized Suvorin shared and supported Burenin's views as conducive to Novoe vremia's prosperity, Chekhov believed it was Burenin and similar extremely conservative and Russian nationalist writers who manipulated Suvorin's direction of Novoe vremia's editorial policies.⁴⁰ Thus for a long time Chekhov did not comprehend that Suvorin actively recruited and conscientiously supported extremist journalists of Burenin's type.

Another renowned journalist of equally extreme conservative convictions was M. O. Menshikov. When recruited as a contributor for the Novoe vremia, Menshikov was being snubbed and even ostracized by most Russian journalists for his extremely conservative positions.⁴¹ Joining Novoe vremia provided Menshikov--a staunch advocate of DeMaistre's

⁴⁰ Simmons, Chekhov: A Biography, p. 442.

⁴¹ Alexander, Grand Duke of Russia, Once a Grand Duke (New York: Cosmopolitan Book Corporation, 1932), p. 199.

monarchist view, chauvinist and vociferously anti-Semitic-- the opportunity to publish his views. His ideas and particularly his reactionary concepts of "law and order" coincided with Suvorin's and the publisher placed Menshikov on Novoe vremia's editorial board.⁴² Menshikov became a long-time writer for Novoe vremia. Suvorin's employment of Menshikov and journalists of similar convictions and the publishing freedom permitted them contributed to Novoe vremia's reputation as an extremely conservative newspaper catering to Russia's ruling circles.

A third extremist writer, V. V. Rozanov, joined the newspaper in the nineties. An established journalist, Rozanov was drawn in part by Novoe vremia's conservative reputation and its anti-Semitic tones. In addition to this ideological compatibility, Rozanov, as were numerous other talented journalists and writers, was attracted by Suvorin's practice of paying his workers well. Almost immediately Rozanov rose to prominence with Burenin and Menshikov as symbols of Novoe vremia's conservative position.⁴³

While these three writers were perhaps the most notorious Novoe vremia journalists at the turn of the century, the newspaper boasted a long list of contributors.

⁴² Abramovich, Novoe vremia, pp. 29-30.

⁴³ Richard Hare, "V. V. Rozanov: A Centenary Appreciation," Slavonic and East European Review, XXXV (December, 1956), 197.

Included in this list were the writers: B. V. Gei, K. A. Skal'kovskii, S. I. Smirnov, A. N. Maslov, I. Ia. Pavlovskii and A. V. Amfiteatrov. Despite Novoe vremia's conservative reputation and the dominance of extremely conservative writers, talented Russian writers of diverse convictions eagerly sought publication of their work in Novoe vremia in order to gain recognition and enjoy the excellent pay.⁴⁴ Suvorin's effort to employ the best journalistic talent available was therefore successful.

In combination with the improvement of the editorial aspects of Novoe vremia, the energetic publisher devoted his attention to introducing advanced publishing techniques. Novoe vremia's superiority as a news service was centered on an elaborate network of foreign correspondents and an efficient editorial staff. Spread across Russia and in foreign lands, Novoe vremia journalists formed a vast communication system for the rapid reporting of foreign and domestic news to the newspaper's St. Petersburg offices. In addition the morning and evening editions of the Novoe vremia were strategically coordinated with the midnight and noon releases of foreign news telegrams from the censorship office of the Imperial Telegraphic Agency.⁴⁵ An annual subscriber to these foreign news releases, through careful planning,

⁴⁴Abramovich, Novoe vremia, p. 35.

⁴⁵Scythicus, "The Russian Press," p. 312.

Novoe vremia was able to offer foreign news items to St. Petersburg readers more quickly than most of its rivals and to provincial subscribers twenty-four hours before the news appeared in the provincial newspapers.⁴⁶ Despite Novoe vremia's conservative and controversial editorial policies, subscription to the daily became a necessity for persons seeking timely knowledge of international and national news. In his work, The Land of Riddles, Hugo Ganz relates observing Novoe vremia in numerous Russian houses and questioning various readers as to why they subscribed to the newspaper. The characteristic reply was, "Infamous but indispensable!"⁴⁷ By the end of the nineteenth century, Novoe vremia enjoyed a reputation as a leading source of rapid and vital information and its large circulation reflected the newspaper's importance.

A prominent feature in the Novoe vremia's system for swiftly disseminating news to subscribers was the practice of publishing a Moscow edition of the newspaper, Vechernee vremia. The Moscow edition received daily dispatches of important news from the St. Petersburg offices of Novoe vremia. At first these news dispatches were telegraphed and later telephoned to Moscow. In addition to the

⁴⁶Novoe vremia, February 28 (13 March), 1901, p. 2.

⁴⁷Hugo Ganz, The Land of Riddles (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1904), p. 216.

items from St. Petersburg, the Moscow edition specialized in reporting news of Moscow governmental activities and provincial news. This combination of St. Petersburg and local news appealed to Moscow readers, causing Vechnee vremia to achieve a substantial circulation and financial success. The Moscow publishing venture, capitalizing on modern communication means and advanced publishing methods, demonstrated Suvorin's alertness to the profit potentials of continuous innovation. In 1892 the publisher's adventurous spirit led him to seriously consider publishing Novoe vremia in Paris but financial costs proved prohibitive.⁴⁸ Continually improving every aspect of Novoe vremia became characteristic of Suvorin's management and increased his prestige.

The format of Novoe vremia's editions illustrates the publisher's propensity to adopt modern newspaper styles. As early as 1880, Novoe vremia editions contained commercial advertisements and a classified ad section.⁴⁹ That same year the newspaper began including illustrations, photographs and sketches depicting news events of the day. When cartoon caricatures became fashionable, Novoe vremia

⁴⁸ S. S. Koteliansky, ed., Life and Letters of Anton Chekhov, trans. by Philip Tomlinson (London: G. Routledge & Sons, Ltd., 1927), p. 208. Hereinafter referred to as Anton Chekhov.

⁴⁹ Novoe vremia, February 28 (March 13), 1901, p. 2.

incorporated them into its editions. As an added attraction, in 1881 Suvorin instituted a Wednesday illustrated supplement featuring belles-lettres and bibliography.⁵⁰

With outstanding men of letters as contributors, the literary supplement was well received; and in 1891 special editor F. I. Bulgakov assumed responsibility for its publication. Under Bulgakov's supervision the literary quality of the supplement magnified readership and in 1897 a new Sunday supplement increased circulation even further.⁵¹ While these additions to Novoe vremia's format were not totally novel to Russian newspapers, the daily's specialized handling of them met with unusual success.

Through this series of modifications Suvorin produced an Imperial Russian daily newspaper which was closely comparable in composition, characteristics and quality to some of the leading daily newspapers in Western Europe. In an average Novoe vremia edition the leading article was devoted to news of foreign politics and events. This article was generally composed of telegrams received from the Novoe vremia's correspondents throughout the world. News on Russia's provinces followed. Most of these news items were presented in the shape of lengthy extracts from foreign and provincial capital newspapers. Next appeared the

⁵⁰
p. 278. "Novoe vremia," Entsiklopedicheskii slovar',

⁵¹Novoe vremia, February 28 (March 13), 1901, p. 2.

St. Petersburg news featuring ordinary municipal, legal, sporting, theatrical and musical reports. A considerable portion of the edition was taken up with official and semi-official government announcements, such as imperial decrees, and notices of the senate, various ministries or the state banks. Included regularly was a chronicle of the public appearances of the Tsar and other members of the imperial family, as well as railway time schedules. When available, semi-official government statistics were published. The remainder of an edition was usually devoted to articles, frequently in the form of letters to the editor, dealing at length with proposed or announced reforms on social and educational questions. A section criticizing the merits and demerits of contemporary foreign publications appeared ahead of the classified ad section. An average edition of Novoe vremia provided readers with an abundance of domestic information and foreign news. The large number of subscribers in Russia's provinces reflects to some degree the value of its content to readers throughout Russia.

To keep pace with the growth of Novoe vremia's circulation, Suvorin also concentrated on upgrading the quality and performance of his newspaper's typography section. The number of workers employed in this section of the newspaper's operation increased to 417 employees in

1901, representing more than a threefold increase since 1876.⁵² Novoe vremia's printing craftsmen were ranked among the best in Russia due to the publisher's foresight. Realizing the need to improve the printing business and supply his newspaper with skilled printers, in 1884 Suvorin established the first private school for typographic apprentices.⁵³ The four-year courses in the school were organized in conjunction with the Novoe vremia's typography section. Apprentices were taught the typography business (theory and practices); the Russian, French and German languages; arithmetic; geography; Russian history; drawing and calligraphy. Over 205 apprentices completed the school by 1901 and more than half of these were employed by Novoe vremia. Skilled typographical workers were attracted to Novoe vremia by the same good pay and employment conditions that Suvorin offered journalists. Characteristic of Suvorin's generous treatment towards his typography workers was the financial support he extended to establish a savings and loan association for employees in Novoe vremia's offices, book store and typographic section. In addition to the normal savings benefits, members of this savings association received unemployment loans, sick pay, accident and

⁵²Ibid., pp. 2-3.

⁵³W. M. Kovalevsky, La Russie à la fin du 19e siècle (Paris: Paul Dupont, 1900), p. 927.

life insurance benefits. Medical services were provided Novoe vremia's typography workers and their immediate families when Suvorin opened a dispensary with a physician in attendance and a pharmacy to dispense medicines.⁵⁴

For workers without families and for typographic school apprentices, Novoe vremia established a hostel. For the reading pleasure of his employees, Suvorin provided a library and books. Annually, Suvorin sponsored a festive Christmas party for his workers and their families.⁵⁵ In general, Aleksei S. Suvorin was regarded as a generous employer; and his employees liked and respected him. The absence of any major labor disturbances or difficulties at Novoe vremia indicates that Suvorin's labor relations, well ahead of their time, were a success.

The physical plant of Novoe vremia also received attention. In the course of twenty-five years, 1876-1901, the changes in the format and the increased circulation from 13,300 to 60,000 demanded improvements in printing machinery. Thus Suvorin continually installed the most modern equipment available throughout the world in order to keep pace with the enormous output of newsprint. For the first twenty-five years of publication, the length of this newsprint equalled 400,000 versts. In 1900 Suvorin

⁵⁴Novoe vremia, February 28 (March 13), 1901, p. 3.

⁵⁵Glinkii, "Suvorin," p. 36.

installed the latest in electric rotary presses imported from its place of manufacture in Chicago, Illinois. The Novoe vremia printing facilities, at the opening of the twentieth century, were the most advanced in Imperial Russia. The sixteen-million-ruble gross expenditures in the first twenty-five years of operations reflect the newspaper's financial achievements.⁵⁶

The success of the Novoe vremia newspaper carried over into its publisher's other activities. The Novoe vremia publishing firm also grew in size and importance. Departing from more traditional practices and concentrating on producing inexpensive editions of reading materials for mass audiences, the Novoe vremia enterprise became one of the largest publishing firms in late nineteenth century Russia. An ardent nationalist, Suvorin's concern with encouraging the enlightenment and education of the Russian people inspired him to direct his firm's activities into offering reading materials, not only to the wealthy, but also to the vast majority of impoverished peasants and lower classes.⁵⁷ These ventures into this new readership market occurred at an opportune time, when various efforts to improve the literacy of the lower classes were engendering some degree of positive response. The aroused reading

⁵⁶Novoe vremia, February 28 (March 13), 1901, p. 2.

⁵⁷Kovalevsky, La Russie à la fin du 19e siècle, p. 931.

interests of these lower classes created consumers for the inexpensive printed material offered by the Novoe vremia firm.

Among the most popular and successful Novoe vremia publications produced for mass reading was a series entitled "Cheap Library." This series of inexpensive editions featured primarily literary classics of Russian and foreign writers. First called "Deshevaia biblioteka" and later titled "Novaia biblioteka,"⁵⁸ these publications were modeled on the French "Universelle bibliothèq̃ue." The individual editions in the Russian series were produced in numbers varying from ten thousand to forty thousand and distributed throughout Russia in a network of Novoe vremia book stores located in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Karkov, Kiev, Odessa and Saratov. Also, Novoe vremia enjoyed the privilege of selling its publications in newsstands located in Russian railway stations.⁵⁹ Weekly, the Novoe vremia newspaper featured a catalogue listing of the publishing firm's offerings which over the years included a wide variety of topics. On an average, these inexpensive pamphlet-size books were priced at one and one-half kopecks for thirty-two printed pages and were within the financial reach of

⁵⁸ Glinskii, "Suvorin," p. 35.

⁵⁹ Simmons, Chekhov: A Biography, p. 105.

the poorer classes.⁶⁰ The early emphasis on foreign writers published in their native languages gave way to a dominance of Russian translations of these foreign literary works. Later, special attention was given to original works written by Russian authors for peasant readers. Suvorin's voluminous series of inexpensive books made a significant contribution to increasing the reading materials available to the lower classes in the last part of the nineteenth century.

The "Cheap Library" series of the Novoe vremia publishing firm was but part of Suvorin's diligent effort to offer printed materials to Russian readers. Other important publications included a cheap edition of a Russian dictionary issued in June, 1888, at the very low price of one and three-fourths rubles. For mass consumption, Novoe vremia annually published the popular Russkii kalendar', priced at only fifteen kopecks. Observers of reading materials in the hands of the Russian peasants reported mainly various Novoe vremia and religious publications in peasant homes.⁶¹ Such observations tend to reflect the popularity that Novoe vremia offerings enjoyed among their new peasant readers.

⁶⁰A. A. Bakhtiarov, Istoria russkii knigakh (St. Petersburg, 1890), pp. 250-51.

⁶¹L. L. Lodian, "Siberian Literature," Book-Lover: A Magazine of Book Lore (San Francisco), March, 1904, p. 272.

The peasant reading market was not the only area where the Novoe vremia publishing firm made inroads. For wealthy Russian readers who could bear the high monetary expense imposed by the censorship policies of the Russian government, Suvorin published a new edition of A. N. Radishchev's Pyteshestvie iz Peterburga v Moskvu in 1888. This edition of the controversial work marked the first uncensored version of Radishchev's work to appear in Russia since its original publication in 1790. In fact, it was superior to the edition published in 1868 by the editor, P. A. Efremov, who deleted three important chapters at the insistence of the Russian censorship officials. The 1888 edition was reproduced from an original copy of Radishchev's work obtained for Suvorin by the Moscow antiquarian, P. P. Shibanov, after a tedious and exhaustive series of searches. When the censors' permission was finally granted to publish this 1888 edition of the Pyteshestvie iz Peterburga v Moskvu, two conditions restricted this reading material from the grasp of the Russian masses. First, the quantity of the publication was not to exceed one hundred copies; and, second, the cost of individual copies was set at from twenty-five to sixty rubles each, depending on the format and paper quality.⁶² Despite these exorbitant prices, this publication sold out in only two days. The printing of this

⁶²N. P. Smirnov-Sokol'skii, Rasskazy o knigakh (Moscow, 1959), pp. 119-20.

historically significant work, along with the publication of his inexpensive editions, characterized Suvorin's efforts to provide the Russian people with informative reading materials despite the hazards of the oppressive censorship policies.

Suvorin's staunch Russian nationalist views also stimulated the wealthy publisher to promote things Russian through other activities. This concern with the development of Russian culture was especially evident in the field of Russian historical scholarship. The opportunity to make a lasting contribution to Russian historical studies presented itself in late 1879, when S. N. Shubinskii, editor of the historical journal Drevniaia i novaia Rossiia, approached the Novoe vremia publisher for assistance. Shubinskii, having obtained the permission of the censorship authorities to publish a new historical-literary monthly journal, wanted Suvorin to apply his organizational talents and managerial skills to publishing the new journal Istoricheskii vestnik. This new journal was intended to overcome the deficiencies of the three existing historical publications: Ruskaia starina, Russkii arkhiv and Drevniaia i novaia Rossiia. Plagued by inefficient operations, small subscription lists, bad designs and formats, the three journals were financial failures. Recognizing that this new publication would contribute to the advancement of Russian historical scholarship, Suvorin agreed to publish

Istoricheskii vestnik, beginning in January, 1880.⁶³

The popularity Istoricheskii vestnik enjoyed in its first year proved the wisdom of eliciting Novoe vremia publisher's participation in issuing the new journal. By the end of 1880, subscriptions totalled 2,379, due largely to Suvorin's devotion to the journal's business operations. The modern publishing facilities of the Novoe vremia publishing firm were utilized. A specially-designed large type was introduced along with a modern format. Because the earlier historical publications were reputedly irregular in delivery to subscribers, Suvorin directed close attention to guaranteeing speedy and regular delivery.⁶⁴ Quickly, the new journal earned a respected reputation in Russian academic circles.

Leading Russian historical academicians and literary scholars were contributors to the Istoricheskii vestnik. Among the noted Russian historians contributing during the first year were N. I. Kostomarov, K. N. Bestuzhev-Riumin, I. E. Zabelin. To attract subscribers, the material published focused on contemporary historical and literary questions. In the course of the next three decades, the Istoricheskii vestnik's subscriptions continued

⁶³Dvatsatipiatiletie 'Istoricheskago vestnika,' Istoricheskii vestnik, XCVIII (October-December, 1904), I.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. VI.

to increase and the journal thrived. The pages of the publication were open to historical and literary scholars representing varied cultural, political and social views. Despite the fact that Suvorin "was responsible for all accuracy and calculations" appearing in the Istoricheskii vestnik, the editors and contributors enjoyed freedom in the presentation of their positions.⁶⁵

Generally, the composition of the Istoricheskii vestnik featured belles-lettres, recollections, historical letters and historical-literary essays. Special attention was given to the publishing of the accounts of foreign travelers to Russia, and a critical bibliographic section appeared in each edition. In the section dealing with recollections by important Russian notables, articles presented detailed eye-witness accounts and vivid pictures of past and contemporary Russian historical events. This section offered Russian historians an abundance of primary source material for analysis. Other sections treating archaeology, ethnology, geography and foreign news reviews were equally profitable to historians. Suvorin's continued patronage of this historical-literary journal made it one of the most valuable publications in late nineteenth century historical circles. Its over one hundred and fifty volumes, published before the Bolsheviks ceased publication

⁶⁵
Ibid., pp. VI-VII.

in 1917, remains a treasury of information on Russian history. In line with Suvorin's desire to improve and develop Russian culture, the Istoricheskii vestnik is a lasting asset to Russian history.

Suvorin's contributions to the field of Russian historical studies extended into other activities. From his St. Petersburg publishing firm, the historical works of N. K. Shil'der, B. B. Glinskii and other significant Russian historians, as well as leading foreign historians, were published for his Russian readers. For the masses, his firm produced popularized historical studies dealing with the lives and reigns of Tsar Peter the Great, Tsarina Catherine II, Tsar Paul I, Tsar Alexander I and Tsar Nicholas I. Some of these editions Suvorin wrote himself. In addition, the Novoe vremia publishing firm produced photographic collections illustrating the history of art in the leading art galleries of Western Europe, and especially the excellent Russian gallery, the Hermitage, in St. Petersburg. Through the years, Suvorin's firm sought to popularize Russian history and provide historical publications for all the classes of Russian people.⁶⁶

As an amateur historian, Aleksei Suvorin, himself, produced some historical studies. His special interest focused on Smutnoe vremia. His research on this

⁶⁶Glinskii, "Suvorin," pp. 39-40.

important era in Russian history did not gain scholarly recognition, but his own analysis of these events influenced Suvorin's later attitudes on the historical development of the Russian people. One study produced by Suvorin at the end of the nineteenth century did gain some attention. This was a series of articles, first published in the Novoe vremia newspaper and later incorporated into a book, wherein he proved that copies of poems in the Russian Archives supposedly written by the Russian poet, A. S. Pushkin, were really forgeries.⁶⁷ This work, plus the relentless and continued support he gave, through his publishing firm, to publications of Russian historical scholarship, are evidence of Suvorin's efforts to promote Russian cultural development and stimulate Russian national pride.

An ardent admirer and patron of the Russian arts and letters, the wealthy owner of Novoe vremia deeply involved himself in Russian dramatic arts during the last decade of the nineteenth century. Ever since he had been exposed to the Russian theatrical world as a young cadet, Suvorin had maintained a keen interest in Russia's dramatic arts. In his early career with the S.-Peterburgskiiia vedomosti, he served as a drama critic and later performed the same service with his own newspaper until 1895, when the wealthy publisher became an active patron and member

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 42.

of the St. Petersburg Theatrical Literary-Artistic Society which he helped organize. A very active member of the dramatic society's managerial board, and later, board chairman, Suvorin purchased the Malyi teatr in St. Petersburg with his personal funds. There, with the assistance of its wealthy patron, the dramatic society managed to stage a number of theatrical productions which ordinarily were banned from public performance by the theatrical censors.⁶⁸ Leading examples of Suvorin's skill in influencing the theatrical censors to allow the Malyi teatr to perform previously censored plays were: Vlasm' t'my, by Count L. N. Tolstoi; a trilogy by Count A. K. Tolstoi; Chaika by A. P. Chekhov; and a series of dramatic works by Western European writers.⁶⁹ Equally important to the Malyi teatr's dramatic group was the wealthy patron's leadership in organizing and managing its performances. Suvorin recruited the finest theatrical performers available, zealously canvassing provincial theatrical groups to bring outstanding talent to the Malyi teatr stage. Through his efforts, numerous gifted actors and actresses were introduced to the St. Petersburg theatrical world, and accomplished directors were retained for productions. In addition he

⁶⁸ E. Karpov, "A. S. Suvorin i osnovanie teatra literaturno-artisticheskago kryzhka," Istoricheskii vestnik, CXXXVII (August-December, 1914), 449.

⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 879-82.

acquired the latest theatrical equipment available in Russia and in Western Europe for the Malyi teatr. Suvorin also wrote plays including a drama, Medeia; the comedies, Tat'iana Repina and Vopros; and a five-act historical drama, Tsar' Dmitrii Samozvanets i Tsarevna Kseniia. The latter, based on his historical interests and studies, was conceived as a critical analysis of conditions during Russia's Smutnoe vremia. As a historical interpretation, this dramatic work received a degree of recognition; but, as was the case with Suvorin's other dramatic endeavors, the play was lacking in dramatic quality. Despite the deficiencies of these dramatic works, Suvorin's patronage and energetic activity in the St. Petersburg theatrical arts continued. Although the stage productions in the Malyi teatr did not represent extremely high levels of dramatic achievement, Suvorin and this theatrical group offered unique opportunities for the numerous gifted performers and directors in the St. Petersburg theatrical world to present their work.⁷⁰ Many of these same artists were major participants in Russian dramatic achievements that followed. Suvorin's patronage of Russia's dramatic arts reflected his continued interest in Russia's cultural development, and he gave financial support to many Russian artists.

It was upon numerous Russian writers and

⁷⁰Ibid., pp. 459-65.

journalists that the wealthy publisher mainly bestowed financial benefits to assist them in their literary activities. Through the years, the Novoe vremia publisher regularly searched for the best writing talents in Russia; and he paid them well to contribute to his St. Petersburg daily and publishing enterprises. Some of the writers who enjoyed Suvorin's financial favors were: Maslov; Skal'kovskii; I. I. Iasinskii; Prince Bariatinskii; D. S. Merezhkovskii; and Fotapenko.⁷¹ The best and most well-known example of Suvorin's patronage was his protégé, Anton P. Chekhov, a literary giant of Russia's Silver Age in literature. The fifteen-year-long business association and friendship between the young writer and his patron reveals the wealthy publisher's devotion to assist promising young writers.

The relationship between the budding writer and Aleksei S. Suvorin began in the latter part of December, 1885, shortly after the publisher read Chekhov's recently published book of comic stories. The owner of the Novoe vremia enterprise perceived Chekhov's potential and invited the financially-distressed writer for an interview in his Novoe vremia office.⁷² Although the interview was brief and formal, the young writer was so impressed with the powerful mogul of the Russian publishing world that Chekhov

⁷¹K. I. Chukovskii, Chekhov, (Moscow, 1958), p. 101.

⁷²Chernov, "Chekhov i Suvorin," pp. 218-19.

immediately wrote home an account of the meeting. Chekhov's depiction of the interview in Suvorin's private office indicated that Suvorin received him very cordially. Immediately after shaking hands with the still relatively-unknown writer, Suvorin expressed his pleasure and satisfaction with Chekhov's literary work. Chekhov was invited to become a regular contributor to the Novoe vremia's Wednesday literary supplement with a substantial financial payment for his contributions. When Chekhov accepted this generous offer, Suvorin advanced money to the needy writer with no conditions attached. Over tea, the new employer advised Chekhov to be frugal in monetary matters and cautioned abstinence from vodka. The aspiring writer left the Novoe vremia offices favorably impressed and awed by his new employer, who was soon to become his patron and intimate friend, showering the young writer with numerous financial benefits during the next fifteen years.⁷³

This business association with Suvorin, whose purse was always open to writers and who loved being a patron, opened new literary horizons to Chekhov. Suvorin, who paid his writers well and who set no limits or deadlines on his writers, published Chekhov's first feuilleton, Panikhida, on February 15, 1886, in the Novoe vremia's Wednesday literary supplement. Upon the recommendation of Suvorin, the young writer dropped his previous pseudonym,

⁷³Koteliansky, Anton Chekhov, p. 69.

"Antosha Chekhonte," and published under his own name.⁷⁴

Publishing his stories in Russia's largest and most widely circulated newspaper enhanced Chekhov's reputation. As the popularity of his protégé increased, Suvorin introduced a special Saturday supplement, in addition to the Wednesday supplement, to feature Chekhov's stories.⁷⁵

The sixteen stories which appeared during the next two years were later published by Suvorin in a separate book entitled V sumerkakh. Entered by Suvorin, this book won the Pushkin Prize in Literature for Anton P. Chekhov, in October, 1888.⁷⁶

Voluminous correspondence and numerous friendly visits characterized the fifteen-year friendship of Suvorin with Chekhov. The frequency of Suvorin's letters is reflected in Chekhov's published correspondence. When Chekhov visited the Russian capital, Suvorin regularly invited him to visit the Suvorin household as a guest. Each summer, Suvorin and Chekhov visited each other's summer homes, and when Suvorin's family vacationed in Western

⁷⁴Ronald Hingley, Chekhov: A Biographical and Critical Study (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1950), p. 74.

⁷⁵Koteliansky, Anton Chekhov, p. 194.

⁷⁶Hingley, Chekhov: A Biographical and Critical Study, p. 78.

Europe, Chekhov accompanied them as Suvorin's guest.⁷⁷

During these meetings, Suvorin engaged the writer in long discussions on topics concerning Russia's political, social and cultural problems. Commenting on his older friend's performance in these lengthy discussions, Chekhov expressed this opinion:

. . . He is a big man. He plays exactly the same part in art as a setter does in hunting woodcock--that is, he works by his devilish flair and is always burning with passion. He is a self-taught man, hence his wholesomeness and his purely dog-like unspoiled nature; hence, too, his independence of outlook. Being poor in theories, he was forced to develop in himself what nature had so richly endowed him with; involuntarily he developed his instinct to the dimensions of a great mind. Merely to speak with him is a pleasing experience and when you get to understand his conversational manner, his sincerity, which the majority of talkers lack, then a chat with him becomes almost a delight.⁷⁸

Suvorin's friendship with Chekhov and the young writer's esteem for the wealthy publisher remained firm as long as Chekhov overlooked Suvorin's decidedly conservative and nationalist views. When Suvorin's staunch anti-Semitic views, expressed in articles and editorials on the Dreyfus Case in France, conflicted with Chekhov's increasingly liberal views, their friendship grew strained and their

⁷⁷V. Nemirovitch-Dantchenko, My Life in the Russian Theatre, trans. by John Cournos (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1936), p. 61.

⁷⁸Koteliansky, Anton Chekhov, p. 112.

business association ended.⁷⁹ Despite Chekhov's rejection of Suvorin's political views and the Novoe vremia's editorial policies, the writer expressed his admiration for the wealthy publisher's achievements as a patron of Russian culture. In defense of Suvorin, Chekhov said he had been the first to increase the salaries and improve the working conditions of the newspaper profession; he had befriended many poor writers and had carried them along with sums of money, which he realized he would never recover; and he brought to the publishing business an instinct for developing Russian culture as well as making profits. "When history finally judges him," concluded Chekhov, "let us not forget these aspects of Suvorin's life."⁸⁰

The tributes of praise and esteem bestowed on Aleksei S. Suvorin, the son of a peasant, at the twenty-fifth anniversary jubilee celebration honoring his leadership of the Novoe vremia newspaper and publishing firm, reflected the recognition of his accomplishments. At the festive celebration, on February 26, 1901, prominent persons from all aspects of Russian society praised Suvorin for his remarkable achievements as a journalist, publisher

⁷⁹ Abramovich, Novoe vremia, p. 35.

⁸⁰ Simmons, Chekhov: A Biography, p. 583.

and wealthy patron of the Russian arts and letters.⁸¹

His sole proprietorship of one of Russia's most widely-circulated newspapers and a prominent publishing firm permitted him to exercise control over a vast publishing system communicating vital information and editorial opinions to a wide segment of Russian society. From this strategic position in Russia's publishing world, Suvorin was able to widely circulate his observations and views on the issues and events shaping Russia's historical development in the tumultuous years leading to the revolutionary upheaval of 1905 and the convocation of the Russian Duma in 1906. The public views of Suvorin on the foreign and domestic problems of Imperial Russia in these eventful years became known to his Russian readers in his column titled "Malen'kiia pis'ma," published regularly in Novoe vremia. Because he was careful to judge the restrictions of Russia's censorship in his articles, Suvorin successfully managed to express shades of editorial criticism acceptable to the dictates of the government's censors.

At the turn of the century, when the Russian government's disastrous foreign policies produced domestic unrest and disorders which threatened the continued existence of the autocratic system of government, Suvorin's

⁸¹Novoe vremia, March 3 (March 16), 1901, pp. 2-3.

views in his "Malen'kiia pis'ma" revealed a strong nationalism, a leaning towards progressive domestic reforms and a rather conservative stance towards changes in the political structure. The growing crisis in the Far East, in particular, gave Suvorin ample opportunity to display his nationalism.

CHAPTER III

SUVORIN AND THE BOXER CRISIS

The Boxer Rebellion in China, which originated in the fall of 1899, began to threaten seriously Russian interests in the Far East in the summer of 1900. With the Manchurian segment of the Trans-Siberian railroad only partially constructed, the Russian government cautiously sought to avoid actions which might prevent the railroad's completion while attempting at the same time to maintain Russia's power position in the region. The reading fare which Suvorin offered the Russian public through his "Malen'kiia pis'ma" during the Boxer crisis was threaded with the themes of nationalism and Russian economic self-interest, and unmitigatedly supported the policy recommendations of the Minister of Finance S. Iu. Witte.

Minister of Foreign Affairs M. N. Murav'ev formulated the early Russian government policy on the Boxer question. At the time of the policy's adoption in February, 1900, Murav'ev appraised the Boxer movement as primarily directed against European missionary efforts and economic concessions in China. Since Russia did not participate in either of these activities to any significant extent,

Murav'ev recommended that Russia curtail its expansive policies and avoid any further conflict in the Far East until the completion of the Trans-Siberian Railway in 1902. Witte, mastermind of the railway, shared Murav'ev's view and joined in supporting a Russian policy of peace and retrenchment in the Far East.¹ During the spring of 1900, however, the Boxer movement increased in scope and intensity.

However, while Novoe vremia published reports of the events in China throughout the spring of 1900, Suvorin himself remained silent on the subject of the Chinese disorders and Russia's role in the Far East. This lack of comment cannot be attributed either to ignorance or unavailability of data. From Suvorin's published memoirs it is evident that he enjoyed ready access to information on China both from his newspaper correspondents and through his acquaintance with the men directing Russia's Far Eastern policy. His personal associations included Murav'ev, Witte, and one of Witte's close friends, Prince E. E. Ukhtomskii, publisher of the S.-Peterburgskiiia vedomosti, head of the Russo-Chinese Bank and chief of the Chinese Eastern Railway Board. Although Suvorin reported meeting with these three important figures on several occasions in early 1900, his memoirs do not indicate the disorders in China were a

¹M. Pokrovskii, "Tsarskaia diplomatiia o zadachakh Rossii na Vostoke v 1900 g.," Krasnyi arkhiv, XVII (1926), 4-25. Krasnyi arkhiv will be hereinafter referred to as K.A.

topic of conversation. While motives cannot be ascertained, the publisher's lack of public comment on the Chinese events appears to be consonant with Murav'ev's and Witte's view that the Chinese situation did not threaten Russian interests in the Far East.²

The situation changed in early June, 1900, when the Boxer movement threatened the foreign legations in Peking. The Boxers murdered the German ambassador, besieged the foreign legations in Peking, and were successfully resisting Chinese government efforts to quell the disorders. Alarmed, Great Britain, Germany, France, Italy, Austria, Japan, the United States and other countries with legations in Peking decided to "take concerted measures" to protect their diplomats and citizens in Peking by forming an international military expedition.³ Despite its desire to avoid involvement, the Russian government felt compelled to participate in this international intervention. On June 4 Murav'ev justified Russian participation by claiming Russia's prestige in the Far East might suffer if it failed to assist in rescuing its own and the other foreign legations. The Russian government also feared major

²A. S. Suvorin, Dnevnik A. S. Suvorina, ed. by Mikh. Krichevskii (Moscow, 1923), pp. 223-40. Hereinafter referred to as Dnevnik.

³Confidential telegrams from M. Girs, Russian Ambassador at Peking, May 27, 1900 and June 7, 1900, K.A., XIV (1926), 12.

Japanese interference if no Russian action was taken.⁴

The decision to dispatch Russian troops to China deeply involved Russia in the Chinese crisis. It was only on June 15, after Russia had made military commitments, that Suvorin expressed concern in his memoirs about the problems in China; but he still avoided publishing his views on the government's actions.⁵

On June 17 Murav'ev submitted a memorandum to Nicholas II revising the basis of Russian policy in view of the growing Boxer threat. Murav'ev saw Russia's role in the Far East as necessarily different from the positions of the other major powers. Anxious to avoid the open hostility of the Chinese government, Murav'ev believed that Russia should maintain a low profile. Under no condition should it seek the leadership of the international forces. Russian troops should limit their involvement to freeing the legations and guaranteeing the safety of Russian subjects and their property. The presence of Russian troops

⁴A memorandum from Count Murav'ev to Nicholas II, June 7, 1900, Ibid., p. 13.

⁵Suvorin, Dnevnik, p. 242. For background on the crisis in China see William L. Langer, The Diplomacy of Imperialism, 1890-1902 (2 vols.; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1935); Edward H. Zabriskie, American-Russian Rivalry in the Far East: A Study in Diplomacy and Power Politics, 1895-1914 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1946); and Andrew Malozemoff, Russian Far Eastern Policy, 1881-1904; with Special Emphasis on the Causes of the Russo-Japanese War (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958) especially chapters VI and VII.

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would prevent the other European states from taking action without Russia's consent.⁶ When this policy was approved by Nicholas II, the Russian government entered the China crisis believing it would not be hampered in its "freedom of action" to renew friendly relations with China as soon as possible.

When Murav'ev died suddenly on June 21, Count V. N. Lamsdorf was nominated provisional director of the ministry of foreign affairs by Witte.⁷ With Lamsdorf in this position, Witte took control of Russia's diplomacy in the Far East. Lamsdorf's immediate action was to endorse Murav'ev's policy of June 17.⁸ The "separate course" emphasis adopted by Lamsdorf was well suited to Witte's attitude on Russia's imperative need to avoid conflict in the Far East until the Chinese Eastern Railway in Manchuria was completed.

The outbreak of Boxer disorders in Manchuria on June 26 and the attacks against Russia's Chinese Eastern Railway induced Lamsdorf and Witte to utilize the "separate course" approach. On the day that news of Boxer disorders

⁶A memorandum from Count Murav'ev to Nicholas II, June 17, 1900, K.A., XIV (1926), 14-15.

⁷S. Iu. Witte, Vospominaniia I (Berlin, 1922), 159-160.

⁸A memorandum from Count Lamsdorf to Nicholas II, July 13, 1900, K.A., XIV (1926), 17-19; Anatolii Ia. Kantorovich, Amerika v bor'be za Kitai (Moscow, 1935), 127.

in Manchuria reached St. Petersburg, Witte received a telegram from Li Hung-chang, a special adviser to the Chinese Imperial Court, requesting assistance in resolving the difficulties with the foreign states having legations in Peking. Witte replied immediately, hoping to initiate separate negotiations with China which would allow removing Russian troops from the international military expedition before it reached Peking. His communique included terms promising that Russia would not declare war and would support Chinese government efforts to resolve the crisis if China would keep peace in Manchuria and would protect the lives of Russian citizens in China. At the same time Witte made arrangements for Prince Ukhtomskii to depart for China and open negotiations in July; but military developments were to complicate matters and bring Suvorin's public support for Witte's policies.⁹

The need to dispatch Russian troops to Manchuria on July 3 to protect the Chinese Eastern Railway and the successful offensive action of the international forces in seizing the city of Tientsin on July 14 aggravated disagreement within the Russian government. General A. N. Kuropatkin, minister of war, challenged the peaceful diplomacy of Lamsdorf and Witte and advocated Russian military leadership of the international forces to swiftly

⁹B. A. Romanov, Rossia v Man'chzhurii, 1892-1906 (Leningrad, 1928), pp. 250-251.

"polish off Peking." Li Hung-chang's reply of July 26 expressing willingness to meet with Prince Ukhtomskii aided the Witte peace approach.¹⁰

Late in the evening of July 28, while Witte was immersed in efforts to stall Kuropatkin's Peking plan, Suvorin visited Witte's home where the major topic of discussion was China. Suvorin's memoirs note that Witte showed him records of a November 28, 1897, discussion with Murav'ev concerning plans to occupy Port Arthur and that Witte had been opposed to that action. Witte also recounted that he had told Murav'ev on the day before his death that Russia's troubles in China had begun with the seizing of the port city.¹¹ Two days later, on July 30, Novoe vremia published the first of a series of "Malen'kiia pis'ma" arguing support for the major Far Eastern policies advocated by Witte.

Suvorin began his discussion by asserting that he regarded the military activities in the Far East a "war." Noting England's huge weekly expense in conducting military operations against the Boers in South Africa, Suvorin argued Russia also might soon be spending "twenty million" a week for military operations in China. The publisher questioned

¹⁰ A memorandum from Count Lamsdorf to Nicholas II, July 13, 1900, K.A., XIV (1926), 18-19.

¹¹ Suvorin, Dnevnik, pp. 242-243.

whether Russia's participation and the financial burdens which would be incurred were necessary. Responding negatively, he asserted: ". . . no one knows what started the war and why it began. . ." In a rebuttal to the proposal to advance aggressively on Peking, Suvorin contended this act would "theoretically" mean "war." In addition, it would mean "losses to Russian fathers, mothers, and wives." As an added reason for his opposition, Suvorin recalled the 1876 crisis over "Constantinople and the Bosphorus." Although he had supported war in that instance, Suvorin declared that the Chinese situation was entirely different. In the Balkans, "taking the Bosphorus meant closing the Black Sea. In doing this Russia reduced expenses for the army and armaments, and strengthened her political influence in the Balkan Peninsula and provinces." Thus, Russia was "recompensed" for its losses. Displaying a profit orientation which was typical, Suvorin asked what Russia would gain by seizing Peking. War with China, Suvorin told his reading public, would not be glorious and "promised nothing except difficulties and expenses." Suvorin conveniently did not mention the large Russian military operations in Manchuria which Witte had directly initiated to protect the Chinese Eastern Railway.¹²

After strongly opposing military action in China,

¹²Novoe vremia, July 17 (July 30), 1900, p. 2.

Suvorin defended independent Russian diplomacy by criticizing the attitudes of the European states.¹³ Citing the false rumors about the death of the Chinese Emperor and Empress, he suggested that reports about the gruesome "horrors" of the Boxers were not verified. The Europeans were "exaggerating everything" in saying that the "...Chinese were cunning and treacherous..." and that the Chinese could not be trusted. European talk of suppressing the Chinese, Suvorin believed, was an equally exaggerated reaction. China was an enormous country with a large army; conducting a war against it would be difficult.¹⁴ Criticism of European hostile attitudes and actions towards China became a major theme in Suvorin's "Malen'kiia pis'ma." Such arguments helped provide continual rationale for Russia's "separate course."

In keeping with his newspaper's anti-German bias, Suvorin stated particular disagreement with the extreme views of German Emperor Wilhelm following the murder of the German Ambassador Baron von Kettler in Peking. Wilhelm's "war cry" demanding "exemplary chastisement and vengeance" on the Chinese and the "razing of Peking to the ground"

¹³ Suvorin used the term "Europe" or "European" in much of his writings regarding the Boxer Rebellion and ordinarily was referring mainly to Great Britain, France and Germany.

¹⁴ Novoe vremia, July 17 (July 30), 1900, p. 2.

were not Russia's attitudes. Despite German claims that "neighborly ties" bound Germany and Russia together in the Far East, Russia's own interests obliged her to judge the situation in China for herself and act accordingly. "It is impossible for us to forget that China is also our neighbor..." Russia, Suvorin argued, could not occupy China and hope to save its good neighborly relations with China. Russia's vital interest, the "Siberian Road," joined China and Russia more closely than ever. In addition, Suvorin insisted Russia was "one-third Asiatic" and shared the same aims as China. By stationing a large number of Russian troops on her neighbor's borders, Russia would only serve as Europe's "policeman watching China."¹⁵

Opposing the attack on Tientsin, Suvorin attempted to engender support for peace by expressing sympathy for the Chinese people and defending them. He explained the defeat of the superior Chinese forces at Tientsin by noting that confusion during the stormy night of the battle accidentally benefited the European troops. The disorders in China were primarily an internal "revolution" comparable to the French Revolution. Drawing on his personal historical research, Suvorin also saw the disturbances as paralleling Russia during the Smutnoe vremia at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Poland's

¹⁵Ibid.

"interference" in Russia's domestic affairs during that historical period united the Russian people against the Poles. "This interference was fatal for the Poles!" In a similar manner the disturbances in China manifested the reaction of the Chinese people to foreign involvement in their domestic affairs. Russia, Suvorin recalled, had interfered only once in Chinese affairs during China's war with Japan, and Russia had acted in support of China. Suvorin asked Russians not to regard their Chinese "brothers" as enemies in the present crisis. Instead, they should understand the predicament of the Chinese people faced with internal strife and struggling against European attempts to saddle them with European culture and religion.¹⁶ In opposing further military activities in China, criticizing European attitudes, and sympathizing with the Chinese people, Suvorin actively encouraged reader support for policies advocated by Lamsdorf and Witte.

The Novoe vremia publisher's backing of the Lamsdorf and Witte position occurred at an opportune time. On the Sunday afternoon before Suvorin's initial article appeared, Witte met with Tsar Nicholas II to discuss Li Hung-chang's proposal and to plan Russia's response. Two days later on July 31 the Tsar approved Prince

¹⁶Ibid.

Ukhtomskii's journey to negotiate with Li.¹⁷ The belief that the summer rains and lack of sufficient troops in China would hamper the advance of the European expeditionary forces for several weeks added to Witte's hopes for an independent peace with China. Meanwhile, on Wednesday, August 1, Lamsdorf and Witte adopted a "wait and see" policy while Russia's negotiations with Li Hung-chang were pursued.¹⁸ The next day Lamsdorf recommended rejection of France's overtures to form an alliance for the purpose of influencing the other major powers in China.¹⁹

When Suvorin's views were challenged by the Russian newspaper Novosti, he retorted that his comment "taking the Bosphorus" meant only closing the Black Sea to war ships of other countries and not closing the Black Sea to nonmilitary activities. The Novosti, he added in a critical note, should be concerned primarily with the Russian people and not the "whole world." As to his idea that Russia was "one-third Asiatic," Suvorin replied, whether Russians wished it or not, Russia was only "two-thirds European." Suvorin based this proposition on the fact that

¹⁷Romanov, Rossia v Man'chzhurii, 1892-1906, p. 184.

¹⁸Draft of a reply to Marquis Montebello, French Ambassador at St. Petersburg, August 1, 1900, K.A., XIV (1926), 20.

¹⁹A memorandum from Count Lamsdorf to Nicholas II, August 2, 1900, Ibid., pp. 21-22.

some degree of Asiatic blood flowed in Russian veins and that Asiatic culture and nationality still existed in the composition of Russian society. Even Peter the Great's reforms did not succeed in destroying all the Asiatic traits in Russian culture but only assimilated Asiatic characteristics to revitalize the whole culture.²⁰

Answering the charge that he was unduly sympathetic to the Chinese, Suvorin replied by asking if the Chinese people deserved the severe punishment demanded by "Christian and enlightened Europe." Europe was viewing China as a criminal, but a criminal is given a lawyer and in court consideration is given to his background, character and circumstances. Citing an item from current news, he pointed out that even the assassin of the King of Italy was being given a trial. Suvorin said he viewed the Chinese as a law court might, and asserted the Chinese people were entitled to the same treatment accorded criminals. But utilizing a concept ahead of its time, Suvorin contended in actuality, "a nation cannot be a criminal. A criminal must be a separate person, a leader, but not the nation."²¹

Nevertheless, in agreement with Witte's stance, Suvorin declared his support for Russia's unquestioned

²⁰ Novoe vremia, July 20 (August 2), 1900, p. 2.

²¹ Ibid.

right to defend her borders and in particular her interests in Manchuria. He based his position on the fact that Russia is part of Asia.²² Perhaps he saw no contradiction between arguing for non-interference in China and at the same time supporting Russian troop movements in Manchuria. The fact that he for the most part avoided mentioning Manchuria, however, suggests that he recognized the contradiction but felt the railroad's importance justified military action. On the question of China proper, Suvorin argued, on the other hand, that military action in that area would only serve Europe's purposes and enough Russian blood had been needlessly shed for European interests and "order" in Europe during the past century. Taking a position slightly at odds with that of Lamsdorf and Witte, Suvorin believed Russian military forces in the Chinese situation should not be placed under a European supreme commander. But he agreed wholeheartedly with the view that Russian forces should not be used to advance Europe's "greedy imperialism" in China. Europe had not carefully considered "China's exploitation" and the complicated situation in Peking proved this. As an example of Europe's superficial analysis, he cited Pierre Leroy-Beaulieu's La rénovation de l'Asie. Noting that the French author had been in China shortly before the Chinese disorders began, Suvorin

²²Ibid.

charged Leroy-Beaulieu did not have a foreboding of the present events. On the contrary, he said the French author erroneously believed Europe could easily divide and exploit China because the "Chinese Jacobins" were indifferent to nationalism and the Chinese government. The publisher concluded by emphasizing that Russia had not joined Europe in "humbling and plundering" China in the 1860's. Instead, Russia "with a huge investment and noble courage" had united China with Europe by building the Trans-Siberian Railway and it did not profit Russia's future in Asia to embitter or divide China.²³

The continuance of the Russian government's June 17 policy was made more apparent on August 6 when Tsar Nicholas II consented to the German Emperor Wilhelm's nominee, Field Marshall Alfred von Waldersee, as the commander-in-chief of the international forces in China. The Tsar's endorsement of Waldersee dampened the hopes of Kuropatkin and the advocates of a more aggressive military policy by Russia. On the same day, Witte received additional encouragement when Lamsdorf was appointed acting director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and announced that Russia was not in a hurry to march on Peking.²⁴ The

²³ Ibid., pp. 2-3.

²⁴ A letter from Count Witte to D. S. Sipiagin, Minister of Internal Affairs, August 7, 1900, K.A., XVIII (1926), 35-36.

Witte and Lamsdorf policy appeared to be overcoming its opposition in St. Petersburg and Witte expressed the belief that the Tsar's acceptance of Waldersee would benefit his efforts for a separate peaceful settlement.

In an article the next day Suvorin conveyed his confidence in Witte's policies, although, as usual, he did not mention Witte by name. Amidst rumors that Li Hung-chang was dead, Suvorin claimed that the Chinese were seriously preparing to open negotiations for peace. Regardless of Li Hung-chang, the "Chinese patriots" realized now that their struggle had begun too early and their preparations were not adequate. However, their plan to liberate China from foreigners was achieving success. The courageous resistance of the Chinese people was causing some in Europe to hesitate over "partitioning China" and opening China as a new horizon for Europe. He noted the irony that the Chinese were fighting with weapons the Europeans, especially the Krupp munitions firm, had sold to them. With God's help and these weapons from Europe the Chinese would defend their independence. Just as Peter the Great won the Battle of Poltava by imitating his "teacher, Sweden," so the Chinese could win by learning from Europe.²⁵

Suvorin blamed China's hostility towards Russia on Russia's participation in the international military

²⁵ Novoe vremia, July 25 (August 7), 1900, p. 1.

action at Tientsin and near Peking when mediations began. This was a rebuff to China. The affair in China, Suvorin hammered at his readers, was Europe's problem. Russia's interests were best served by "independent action" and "only this independent pledge calms our Siberian borders and our trade relations with China."²⁶

Encouraging reader identification with China, Suvorin described Europe's attitude towards China as resembling the European approach towards Russia in the 16th and 17th centuries. Russia was an enigma to Europe for hundreds of years and so was China. Arrogantly, Europe considered itself better than Russia. As proof, Suvorin suggested that one should read the works of foreign travelers to Russia and see that they visited only Moscow. "Even the best--Herberstein, Fletcher, Meierberg, and O'Leary--did not have a foreboding that Russia has a powerful government. They censured our form of government, our administrators, bribery and ignorance and laughed about our religious forms, our customs, and character." These travelers could be compared to contemporary European travelers to China. Suvorin asked, what do they know? He believed China would not change or give in to Europe. In the conflict with Europe the Chinese "...placed questions about their independence above the right to life. It is necessary

²⁶Ibid., pp. 1-2.

for all mankind to take these questions seriously."²⁷ Thus in his column Suvorin continued to stress arguments which supported a Russian policy of peace and independent action towards China.

The accuracy of Suvorin's analysis that the Chinese were prepared to negotiate was demonstrated later that same day. The Chinese government announced Li Hung-chang was appointed to act as its representative in peace negotiations. The effect of this news raised hopes in St. Petersburg that a "reconciliation" of the two "neighbors" was imminent.

Suvorin commented favorably on the anticipated "reconciliation" with China and the Chinese intention to "apply energetic measures for the establishment of tranquility among the Chinese." Suvorin argued the Chinese were not a warlike people; but were "...a nation, i.e., collected people, conscious of their unity and possessing an idea of national honor." Mentioning that in early May a telegram from D. D. Pokotilov, Witte's financial agent in Peking, had indicated that the population was peaceful, Suvorin declared that it was now obviously the Chinese population and not only the Chinese government opposing the European forces marching to Peking. This stubborn resistance he attributed to the economic "concessions" granted

²⁷ Ibid., p. 2.

the European powers by the Chinese government.²⁸

In reply to criticism of his views from German diplomatic circles, Suvorin declared that it was difficult to accept European policies in China because the Chinese people did not regard European "concessions" as beneficial to them. This view of the European concessions echoed the Russian government's position. Explaining his version of the origin of the conflict, Suvorin argued the Chinese people were exploited by the concessions and as their patience ended they began a revolution against their government for granting them. When all the European concessionaires came to the assistance of a Chinese government powerless to suppress the revolution, the whole Chinese population and army rose up against Europe. The complicated international conflict in China then created demands for a European supreme commander. Suvorin questioned Wilhelm II's choice of Field Marshal Waldersee for this post. He believed that the appointment of a general in Germany, rather than one on the scene of the conflict, would create new problems. But he considered it likely that the Chinese crisis would resolve itself before Waldersee arrived and that a supreme commander would not then be necessary.²⁹

The latter view was in agreement with Lamsdorf's and

²⁸ Ibid., July 28 (August 10), 1900, pp. 1-2.

²⁹ Ibid.

Witte's belief that either peace negotiations would have begun or Peking would have been taken before Waldersee could arrive in China and assume command.³⁰ The appointment of Waldersee also caused Suvorin to raise doubts about the German general's mission with the "European concert" in Europe. Suvorin wanted this concert to end without a "solo" for Germany and he believed Waldersee's appointment meant difficulties for Russia in China. The problem in China was not a "Gordian Knot" to be cut with a sword. If the "sword" was used in China, it would unleash problems for many years to come. Moreover, if Europe were to "open" China to European culture, it would threaten Russia's position in the Far East and Russia could not permit this.³¹

Insisting that Russia and China were not enemies, Suvorin again argued that Russia's greatest effort must be to seek a peace treaty with China. Going a step further than Lamsdorf and Witte, he suggested an "alliance" in the Far East similar to the Triple Alliance in the West, with Russia, Turkey and China as members. "Where Genghis had reigned" lay Russia's future destiny. "In the East we are

³⁰A letter from Count Witte to D. S. Sipiagin, August 23, 1900, K.A., XVIII (1926), 39.

³¹Novoe vremia, July 28 (August 10), 1900, p. 2.

more heard, more understood, and more of our business is there."³²

On August 14, with the recent actions of the Chinese government indicating peace negotiations would begin shortly between Russia and China, Suvorin reasserted the necessity for Russia to enter into an alliance with Turkey and China. In Asia "Russia must not desire new acquisitions, but a new influence, new proof of our might and importance, a new hegemony." Above all, in this new alliance in the East, Russia must seek "independence of states." The increasing and persistent rivalries among the European states in China for "spheres of interest" compelled Russia to seek alliances if she wished to retain her "great role" in Asia. In a chauvinistic tone, he asserted the Russian people were peaceful and not warlike. The Russian Tsar demonstrated this peaceful quality with his efforts to convene the Hague Conference. Suvorin stated, perhaps knowing the action would be initiated, that he would not be astonished if the Russian embassy left Peking to end its interference in Chinese affairs. The courageous, self-respecting Russian nation did not need territorial gains from China; and Russian troops only remained in China to limit and shorten the war and to exercise

³²Ibid.

Russia's "resolute influence on the Far East."³³

Concerning Field Marshal Waldersee's command over Russian troops, Suvorin modified an earlier view and indicated his leadership would be acceptable but only under the condition that the Russian military representatives' opinions would be honored. This changed sentiment was more in conformity with the stance taken by Lamsdorf and Witte. At the same time Suvorin rejected the claims of the German press that Waldersee was "all-powerful." Russia's interests in the Far East were so "vital and essential" that they must not be "subordinated" to Waldersee's commands or to the "general interests of Europe." He suggested that China and the powers with troops in China were at the crossroads of war or peace, and he preferred the latter.³⁴

Suvorin criticized European arrogance and treatment of China, claiming that Europe exaggerated the seriousness of the situation in China. Recalling that he had expressed this view three weeks earlier, Suvorin proceeded to show that developments in China supported his charge. He concluded, "For Europe, China...is a mysterious country." One reason for the failure to comprehend China, Suvorin suggested, was the lack of language proficiency of most foreign diplomats assigned to the Far East. Alexander III

³³Ibid., August 1 (August 14), 1900, p. 2.

³⁴Ibid.

had directed Russian diplomats to be skilled in the native languages of the eastern countries to which they were assigned. This language proficiency enabled the Russian diplomats to analyze the local politics, press and population. Suvorin claimed that a study of the servants in the Peking foreign legations revealed they were all Chinese who understood the languages of the foreign diplomats and thus could intelligently serve the foreign embassies. By contrast, the diplomats did not understand Chinese and consequently did not know what was happening in China: "To know the languages of other countries is to know the correct course with them. It is to know the spirit of these countries and to understand their character and the evolution in their spirits." In addition, Suvorin criticized the inadequacy of Western European atlases, noting that they devoted more attention to Switzerland than to China. The English, he declared, duplicated a map of China from a Russian version. Suvorin suggested to Novoe vremia readers that only Russia really understood China and that consequently its independent action in China was justified. He concluded by asserting that Europe had involved itself in China to divide it up and had prophesied that European forces would not retreat when the legations were finally freed.³⁵

³⁵Ibid., August 5 (August 18), 1900, p. 2.

On August 19 St. Petersburg was surprised by the news that the international relief forces had taken Peking. The foreign legations were released. This development startled Witte and Lamsdorf, who had believed that bad weather and insufficient forces were delaying the advance.³⁶ However, Witte accepted the fait accompli; with the legations free, Russian diplomacy could emphasize peaceful intentions even more strenuously.

Having staunchly opposed the march on Peking, Suvorin now reversed his position. On August 20 he heralded the relief of the foreign legations in Peking, lauding the role Russian troops had played in the action. He praised General N. P. Lenivich for his leadership and for his "tricky role as a field marshal" in storming the gates of Peking, comparing the event to the triumphal march into Paris in 1814. Now that the foreign legations were released, Suvorin hoped the crisis would end. "The Chinese are sufficiently beaten down! Why Continue?" The publisher shared the position of Witte and Lamsdorf that there was no need for the international forces to conduct further punitive expeditions against the Chinese revolutionaries. He believed that it was wise for the international forces to cease military operations and to wait in Peking until Field Marshal Waldersee arrived. Suvorin speculated whether the European

³⁶ A letter from Count Witte to D. S. Sipiagin, August 10, 1900, K.A., XVIII (1926), 39.

powers would allow the Chinese Emperor who had fled from Peking in June to return.³⁷ He was no doubt particularly interested in this point since the Russian government was attempting to negotiate with the Emperor's representative.

Turning his attention to Waldersee's mission, Suvorin considered the alternatives open to Waldersee as supreme commander. Waldersee's primary measure for restoring order should be to "compel the Christian missionaries to abandon commercial aims and commercial methods for converting the Chinese to Christ. Christ is the God of love and brotherhood but not the God of commerce and retailing." Suvorin condemned the Europeans for making the Christian Chinese a privileged class by extending patronage to Christian Chinese firms. The Chinese people were tolerant, but use of material advantages to proselytize was alienating them. Moreover, the missionaries humiliated the Chinese people and their religion with sermons based on scorn and contempt. Suvorin questioned whether Russian diplomats would aid the Chinese and "remove this evil." He believed that Russian diplomats had the right to assist the Chinese and he emphasized that Russian diplomats must "fearlessly and boldly stand on the side of the Chinese" proposing this as the first step to take in China.³⁸

³⁷Novoe vremia, August 7 (August 20), 1900, p. 2.

³⁸Ibid.

On August 22 Suvorin attacked Europe's planned reforms for China and the economic motives he believed were involved. In particular, he singled out the "female question" that the Europeans were raising in China. Chinese women were bound to traditional dress fashions; but Europe would allow them to dress in European styles. Such changes were not for the betterment of Chinese women. "If women were liberated and given the right to dress in European styles and live in European fashion, imports would immediately increase significantly." There were 200 million women in China. Suvorin believed Germany considered this when it said "commercial war" was necessary for the comfort of the Chinese. He criticized Europe for ignoring that the Chinese workers were poor and for saying their handicraft industries were all they needed for their simple life. Suvorin forecast for his readers the spectre of these poor and hungry Chinese workers flooding into Russia's Siberian land and commented that this prospect was not good for Russia's future. He mentioned that the United States prohibited Chinese workers because their low wages led to strikes.³⁹

Suvorin continued to be very much concerned about the "Allies" under the leadership of Field Marshal Waldersee. He quoted Waldersee's comment to Wilhelm II when leaving for China: the "...order to retreat will not come from my

³⁹ Ibid., August 9 (August 22), 1900, p. 2.

mouth." He also noted Waldersee's conversation with newspaper reporters during which he told them he expected great danger. From Waldersee's attitude Suvorin believed the continuance of war in China was inevitable.⁴⁰

Suvorin's sympathy for the "wild Chinese fanatics" and his proposal for an alliance in the Far East were attacked by one of the authors of a pamphlet representing the events in China as a manifestation of the "yellow peril." In his August 23 reply to the demands of the Kiev publicist "Kievljanin" that the Chinese officials be hanged, Suvorin stated that he believed "human understanding" and "rational judgment" must prevail over the heated indignation of critics like the Kiev publicist. China already was receiving punishment in Manchuria, Tienstin and Peking and everyone desired the speedy return of peace and the normal order. The losses suffered in conflict did not affect international affairs. As proof, Suvorin noted Russian and French losses in the Napoleonic invasion of Russia did not prevent the two countries from entering into an alliance. He rejected the Kiev publicist's charge that Russia would be joining in an alliance with Muslims and pagans. Pointing out Russia's population included several million Muslims, Suvorin declared Christian Europe based its culture and law on the pagan cultures of Greece and Rome. China had a culture that

⁴⁰Ibid.

was over a thousand years old and that was respected in the world. The Chinese were not "pagans." Studies of Buddha and Confucius by scholars proved the Chinese culture had fine moral rules. His proposal for a Russian alliance with China and Turkey was not a sign of hostility toward Europe but a sign of his determination to protect Russia's interests in the Far East and bring Russian "order" there. In promoting Russia's well-being, he denied that he was guilty of Germanophobia or Anglophobia. Instead, he declared that he was exercising his patriotic right to defend his government's foreign policies just as the English and German press were defending their governments. The principle of discussing Russian foreign policy in the press, Suvorin recalled, was defended in a document by former Minister of Internal Affairs D. A. Tolstoy, who "considered it highly wholesome." He asserted that his motivations were the same as foreign writers who wished their diplomats to be perfect. He said that he, too, wanted the Russian "eagle to be brilliant" and successful. Suvorin wondered why his praise of Russian diplomacy was received so "poorly." His proposal for Russia to seek an alliance with China and Turkey was in Russia's future interest. It was in no way meant to show hostility towards Europe or Russia's ally, France.⁴¹

Witte and Lamsdorf at this point were working to

⁴¹ Novoe vremia, August 10 (August 23), 1900, p. 2.

return the situation in the Far East to normal as soon as possible. In a meeting with Nicholas II on August 25 they decided that Russia would remove her delegation and troops from Peking to Tientsin. Russia would also indicate her readiness to negotiate with the Chinese Emperor, who was regarded as the lawful head of state.⁴² These views were made known to the other nations in a circular on August 28. The desired effect of these actions was to set Russia apart from the other powers in the eyes of the Chinese government and to encourage the beginning of peace negotiations. In addition, Russia sought to soothe China and Europe by indicating in the same circular that she intended to withdraw from Manchuria when order was restored and the railway protected.⁴³

With Lamsdorf about to announce the departure of the Russian legation and troops from Peking and Russia's readiness to negotiate, Suvorin reasserted his opposition to continued war against the Chinese people on August 25. The Chinese were human beings and could not be treated as outside the laws of humanity. In a tone he was to alter during the Russo-Japanese War, he deplored regarding the

⁴²Russian government circular note to major Russian embassies, August 25, 1900, K.A., XIV (1926), 28-29.

⁴³Die Grosse Politik der Europäischen Kabinette 1871-1914, Vol. XVI: Die Chinawirren und die Mächte 1900-1902, ed. by Johannes Lepsius, Albrecht M. Bartholdy and Friedrich Thimme (Berlin, 1924), no. 4621.

Chinese as a "dirty and foul influence" to be suppressed and destroyed as one would a "rabid dog." He believed preaching hatred and war against the Chinese people contradicted the principles of Christian love. It would be pitiful to continue waging war against a nation "which desires only that it remain in peace." The Chinese were involuntarily drawn into a war "by international envy and intrigue." Evidence of this "international envy" was now obvious in the actions of the major foreign powers. The Chinese desired only justice and objectivity in settling this international situation. Suvorin forecast that the Chinese faced grave difficulties because of the "inflamed appetites" of the European powers. Implying that the matter was out of Russian hands, Suvorin stated that he was happy Field Marshal Waldersee was named supreme commander and was responsible for the complicated situation. Russia was not at war with the Chinese revolutionaries. Russia sought peace; its proper role in the Far East was as a "peacemaker." He argued that the Russian army demonstrated this when it halted at Peking to await the arrival of Field Marshal Waldersee.⁴⁴ The publisher's portrayal of Russia as a peacemaker in the Far East was essentially the same image Witte and Lamsdorf were attempting to project in their message to the other powers.

⁴⁴Novoe vremia, August 12 (August 25), p. 2.

Suvorin's sympathetic views towards the Chinese and his proposal for a "Triple Alliance" were criticized in the foreign press. Prince V. P. Meshcherskii, editor of Grazhdanin, quoted the allegations voiced by the editor of the Berliner Tageblatt charging that Suvorin was preaching "Pan-Slavism" and that his alliance proposal did not represent an official Russian government policy. On August 28 Suvorin denied there was any basis to the first point. The charge of "Pan-Slavism," Suvorin contended, was a decoy intended to draw attention away from the "Pan-Germanism" evidenced in Germany's occupation of Kiaochow. Germany's action obviously showed that it desired a "political influence in China." As for the origin of his proposed alliance, Suvorin claimed the source was German government officials who had argued such an alliance in the Far East would work against England. Suvorin speculated that the German encouragement of this alliance and the enthusiasm of the Germans towards Russia building the Trans-Siberian Railroad were part of the German government officials' "far-sighted" plans for German penetration into the Far East. Now that Russia's movements in the Far East were successful, Germany and the rest of Europe were mistaken to believe Russia would be hindered from exerting her influence. Suvorin declared that he agreed with Prince Meshcherskii's view, "Before you Russians work for the King of Prussia, do the work for yourselves." From the attitude expressed in the

German press, Suvorin surmised that Field Marshal Waldersee was not a "battle general, but rather an administrator and politician." The German press failed to realize Russia was "considering her future influence" in the Far East. Russia, after a half-century of movement, had learned a great deal about the Far East and was wise enough to not turn China over to Europe.⁴⁵

On the next day, August 29, Suvorin turned his attention to the question of beginning negotiations in China. Supporting the position of Lamsdorf and Witte, Suvorin declared that, since Peking was liberated, negotiations should begin immediately and not await the arrival of Field Marshal Waldersee. It was wrong for the Europeans to bicker over the question of which government should conduct the negotiations. The Chinese Emperor was alive and Li Hung-chang was empowered by him to conduct negotiations. Europe's evasion of beginning negotiations could prove disastrous. He reminded the Europeans that during the Franco-Prussian War a provisional government was set up by the French people and that it insisted on continuing the war. A similar situation had occurred in Russia during the Smutnoe vremia, when the Russian people formed a "government of the people's defense" and waged war for several years against foreign interference. Suvorin questioned

⁴⁵Ibid., August 15 (August 28), p. 2.

whether the same situation might not occur in China if Europe was unsuccessful in crushing the revolt against the Manchu dynasty. Based on his analysis of the Chinese historical tradition, Suvorin believed that China's proper form of government was a monarchy. Therefore, he concluded Russia should not involve herself in China's domestic affairs and should immediately negotiate peace with the Chinese Emperor's representative. Russia, he declared, "Is a peace-maker and not a participant in the trade-warriors' war; we will not break lances for the 'open door.'" The Far Eastern railroad made it necessary that Russia support China.⁴⁶

As the Russian embassy and troops prepared to withdraw from Peking to Tientsin, Suvorin described Russia's action as displaying "full generosity in relations with the Chinese Emperor and true philanthropy in dealing with the peaceful Chinese population." Quoting a communique from the Chinese Emperor, Suvorin told his readers that he interpreted it to mean that the withdrawal of troops was a prerequisite to peace negotiations. Suvorin hoped "complications" would not upset this Russian withdrawal. "The possibility of these complications was foreseen in a circular telegram by Lamsdorf stating that 'Russia will not fail to withdraw her troops from her neighbor's empire

⁴⁶Ibid., August 16 (August 29), p. 2.

if the actions of the other powers will not serve as obstacles to this withdrawal.'" Although all the powers involved had consented to Lamsdorf's "fundamental principles" of July 13,⁴⁷ Suvorin predicted problems would now arise. In typically anti-German fashion, Suvorin stated the difficulty would be with Germany, which he saw as desiring railway interests rivaling those of Russia. He discussed the summary of an article in the Marine-Rundschau suggesting that Waldersee's mission was to provide a solution to Germany's problems with China. He wondered what this article meant when it said that Waldersee would do this by "military power" and questioned whether Waldersee would wage war in China. He denied Wilhelm II's claim that Germany and Russia stood shoulder to shoulder in pursuing hostilities. Russia would not be reduced to a secondary role in the Far East by Germany. Russia had established a "window in China" and its "international and historical rights" in the Far East were very great. Germany must consider this.⁴⁸

The announced withdrawal of Russia's embassy and

⁴⁷Lamsdorf's circular stated four principles:
 1) harmony among powers with interests in China;
 2) no partitioning of China; 3) preservation of the Chinese government which existed before the Boxer crisis;
 4) restoration of this Chinese government to legitimate power through common action. See Kantorovich, Amerika v bor'be za Kitai, p. 127.

⁴⁸Ibid., August 21 (September 3), p. 2.

troops from Peking aroused European criticism, but on September 7 Suvorin pointed out that Russia was carrying out the objectives it stated in June. Russia's position was difficult because by leaving Peking it broke the "European concert" in which it played an important role. Russia must break from participating in this European concert whose "commercial interests" were the sources of disturbance in China. Russia had assisted Europe when necessary and now it was time to go home and build its railroad in Manchuria. Undoubtedly, Europe was displeased with Russia and a telegram already suggested Russia was not honoring her commitments; but Suvorin contended that the major powers were only instigating trouble in China by showing discord. Let China control its own destiny and pacify the disturbances with its own forces. Germany and England were really intending to set China against Russia. Our relations with Europe are "double-edged: one side in friendship; the other side, hostility. On one side we are cordial with Europe, but on the other side we have our own interests, which we are ready to defend even beyond a peace position."⁴⁹

Amidst growing European concern that Russia would seize Manchuria, Suvorin denied this was Russia's intention. In line with Witte's view, he argued that the financial burden and geographic characteristics of Manchuria would not

⁴⁹Ibid., August 25 (September 7), p. 2.

make it a desirable acquisition for Russia. The Russian railway in a Chinese Manchuria was more profitable than all of Manchuria as a Russian province. This railway undoubtedly would bring development and inhabitants, Suvorin suggested, citing England as an example of a country which developed its overseas interests through railroads. Russia wanted peaceful relations, especially since she required a warm-water port, and this is what she had in Dalny and Port Arthur. That is why the railway was necessary. Russia must have the railway, the port and the sea in order to help maintain peace in the world.⁵⁰

The European powers did not share Suvorin's confidence that Russian policies in the Far East would result in peace. They also doubted that she would honor the commitments made in Lamsdorf's circular of August 28. In his "Malen'kiia pis'ma" of September 12 Suvorin commented on statements in the European press that Russia was not withdrawing from Peking. These charges were based on announcements by General Lenivich that Russian troops would winter in Peking. Suvorin replied that Lamsdorf's circular of August 28 was the new direction in Russia's policy and that General Linevich's orders instructed him to withdraw but made this action dependent upon conditions in Peking. Suvorin admitted that he did not know whether the Russian

⁵⁰Ibid.

embassy and troops were withdrawing but he argued, if they were not, it was because General Lenivich felt conditions in Peking prevented him from doing so. Suvorin asserted that the vague actions of the other powers in reply to Lamsdorf's note made the Russian position difficult. As an example, he observed the United States also wanted to withdraw but made her action dependent upon steps taken by the other powers. He declared the United States desired a "separate agreement" with China, and he sympathized with the United States' position. The other countries were deliberately lingering and delaying their decisions to settle the situation in Peking just as they were obstructing Li Hung-chang's journey. Under these circumstances Russia must abandon the European states and settle with China separately. Russia was honoring the "fundamental principles" while the other European powers were now ignoring the terms of this agreement by seeking to "divide the Celestial Empire." Suvorin predicted Europe would circumvent the literal terms of the "principles" and create "spheres of influence." This latter term, he insinuated, was devised by diplomats to accomplish the partition of China. Suvorin reemphasized Lamsdorf's note made Russian withdrawal dependent upon "the actions of other states." Russia must not abandon China. Russia's half century of movement into the Far East was on the "threshold of a new historical ediface." Russia must stand on its fourth

principle--China must not be divided.⁵¹

Replying to a domestic critic of the Witte-Lamsdorf policy, on September 15 Suvorin attempted to ouelch Russian desires for Chinese territory. He repudiated the arguments of Prince E. N. Trubetskoi in the S.-Peterburgskiiia vedomosti calling for the division of China to remove the prospect of a future "Mongol Yoke" over Europe and Russia. Quoting Prince Trubetskoi's appraisal that Russia was compelled by present events to share in the division of China, Suvorin replied the Chinese people and Europe would object to Russia seizing Manchuria and Mongolia. Such a step would only complicate Russia's position in Asia. The hostility of the native population would require Russia's military occupation of these areas and this would increase the danger of war. New acouisitions would also impose huge financial burdens on Russia. As for the Chinese people, he contended, if Russia's withdrawal led them to mistakenly believe that China had won a victory over Russia, Russia had the resources to defend herself in the future against China's "Mongol Yoke." Further, the Chinese would be incapable of striking against Russia since they would be concentrating for a long time on liberating themselves from exploitation by Europe. Suvorin concluded it was more profitable

⁵¹Ibid., August 30 (September 12), p. 2.

for Russia to live in peace with the "yellow races" and even assist them than to participate in destroying them.⁵²

Suvorin's article on September 15 ended his discussion of the Russian government's policies in the Far East. His views expressed over the two months essentially supported the peace and "separate course" policies which Witte and Lamsdorf pursued in the Chinese crisis. Although his articles concentrated primarily on the situation in China, the Novoe vremia publisher also unconditionally approved Russia's military occupation of Manchuria. It was the Manchurian occupation which proved to be the basis for Russia's future crisis in the Far East and her disastrous war with Japan.

⁵²Ibid., September 2 (September 15), p. 2.

CHAPTER IV

PEACE ADVOCATE TURNS WAR PROPAGANDIST

Once the end of the Boxer crisis in September, 1900, stabilized Russia's position in the Far East, Suvorin turned to domestic affairs. However, Russia's reluctance to withdraw from Manchuria increasingly alarmed the major powers, particularly Japan. When it became apparent in late 1903 that Russian-Japanese negotiations over Manchuria and Korea had reached a critical stage, Suvorin returned to Russia's policies in the Far East. In discussing the negotiations, he supported a moderate, peaceful policy and strongly opposed war with Japan. Only when negotiations failed and Japan attacked the Russian squadron at Port Arthur on February 8, 1904, did Suvorin favor war. With the Japanese onslaught, Suvorin assumed the role of a staunch Russian nationalist, zealously seeking to engender popular support for Russia's war effort in the face of an unprecedented series of military defeats.

A meeting with Nicholas II held during the week of May 2-7, 1903, to reevaluate Russian policy in the Far East set Russia firmly on the path to confrontation with Japan. As a result of the meeting, Nicholas approved a

"new course" of action advocated by Captain A. M. Bezabrazov. The subsequent appointment of Bezabrazov as "state secretary" in charge of implementing the new policy was indicative of the rise in influence of a small circle with aggressive, money-making plans for Manchuria and Korea. The so-called "Bezabrazov Circle" took a position in direct opposition to the advice of Russia's more cautious ministers, Lamsdorf, Witte and Kuropatkin. The "new course" championed by the Circle caused Russia to ignore an April 8, 1902 treaty with China whereby Russia had agreed to evacuate Manchuria according to a set timetable. Instead, Russia remained in Manchuria, re-occupied territory in southern Manchuria and advanced into new areas of Korea. At the same time, Russia sought to close Manchuria to any other foreign penetration while encouraging the broad development of Russian enterprises. Under the "new course," Russia also began to expand its military forces in order to defend Russian interests in Manchuria.¹

Alarmed by Russia's actions, Japan, on July 28, 1903, proposed that both nations enter into direct negotiations to resolve their conflicts of interest in Manchuria and Korea. Having received the agreement of the Russian government to negotiate, on August 12, 1903, the Japanese submitted their recommendations for a settlement. In

¹Romanov, Rossiia v Man'chzhurii 1892-1906, p. 428.

essence, the Japanese insisted that Russia respect the independence and territorial integrity of the Chinese and Korean empires and maintain the "open door" policy in those countries. In addition, Japan proposed a recognition of Japanese interests in Korea in return for the recognition of Russia's special interests in Manchuria.² The Japanese terms directly challenged the aggressive Russian policies promoted by the Bezabrazov Circle.

Even as the Japanese were opening negotiations with Russia, the situation grew more complicated. In a special report Kuropatkin had advised against Russia's continued involvement in the Yalu concessions.³ Witte urged that Russian expansion in Manchuria "take place naturally, without precipitating events, without taking premature steps, without seizing territory."⁴ But instead, in a conference on August 1, 1903, Nicholas II elected to pursue the Bezabrazov policies and on August 13 he created the Far Eastern viceroyalty with Admiral Alexiev as viceroy. The Tsar's edict exempted the viceroyalty administration from the control of the regular ministries and gave it

²Wladimir Burtzew, Der Zar und die auswärtige Politik (Berlin, 1910), pp. 57-58.

³A. N. Kuropatkin, "Dnevnik A. N. Kuropatkina," K.A., II (1922), 45-49.

⁴Witte, Vospominaniia, I, 218.

responsibility for diplomatic relations in the Far East. This action placed Bezabrazov and his cohorts in charge of Russia's Far Eastern policy and cast Russia on an inevitable collision course with Japan.

After almost three years of silence on the subject, Suvorin reinitiated discussions of Russia's Far Eastern policy on the same day the Japanese submitted their proposals. His comments were included in an article repudiating European press claims that Russian domestic unrest, especially the strikes in southern Russia were a sign of "backwardness" and weakness in foreign affairs. On the contrary, Suvorin argued that the turbulence was indicative of Russia's development over the past half-century, during which time Russia accomplished great feats in the Far East. Despite "treacherous and jealous neighbors," the Russian people, working in harmony and believing in Russia's power, would continue to bolster Russia's aspirations in the Far East. These views disseminated at the beginning of direct negotiations with Japan appear to have been an effort to encourage support for continued Russian involvement in the Far East.⁵

Shortly after Suvorin's article was published, relations between Japan and Russia grew more strained. The creation of the viceroyalty in the Far East brought about

⁵Novoe vremia, July 30 (August 12), 1903, p. 2.

the resignation of Witte as minister of finance on August 29, 1903. In his memoirs Witte described the attitude existing in the Russian government regarding the Far East as follows: "We were headed straight for war and at the same time we did nothing to prepare ourselves for the eventuality; we acted as if we were certain that the Japanese would endure everything without daring to attack us."⁶ In this situation, Witte chose to resign rather than share responsibility for the provocative policies dictated by the Bezabrazov Circle.⁷ The fall of Witte, accompanied by the creation of the special "Committee of Far Eastern Affairs" charged with the conduct of all Far Eastern affairs, alarmed Japan further. It was clear that Russia's Far Eastern policy was almost completely under the control of the Bezabrazov Circle.

Suvorin treated Witte's fall with guarded comments on September 11. Carefully avoiding references to the Far East, Suvorin concentrated on praising Witte's talent and achievements as minister of finance. Extolling the former minister as a well-known Slavophile and admirer of enlightened autocracy, Suvorin proclaimed Witte an imaginative man who by his energetic work and management had

⁶Witte, Vospominaniia, I, 260.

⁷Romanov, Rossia v Man'chzhurii 1892-1906, pp. 444-45.

accomplished remarkable feats in his service as minister of finance.⁸ Nevertheless, Suvorin did not mention the Siberian railway even though in an article on March 7, 1903 he had heralded Witte's railway efforts in the Far East and labeled the project one of the great feats in the history of the Russian people.⁹ In concluding his comments on Witte's resignation Suvorin was careful to make his analysis conform to the prevailing feelings by emphasizing that Witte's financial policy encroached too much upon Russian policy in general.¹⁰

Meanwhile, Russia's relations with Japan deteriorated even further due to the manner in which Russia conducted negotiations. Russia held back response to Japan's first note and then Count Lamsdorf proposed that the negotiations be transferred to Tokyo. This suggestion added to the delay and throughout the month of September Russia continued to stall while improving Russian military strength in the Far East. After a delay of eight weeks, Russia's counter-proposals were presented to the Japanese government on October 3, 1903. The counter-proposals made it clear that Russia would continue the occupation of Manchuria after

⁸Novoe vremia, August 29 (September 11), 1903, p. 2.

⁹Ibid., February 22 (March 7), 1903, p. 2.

¹⁰Ibid., August 29 (September 11), 1903, p. 2.

October 8, 1903, the date fixed for the final evacuation. Moreover, the Russian reply ignored Japan's request for a mutual agreement regarding the independence and territorial integrity of the Chinese Empire and the "open door" in China and Korea. Russia also insisted that Japan recognize Manchuria as "in all respects outside its sphere of interest."¹¹ The unyielding Russian proposals indicated that the Bezabrazov Circle underestimated the danger created by Russia's actions in the Far East. The Tsar himself seemed to have only contempt for Japan and naively believed Japan would not dare to attack Russia; but, on the other hand, it was clear that Nicholas did not desire hostilities with Japan.¹² In mid-October Suvorin noted in his personal diary that shortly after Russia's reply was delivered to the Japanese, the Tsar instructed Foreign Minister Lamsdorf "that there should be no war."¹³

On October 30 Japan made important concessions in its answer to Russia's counter-proposals. The most important was that Japan would recognize Manchuria as outside its sphere of special interest in return for a recognition by

¹¹Romanov, B.A., Ocherki diplomaticheskoi istorii russko-iaponskoi voiny 1895-1907 (Moscow, 1955), pp. 242-43.

¹²S. S. Ol'denburg, Tsarstvovanie imperatora Nikolaia II, I (Belgrade, 1935), 220.

¹³Suvorin, Dnevnik, p. 301.

Russia that Korea was outside Russia's sphere of special interest. Once again Russia resorted to evasive, delaying tactics in replying. Throughout November negotiations grew more critical and when the mediation efforts of the King of England were rebuffed, the danger of war became apparent.¹⁴

Amidst speculation in the European press over mounting tensions between Russia and Japan, Suvorin charged that Europe, and not Japan, was the cause of the crisis in the Far East. Since Russian interests posed an obstacle to European expansion in Asia, Europe intrigued with Japan against Russia.¹⁵ Nevertheless, the alarm concerning war in the Far East was unnecessary. Suvorin contended that, as a Russian journalist who represented Russian society, he did not desire nor encourage war with Japan. Despite Japan's demands, Russia could not abandon its railroad interests in Manchuria which cost millions to develop. Echoing the position of the moderates, he reasserted the view he had expressed during the Boxer crisis: Russia did not need to annex Manchuria as a Russian province. But, it was tragic that Japan, bolstered by an alliance with England and supported by the United States, might declare war against Russia. The enthusiasm in Japan for war against

¹⁴ A. Gal'perin, Anglo-iaponskii soiuz, 1902-1921 (Moscow, 1947), p. 195.

¹⁵ Novoe vremia, November 18 (December 1), 1903, p. 2.

Russia Suvorin condemned as the work of the Japanese press which openly boasted of the lands and money to be taken from Russia.¹⁶ If Japan declared war against Russia, Japan would arouse the patriotism of all Russians and unite them against Japan. It was a tragedy that a great state could not retreat in the face of a small state's attack; and, as an example of such a tragic war, Suvorin cited Great Britain's war with the two Boer Republics. But if Japan attacked Russia, the Russian people would be forced to wage war on the smaller nation.¹⁷

In the Russian counter-reply, delayed until December 11, Russia again deliberately omitted any reference to Manchuria. Ten days later Japan submitted a third note to Russia making it clear that Japan regarded Manchuria as an integral part of any peaceful arrangement with Russia.¹⁸ Despite Japan's insistence on settlement of the Manchurian question, the Tsar continued to be influenced by the Bezabrazov Circle and ignored Japan's demands. Meanwhile advocates of a moderate policy endeavored to reverse

¹⁶The role of the Japanese press in the period of the prewar negotiations is analyzed in Shumpei Okamoto, The Japanese Oligarchy and the Russo-Japanese War (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), pp. 57-104.

¹⁷Novoe vremia, November 18 (December 1), 1903, p. 2.

¹⁸Maurice Bompard, Mon ambassade en Russie, 1903-1908 (Paris, 1937), p. 43.

Russia's aggressive "new course" and reach a peaceful compromise with Japan. In a conference with the Tsar on December 28, Lamsdorf, Kuropatkin and Witte united in urging that Russia make concessions to Japan on the question of Manchuria. In essence they supported recommendations contained in a report which Kuropatkin filed after traveling in the Far East. Kuropatkin's report urged Russia not to annex Manchuria and to withdraw from the recently occupied area. Kuropatkin concluded, "We should keep only North Manchuria. The new frontier will not touch Korea and will not provoke complications with Japan."¹⁹ Persuaded by the three moderates, during the conference Nicholas II agreed to include Manchuria in an agreement with Japan.²⁰ For a brief time it appeared that Russia would make concessions in its next reply to Japan.

In an article on January 5, 1904 expressing support for domestic reform, Suvorin made an appraisal of the Far East situation which echoed the conciliatory attitude of the moderates. In his estimate of the differences with Japan, Suvorin concluded the chief issues centered on

¹⁹B. B. Glinskii, "Prolog russko-iaponskoi voiny," Istoricheskii vestnik, CXXXVII (August-December, 1914), 623-25; Kuropatkin, "Dnevnik A. N. Kuropatkina," K.A., II (1922), 94-95.

²⁰A. N. Kuropatkin, Zapiski generala Kuropatkina o russko-iaponskoi voine. Itogi voiny, ed. by I. Ladyschnikov (Berlin, 1909), pp. 173-74.

Russia's construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway, the seizure of Port Arthur and the continued occupation of Manchuria since the Boxer crisis of 1900. These activities and Russia's current policies created the complex situation in the Far East from which only war would result if Russia did not make concessions to Japan. The essential question in determining Russia's compromise with Japan was whether Russia needed to occupy all of Manchuria or only the northern part in order to maintain land ties with Port Arthur. Based upon his knowledge, Suvorin doubted whether the annexation of all Manchuria was advantageous. But, he added, the Tsar must analyze the advantages and disadvantages of ceding Manchuria as a Russian province; and, if the Tsar decided in favor of annexing Manchuria, Suvorin declared that he was bound to support the Tsar's policy. Appropriation of Manchuria, however, would evoke the hostility of Russia's neighbor China and would lead to the partition of China. Although the Manchurian question was the source of the conflict with Japan, Suvorin claimed the most important aim of Russian policy must be to preserve Russia's "supremacy in Asia." The basis for Russia's power in the Far East was not the occupation of Manchuria but the Trans-Siberian Railway; and Russia's recent vague policy in the Far East must be replaced by a "well-defined and firm program" to protect

Russia's railway interests.²¹

On the next day, January 6, 1904, the Russian government delivered a reply to Japan's proposals of December 21, 1903. The position of the Russian government remained unchanged and it was clear that Nicholas II had ignored the advice of the moderates. It was apparent also that the Bezabrazov Circle continued to advocate a policy of aggression on the theory that Japan could be bluffed.²² The positions of the two governments were as irreconcilable as ever and tensions mounted as both sides prepared for war.

The world press sided with Japan against Russia, predicting Russia's defeat. Even some elements of the Russian press urged Russia to sell her railway interests in Manchuria and abandon Port Arthur. Suvorin retorted that if England did not abandon Wei-hai-wei and Germany did not abandon Kiaochow, it was not necessary for Russia to abandon Port Arthur. Adding that he was not sympathetic to all of Russia's aims, Suvorin stated Russia's movement to the Pacific Ocean and the establishment of firm borders were important aspects of Russia's policy in the Far East. He rejected charges that these new

²¹Novoe vremia, December 23, 1903 (January 5, 1904), p. 3.

²²Kuropatkin, "Dnevnik A. N. Kuropatkina," K.A., II (1922), 80.

territories in the Far East were too inaccessible from European Russia to be valuable. Instead, he pointed to the distant colonial possessions of France, England and Germany. Even though these colonies were located across vast ocean distances, they were developed by the European states. In contrast Russia enjoyed the advantage of being linked by land to the new territories in the Far East and now with the Trans-Siberian Railway, Russia had a logical claim and link to her possessions. Nevertheless, Suvorin cautioned against any overly aggressive policies endangering these Russian possessions.²³

On January 13, 1904, Japan made a fourth attempt to obtain an agreement with Russia but this time Japan's proposal amounted to an ultimatum and an early reply was demanded. Once again the negotiations dragged on and when the Japanese approached Witte in an effort to alert the Russian minister of foreign affairs concerning the gravity of the crisis, Witte learned Count Lamsdorf could do nothing. Lamsdorf replied, "I take no part in the negotiations."²⁴ At the same time the military activities of the two countries greatly accelerated and it was clear war would break out unless Russia quickly returned a favorable reply to

²³ Novoe vremia, December 28, 1903 (January 10, 1904), p. 4.

²⁴ Witte, Vospominaniia, I, 261.

Japan.

Recognizing that the complicated relations between Russia and Japan brought Russia to the brink of war, Suvorin once again defended Russia's vital interests in the Far East on January 25. He asserted that the Trans-Siberian Railway was at the center of the complex crisis in the Far East. This railway was more than just a "Siberian" road; it was an "iron bridge" important not only for economic ties with Asia but also as a vital link between Europe and Asia. The railway reinforced the "indissoluble ties" and "special influence" which Russia possessed in Asia. Citing Professor V. O. Kliuchevskii's views that Russia historically served as a mediator between Europe and Asia because of her geographic location, Suvorin declared the Trans-Siberian Railway was a memorable and peaceful step in Russia's effort to fulfill her destiny in Asia. Peter the Great had opened a window to Europe; and now Nicholas II opened a gate to the Pacific Ocean. The whole world recognized Russia's accomplishment, but now Russia's critics expected her to abandon her railway interests in Manchuria and Port Arthur. Russia faced a choice whether to retreat and be humiliated as she had been twice before in the Balkans or remain in Manchuria and face the frightening "spectre of invasion by the yellow races." Suvorin, who really favored peace,

predicted Russia would not retreat.²⁵

Russia's reply to Japan was delayed until the first week of February, while rumors circulated in the press that Russia would make favorable concessions to Japan. On February 5, Suvorin charged that if war broke out, it was because Japan desired war. War would be a tragedy but Japan was encouraged by the English press, particularly the London Times, which assured Japan that Russia's position in the Far East was weakened by internal strife. Suvorin condemned the Japanese press for foolishly belittling Russia's concessions as evidence of Japanese superiority over Russia. He urged Russia's leadership to coolly and rationally decide the question of peace or war. The tense relations between the two countries, Suvorin concluded, were tragic.²⁶

On the next morning, February 6, Japan finally lost patience and terminated the negotiations in view of "Russia's repeated delays to reply without intelligible reasons and its naval and military activities, irreconcilable with pacific aims."²⁷ Japan severed diplomatic relations stating that it would take such independent action as

²⁵ Novoe vremia, January 12 (January 25), 1904, p. 2.

²⁶ Ibid., January 23 (February 5), 1904, p. 3.

²⁷ K. Asakawa, The Russo-Japanese Conflict (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1904), pp. 342-43.

was necessary to defend its "menaced position" and to protect its rights and interests.²⁸ Japan's actions accompanied by this ominous statement made the outbreak of hostilities imminent. Upon learning the news of this rupture of diplomatic relations between Russia and Japan, Novoe vremia published a special edition announcing the news to the Russian public. Novoe vremia's editorial defended the Russian diplomacy claiming the government in a "pacific spirit" made "all possible concessions" to Japan. The newspaper rejected accusations that Russia protracted negotiations for the purpose of gearing up for war. Instead, Novoe vremia charged Japan's negotiations were a "farce" to prepare for war. When the Japanese severed diplomatic relations, Novoe vremia proclaimed:

...The Japanese threw off the mask; not even awaiting the Russian reply, they recalled their minister. Asiatics have shown themselves Asiatics; they were not even able to observe the slightest decency. History knows no case of similar behavior. We are convinced that public opinion in Russia will give the Japanese the proper reply.²⁹

While the breaking of diplomatic relations "does not necessarily mean war," Novoe vremia feared that of the three alternatives facing Russia "--war, mediation or a prolonged tension," war was inevitable. Accusing the Japanese of

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Novoe vremia, January 25 (February 7,) 1904,

being responsible for the crisis created by the cessation of diplomatic relations, Novoe vremia concluded:

Russia stands on the threshold of great events, and every son of Russia without distinction of convictions, will consciously and sincerely say today: "Japan has herself willed it. So let it be. God be with us."³⁰

In his article in the same edition, Suvorin speculated on the danger of war and called upon the Russian people to face future events with courage and determination. Once again he criticized the foreign press particularly in England, France and Germany for "scolding Russia" by writing stupid and unfounded nonsense. These writings were the work of "universal Jewish agitation" against Russia following the Kisnev program. Japan was a victim of this "Jewish agitation" and had become a tool of England for tearing Russia to pieces. He wondered why Europe's great and talented leadership was not coming to Russia's assistance in this crisis. In particular, Suvorin criticized the German Emperor Wilhelm II who in the past had been very vocal in his views on the Far East but who now remained silent. Why was this "skillful diplomat" who first discussed the "dangers of the yellow peril for Europe" now keeping his thoughts secret? Wilhelm II had ordered the occupation of Kiachow and had been instrumental in moving Europe against the "yellow peril" during the Boxer crisis

³⁰Ibid.

in China. Japan, Suvorin recalled, had been specifically included as part of the yellow peril in Wilhelm's numerous pronouncements and the German Emperor even presented a picture to Nicholas II representing Russia as the defender of Europe and Christianity in a struggle with the yellow races. Wilhelm's silence puzzled and disappointed Suvorin. Nevertheless, Suvorin urged peace and reconciliation between Russia and Japan. Unfortunately, Russia and Japan did not understand each other and the two countries were about to enter into a tragic war. Russia and Japan must recognize one another's interests and "break the expectations of Europe..." for war between them. Russia was not preparing for war with Japan as she had prepared for war with Turkey in 1877; instead Russia sought peace but was ready to meet with great courage any threats or challenges to its new markets in the Far East.³¹

Facing the prospect of imminent war, the next day the Tsar wired new orders to the Far Eastern commander. In these orders, Nicholas II instructed "that the Japanese, and not we, be the ones to start military operations..."³² Russia did not have to wait long for Japan's challenge because on the same day, February 8, Japanese destroyers

³¹Ibid., p. 3.

³²Kuropatkin, "Dnevnik A. N. Kuropatkina," K.A., II (1922), 109.

entered Port Arthur and shelled the Russian naval squadron without a declaration of war. Because the Russian squadron was unprepared for a "surprise" attack, the Japanese inflicted heavy losses on the Russian battleships in the harbor. The following day Japan formally declared war on Russia.

News of the Japanese attack and Russian losses at Port Arthur reached St. Petersburg on February 9. Suvorin, who had preferred peace, now came to the support of Russia's war effort. In his article of February 10, Suvorin noted that a state of shock and gloom had prevailed over the population in St. Petersburg on the morning of February 9. News of the heavy losses inflicted upon the Russian squadron in the well-planned and executed Japanese attack alarmed Russians concerning the Japanese preparations for war. Suvorin charged that the Japanese "surprise" attack without a declaration of war ignored the rules of modern diplomacy; Japan's actions were treacherous and dishonorable.³³ Attempting to rally patriotism, Suvorin proclaimed that while Russia enjoyed a reputation for military victories on land, the naval disaster at Port Arthur was one of Russia's worst military misfortunes. The date of the Port Arthur attack marked the anniversary of another great calamity in Russian history when Russia's

³³ Novoe vremia, January 28 (February 10), 1904,

great poet Pushkin was fatally wounded on February 8, 1837. But just as Russian poetry did not die as a result of this great loss, so Russia would not die as a result of the naval disaster at Port Arthur. As evidence, Suvorin pointed out that the anxious and gloomy atmosphere of the morning gave way to expressions of Russian patriotism. When additional news was received later in the afternoon and the Tsar issued a manifesto declaring war, crowds gathered in front of the Winter Palace and cheered. This was the great Russian patriotic spirit which created Russia and this wave of patriotism would carry Russia and her people through this terrible war to victory.³⁴ With this article, Suvorin and Novoe vremia embarked upon a campaign to generate support for the war against Japan and to demonstrate that the Russian public was solidly behind the war.

In the first few days following the outbreak of war there were demonstrations and telegrams to the Tsar from many parts of the Russian empire manifesting loyalty and patriotism. However, as Witte indicated in his memoirs, some of these early demonstrations were organized by the government or were largely made up of the military and government elements of the Russian population.³⁵ Suvorin endeavored to utilize these demonstrations in encouraging

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Witte, Vospominaniia, I, 262.

citizen enthusiasm. In his article on February 12, Suvorin argued that Japan threw down "the gauntlet" when she attacked Port Arthur. Now Russia faced what would be an extended and difficult war. A telegram from Novoe vremia's London correspondent quoted the Japanese attaché there as saying that Japan was well-prepared for a long war.

Suvorin stated that he did not desire war with Japan; but now that war was an accomplished fact, he supported it because Russia's future role in the Far East was threatened. Above all, the Russian people must direct their attention to this crisis with Japan and unite in the war effort for the preservation of Russia's interests in the Far East. The current enthusiastic demonstrations were reminiscent of the patriotic sentiments against the Turks in 1877 that contributed to Russia's victory against Turkey. In the quarter of a century since that war, Russia had developed into an "invincible power" and Suvorin predicted Japan's treachery would cause the Russian people to concentrate their talent on crushing the Japanese.³⁶

At the outset of military operations it was apparent that the Russian naval forces were strategically important to Russia's military success. Consequently, the losses inflicted upon the squadron at Port Arthur and the fighting condition of Russia's Far Eastern naval forces

³⁶ Novoe vremia, January 30 (February 12), 1904,
p. 3.

immediately concerned the Russian public. When a Moskovskiiia vedomosti writer, the German Count Gaventlov, criticized their poor performance and quality, Suvorin defended the Port Arthur seamen.³⁷ Praising the patriotism of two wealthy Russian patrons who made large contributions toward the construction of additional ships for the Russian navy, Suvorin appealed to his readers to join in making similar contributions to a "fleet fund." For a quarter of a century, Suvorin declared, he and his newspaper had continually published polemics urging a strong and modern navy. In particular, Novoe vremia's multitude of articles had urged the Russian navy to acquire submarines, since submarines were relatively inexpensive in comparison to the enormous costs of battleships and were well-suited to Russia's defense needs. Russia's military leadership was well aware of Russia's naval weakness but chose to concentrate on building and maintaining Russian land forces before developing Russia's navy. Referring to General Kuropatkin's report as Minister of War in 1900, Suvorin expressed agreement with the report's recommendations, but the losses of the naval forces at Port Arthur raised questions about Russia's naval strength. Russia's future position in the Far East made it obvious that Russia must have a large fleet in the Pacific Ocean. With the powerful

³⁷Ibid.

Black Sea fleet locked in the Black Sea by terms of the Treaty of Berlin, Suvorin urged the public to aid in strengthening the navy by contributing to Russia's Volunteer Fleet Fund. Russia and the Tsar needed this financial aid because the expense of building the Trans-Siberian Railway had prevented construction of a strong fleet in the Pacific Ocean.³⁸

Not everyone agreed with Suvorin's campaign to raise funds for the Volunteer Fleet. Prince Meshcherskii, publisher of Grazhdanin, charged in his newspaper that Suvorin's patriotic entreaties were "overdone" and smacked of chauvinism.³⁹ Suvorin rejected Meshcherskii's criticisms, asserting that Russia needed a powerful fleet and his patriotic appeals were necessary if Russian society was to be encouraged to donate for such a fleet's construction. Patriotism in time of war was not chauvinism when it involved providing soldiers and sailors with the necessary equipment. It was the duty of wealthy Russians to display their love for Russia by publicly making large subscriptions for the "fleet fund." Suvorin discounted Meshcherskii's contention that the "fleet fund" was a fantastic adventure because a fleet could not be constructed in a short time, arguing that creation of a Russian fleet depended upon action and

³⁸Ibid., February 3 (February 16), 1904, p. 3.

³⁹Ibid., February 7 (February 20), 1904, p. 3.

not merely discussion. He boasted that Novoe vremia's campaign raised several thousand rubles in only four days. The Russian public obviously desired to assist the government and he proclaimed his newspaper would continue its fund-raising campaign for the "fleet fund." As additional justification for his position, Suvorin included in a postscript the Tsar's announcement that the "Committee on the Status of the Naval Fleet" was appointed to solicit voluntary subscriptions for Russia's fleet. This early effort of Suvorin and his newspaper to stimulate financial backing for Russia's naval construction characterized Suvorin's avid support of Russia's war effort.⁴⁰

The losses inflicted on Russia's naval forces in the first weeks of the war made it apparent that Russia could not maintain command of the seas. Russia now turned to preparations for a long land war as its only hope to defeat Japan. This strategy placed a tremendous burden on the Russian army. To conduct military operations in Manchuria, Russia had to mobilize large numbers of troops in European Russia and transport them across the vast distance of Siberia to the theater of military operations. Such an undertaking required time and the best military leadership in Russia. Russia's existing naval forces at Port Arthur were in a position to threaten and delay Japanese landings

⁴⁰Ibid.

and gain time for the Russian army. Against the protests of the Bezabrazov Circle which feared the appointment would weaken the position of Viceroy Alexiev, the Tsar named Kuropatkin to command Russia's land forces in Manchuria.⁴¹

On February 22 Suvorin proclaimed his pleasure at the news of Kuropatkin's appointment. He lauded the general's talents and reputation as Russia's most distinguished military leader, recalling his own personal association with the general dating back to the Russo-Turkish War when Kuropatkin was a junior officer serving with the popular General Skobelev. General Kuropatkin was a patriotic and industrious officer who justly merited the respect of Russia's army and navy leaders and was the leader most able to overcome the great obstacles confronting military operations against the Japanese. Recalling the graft and corruption that permeated the Russian army during the Sevastopol campaign and Russo-Turkish war, Suvorin praised in particular Kuropatkin's promises to simplify the administration of the army and to make supply operations efficient and graft-free.⁴²

World opinion as represented by the foreign press

⁴¹Ol'denburg, Tsarstvovanie imperatora Nikolaia II, I, 229.

⁴²Novoe vremia, February 14 (February 27), 1904, p. 3 and Novoe vremia, February 9 (February 22), 1904, p. 2.

continued to be dominantly sympathetic towards Japan. Referring to the prevailing hostility towards Russia, Suvorin challenged the credibility of the anti-Russian attitudes in the world press. Although newspapers in general represented public opinion, in this instance the "radical press" was not objective in its judgment of Russia. Instead, these "radical" newspapers openly concentrated upon arousing passions and enflaming hostility and consequently they did not represent public opinion. Conveniently, Suvorin viewed the newspapers sympathetic to Russia as rational and objective representatives of public opinion. These newspapers, Suvorin observed, were primarily the influential newspapers in France and Germany. In France the sympathies of the newspapers for Russia were reflective of the French people. As evidence, Suvorin cited his personal recollections of the numerous public demonstrations in France when the Russian fleet visited in October, 1893. Since that time the rise of radical parties in France and Germany moved these two powers in the direction of a rapprochement with England. Under the influence of England, Japan's fervent sympathizer, France's friendship for Russia cooled in the months before the war. But the Japanese attack on Port Arthur revived the anti-English sentiments of the French people and their positive feelings for Russia. The recently-expressed sympathy of the German Emperor, Suvorin stated, clearly evidenced that country's friendly attitude towards Russia. If England intervened on Japan's

side, France and Germany might not remain neutral.⁴³

The anti-English sentiments of Suvorin and Novoe vremia continued to grow. Novoe vremia charged England with having permitted the Japanese to use Wei-hai-wei, an English port on the China coast, as a base for Japanese naval operations.⁴⁴ Also, Novoe vremia accused England of a breach of neutrality when British naval officers aided in the delivery of two warships to Japan. It declared that British officers helped the Turks in the war of 1878. "Now," said the newspaper, "British sailors are in command of Japanese ships. The profession of condottiere is a recognized thing in the British army."⁴⁵ Novoe vremia's accusations were publicly denied by Lord Selborne in the English Parliament and were said to be based on mendacious rumors invented by Novoe vremia. The London Times in an editorial on February 26 supported Lord Selborne's repudiation of Novoe vremia's charges and concluded by agreeing that Novoe vremia's story that the Japanese were allowed to use Wei-hai-wei was "a most wicked falsehood."⁴⁶

The criticisms of Russia in the London Times

⁴³Ibid., February 13 (February 26), 1904, p. 3.

⁴⁴Ibid., January 29 (February 11), 1904, p. 2.

⁴⁵Ibid., February 18 (March 2), 1904, p. 2.

⁴⁶The Times (London), February 26, 1904, p. 7.

caused Suvorin to denounce the Times as a propaganda organ for anti-Russian elements in England. Despite the English government's declared neutrality in the Far Eastern conflict, the views and anti-Russian tone of the London Times represented a portion of the English people who hated Russia and desired Russia's defeat. The Russian people believed that Japan would not have attacked if it were not for England's instigation and the support of English public opinion. England's actions in the present situation confirmed the suspicions of the Russian people about its hostility towards Russia since the end of the Russo-Turkish war. England's policy of "benevolent neutrality" fanned the flames of Russian patriotism against Japan and England. But Russia, as a developing state, was now equal to England and would prove her equality by successful military deeds in the Far East. Russia's war effort was a national movement which English anti-Russian policies stimulated. Thus, Suvorin and his newspaper seemed determined to arouse Russian public opinion against England as part of their effort to induce the population to support the war.⁴⁷

Once again on March 15 Suvorin appealed for contributions to the Volunteer Fleet. He traced the precedent for contributions to construct a Volunteer Fleet to an

⁴⁷ Novoe vremia, February 23 (March 7), 1904, p. 3.

article, "Russkoe kreiserstvo" which appeared in Pravitel'stvennyi vestnik on May 1, 1878. Suvorin claimed this appeal to strengthen Russian naval power was prompted by European powers attempting to deprive Russia of benefits gained in the Treaty of San Stefano. By dispatching large naval units to the Black Sea where Russia was defenseless, the European naval powers had threatened Russia into agreeing to the terms of the Congress of Berlin. The article's author argued that while Russia proved invincible on land, Russia was completely open to attack on the seas. He asked the Russian people to donate funds for vessels which would serve Russian trade in peacetime and provide a reserve fleet in case of war. The article concluded that building a Volunteer Fleet would be a continuous business and not merely a temporary project. Suvorin noted that by September 20, 1878 this appeal had raised three million rubles and on that day the first ship was purchased. The first task of the Volunteer Fleet had been returning Russian troops from the Turkish war. Later, this fleet participated in Russia's maritime trade and in the eighteen years prior to the outbreak of war with Japan received an annual subsidy from the treasury. In 1902 the fleet numbered eight steamers with a capacity of 60,000 tons. The existence of this Volunteer Fleet was justified because it served as a partial deterrent to England's interference in Russia's policies. This fleet indicated that after the Crimean War Russia would not be bound by restrictions

against a Russian fleet in the Black Sea. The bitterness of Russians over these restrictions was replaced by patriotic pride when the Volunteer Fleet was created and when later Tsar Alexander III embarked upon the construction of the Black Sea fleet. However, financial circumstances made construction of Russia's naval power a slow process and now once again Russian society must participate. Japan's sudden attack on Port Arthur and the war in the Far East made it obvious that Russia's wealthy citizens must open their purses and assist their government in building Russia's navy. These voluntary donations could be used to acquire submarines for use at Port Arthur against the Japanese. Suvorin admitted he did not regard himself a specialist in naval affairs; but, as a patriotic Russian, he was certain that voluntary donations would contribute to Russia's ultimate victory.⁴⁸

Suvorin's efforts to generate popular support for the war were appreciated by the Russian government. On March 9 the Tsar himself received Suvorin and the editor of S.-Peterburgskiiia vedomosti as representatives of the Russian daily press. In reply to their loyal expressions of devotion, the Tsar stated:

I have been following the Press with attention lately and have become convinced that it interprets events rightly. The national

⁴⁸ Ibid., March 2 (March 15), 1904, p. 2.

spirit which animates the Press has given me profound satisfaction. I hope the Press will continue to show itself worthy of its task, to express the feelings and thoughts of the country, and to use its great influence on public opinion in order to impart to it the truth and nothing but the truth.⁴⁹

The Tsar's actions suggest that he welcomed and wished to encourage the patriotic zeal of Suvorin and Novoe vremia.

Within a week of his audience with the Tsar, Suvorin proclaimed the Russian people were united in the war effort by their sorrow over the losses suffered in the Far East. As evidence of popular enthusiasm, Suvorin pointed to the wires from General Kuropatkin, who was stopping in Moscow while en route to the Far East. Kuropatkin reported that he was welcomed on his arrival by the mayor, the chairman of the zemstvo, numerous noble leaders and the elite of Moscow society. The delegation members expressed their faith that Russia could meet the Japanese challenge against "...Russia's stronghold on the shores of the great ocean." Suvorin pointed out that these Russian delegates preferred peace to war and he agreed war was utterly useless. Wars were destructive and exhausting for the state and all citizens. But the war against Japan was necessary because Russia could not simply admit her holdings in the Far East were insignificant and liquidate them in mediation. Russia could not suffer a new

⁴⁹Pravitel'stvennyi vestnik, February 28 (March 11), 1904, p. 2.

humiliation greater than the Berlin Congress. The question of Manchuria must be settled only after a victorious war. The most important issue at stake was Russia's reputation as a world power and Russia's victory over Japan would prove Russia's significance as a great and enlightened state. Suvorin alluded to those who argued for Russia's defeat because they believed a period of internal reforms would follow similar to the era of reforms after the defeat of the Crimean War. Such persons he branded as mad men who failed to realize that the defeat of the Russian army meant the defeat of the Russian people. Once Russia achieved victory in the Far East, Suvorin insisted, Korea must be returned to Japan as a protectorate, Manchuria should be given back to China and Russia should withdraw from all lands that were not essential for Russia's consolidation with Port Arthur. In addition, Russia must not attempt to partition China; instead, Russia should form an alliance with China. All of Russia's "educated society" aspired for an end to the war because the war interfered with internal reforms; but that "educated society" realized only a Russian victory could end the war and bring a return to reforms.⁵⁰

By late March it was obvious that the war would be long. Reports from the Far East indicated Russian naval

⁵⁰ Novoe vremia, March 14 (March 17), 1904, p. 2.

forces were on the defensive and the Russian army was unprepared to effectively defeat Japan's troops. On February 18 the government had told the Russian people that considerable time would be needed in order to strike blows at Japan which were really representative of Russia's might.⁵¹ General Kuropatkin in his public speeches reiterated the same view, cautioning Russians to be prepared for a war lasting at least eighteen months.⁵² Suvorin began to suggest that the army faced complicated problems in the war with Japan. He compared the future of the struggle with Japan to earlier wars during the reigns of Peter the Great and Catherine the Great, when Russia's military fortune fared badly in the early stages of war with the Swedes and Turks. With the outbreak of hostilities, Suvorin said he had read a great deal about Japan and the condition of Japan's military development. He concluded that Japan was a formidable opponent who had successfully implemented European military techniques in a fashion similar to Russia's military development during Peter the Great's war with the Swedes.⁵³ Suvorin cited Pierre

⁵¹ Pravitel'stvennyi vestnik, February 5 (February 18), 1904, p. 3.

⁵² Russkii invalid, February 12 (March 12), 1904, p. 2.

⁵³ Novoe vremia, March 9 (March 22), 1904, p. 2.

Leroy-Beaulieu's article in the Revue des deux mondes as the best analysis of Japan's strength that he had read. The French economist regarded the Japanese people as highly patriotic and rated Japan's military capability as comparable to most of the best European military powers. The Japanese army was an excellent military organization capable of placing 400,000 troops in the field against Russia. Japan's navy was rated equal to that of the United States. The Japanese economy was strong largely because of remarkable economic growth in the last half century and Japan could easily finance a war with Russia. Finally, the French economist regarded Japan's form of government, which resembled the French Directory, as shabby; but he believed this government did not obstruct the Japanese army in waging a successful war against Russia.⁵⁴ Although Suvorin agreed with Leroy-Beaulieu's conclusion that Japan was a powerful state, he criticized the article for failing to make significant comparisons between Japan and the Russian Empire. Suvorin declared Russia was also a strong power. The primary difficulty confronting Russia in conducting military operations against the Japanese would be the mountainous terrain of Korea, giving the Japanese an advantageous position.

⁵⁴M. Pierre Leroy-Beaulieu, "Le Japon et ses ressources dans la guerre actuelle," Revue des deux mondes (Paris), XX (1904), 389-419.

In addition, the Japanese enjoyed closer proximity to the field of military operations, offering them shorter and easier supply lines. In contrast, Russia's supply lines were long and Russia would not be able to land forces on Japan's mainland without facing the interference of England and the United States. However, Japan might successfully invade Russian territory and Suvorin warned that such an occurrence would meet determined resistance by the Russian people. Suvorin agreed with the French economist that a lengthy and difficult war between these two countries would be unprofitable for both, but he predicted that Russia would be the victor.⁵⁵

Suvorin's effort to give patriotic stimulus to his readers continued. On March 28 Suvorin reported that General Kuropatkin was scheduled to arrive in Manchuria and assume command of the Russian army. Suvorin reminded his readers that Kuropatkin's strategy would be to defeat Japan's land forces and that this would require time. Meanwhile, the Russian navy had to be mainly concerned with keeping the Japanese naval forces from taking Port Arthur. Therefore, instead of providing a few expensive battleships, a large number of submarines and destroyers should immediately be sent to Port Arthur. The Russian fleet aroused the interest of all Russians who were now conscious of

⁵⁵Novoe vremia, March 9 (March 22), 1904, p. 2.

their responsibility to these seamen. As proof, he noted that in the city of Moscow, which formerly paid little attention to the Russian navy, lectures urging support for the fleet were drawing large audiences. This was particularly significant because Moscow, an inland city, had been primarily concerned with Russia's land forces since the defeat of Napoleon. Such interest, Suvorin proclaimed, exemplified the spirit of the Russian people behind the Russian war effort.⁵⁶

On April 1 Suvorin questioned what motivated Japan's courage and daring to believe she could conquer Russia. He charged that Great Britain and the United States instigated Japan to attack Russia because these two powers feared Japan and Russia as trade rivals in Asia and hoped Russia and Japan would ruin each other. Foreign newspapers, especially the London Times, encouraged Japan by printing articles and editorials depicting Russia as weakened by domestic unrest and on the brink of revolution. Further, Japan was overly confident because it had a constitution and believed it equal in standing to the enlightened states of Europe. An alliance with Great Britain and Russia's reluctance to embark upon a war contributed to Japan's confidence in her military superiority. All these factors caused Japan to carry out a surprise attack

⁵⁶Ibid., March 15 (March 28), 1904, p. 3.

on Port Arthur. Now the Russian people desired only victory and rejected any mediation which would humiliate Russia. Only as a victorious gladiator would Russia willingly grant generous concessions to Japan and agree to recognize Korea as a Japanese protectorate.⁵⁷

As further proof of patriotic sentiment in Russia over the war, Suvorin referred to an interview with L. N. Tolstoi which appeared in the French newspaper Figaro. Despite his claims to be free from such feelings, by his actions this world-famous pacifist displayed deep patriotism for Russia. The writer of the article had learned from Tolstoi's wife that Tolstoi, who hoped wars would cease, drove regularly twenty-eight miles to Tula for the latest telegraph reports about the war. Suvorin argued Tolstoi's "Russian soul" made him impatient to learn about the destiny of the Russian army. The feelings of Tolstoi, who symbolized the great spirit and genius of the Russian people, originated in the patriotic movement of 1812 which saw the ascent of Russia's power. Suvorin proclaimed Tolstoi's book War and Peace captured for future generations the patriotic spirit of the Russian people and it was Tolstoi's own patriotism which caused his concern about the destiny of Russia in this war.⁵⁸

⁵⁷Ibid., March 19 (April 1), 1904, p. 2.

⁵⁸Ibid., March 28 (April 10), 1904, p. 4.

A telegram on April 13 from Port Arthur informed the Russian people of another important Russian naval loss. The battleship Petropavlovsk struck a mine and sunk with a heavy loss of lives. Among the dead was Admiral S. O. Makarov, who, upon taking command of the Port Arthur squadron after the first Japanese attack, had rejuvenated the naval forces. His death along with the loss of the Petropavlovsk demoralized the seamen at Port Arthur and crippled the effectiveness of the Russian squadron.⁵⁹ The news of this disaster engendered gloom and stupefaction when it was announced in a special edition of the St. Petersburg newspapers.

Displaying his religious fervor, Suvorin described the disaster as another of "God's tests" for the Russian people. He observed that this "laconic telegram" had the same demoralizing effect on the Russian people as the news of the first attack on Port Arthur, but hope remained alive. Disagreeing with some naval-circle opinions that the Port Arthur squadron should have been limited to defensive maneuvers, Suvorin sided with Admiral Z. P. Rozhdestvenskii's views in the Petit Parisien defending

⁵⁹Serge Terestchenko, La guerre navale Russo-Japonaise (Paris, 1931), pp. 179-80.

Makarov's offensive actions.⁶⁰ Admiral Makarov and his squadron, Suvorin argued, had given Russia two vital months in which to mobilize the army.⁶¹

The piecemeal manner in which the war news concerning the loss of the Petropavlovsk was divulged angered the Russian press. In Grazhdanin, Prince Meshcherskii bitterly attacked the withholding of news and argued that the government's cynicism towards the Russian people was unpardonable.⁶² Joining in the criticism, Suvorin charged that official telegrams were too brief and vague for the Russian press and public to obtain adequate information.⁶³ As examples, he cited the two dispatches concerning the first attack on Port Arthur and the loss of the Petropavlovsk. Official war-news dispatches released to the Russian press must contain more reliable and complete information if the courage and confidence of the Russian public in the war effort was to be maintained. Suvorin argued it was evident that the first dispatch concerning the Petropavlovsk was utterly misleading and brought a flurry

⁶⁰ Petit Parisien, April 11, 1904, p. 3.

⁶¹ Novoe vremia, April 2 (April 15), 1904, p. 2.

⁶² Grazhdanin, April 5 (April 18), 1904, p. 2.

⁶³ Novoe vremia, April 2 (April 15), 1904, p. 2.

of rumors concerning the cause of this tragedy.⁶⁴ In particular, he censured the editorial staff of the Trade Telegraph Agency for issuing dubious accounts of military activity. Although intended to arouse patriotism and benefit the government, the rumors resulting from these misleading reports would only undermine patriotic sentiment by creating doubts in the minds of the Russian people. Only with truthful and detailed reports could the Russian press arouse the patriotism of the Russian people to support the government in the war against Japan.⁶⁵

A few weeks later Suvorin repeated his concern that the Russian press was not kept well informed by the government. In an article on May 1 rejecting England's offers of mediation, Suvorin criticized the minister of foreign affairs for failing to provide the Russian press with information about Russia's policies in Tibet. Without access to the Russian documents, the Russian press could not stimulate public opinion against England's charges of Russian intrigue in Tibet. Suvorin added that he believed press discussion was good and aided in stimulating public support for foreign policies.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Ibid., April 3 (April 16), 1904, p. 3.

⁶⁵ Ibid., April 6 (April 19), 1904, pp. 2-3.

⁶⁶ Ibid., April 18 (May 1), 1904, pp. 2-3.

The sinking of the Petropavlovsk caused Suvorin to comment on the two factors contributing to the deplorable condition of the Russian navy. First, the naval regulations introduced by Naval Minister N. M. Chikhachev, a former director of the Black Sea Steamship Company, were adopted from a commercial fleet and were unsuitable for a military fleet. Incorporation of these naval regulations into the Russian navy gave rise to neglect, carelessness and mismanagement, and was largely responsible for the wasted energy and useless loss of lives. The heroic Russian seamen now bitterly remembered that Novoe vremia had opposed the adoption of these regulations.⁶⁷ These naval regulations gave rise to the second factor--namely, the deficiency of technical education in the Russian navy which in the last nineteen years failed to keep pace with western naval training and techniques. In rebuttal to critics who argued that it was premature for Russia to adopt western techniques, he pointed to the development of Russian literature and art as proof that it was feasible for Russia to successfully adopt western techniques. His criticism, Suvorin declared, was a patriotic effort to improve the navy in the face of public pressure to explain the current naval deficiencies.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Ibid., April 13 (April 26), 1904, p. 2.

⁶⁸ Ibid., April 19 (May 2), 1904, p. 2.

When Admiral N. I. Skrydlov was appointed commander of the Pacific squadron, Suvorin praised the new commander as an important addition to the leadership of the naval forces. But new leadership and the courage of Russian seamen were insufficient to assure Russia's victory over Japan. Technical knowledge was also a vital factor in the war. To emphasize its importance, Suvorin cited the valuable technical knowledge that the Japanese utilized against Russia. During the Russo-Turkish War, the Japanese carefully observed Russian military operations and were profitably using this knowledge in preparing for the war against Russia. Suvorin urged Russian military leaders to study Japanese military operations and capitalize on this technical knowledge in planning military strategy.⁶⁹ It was a sad mistake that Russia knew so little about Japan while the Japanese were obviously well-informed about Russia. Suvorin attributed this ignorance about Japan's technical development to the failure of Russian diplomats to observe and study Japan's development.⁷⁰

It was becoming increasingly clear that Russia was ill-prepared to wage war in the Far East, a fact which Suvorin had apparently realized long before the disagreement with Japan had reached war proportions. Suvorin had

⁶⁹Ibid., April 10 (April 23), 1904, p. 3.

⁷⁰Ibid., April 16 (April 29), 1904, pp. 2-3.

attempted to reinforce the moderate policies of Witte, Lamsdorf and Kuropatkin, believing that imprudent attempts to acquire new territory and concessions in the Far East could jeopardize Russia's current holdings. He was well aware of the extent to which building the Trans-Siberian railway had strained the Russian economy and recognized that complications in the Far East could result in irreparable losses for Russia. For these reasons, Suvorin strongly advocated caution and peace in the Far East. Confronted with war, a disorganized, ill-equipped military and an unenthusiastic populace, Suvorin actively used the forum of Novoe vremia to attempt to prod Russia towards victory.

After the death of Makarov, Russia's navy forces adopted a totally defensive strategy and ceased to be an effective fighting force. Meanwhile, the field of conflict moved to the land where Suvorin had predicted the invincible Russian army would defeat the Japanese and win the war for Russia.

CHAPTER V

PUBLICIST OPPOSES PEACE WITHOUT VICTORY

Taking advantage of an early naval victory over the Russian squadron at Port Arthur, the Japanese initiated land operations against the Russians in May, 1904. It was on land that the Russians hoped to defeat the Japanese, but the long series of blows which the Japanese now dealt the Russian army added fuel to the internal discontent against the war. Faced with increasing pressure for peace, Suvorin nevertheless doggedly rejected mediation and insisted upon the need for Russian supremacy over the Japanese. Utilizing his position as a disseminator of information, he attempted to convince his readers that peace without victory would mean irreparable losses for Russia. At the same time he carefully hid his own discouragement with Russia's military performance. When peace negotiations began in the summer of 1905, Suvorin continued his efforts to maintain public interest in the Far East by portraying Russia as a strong, battle-ready nation only reluctantly engaging in peace talks. Thus, Suvorin, who had first been opposed to the war in the Far East, now constituted a major force against a negotiated peace.

The news of Russia's naval setback with the sinking of the Petropavlovsk and the loss of Admiral Makarov was followed by the announcement of the Anglo-French Entente in April. The announcement created speculation that England would seek an alliance with Russia and mediate peace between Russia and Japan.¹ On April 29, Suvorin charged an alliance with England would only restrain Russia's expansion. Recalling that England had rejected Russian offers to mediate peace between England and the Boers, he argued that Russia must likewise reject England's offer. England's motives for offering to mediate were unclear. Observing that Great Britain possessed few interests in Korea and Manchuria, he conjectured that it was Russia's railroad interests in northern Asia that whetted England's appetite. Consequently, it was ridiculous to believe England would be assisting Russia as a mediator.²

Two days later Suvorin reasserted his opposition when he answered the letter of S. N. Syromiatnikov published in Novoe vremia. Citing the letter as a typical argument in favor of English mediation, Suvorin asserted that Russia could not forget England's important role in the affront given Russia at the Congress of Berlin. Furthermore, England's insults and the hostility evidenced in

¹Gal'perin, Anglo-iaponskii soiuz, 1902-1921, pp. 210-212.

²Novoe vremia, April 17 (April 30), 1904, p. 2.

the English press made it impossible for the two countries to engage in cordial negotiations until Russia emerged victorious over Japan.³ At the same time Suvorin attacked Prince Meshcherskii, editor of Grazhdanin, for questioning in his daily column whether Russia's interests in the Far East justified war with Japan. He also condemned Meshcherskii's appeal for the conclusion of peace through mediation by Russia's enemies. It was Japan who began this war when Russia refused to retreat. Under these circumstances, when one party desired war, war could not be avoided. Consequently, Russia had no choice but to defend herself.⁴

While Suvorin was engaged in defending Russia's war effort and rejecting mediation, military events in the Far East moved in an unfavorable direction. Having secured the command of the sea, the Japanese began landing their army in late April. On May 1 the first major land engagement of the war was fought at the Yalu River. Within a week the Japanese army defeated Russian forces under the command of General M. I. Zasulich. This outcome gave Japan a significant moral victory which the European press

³ Novoe vremia, April 18 (May 1), 1904, pp. 2-3.

⁴ Novoe vremia, May 1 (May 14), 1904, p. 2.

acclaimed, comparing it to Germany's victory over France in 1870.⁵ In Russia the news of the Yalu defeat shook the confidence of the Russian public and the Russian press reacted by attempting to reassure the people of Russia's military strength.⁶

As the Russian troops retreated from positions on the Yalu and around Port Arthur, Novoe vremia and Suvorin joined in the effort to bolster waning Russian patriotism. Suvorin treated the Yalu retreat as an action similar to the battle of Borodino, when Russian armies were forced temporarily to fall back. He denounced those elements in Russian society who claimed to be glad because of Russia's defeats and rejected their argument that this was a "second Sevastapol" signifying the failure of the government. Victory at Sevastapol would have brought the liberation of the peasants along with other reforms. It was shameful for any Russian to wish the defeat of his country in order to bring political reforms. On the contrary, victory would bring progressive reforms by renewing Russia's spirit and reuniting all social classes. As an example, Suvorin cited Germany's victory over France in 1870 which was

⁵M. Pavlovich, "Vneshniaia politika i russko-iaponskaia voina," in Obshestvennoe dvizhenie v rossii v nachale XX-go veka, ed. by L. Martov (St. Petersburg, 1910) II, 2.

⁶Ibid., p. 20.

followed by thirty years of unusual development; while France, which was defeated and humiliated, spent many difficult and bitter years recovering from her defeat.⁷

By the middle of May the Japanese army had succeeded in isolating Port Arthur and by the end of the month had laid siege to the naval base. The Russian army showed itself incapable of checking the Japanese advance and the poor performance of the Russian forces engendered criticism of military operations. A major problem for the Russian forces was a conflict between Admiral Alekseev and General Kuropatkin over strategy. Alekseev, the commander-in-chief, insisted that Russian forces challenge the Japanese at every opportunity.⁸ Kuropatkin, commander of the army, preferred a strategy of gradual retreat similar to Russia's 1812 campaign against Napoleon. Under his plan, the Russian forces would conserve their strength until large numbers of troops could be brought from the European section of Russia. Then the superior Russian forces would crush the Japanese armies.⁹ The conflict between the two commanders produced an indecision in strategy that contributed to the failures of the

⁷ Novoe vremia, May 5 (May 18), 1904, p. 3.

⁸ V. A. Apushkin, Russko-iaponskaia voina (St. Petersburg, 1910), p. 74.

⁹ Kuropatkin, "Dnevnik A. N. Kuropatkina," K.A., LXVIII (1935), 81-83.

Russian forces.

To reassure the public, Suvorin threw his support behind Kuropatkin, utilizing what he termed were "objective" comments based on information available from government telegrams. Suvorin emphasized that the overall direction of Russia's military operation lacked "talented leadership" and "harmony," but he carefully praised Kuropatkin both for his leadership and for his zealous work in preparing the Russian army for combat. The Japanese army had the advantage because its forces were well-equipped for mountain fighting. Suvorin asserted that in January he had urged equipping Russian forces with mountain artillery but his suggestion was ignored. Now these initial setbacks due to the shortage of mountain artillery justified his position. His own critical assessment of Russia's military operations was motivated by patriotism, he wrote. Now overtly acknowledging the existence of revolutionary elements, he condemned them for exposing Russia's military weakness only for the purpose of undermining public morale.¹⁰

Despite such efforts by Suvorin and others, agitation against the war grew in Russia. Witte, the former minister of finance, joined in condemning the war as unnecessary and charged it was the result of intrigue by the Bezobrazov Circle. In hopes of extricating Russia from the

¹⁰ Novoe vremia, June 12 (June 25), 1904, p. 2.

war, Witte made an unsuccessful attempt to initiate peace negotiations with the Japanese while in Berlin in July, 1904.¹¹

The plight of the encircled Port Arthur garrison and the inability of Russia's Far Eastern naval forces to wrest command of the seas from Japan concerned supporters of the war. In early July an ardent campaign was launched urging the dispatch of a second naval squadron to the Pacific. Since by the terms of the Treaty of Paris and the Convention of London the Black sea fleet could not leave the Black Sea, the advocates of this plan demanded that the Baltic fleet be sent to the Far East to relieve Port Arthur and defeat the Japanese fleet.¹² Suvorin and his newspaper became a leading force in the movement to send the Baltic fleet to the Far East.¹³

To arouse Russian patriotism, Suvorin turned to an earlier example of Russia's determination in a time of crisis, which was cited in S. M. Solovev's historical works. During the reign of V. I. Shuiskii, the Russians defeated the Polish and Lithuanian troops attacking the

¹¹Romanov, Ocherki diplomaticheskoi istorii russko-iaponskoi voiny 1895-1907, p. 320.

¹²A. I. Gippius, O prichniakh nashei voiny s iaponiei. S prilozheniiami (Dokumenty), St. Petersburg, 1905, pp. 43-47.

¹³Novoe vremia, June 21 (July 4), 1904, p. 2.

defenseless city of Novgorod. The Russian inhabitants of Novgorod had no weapons nor were they prepared to defend their city. But when the Poles attacked, the inhabitants built fortifications, forged weapons and trained an army. Four times the Russians repulsed the Poles. This was a heroic example to be imitated by the Russian people in the struggle with Japan. Once again it was obvious that Russia was ill-prepared for war and crudely backward in its techniques. The Russian people must overcome Russia's backwardness in order to be victorious in this war.¹⁴

In July the Japanese forces continued their successful advance and moved closer to Port Arthur. The chronic failures of the Russian army shook the confidence of the Russian people in their government.¹⁵ With the increasing mobilization of troops, opposition to the war and against the government mounted. Suvorin reacted by defending his country's position. He denied Russia intended to expand into Korea and Manchuria; Russia was involved in this war to protect her present and future position in the Far East. The war in the Far East was a test of Russia's power just as Russia was tested during her wars in Astrakhan, Kazan,

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ol'denburg, Tsarstvovanie imperatora Nikolaia II, I, 241-42.

Crimea, Kazakhstan and Central Asia.¹⁶ Therefore, Russia must not be beaten in Asia. This war was being fought not only against Japan, but also against England and the United States, which were sympathetic to the Japanese. Russia had made great sacrifices in the Far East and Russia must not simply retreat because of the recent defeats. In particular, Suvorin condemned Count Tolstoi's peace plan advocating that Russia abandon its interests in Manchuria. Russia established itself in the Far East by building the railroad, securing Port Arthur and stationing a fleet in the Pacific. The war was a trial by God of the Russian people. Despite the reverses suffered by the Russian army and navy, Suvorin predicted the Russian army would surprise the world by defeating Japan on land. He conceded that now Russia's military leaders realized Japan for the present was invincible on the seas, but he predicted that the Baltic squadron would reclaim Russia's naval honor.¹⁷

A large segment of world press opinion appeared to sympathize with Japan. The Russians were regarded as the villains against Japan, a smaller power, who was defending her vital interests in Asia as well as preventing Russia's expansion into Manchuria and Korea. The early victories of the Japanese were welcomed and praised by the

¹⁶ Novoe vremia, June 26 (July 9), 1904, p. 2.

¹⁷ Ibid.

European and American press.

Suvorin criticized the foreign journalists for their acclaim of the Japanese military successes. The Japanese were barbarians and could be compared to the Huns, Avars and Mongols who swept over nations like a hurricane, destroying them and their civilizations. One only had to view Japanese art and compare it to European art to see the ugliness and vulgarity in Japanese culture and society. Suvorin wondered why Europeans praised the Japanese with their decadent culture for their sudden successful use of European weapons and military techniques against Russia. At the same time Suvorin lamented that Russia faced a more formidable opponent than England against the Boers. Unlike the Boers, Japan was a nation of fifty million or about one-third the population of Russia. In addition, Japan enjoyed the advantage of English and American contraband. Unfortunately, Russia's military forces in the Far East were unprepared for Japan's challenge; and, if they had been prepared, Japan would have been defeated already and the superiority of the white race defended. Russia would prove the superiority of the white race over the squinted-eyed yellow race despite the bravery and "genius" of the Japanese military. But he cautioned that the Japanese threatened to invade Russia because Japan had successfully mastered modern scientific and technical advances. The Russian people must meet the challenge of the Japanese, who were confident of

their invincible military power.¹⁸

Revolutionary activities increased to the point where on July 28 V. K. Plehve, minister of the interior and architect of the Far Eastern war, was assassinated. The "little victorious war" over Manchuria and Korea that Plehve had advocated to relieve internal discord was proving to be a stimulus to Russia's domestic problems. Meanwhile in the Far East the Russian forces continued to meet with failure. The Russian counterattack to relieve Port Arthur in late July was easily turned back. When Japanese forces moved close enough to Port Arthur to bring the naval squadron under direct fire, an unsuccessful attempt was made to move the squadron to Vladivostok on August 10. Efforts of the Vladivostok squadron to aid Port Arthur by attacking the Japanese fleet resulted in another defeat for Russia's naval forces.¹⁹ The news of these events created a grim mood in St. Petersburg.

Taking note of the Russian public's distress, Suvorin concentrated on the difficulties of the encircled Port Arthur garrison in a series of articles. He joined with Men'shikov in appealing to the Russian people to perform a "Herculean feat" and contribute funds for the

¹⁸Ibid., July 2 (July 15), 1904, p. 2.

¹⁹Pavlovich, "Vneshnaia politika i russko-iaponskaia voina," pp. 22-23.

strengthening of the Baltic squadron so that it could be sent to rescue Port Arthur.²⁰ Kuropatkin also called for the Baltic squadron to be sent to the Far East as part of his strategy to defeat the Japanese.²¹ Kuropatkin's plan was succeeding because now Russia had an army of four hundred thousand troops in the Far East. This force was incomparable to the small force available a few months earlier and Suvorin speculated a decisive battle was near.²² Until the main Russian forces engaged the Japanese army, Suvorin made Port Arthur a rallying cry for the Russian people to work for victory. He lauded General A. M. Stessel's determination to continue defending Port Arthur even after the Vladivostok squadron failed to rescue the garrison.²³

The situation in the Far East in late August brought rumors of peace between Russia and Japan. English newspapers recommended that Russia conclude a peace even if Russia's prestige suffered. Suvorin condemned the position of the English press, arguing that a peace settlement would only be an interlude during which Russia and Japan would

²⁰ Novoe vremia, July 25 (August 10), 1904, p. 2.

²¹ Kuropatkin, "Dnevnik A. N. Kuropatkina," K.A., II (1922), p. 28.

²² Novoe vremia, August 4 (August 17), 1904, p. 2.

²³ Novoe vremia, August 8 (August 21), 1904, p. 2.

continue arming to resume hostilities. Russia had not foolishly expended her energy and money in Asia to be dealt defeat and humiliation. Furthermore, Russia was not yet defeated. The Baltic squadron still existed and part of the Port Arthur squadron remained to continue the war on the seas. On land the Russian army was large and would continue to fight even if Port Arthur fell. The Russian army had been holding the Japanese in a small area for six months and Kuropatkin's army would check the Japanese advance. Japanese fanaticism had failed to conquer the Russians and rumors of peace were the result of Japanese, not Russian, agitation for peace.²⁴

As Suvorin rejected the possibility of peace, a major battle between the Russian and Japanese forces was raging near Liaoyang. After twelve days, Kuropatkin's forces retreated. The Russian troops fought well and retreated in good order, but the failure of the large concentration of Russian forces to defeat the Japanese evoked criticism of Kuropatkin in St. Petersburg.²⁵ Suvorin, however, defended Kuropatkin's decision to retreat rather than endanger the troops with encirclement, charging critics in St. Petersburg did not fully comprehend Kuropatkin's

²⁴Ibid., August 19 (September 1), 1904, p. 2.

²⁵Romanov, Ocherki diplomaticheskoi istorii russko-iaponskoi voiny 1895-1907, pp. 324-325.

position and were not representative of Russian patriotism.²⁶ When his attacks on Kuropatkin's critics for "haughtiness" and "abusive criticism" were challenged, Suvorin replied that he did not intend to intimidate patriotic Russians. A series of articles in Razvedchik by M. I. Dragomirov particularly annoyed him. This critic, Suvorin charged, based his critical comments on incomplete reports of the Liaoyang battle. The absence of accurate battle reports made competent analysis difficult and unwise. The reports of Novoe vremia's correspondent in the Far East, V. I. Nemirovich-Danchenko, supported his own defense of Kuropatkin's conduct. Kuropatkin needed more troops and supplies before he could defeat the Japanese. The "haughty" St. Petersburg critics failed to understand that the condition of the Trans-Siberian Railway was a major source of Kuropatkin's problems.²⁷ Instead of criticizing Kuropatkin, these critics should concentrate their attention on eliminating the railway delays caused by quarrelsome generals and officials. As the details of the Liaoyang battle were reported, the people demanded to know why the Russian army was not as well equipped as the Japanese forces. The St. Petersburg critics, and especially Dragomirov, the "small

²⁶ Novoe vremia, August 23 (September 5), 1904, p. 2.

²⁷ Ibid., August 25 (September 7), 1904, p. 2.

Napoleon," did not have an answer.²⁸

The success of the Japanese against the Russians began to change some attitudes in England and arouse concern over the Japanese "yellow peril" in Asia. As evidence of this viewpoint began to appear in the London Times,²⁹ Suvorin asserted that for a long time Novoe vremia had been publishing editorials and articles by its foreign correspondents concerning the Japanese threat. These writers pointed out that the Japanese slogan "Asia for Asiatics" really meant "Asia for Japan." As early as June, G. S. Veselitskii, who wrote for Novoe vremia under the name "Argus," presented these views to the Central Asiatic Society in London. Veselitskii opened the eyes of the English public to Japan's threatening power. As further evidence, Russkii invalid indicated Japan was capable of putting one million troops equipped with the latest European military arms into the field. The spectre of Japan's future military power was causing England and Europe to reconsider Russia's role in Asia. In the past Russia was always suspect for her intentions in Asia, but now Japan was the center of suspicion. The London Times, Suvorin observed, did not wish Japan to dominate China. But Suvorin

²⁸ Ibid., August 28 (September 10), 1904, p. 2.

²⁹ Editorial, The Times (London), September 7, 1904, p. 7.

objected to the Times' argument regarding England's role in India and China. England regarded itself as the best counsel for solving government problems in these areas and Suvorin questioned whether it was not possible for Japan to do the same in Asia. Japan was now receiving sympathy and attention from other Asiatic states and was replacing England as a model. An alliance with China would give Japan the power to challenge England's authority in Asia. Because Japan capitalized on the alliance with England, Russia was fighting the war in Asia to defend her own interests as well as those of England and Europe. A Japanese victory over Russia would, therefore, be a victory over England because the "yellow foes" of Russia were also England's enemies. England erroneously believed supremacy in Asia could be shared with Japan, which in the future would threaten England's empire in India. It seemed clear that England and Russia shared common interests and a common enemy and that England should well understand the need for victory over Japan after her experience in the Boer War. For Russia this victory was more necessary than England's victory over the Boers; the honor of the Russian army and the Russian people were at stake. The patriotism aroused by the war would bring victory and the "spring" of reforms

that the Russian people awaited.³⁰

While the Russian army moved back to positions near Mukden, discussion centered on the performance of Kuropatkin and the Russian forces at Liaoyang. In their defense, Suvorin questioned the division of responsibility between Alekseev and Kuropatkin. Advocating one supreme commander, he cited the success a similar military organization had brought Russian forces under General A. V. Suvorov against the French. The defense of Port Arthur under General Stessel was a prime example of success in utilizing a single commander. Suvorin endorsed Russkii invalid praise for the excellent performance of the Japanese troops under the leadership of a well-organized headquarters. In comparison, the lack of a general staff in the Russian army resulted in discord and poor performance. In addition, Suvorin urged that experienced troops be dispatched to the Far East instead of mobilized peasants. These peasants were untrained and inadequately informed about the reasons for the war in the Far East. Russia's use of these troops and the lack of a unified command were major sources of Kuropatkin's difficulties during the battle of Liaoyang.³¹

Despite current problems, Suvorin proclaimed

³⁰Ibid., August 30 (September 12), 1904, p. 2.

³¹Ibid., September 8 (September 21), 1904, p. 2.

Russia's land and naval forces were fighting well and growing stronger. The early mistakes and deficiencies would be corrected and Prince Meshcherskii's appeal for Russia to seek peace should, therefore, be rejected. Russia's best troops were not yet committed in the Far East and favorable conditions still existed for a Russian victory. Furthermore, Russia's finances were capable of sustaining the war effort. Russia's military prospects were improving because Kuropatkin saved his troops at Liaoyang to build the army for a decisive battle at Mukden. Suvorin compared Kuropatkin's strategy to General M. I. Kutuzov's retreat to Moscow after the Russian loss at Borodino in the 1812 campaign. Kuropatkin's strategy would ultimately prevent the Japanese from victory in the war. Those elements who supported Kuropatkin for commander-in-chief wanted Russia to succeed in the war.³² Efforts to have General Kuropatkin made commander-in-chief received a boost from Prince K. D. Shirinskii-Shikhmatov who, upon his return from the Far East, visited with the Tsar on October 7. The prince praised Kuropatkin to the Tsar and reported that Alekseev was responsible for the failure of the Russian army's operations. The Tsar replied that he was aware of the situation because Suvorin's "Malen'kii pis'ma" were excellent in exposing the problems and he complimented

³² Ibid.

Suvorin's journalism.³³

In his next article, Suvorin claimed his desire to see Kuropatkin made commander-in-chief was supported by a multitude of letters he had received since his recent article on the subject. These letters from representatives of all classes in Russian society convinced Suvorin that Kuropatkin was immensely popular with the Russian people. They were confident that Kuropatkin would carry out his pledge to fulfill the Tsar's command and defeat the Japanese at Mukden.³⁴ Within two weeks, Suvorin's efforts were rewarded when Kuropatkin was made commander-in-chief. In his article on October 27 Suvorin welcomed the news and pledged support of Kuropatkin.³⁵

While the Novoe vremia publisher campaigned for Kuropatkin's appointment, another peace initiative was presented to Russia. On October 20 Novoe vremia announced that United States President Theodore Roosevelt was attempting to mediate between Russia and Japan.³⁶ Roosevelt, who officially proclaimed his country's neutrality at the opening of hostilities, was personally sympathetic to Japan's

³³ Suvorin, Dnevnik, p. 321.

³⁴ Novoe vremia, September 27 (October 10), 1904, p. 3.

³⁵ Ibid., October 14 (October 27), 1904, p. 3.

³⁶ Ibid., October 7 (October 20), 1904, p. 2.

cause but was ready to volunteer his cooperation to stop the hostilities.³⁷ Roosevelt invited Germany and France to join him in the venture.³⁸ He made the peace move during a lull in the fighting between the two armies when the battle lines had stabilized and the war had turned to the trenches. At the same time Japanese efforts to take Port Arthur continued to meet with stiff resistance and the war appeared to be at a stalemate.

In Russia there was growing evidence that a large element of the population favored peace and that only the Tsar, the military and a circle of officials preferred continuing the war.³⁹ A Novoe vremia editorial on October 20 admitted that certain factions in Russia leaned toward peace and mediation but it said:

If we wish to get the true import of such leanings, we must remember that we have two factions advocating peace--first, the extreme reactionaries, who wish in their old way to hide their heads under their wings and to reestablish a hollow peace for their own tranquility and, second, the radicals, who think that the war has weakened the government enough, and who hope that a disgraceful peace will entirely discredit it. There is a third element of calm and progressive Russians--namely, the majority, who admit that the war has shown many points of weakness, but who stand for

³⁷ Tyler Dennett, Roosevelt and the Russo-Japanese War (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1959), pp. 47-50.

³⁸ Romanov, Ocherki diplomaticheskoi istorii russko-iaponskoi voiny 1895-1907, pp. 343-44.

³⁹ Romanov, Rossia v Man'chzhurii 1892-1906, p. 513.

absolute victory over the Japanese, so that whatever reforms shall subsequently be inaugurated shall prove the outcome of the natural evolution of the Russian monarchy and not be due to pressure from without.⁴⁰

Four days later, Suvorin reiterated his paper's position, rejecting a claim by the French Temps correspondent that Russia suffered a crushing defeat at Liaoyang. Roosevelt's endeavors for a peace conference proved the Japanese were weakening. Therefore, Russia's enemies wished to compel her to conclude a peace with Japan before her ultimate victory; but the Russian people demanded victory and the reforms and improvements it would bring. The Tsar sincerely desired to grant the true wishes of the Russian people once the Japanese were defeated. Only by working with the Tsar for victory would the Russian people advance.⁴¹ Thus Suvorin very cleverly made reforms contingent upon the population's continued support of the war. It is, unfortunately, difficult to ascertain whether Suvorin's increasingly open discussion of reforms had the Tsar's concurrence or whether it reflected the decreasing ability of the autocratic regime to stifle expressions favoring reform.

Although Suvorin was publicly expressing confidence in Kuropatkin and Russia's increasing strength, his personal

⁴⁰ Novoe vremia, October 7 (October 20), 1904, p. 2.

⁴¹ Ibid., October 11 (October 24), 1904, p. 2.

diary reveals quite different personal views. After receiving the news of Kuropatkin's retreat from Liaoyang, Suvorin expressed despair and indignation with Russia's leadership of the war. Liaoyang was a Sedan for Russia, he wrote. The Russian fleet was annihilated and now the Russian army was decimated. He speculated that Russia would be forced to accept a disgraceful peace if England did not permit the Baltic squadron to reach the Far East. The internal situation of Russia was equally ticklish because the Tsar's absolute power was a fiction. The Tsar was under the domination of bureaucrats and other self-seeking persons. It was not surprising that the Russian people were increasingly disturbed with this arbitrary regime. After studying the situation facing Kuropatkin at Liaoyang, Suvorin and his editors privately blamed Kuropatkin whom they called bezdarnyi. The telegrams from the Far East demoralized them and they feared that the Russian army was destroyed by this tragic defeat at Liaoyang. Since Suvorin and his editors held these critical personal views of the war and Kuropatkin, it seems apparent that the published praise and confidence in Kuropatkin and Russia's war effort was primarily propaganda designed to raise public morale.⁴² Clearly, Suvorin was attempting to carry out his intention of influencing public support for the war with Japan as he

⁴² Suvorin, Dnevnik, p. 318.

had done in 1876 during the war with Turkey.⁴³

The military situation in the Far East following the retreat from Liaoyang placed the Port Arthur garrison in an even more critical position. To rescue Port Arthur, the Tsar dispatched the Baltic squadron in mid-October. While passing through Dogger fishing banks, however, the ill-trained and tension-ridden Russian squadron opened fire on English fishing vessels, mistaking them for attacking Japanese warships. The incident provoked a serious crisis between England and Russia. After discussing the incident with Captain N. Klado, Suvorin and his newspaper defended the conduct of Admiral Z. P. Rozhdestvenskii, the Baltic squadron's commander.⁴⁴ Suvorin insisted that Russian naval regulations required the Baltic squadron to be battle-ready at all times and to regard all foreign vessels as a possible enemy even in neutral waters.⁴⁵ England's threats of an ultimatum and war were condemned. An investigation would exonerate the Russian squadron.⁴⁶ Meanwhile, Suvorin urged the Russian public to remain calm until the

⁴³Ibid., p. 307.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 322.

⁴⁵Novoe vremia, October 19 (November 1), 1904, p. 3.

⁴⁶Ibid., October 30 (November 12), 1904, p. 3.

truth was known.⁴⁷ It was important that war with England be averted even though England had been aiding Japan and was largely responsible for Russia's humiliation during the Congress of Berlin.⁴⁸

Popular disenchantment with the war in the Far East increased significantly in late 1904. Incidents of opposition to troop mobilization occurred throughout Russia.⁴⁹ The zemstvo organizations proved to be a major source of agitation against the war and by November, 1904 were instrumental in a national movement demanding reforms.⁵⁰ With the military operations at a stalemate everywhere but at Port Arthur, Suvorin concentrated his attention on Russia's internal problems and only turned to the siege of Port Arthur to rally support for the war.

The Japanese, realizing the necessity of taking Port Arthur before the Baltic squadron arrived, launched a major assault on the fortress in mid-November. By the middle of December the fall of the fortress was anticipated. In St. Petersburg's gloomy atmosphere the demands for peace

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Ibid., October 19 (November 1), 1904, p. 3.

⁴⁹Ol'denburg, Tsarstvovanie imperatora Nikolaia II, I, 256.

⁵⁰Bompard, Mon Ambassade en Russie (1903-1908), pp. 90-92.

and reforms grew stronger. Suvorin responded by reiterating that Russia could only have peace and reforms after victory over Japan. Only in the joyous spirit of victory would Russian internal creativity flourish. In the discontent and uncertainty dominating Russia, the glorious story of Port Arthur's courageous defense offered consolation. This Herculean feat marked a glorious page in Russia's history and refuted criticism of Russia's military capability.⁵¹ The fall of Port Arthur on New Year's Day, 1905 made a huge impression on the foreign press and the Russian people. Newspapers in England, France, Germany and Italy, while praising the valor of General Stessel and his troops, concluded that this defeat ended Russia's importance not only in the Far East but in Europe. It was time for Russia to conclude peace. Popular opposition to the war was growing; the Russian population desired peace.⁵²

The views of the foreign press and the growing peace movement in Russia did not sway Suvorin's support for continuance of the war. Although the fall of Port Arthur was a grave misfortune for Russia, Suvorin denied Russia's prestige and influence in Asia was destroyed. Further, Suvorin challenged claims in the foreign press that demonstrations and appeals for peace in newspapers and zemstvos

⁵¹Novoe vremia, December 7 (December 20), 1904, p. 3.

⁵²Ol'denburg, Tsarstvovanie imperatora Nikolaia II, I, 258.

indicated "all wished peace" in Russia. These elements did not speak for all Russia's people. On the contrary, the patriotic sacrifices of the Russian military forces and the responses of cities and villages throughout Russia to the war effort proved the loyalty of the people to Russia's cause in the Far East. Although it was possible that the people did not fully understand the need for Port Arthur and railway interests in Manchuria, Suvorin declared that all understood the importance of Russia's honor in this war. To achieve victory, Suvorin appealed for the unity of the Russian people, and asserted that internal division would only bring the frightening prospect of revolution and the collapse of Russia. The hopes of the Russian people rested on General Kuropatkin's army and the Baltic squadron. To the bewilderment of Europe, Russia would resolutely continue the war until victory.⁵³

Only two weeks later, on January 22, events in St. Petersburg indicated the attitude of the Russian population was quite different from Suvorin's published claims. On that day a peaceful procession of workers seeking to present a petition for general reforms to the Tsar ended in a tragic massacre. This event, "Bloody Sunday," signaled the beginning of more violent expressions of opposition to war and the Tsarist government's indifference to the welfare

⁵³ Novoe vremia, December 24, 1904 (January 6, 1905), pp. 3-4.

and peaceful aspirations of the Russian people.⁵⁴ Although Suvorin sympathized with the St. Petersburg workers' desires for internal reforms and especially the summoning of a Zemskii Sobor, his published opinions on continuing the war did not alter. On the anniversary of the Japanese attack on Port Arthur, Suvorin conceded that the first year of war resulted in a number of reverses for the Russian navy and army. Port Arthur had fallen and the Russian military future seemed bleak; but Suvorin doggedly argued that the Russian people refused to accept defeat.⁵⁵

The military situation after the fall of Port Arthur and the heightening of internal disturbances caused Roosevelt again to initiate mediation efforts.⁵⁶ Peace overtures were begun in London through the Russian ambassador and through the German Emperor whom Roosevelt hoped would influence Nicholas II to seek peace. This peace movement also received the endorsement of Austrian Emperor Francis Joseph, but was rejected by the Russian government as unacceptable to the supporters of the war.

Suvorin reflected the Russian government's

⁵⁴A. M. Pankratova, Pervaia russkaia revoliutsiia 1905-1907gg., (Moscow, 1951), pp. 61-68.

⁵⁵Novoe vremia, January 27 (February 9), 1905, p. 2.

⁵⁶Romanov, Ocherki diplomaticheskoi istorii russko-iaponskoi voiny 1895-1907, pp. 361-62.

rejection of these peace overtures. He expressed shock at the Austrian Emperor's suggestion that Russia should seek a peace settlement, claiming negotiated peace at this time would be "disgraceful." On three earlier occasions the opportunities for a peace settlement had been far better than after the surrender of Port Arthur and the development of internal strife in Russia. Now, with the threat of revolution, a "disgraceful peace" would be used by the revolutionary movement as proof of the government's impotence. Suvorin asserted that he had received many letters from peasants expressing concern that the revolutionary movement was in the hands of the Japanese and threatened disaster for Russia in the war. Others feared a hasty peace at this time would destroy national pride and hasten the revolutionary movement and civil war. Several letters believed a "disgraceful peace" and revolution in Russia would result in Europe uniting against Russia just as Europe collaborated against France during the French Revolution. To bring Russia victory, Suvorin urged the summoning of a Zemskii Sobor to unite the Russian people torn by internal strife and the war. He questioned the position of the Minister of Interior Sviatopolk-Mirskii that a Zemskii Sobor was possible only in a peace time.⁵⁷ Internal discord was damaging the war effort. Suvorin was shocked that striking students and

⁵⁷ Novoe vremia, February 14 (February 27), 1905, p. 3.

teachers were closing schools and universities in an effort to undermine the Russian government and protest the war.⁵⁸ In addition, Suvorin criticized some military leaders for their disparaging comments on military operations.⁵⁹

While Suvorin was expressing these views, the long-awaited decisive battle began near Mukden. A large concentration of Russian forces under Kuropatkin's command engaged an almost equal number of Japanese forces in a two-week battle ending on March 10. The outcome was a victory for the Japanese. The battle of Mukden was to be the last major land engagement of the war and this defeat brought Kuropatkin's replacement as commander-in-chief.⁶⁰ The results of the battle of Mukden produced a widespread demand in Russia for a reassessment of the war. Numerous conservative newspapers that had supported the war now joined in the clamor for peace. Suvorin, however, still did not advocate peace, even though he compared Mukden to Russia's defeat at Austerlitz on December 2, 1805. Admittedly, Mukden damaged Russia's morale and added to internal discord. The Russian government's silence on the situation in the Far East contributed to the confusion of the Russian people. The

⁵⁸Ibid., February 26 (March 11), 1905, p. 3.

⁵⁹Ibid., February 28 (March 13), 1905, p. 2.

⁶⁰Ol'denburg, Tsarstvovanie imperatora Nikolaia II, I, 276-77.

inadequacy of Kuropatkin's brief report of Russia's position and editorials in London newspapers suggesting the defeat at Mukden would force Russia to seek peace were creating alarm and confusion. If the Russian press was to assist the government in calming alarm, the Russian government must present the general facts and clearly state its policies.⁶¹ In reply to other newspapers urging peace, namely Grazhdanin and Novosti, Suvorin argued that Russia faced great challenges during the Smutnoe vremia and the war of 1812. Russia refused to be disgraced during these struggles and emerged with honor and dignity. The Russian people were wise and now would not permit Russia to lose her power and achievements in the Far East after only one year of war. The Russian people would continue the war even if the Japanese conquered all of Manchuria and reached the Volga.⁶²

By the end of March the peace movement began to gain momentum. While Roosevelt approached Japan and Russia, the French Foreign Minister T. Delcassé appealed directly to the Tsar to negotiate.⁶³ Meanwhile as talk of peace continued to dominate the Russian press, Suvorin belabored his

⁶¹Novoe vremia, March 3 (March 16), 1905, p. 2.

⁶²Ibid., March 5 (March 18), 1905, p. 2.

⁶³Maurice Paleologue, Un Grand Tournant de la Politique Mondiale (1904-1906) (Paris, 1934), pp. 261-63.

rejection of a negotiated peace.⁶⁴ In April, the Russian government was still not ready to acknowledge defeat and the Tsar remained determined to continue the struggle.⁶⁵ He was supported by the German Emperor Wilhelm who feared that ending the war after the long series of Russian defeats might end the monarchy in Russia.⁶⁶ Furthermore, Suvorin's view that Russia as a great power must defeat Japan in order to maintain her position in the Far East and in international affairs persisted in some circles in St. Petersburg. War militants believed that the early defeats did not represent Russia's true military strength and Russia would crush the Japanese when the superior numbers of her land forces were moved to the Far East. Consequently, the Tsar and the supporters of the war rejected peace and placed their hopes in the Baltic squadron recapturing control of the seas. Suvorin pledged his support for the Tsar's determination to continue the war. He condemned the extreme conservatives and radicals for desiring peace which he asserted would only bring revolution. Letters from different estates, men and women, wives of soldiers and peasants, proved that the Tsar's war

⁶⁴Novoe vremia, March 16 (March 29), 1905, p. 3.

⁶⁵Bompard, Mon Ambassade en Russie (1903-1908), pp. 123-24.

⁶⁶A. A. Sergeiev, ed., "Vilgelm II o russko-iaponskoi voine i revoliutsii 1905 goda," K.A., IX (1925), 62-65.

policy had broad support. Hopes of victory were placed in the Baltic squadron which had reached Singapore; the destiny of Russia would be determined by the Baltic squadron.⁶⁷ The Baltic squadron represented the final encouragement Suvorin could offer a war-weary Russian people.

The long-awaited battle took place in the Tsushima Strait at the end of May and resulted in the complete destruction of the Baltic squadron. Immediately after the news of Russia's defeat was transmitted, Roosevelt revived his peace drive.⁶⁸ Japan was willing to have Roosevelt mediate but Russia required more encouragement. Even though the Tsar received recommendations to make peace from several sources including the German Emperor, he hesitated.⁶⁹

While the Tsar deliberated, Suvorin expressed shock at the naval catastrophe and the rising tide of revolutionary activities. To combat declining Russian morale, Suvorin again urged the immediate convocation of a Zemskii Sobor. A Zemskii Sobor would unite the Russian people by bringing together their most talented representatives. Unity was necessary before Russia could resolve the question of

⁶⁷Novoe vremia, March 30 (April 12), 1905, p. 3.

⁶⁸E. P. Trani, The Treaty of Portsmouth (Lexington, Ky.: University of Kentucky Press, 1969), pp. 56-57.

⁶⁹Ol'denburg, Tsarstvovanie imperatora Nikolaia II, I, 283.

war or peace.⁷⁰ Of the two alternatives, Suvorin made clear his preference for war. The Japanese peace proposals required territorial concessions and a huge indemnity, and such demands would only bring national shame and burden future generations.⁷¹ The Zemskii Sobor would not be forced to conclude peace because Russia still had an army and was not defeated.⁷² Only a Zemskii Sobor could engender the growth and development in Russia necessary to support the war. Japan, he pointed out, waged the war under a parliament and free press which insured honesty while Russia's deficiencies remained hidden. Now, little by little, Russians learned their country was not as prepared for war as Russia's officials had led them to believe. A Zemskii Sobor would investigate government activities and remove the doubts concerning Russian war preparedness.⁷³

On June 6, the Tsar called military leaders together to consider the question of war or peace. Some of the views expressed at the conference incorporated Suvorin's position. For example, General P. L. Lobko advised seeking the opinion of the Russian people by convoking a Zemskii Sobor. He cautioned that the return of a defeated army

⁷⁰Novoe vremia, May 19 (June 1), 1905, p. 3.

⁷¹Ibid., May 20 (June 2), 1905, p. 3.

⁷²Ibid., May 22 (June 4), 1905, p. 3.

⁷³Ibid., May 24 (June 6), 1905, p. 3.

would be detrimental to Russia's internal situation and he favored continuance of the war. However, the impact of Tsushima and the spread of disorders in Russia appear to have swayed the Tsar to consider peace. That evening the Tsar notified the American ambassador that he had decided to accept mediation.⁷⁴

Although Suvorin did not directly condemn the Tsar's action, he greeted the news by criticizing the terms of peace proposed by the Japanese. At the same time, Suvorin condemned revolutionaries and conservatives alike for urging acceptance of Japan's peace terms. The revolutionaries were traitors because their activities in the army and navy frustrated Russia's military operations. They urged acceptance of a disgraceful peace in order to bring discredit upon the Tsar's government and add to popular discontent.⁷⁵ Conservatives like Prince Mercherskii in Grazhdanin favored peace because a "reawakening of war patriotism" and a meeting of the Zemskii Sobor would bring demands for reforms and limits on the Tsar's powers. Not everyone shared the views of either the conservatives or radicals. Suvorin insisted that the numerous letters he received indicated that there was popular opposition from all estates to a peace

⁷⁴B. A. Romanov, ed., "Konets russko-iaponskoi voiny; voennoe soveshchanie 24 maia 1905G. v Tsarkom Selo," K.A., XXVIII (1927), 203-09

⁷⁵Novoe vremia, May 26 (June 8), 1905, p. 3.

containing territorial concessions and an indemnity. The Japanese might have won a victory over Russia's bureaucrats but Japan would discover the Russian people were invincible. Peace or war could only be decided when there was mutual consent and trust between the people and their government.⁷⁶ Only a Zemskii Sobor could arrange a peace settlement acceptable to all the Russian people and avoid the indignation which would sweep Russia if a disgraceful peace were concluded.⁷⁷

Suvorin's disapproval extended to Roosevelt and mediation in Washington. He viewed the American president with distrust and compared Roosevelt's role as an "honest broker" to Bismarck's role in the Congress of Berlin when Russia lost the fruits of victory. He questioned whether Roosevelt was really Russia's benefactor and savior as claimed by world opinion. It was Japan which was exhausted from the war, while Russia had the resources to continue and Roosevelt certainly knew this. Roosevelt was mistaken to believe Russia would accept Japan's peace demands as moderate. Russia rejected these demands at the beginning of the war and would continue the war rather than accept them.⁷⁸

In June, Suvorin's opposition to peace was shared

⁷⁶Ibid., June 5 (June 18), 1905, p. 3.

⁷⁷Ibid., June 1 (June 14), 1905, p. 3.

⁷⁸Ibid., June 5 (June 18), 1905, p. 3.

by many government officials and especially by Russia's military leadership. Generals Linevich and Kuropatkin and the Minister of War V. V. Sakharov urged the Tsar not to conclude peace and to continue the war until the Russian army was victorious.⁷⁹ As more and more Russian troops arrived in Manchuria with the improvement of transportation over the Trans-Siberian Railway, the confidence of the military leaders and their supporters mounted. While the details of the peace conference were being arranged, however, these opponents of peace were dealt a serious blow when the Japanese army succeeded in occupying Sakhalin Island with little resistance from the Russian army. Shortly thereafter the Tsar finalized diplomatic arrangements for a Russian peace delegation under the leadership of Witte to meet with Japan's representatives at Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

Witte and the Russian peace delegation arrived in the United States on August 2. Witte, who believed Russia could not continue the war and who favored peace, worked out a strategy with Dr. E. J. Dillon to sway the American public to Russia's side. Upon his arrival, Witte delivered a brief statement emphasizing the friendly feelings of Russia for the United States.⁸⁰ Along his route to Portsmouth,

⁷⁹Pavlovich, "Vneshniaia politika i russko-iaponskaia voina," p. 31.

⁸⁰Witte, Vospominaniia, II (Berlin, 1923), 415-16.

Witte endeavored to make a favorable impression upon the American press and public. Apparently, Suvorin shared Witte's desires to win American sympathy because, in a reversal of his earlier anti-American position, he praised Witte's efforts. Witte, Suvorin wrote, was truly a clever and talented representative of the Russian people. Witte's speech characterized the spirit of Russia's traditional friendship for the United States expressed by A. I. Hertsen on December 1, 1858 at Kolokol. Hertsen's article reprinted the same day in the Novoe vremia argued that since Russia and the United States shared the shores of the Pacific Ocean, the two countries must be fellow travelers in the Far East and join in an alliance to protect their mutual interests.⁸¹ Since Suvorin's son Boris was a member of Witte's delegation, it seems probable that Suvorin's sudden friendly overture towards the United States was part of Witte's strategy.

Nevertheless, as the peace conference convened in Portsmouth, the "Malen'kiia pis'ma" still maintained a hard line against peace. Suvorin, who later commented that neither he nor Witte really expected a peace settlement, probably wanted to project a strong Russian war readiness both because it would enhance Russia's position at the conference and because he expected the war to continue.⁸² Thus in his

⁸¹Novoe vremia, July 24 (August 6), 1905, p. 2.

⁸²Ibid., August 17 (August 30), 1905, p. 3.

column, he claimed the Russian "man-in-the-street" opposed Witte concluding peace with Japan. The Russian people would never accept a peace granting territorial concessions and an indemnity to Japan.⁸³ Witte must reject such a "disgraceful peace" because it would destroy Russia's position and interests in the Far East. Furthermore, Suvorin insisted that the Russian "man-in-the-street" shared his conviction that only a Zemskii Sobor could decide the question of war or peace.⁸⁴

The growing opposition of Suvorin and other militant war elements to the course of the peace negotiations created an impression at Portsmouth that the Russian public was increasingly disenchanted with Japan's peace terms and preferred a renewal of the war.⁸⁵ On August 26, when the peace negotiations reached a critical stage, Witte categorically rejected Japan's demands for an indemnity and territorial concessions. The Japanese now believing that their demands were not acceptable to the Russian people and that military operations would resume when the peace negotiations broke down, surprisingly agreed to Witte's conditions and signed a peace settlement on August 29, 1905.

The news of peace did not produce public

⁸³Ibid., July 29 (August 11), 1905, p. 2.

⁸⁴Ibid., July 30 (August 12), 1905, pp. 2-3.

⁸⁵Ibid., August 13 (August 26), 1905, p. 3.

demonstrations of joy in St. Petersburg. Reactions to the news varied; but a mood of indifference and apathy tended to prevail. Suvorin reacted with a degree of surprise and disappointment that peace had been concluded. He disapproved of the peace and charged that it implied Russia lost the war. By agreeing to a "disgraceful peace," Russia failed to endure the test of her power and strength. In accepting peace, Russia suffered incalculable losses while Japan gained at Russia's expense. Suvorin regretted Russia's forfeitures primarily because he still insisted that the Russian army was not defeated and that Japan's compromises indicated her uncertainty about continuing the war.⁸⁶ However, Suvorin argued in defense of Witte that peace was forced upon the Russian delegate when the Russian army failed to conduct aggressive operations against the Japanese and when the revolutionary movement in Russia undermined Witte's position at the peace conference. Suvorin praised Witte's diplomatic skill under these difficult circumstances and proclaimed Witte carried out a "diplomatic victory" in forcing Japan to compromise its demands. Although Suvorin regarded the peace as undesirable and questioned whether it would be lasting, he resigned himself to accepting it. The Russian people needed peace in order to concentrate their

⁸⁶Ibid., August 17 (August 30), 1905, p. 3.

attention on Russia's domestic problems.⁸⁷

The conclusion of peace scuttled Suvorin's campaign supporting the war. The terms of peace now terminated the imperialist Russian expansion in the Far East that Suvorin had so zealously supported for almost a decade. During the Boxer crisis and the pre-war negotiations with Japan, Suvorin had opposed use of military force to advance Russia's policy and continually argued for peaceful penetration. In consonance with Witte he sought to curb the aggressive policies of the Bezabrazov circle, which he foresaw would inevitably plunge the country into armed conflict and jeopardize Russia's economic interests in the Far East. When Japan attacked Port Arthur and declared war on Russia, Suvorin became an avid supporter of the war. Since Japan, an emerging power, had challenged the great Russian giant in the Far East, Suvorin felt that Russia could retain her economic interests and her power position in Asia and the world only by decisively crushing the aggressor. A skilled propagandist, Suvorin appealed to the Russian people to recognize the great economic losses which Russia would suffer were she not victorious. Asking for patience and using a variety of devices, such as the fleet fund and the threat of the yellow peril, he attempted to keep the population solidly and enthusiastically behind the war. Faced with a

⁸⁷Ibid., August 18 (August 31), 1905, p. 3.

series of devastating military defeats and blunders, Suvorin saw the mood of the people change rapidly. Recognizing that the population found it increasingly difficult to understand the view that Russia's Far Eastern interests were worthy of the current hardships and human sacrifice, Suvorin subtly changed his arguments to appeal to national honor. As possibilities of a negotiated peace presented themselves, Suvorin found himself in strong opposition. When sagging morale and the revolutionary movement threatened to completely disintegrate support for the war, Suvorin threw his weight behind popular demands for a Zemskii Sobor. He believed that the immediate convocation of a Zemskii Sobor could and would reunite the people behind the war and carry Russia to victory. Although he had private misgivings about the way in which the war was being conducted, at no time did he allow his published writing to convey anything but faith in Russia's ultimate victory. His consistent and forceful attempts to portray Russia as a willing and able warrior may well have been an important factor in the outcome of peace negotiations even though Suvorin would have much preferred a military victory.

CHAPTER VI

SUVORIN URGES "REFORM FROM ABOVE."

From 1900 until the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War, the Russian domestic scene was dominated by Witte's ambitious economic and industrial development program. Aimed at rapid industrial transformation, Witte's program concomitantly triggered increasing political, economic and social discontent and inspired demands for the modernization of many facets of Russian society. During this era, Suvorin supported those domestic reforms which he felt were compatible with his own political philosophy and his views on the nature of Russian society. His stance on economic and social issues was essentially progressive and nationalistic while he remained conservative towards changes in the autocratic form of government.

The "Witte system" called for the fastest possible industrialization while providing for improvement of peasant conditions, expansion of civil liberties, and the extension of educational opportunities to all classes. By 1900, however, the "system" was under attack by agrarian interests for placing undue emphasis on industrialization at the

expense of other areas in Russian society. Nevertheless, the basic tenets of the "Witte system" were laid down in February, 1900, when Witte submitted a report "On the Condition of Our Industry" to Nicholas II. In essence, Witte wanted the Tsar to initiate "reform from above" by rapid industrialization. Witte's report emphasized the vital necessity of foreign capital to finance Russia's industrial development and gave rise to agrarian agitation against foreign investors.¹

Taking issue with critics who said that foreign capital threatened Russia's economic independence, Suvorin expressed his support for Witte's policy on March 30, 1900. When reactionary critics of Witte's policies challenged his views in the pages of the Kievljanin, Suvorin denounced such chauvinism, pointing out that if Russia did not use foreign capital to hasten industrialization it would have to borrow the money at heavy interest. He insisted that his support for Witte's policy did not include permitting foreign investors to make Russia their "submissive servant."² While foreign companies and foreign technicians would not be allowed to interfere in Russia's domestic affairs, foreign capital could be utilized to meet the needs of the Russian

¹"Dokladnaia zapiska Witte Nikolaiu II," Istorik marksist, II (1935), 130.

²Novoe vremia, March 17 (March 30), 1900, p. 2.

economy. By defending Witte's plea for an influx of foreign capital, Suvorin made clear his desire for the rapid industrialization of Russia.

Agricultural problems continued to pose obstacles to Witte's industrialization policies. Repeated crop failures and persistent peasant unrest gave rise to increasing concern in official circles and spokesmen for Russian agrarian opinion, especially landowners, charged that Russian agriculture was deteriorating under the burdens Witte placed on it.³ The dire plight of the peasants indicated reforms were necessary but jurisdiction over peasant affairs was outside Witte's ministry. In November, 1901, the Tsar, under pressure from all sides to remedy the problems of Russian agriculture, appointed a commission under the chairmanship of V. I. Kokovtsov "for a thorough analysis of the question of the economic decline of the center in comparison with the economic conditions of the other parts of the Empire."⁴ Shortly thereafter, in January, 1902, Nicholas directed Minister of Interior D. S. Sipiagin to update peasant legislation since the reforms of Alexander II. Finally, in February, 1902, the Tsar made Witte chairman of a Special Commission on the Needs of Agriculture Industry. This appointment

³A. A. Polovtsev, "Dnevnik A. A. Polovtseva," K.A., XXXXVI (1931), 128-29.

⁴I. V. Chernyshev, Agrarno-krestianskaia politika Rossii za 150 let (Petrograd, 1918), pp. 267-68.

gave Witte control over the rural economy and assigned him the difficult task of reforming peasant conditions.⁵

Although in earlier years Suvorin had deplored the condition of the Russian peasants, his "Malen'kiia pis'ma" ignored the peasant reform work under Kokovtsov and Sipiagin. When Witte assumed chairmanship of the commission to improve the rural economy, however, Suvorin immediately supported the minister of finance. Suvorin rejected rich-landowner allegations that Witte's industrialization policy ignored rural economic problems and exploited the agricultural classes to the benefit of the industrial classes. He also dismissed the landowners' complaints that Witte's adoption of the gold standard threatened their welfare and the privileges of the landed gentry. The commission, including the ministers of interior and agriculture as well as numerous agricultural experts, would provide reforms for the improvement of the rural economy. These specialists would also furnish explanations as to whether the financial system injured the rural economy and would thus end the "nonsense" directed against Witte's financial measures. Attacks against Witte, Suvorin charged, were "vulgar" and "tactless" gossip which the commission should ignore and concentrate on the complicated task of examining the long history of rural economic problems. Rural economic problems involved more than just

⁵Polovtsev, "Dnevnik A. A. Polovtseva," K.A., III (1923), 114.

the plight of landowners and included the peasants and the whole mode of village economy. Peasant complaints, neglected since their liberation, must be considered if rural problems were to be solved. The commission would repudiate the "superfluous words" and "self interests" of landowners.⁶

Focusing on the "great work" of the commission, Suvorin indicated that he, like Witte, believed in "reform from above."⁷ The commission was completing the unfinished reforms of Russia's rural economy begun with the emancipation of the peasants forty years earlier. The past forty years showed that only elementary changes were begun in peasant affairs and that very vital and important reforms were still needed. Suvorin proclaimed that Russian history indicated the Russian government was the initiator and leader of all important reforms. Since Smutnoe vremia, the Russian state had built an empire, organized all social classes, created the army and arranged all the essential activities of the Russian people. The Russian government in the past forty years guided the developments in the rural economy. It gave the peasants land, decreased redemption payments, established peasant banks and created the Ministry for Agriculture. Unfortunately, the measures introduced were sometimes contradictory, producing added discord in the rural economy. Now

⁶Novoe vremia, January 27 (February 9), 1902, p. 2.

⁷S. I. Witte, Samoderzhavie i zemstvo (Stuttgart: J. H. Dietz, 1903), pp. 92-93.

it was necessary for the government again to assess past and present conditions and to introduce reforms for the creation of a healthy rural economy.⁸

The peasant, and not the landowner, Suvorin argued, must be the principal beneficiary of rural reforms. The commission must not introduce reforms shaping Russia's rural economy in imitation of Germany's agriculture economy, as Prince Meshcherskii advocated. The German agrarian system benefited only a few rich landowners and was unsuitable for Russia. The period since emancipation proved that the vast majority of Russian noble landowners did not possess the energy or talent to improve Russia's rural economy. Despite landowner criticism, Suvorin assured his readers that Witte, assisted by agricultural specialists, would produce rural reforms which would balance the needs of all interested parties.⁹ Thus, Suvorin supported Witte's plans and urged the autocratic government to undertake a vast program of peasant reforms which would continue the progressive attitudes of the eighteen-sixties.

The need for these reforms became clearer in succeeding months when peasant uprisings in Poltava and Kharkov accented rural distress.¹⁰ Facing rising rural discontent,

⁸Novoe vremia, January 27 (February 9), 1902, p. 2.

⁹Ibid., January 28 (February 11), 1902, p. 2.

¹⁰Suvorin, Dnevnik, pp. 288-89.

Witte sought support for his commission by consulting local committees from counties and provinces.¹¹ Witte viewed the peasant commune as the source of rural distress and the local committees who shared Witte's opinion joined in seeking the abolition of the commune.¹² For almost a year Witte and the commission labored toward this end. On February 3, 1903, Witte's hopes to abolish the commune were frustrated. The Tsar, under pressure from Witte's agricultural opponents, issued an imperial decree upholding the "inviolability of the communal organization of peasant land ownership."¹³

Despite the Tsar's action, Suvorin continued to express his faith in Witte and the reforms recommended by the commission. The local committees were the "voice of the land," offering calm and sensible approaches which the government would be wise to heed. Suvorin endorsed abolition of the commune and encouraged creation of an individual land-owning peasant class. Peasant reform, Suvorin proclaimed, now was the most urgent matter facing Russia and the minister of finance should concentrate on this domestic crisis rather than on the Far Eastern railway.¹⁴ Suvorin,

¹¹V. I. Gurko, Features and Figures of the Past, pp. 222-24.

¹²Polovtsev, "Dnevnik A. A. Polovtseva," K.A., III (1923), 144-45.

¹³V. I. Gurko, Features and Figures of the Past, pp. 217-18.

¹⁴Novoe vremia, February 22 (March 7), 1903, p. 2.

therefore, pressed for peasant reform and urged Witte's continued leadership in reorganizing Russia's rural economy.

It should be noted that Suvorin's support for peasant reform and for Witte occurred when the minister of finance's position was deteriorating. Minister of Interior Plehve, Witte's opponent, was pressuring for more reactionary policies and less reform in domestic affairs.¹⁵ Joining forces, Plehve and the Bezabrazov circle forced Witte's retirement from the Ministry of Finance and brought to an end the Witte system. As mentioned earlier, Suvorin's reaction to Witte's downfall was an expression of the publisher's admiration for Witte and his accomplishments. While Witte had made many significant contributions in long-neglected areas, Suvorin noted that Witte had not devoted sufficient attention to alleviating the friction between rural and industrial development. Although he regretted Witte's departure, Suvorin was convinced Russian society would profit by the changes resulting from Witte's leadership.¹⁶ He continued to support progressive change and believed that the autocracy would undertake additional "enlightened" reforms.

One effect of the industrial development accelerated by Witte's system was the generation of pressure for the

¹⁵Witte, Vospominaniia, I, 262.

¹⁶Novoe vremia, August 29 (September 11), 1903,

reorganization of Russian schools. Witte's program placed particular emphasis on increasing technical knowledge and Suvorin supported the idea of a network of technical schools.¹⁷ Such a system would end the necessity of Russians going abroad for technical education and would reduce the need for foreign technicians.¹⁸ Suvorin claimed that he shared Russia's desire for liberation from foreign technical subservience and summed up his position with the motto, "Russia for Russians."¹⁹

Although Witte had concentrated his personal efforts on advanced technical education, the minister of finance also pressed for mass education. His influence encouraged the Ministry of Education to recognize the necessity of reforming the educational system promulgated by the archaic and reactionary philosophy of Count Dmitri Tolstoi.²⁰ The initiative to liberalize this classical educational system designed for the elite began in 1898 with Minister of Education N. P. Bogolepov. Bogolepov, a champion of mass education, increased government expenditures for primary education and extended the number of secular schools. In secondary education, Bogolepov formulated and implemented a

¹⁷Ibid., March 26 (April 8), 1900, p. 3.

¹⁸Ibid., March 17 (March 30), 1900, p. 2.

¹⁹Ibid., March 26 (April 8), 1900, p. 3.

²⁰Witte, Samoderzhavie i zemstvo, pp. 148-51.

reform scheme for the liberalization of the Tolstoi system but in February, 1901, his assassination interrupted the completion of his plans.²¹ However, his successor, General Petr Vannovskii, acknowledged the necessity of continuing the reform movement and announced his intentions to revise Russian schools.²²

Suvorin favored Vannovskii's intended reforms but insisted that the new minister could not improve Russian education without funds. In the last forty years, Russia had attempted three reforms of the educational system but each had failed to materialize because funds were not made available. Great promises were unfulfilled and Russian professors and teachers were not productive because they were underpaid. Therefore a fine national education system to serve the needs of the empire was not built. Spelling out the deficiencies of the Tolstoi approach, Suvorin called for an educational system accessible to all classes of Russian society. A "ladder system" would make it possible for any Russian citizen to pursue an education based on his abilities and needs. Talent and innate ability would be the main determinants of his rise through the educational system and completion of university studies. The Russian government must provide the

²¹Ibid., pp. 158-59.

²²Olga Trubetskaia, Kniaz S. N. Trubetskoi: vospominaniia sestry (New York: Chekhov Publishing House, 1953), p. 42.

funds to support such a national education system and eliminate wealth as a prerequisite of educational opportunity. In essence, Suvorin recommended a universal educational system to replace the existing system which catered to the elite. Vannovskii, he believed, understood the need to create a democratic educational system, but such a transformation paralleled Peter the Great's educational efforts and certainly could not be accomplished without funds.²³ Thus, Suvorin urged government financial support for education reforms.

When his appeal for increased funds to provide universal education was ridiculed, Suvorin reiterated his support for General Vannovskii and his reform intentions. An increased budget, he repeated, was essential to educational reforms. Russia's chronic shortage of financial support for education dated back to the very beginning of the reform era of the 'sixties. As proof, Suvorin cited a letter of N. I. Pirogov to Earoness Raden in 1862. Pirogov, a liberal educator who expressed the idea of a democratic ladder system, emphasized that adequate funds were essential to creating quality education in Russia. Despite Pirogov's warning, financial appropriations for education remained a problem. Suvorin said he could understand the indifference of the poor classes to education but the critical attitude

²³ Novoe vremia, March 22 (April 4), 1901, p. 3.

of wealthy Russians towards increasing educational expenditures was a puzzle.²⁴ Pirogov clearly stated in 1862 that funds for education must be significantly increased if the aims of education were to be achieved. Vannovskii adopted Pirogov's educational objectives and Suvorin urged revision of Russia's education budget to support the minister of education.²⁵

Taking issue with Suvorin's views on education, Prince Meshcherskii rejected Suvorin's argument that additional funds were necessary and he objected to the reference to Pirogov's theories as the basis for new educational reforms. Meshcherskii charged that Suvorin unrealistically expected an immediate miracle from the minister of finance to produce millions of rubles for the education budget.²⁶ Suvorin replied that he did not expect large funds for reforms in education immediately but that increased funds for education were necessary. The minister of finance, Suvorin argued, obviously shared his convictions because Witte in recent years had attempted to increase the budget for Russian schools. In his defense of the classical system in Russia and its costs, Suvorin challenged, Meshcherskii failed to recognize the deficiencies of the system. In thirty years

²⁴Ibid., March 25 (April 7), 1901, p. 3.

²⁵A. S. Suvorin, Pis'ma A. S. Suvorina k V. V. Rozanovu (St. Petersburg, 1913), pp. 92-94.

²⁶Grazhdanin, March 27 (April 9), 1901, p. 3.

the classical system had failed to produce "distinguished persons" involved in public service, as Meshcherskii claimed. If Russia wished to remain a major power, the classical system, which produced largely negative results and neglected educating the lower classes, could not be continued. For proof, one had only to look at the seventy-thousand university graduates of the classical system to see the army of "idiots" and "ignoramuses" this system produced by concentrating on Latin and Greek grammar rather than preparing students in serious scientific work and practical knowledge. The source of deficiencies in the classical system Suvorin attributed to the adoption of European educational methods in an archaic form. In addition, Suvorin disagreed with Meshcherskii's contention that Russia must concentrate on building a few quality schools before expanding. It was possible, he argued, to build an excellent school system for the benefit of all. The time was at hand. The Russian people must be educated if Russia was to become a modern enlightened state. It was a misfortune that Russia's gymnasiums and universities did not enjoy a reputation for inspiring scholarship in students when the masses of the Russian people hungered for education. Peasant children, anxious to read and write, were the victims of this tragedy. These poorly-dressed and undernourished children were forced to walk miles in the snow to substandard schools where equally impoverished teachers taught. These rural "pigsty" schools

were deplorable when compared to expensive universities and technical schools. Russia must make an extraordinary effort to eliminate these dire conditions in order to offer Russian youth the best education possible. Also, Russia must establish new schools on all educational levels. The schools should be modeled after the French system which included small universities in each province, where peasant children could exercise their "inalienable and sacred right" to pursue an education.²⁷ Suvorin, of course, could speak from first-hand knowledge about the educational plight of peasant children. Now the largely self-educated Suvorin sought to use his influence to improve the educational opportunities of Russian children from backgrounds similar to his.

When Vannovskii assembled a commission to prepare education reforms, the news was greeted with criticism.²⁸ The character of this commission indicated that it would continue the preliminary liberalization of Russian school curriculum begun by Bogolepov. Under Bogolepov, efforts were begun to reduce the emphasis on Latin and Greek grammar and classics. Further, teachers were given some discretionary powers to concentrate on new ideas and present contemporary subjects. Vannovskii's intentions to proceed along these liberal lines were viewed as a dangerous threat to the

²⁷Novoe vremia, April 8 (April 21), 1901, p. 2.

²⁸Ol'denburg, Tsarstvovanie imperatora Nikolaia II, I, 163-64.

Tolstoi system and opponents of reform challenged curriculum changes.²⁹ Commenting on Prince S. Trubetskoi's article in the S.-Peterburgskiiia vedomosti expressing alarm over resistance to educational changes, Suvorin joined in condemning critics of reform. Trubetskoi charged these critics were confused and frightened by new teaching methods which were imagined to be responsible for radicalism in Russian schools. In addition, critics complained that de-emphasizing Latin and Greek grammar would undermine the training of future generations. The recommended reforms of recent commissions were considered by some to be alien and fanciful schemes which sought to revolutionize Russian schools.³⁰ These harsh views, Suvorin asserted, were represented by the Moskovskiiia vedomosti, heir to Katkov's concept of classical schools and the Tolstoi system. For over thirty years, the pages of this newspaper defended the meaningless rote method which the shameful Russian classical system perpetuated. New teaching methods were branded as "radical" and ignored by critics even though the Tolstoi system inspired only hatred in students towards schools. Critics feared that innovative teaching methods concentrating on the "movement of ideas" would give students knowledge of social atmosphere and

²⁹A. Kireev, "O predstoiashchei reforme nashego obrazovaniia," Russkii vestnik, January 1902, p. 317.

³⁰S.-Peterburgskiiia vedomosti, May 1 (May 14), 1901, p. 3.

encourage social disorders.³¹

The reform proposals of Vannovskii's commission were ratified by the Tsar in early June, 1901, and scheduled for implementation in September of the same year. Essentially, Vannovskii began the creation of a unified secondary school system to be completed within the next three years. Under this system, Latin and Greek, the core of Tolstoi's classical system, were downgraded in importance and removed as admission requirements to the universities. Curriculum revisions gave increased time to such contemporary subjects as modern languages, geography and sciences. The drift of these revisions was against the traditionalism of the Tolstoi system. Defenders of this system revived their opposition in November, 1901, when comments from school districts stirred a reaction against Vannovskii's threat to the Tolstoi system.³²

Once again, Suvorin rose to defend Vannovskii's reform plans. He made clear his disapproval of classical studies under the Tolstoi system. Classicism, Suvorin conceded, provided an excellent foundation to Western Europe's academic system. For instance, the fine English universities, Cambridge and Eton, were founded on classical studies.

³¹Novoe vremia, May 5 (May 18), 1901, p. 2.

³²Kireev, "O predstoiashchei reforme nashego obrazovaniia," p. 319.

Even Germany and France were committed to classical studies. Russians encountered difficulty with classical studies, Suvorin suggested, because the Tolstoi system failed to impart a true appreciation of the classics. Tolstoi introduced only the first stages of classical studies and the result was a lifeless and incomplete educational system with little connection to Russia's historical tradition. Introducing Vannovskii's reforms, Suvorin argued, would balance Russian education. Classical studies offered an important understanding of European society because Latin and Greek were the essence of Europe's scholarship in the time of the Renaissance while Russia remained backward until Peter the Great reformed Russia. The classical studies were introduced into Russian education in order to open the wealth of European antiquity and scholarship. However, with Russian translations of the classics available, Suvorin believed it was not now necessary for the masses of Russian children to study the classical languages in order to appreciate the classics. Studying the classics must not be compulsory, but several gymnasiums should retain the classical languages for those who wished to study them.³³ The new school reforms were designed to incorporate appreciation of the foreign classics in an independent Russian school system which would no longer merely imitate European schools. Instead,

³³ Novoe vremia, November 14 (November 27), 1901, pp. 2-3.

Suvorin shared the minister of education's appeal, on March 20, 1901, that the Russian education system should henceforth concentrate on strengthening the foundations of Russian culture. The greater emphasis given to Russian literature in preference to classical studies would hopefully stimulate youth to know and appreciate their country.

Hence, Suvorin viewed Vannovskii's reforms as instilling both general knowledge and patriotic devotion to Russia. His support of educational changes was indicative of his desire for progressive reforms which would modernize Russia, encourage nationalism and preserve the autocracy.

At the same time he supported educational reforms, Suvorin joined a debate on the question of religious freedom. The press dialogue on this topic began in October, when M. A. Stakhovich, a Slavophile landowner from the Orel province, argued for religious freedom in a speech before a missionary congress in Moscow. In November, 1901, when articles by the priest T. Cherkasskii appeared in the S.-Peterburgskiiia vedomosti, Suvorin joined in the press discussion.

Cherkasskii had advocated abolishing church schools and seminaries and replacing them with theological faculties under university control. In addition, he had suggested that priests be elected and be restricted from wearing clerical clothes in public. Suvorin objected to Cherkasskii's suggestions, claiming that the Old Believers already incorporated Cherkasskii's wishes into their religious practices.

Yet, because of their militant religious spirit and practices, the Old Believers had faced hostility and a denial of religious freedom for two and one-half centuries. Suvorin stated his stance was in the middle between Cherkasskii and opponents of religious freedom. He claimed further that his position and his newspaper's editorials represented "progressive convictions" held by many educated secular and spiritual persons, including ministers and administrators.³⁴

These opinions incorporated the position of Professor B. N. Chicherin, a man of moderate views. His book, Istoriia politicheskikh uchenii, offered the finest definition of religious freedom. In Chicherin's opinion, religious freedom permitted every citizen the right to follow whatever religious belief he chose without fear of punishment or compulsion to practice any particular creed. However, Suvorin emphasized Chicherin's opinion that the state was not bound to tolerate religious sects which might undermine or offend public morals. In this area of "church and state relations," Suvorin placed his support with the state, which must be free to develop relations with citizens without church interference.³⁵ Although Suvorin appeared to be accepting a liberal view towards freedom for various religious sects, his position really

³⁴Ibid., October 5 (October 18), 1901, p. 1.

³⁵Ibid., November 3 (November 16), 1901, p. 2.

only extended to tolerance of religious groups which did not conflict with the aims of the Russian state and the official religion, Orthodoxy.

Suvorin's view on the importance of religious issues involving minorities was evident in his attitude toward the Old Believers. Unlike his position towards certain other religious minorities, Suvorin approved of changes in the Russian criminal law softening punishments against the Old Believers. Even the Holy Synod recognized that the Old Believers were no longer a serious threat to Orthodoxy and recommended a conciliatory attitude and tolerance. The reforms in the legal code merely reflected the Christian love of Orthodoxy and were designed to advance the brotherly unity of the Russian people.³⁶ While Suvorin's attitude towards religious tolerance for the Old Believers appeared to be progressive, in fact, Suvorin was only supporting reform measures for a religious minority that he no longer regarded as a threat to Orthodoxy and Russian nationalism.

The Poles, however, were a minority that Suvorin wished assimilated. Although the Poles were a Slavic people, Suvorin claimed that the Catholicism of the Poles clashed with Russian Orthodoxy. The origin of this conflict he traced to Smutoe vremia when invading Polish Catholics threatened the existence of the Russian state and Orthodoxy.

³⁶Ibid., December 25, 1903 (January 7, 1904), p. 7.

Since then, the religious differences remained a source of conflict.³⁷ Suvorin observed that the Poles were responsible for two abortive revolutions against the Russian Tsar. Furthermore, Polish political intrigue was always rumored at the source of revolutionary activity in Russia. When, in May, 1901, the Russian government deliberated the establishment of zemstvos in the heavily Polish-populated provinces in western and southwestern Russia, Suvorin favored their introduction as an effective means to advance the assimilation of the Poles into Russian society. The Russian and Polish elements would be brought together in the zemstvos and the zemstvo schools would succeed in educating the youth in Russian culture. The work of "Russification" would be carried out by the zemstvos and Polish culture would be rebuffed in these provinces.³⁸ In practice, therefore, Suvorin did not tolerate Polish Catholicism and supported the government's policy of "Russification" to suppress and eventually eliminate this religious group.

Suvorin's harsh treatment of Jews was a notorious example of his intolerance of religious minorities which he felt threatened Orthodoxy. In fact, his criticism of the Jewish population earned Suvorin a reputation as one of Russia's leading anti-Semites. Suvorin primarily directed his

³⁷Ibid., August 7 (August 20), 1900, p. 2.

³⁸Ibid., May 3 (May 16), 1901, p. 2.

attacks against the Jews for not assimilating into Russian society. The Jewish people, Suvorin claimed, managed to survive for thousands of years by their ability to accommodate to circumstances while still preserving their religion. The beginnings of disorders involving Jews he traced back to pogroms in Odessa when he was an editor with the S.-Peterburgskiiia vedomosti. Although the Jewish pogroms that followed were largely motivated by economic issues, Suvorin argued that Jewish problems were increasingly tied to the question of religious freedom. Suvorin excluded Jews from the privilege of religious freedom mainly because he doubted that Jews could really become loyal Russian citizens. Jews could not change their allegiance from the "Promised Land" to Russia; but only Jews who converted to Christianity could become loyal Russian citizens.³⁹

Suvorin also displayed his anti-Jewish attitudes in other ways. For example, he permitted the St. Petersburg Theatrical-Literary-Artistic Society to perform an anti-Jewish play "Kontrabanda" in his Malyi teatr. Charges that this play, representing only the negative side of Jews, excited religious and racial hatred were dismissed by Suvorin as the smears of Jewish writers and short-sighted liberals. It was the Jews, by their opposition to the performance of this play, who intensified hatred against themselves. The

³⁹ Ibid., December 2 (December 15), 1903, p. 3.

public, Suvorin insisted, had a right and responsibility to see this play.⁴⁰

Another facet of Suvorin's anti-Jewish attitudes surfaced in his article supporting the formation of a Union of Stage Activities Members of the Russian Theatrical Society. While extolling the merits of this Union, Suvorin criticized permitting "members of the Israelite religion" to participate without restrictions. There were great numbers of Jews involved in all aspects of the Russian theater. Suvorin argued that the number of Jews allowed to participate in the theater should be restricted by a quota similar to the ten-per-cent quota imposed on Jewish students in universities. These quotas in education insured that only the most qualified Jews obtained an education while the educational system maintained a Slavic essence. In addition, Suvorin did not believe that Jews should earn the "rank of honorary citizenship" for theatrical achievements, since Russia did not bestow similar rewards on other craftsmen, such as blacksmiths or farmers, for achievements.⁴¹

In general, Suvorin feared the Jewish population would become an economic and privileged element in the professional and industrial sectors of Russian society. When the Jewish newspaper Novosti attacked the Novoe vremia bookstore

⁴⁰Ibid., January 7 (January 20), 1901, p. 2.

⁴¹Ibid., February 5 (February 18), 1901, p. 2.

for discriminating against Jewish students, Suvorin charged the Novosti was always full of Jewish lies and slander against Novoe vremia. In the face of increasing Jewish attacks, Novoe vremia represented a "small Egypt" and Suvorin was its "pharaoh" fighting Jewish expansion. The existence of Jewish elements that resisted assimilation in the Russian population threatened the homogeneity of the Russian state.⁴² Following Chicherin, such elements should, therefore, not be accorded religious freedom.

Suvorin also shared many of Chicherin's views on the Russian political process and termed Chicherin's ideas on Russia's development and stagnation "enlightened patriotism." Suvorin and Chicherin both had tremendous admiration for the reforms of Alexander II as a foundation for a secure political order in Russia.⁴³ Suvorin's discussion of Chicherin's works in late 1901 reflected the increasing political agitation in the country. Early political activity emerged primarily in the ranks of the zemstvo leaders, who made moderate demands for reforms while Nicholas II and his government continued to adhere to policies of repression and reaction against them. This unyielding policy in the face of growing discontent, especially among the workers and peasants, only focused increasing attention on political questions and the

⁴²Ibid., November 6 (November 19), 1901, p. 2.

⁴³Ibid., November 3 (November 16), 1901, p. 2.

need for reforms. This period marked the formative stage of what later evolved into the liberal movement under the zemstvos. Consonant with his support of Witte's progressive plans, Suvorin joined in stimulating public sentiment for reform.

In January, 1902, Suvorin compared Russia's political climate to the atmosphere of the sixties and earlier periods of reform. The first parallel Suvorin envisioned was between the events in 1902 and the moods of Smutnoe vremia, when the old boyar-dominated government ignored the lower classes' demands for reform and was destroyed. Suvorin agreed with C. T. Platonov's book, Ocherki po istorii smuty, that middle classes, merchants and lesser nobility were the victors in this struggle and emerged as the new ruling class. This same element in the zemstvos now led the movement for reform. In another similarity, Suvorin observed that Russia had experienced eras of reform in each of the past three centuries. Each reform period was preceded by war and severe internal discontent and disturbances. Coincidentally, the reform eras corresponded to the decades of the sixties in the three past centuries. These events marked the reigns of Alexis, Catherine II, and Alexander II, in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries respectively. In each reign, reforms were introduced from above to quell domestic discontent aggravated by the impact of war. Now, alluding to the Far Eastern situation, Suvorin questioned whether another

"foreign invasion" would occur. He hoped, instead, that the only "foreign invasion" would be "reason" and "enlightenment."⁴⁴ He confidently proclaimed the reforms of the sixties would direct Russia in a new historical cycle towards a bright future.

Peaceful reforms did not materialize as Suvorin had hoped. Instead, the government continued to pursue reactionary policies and ignore the moderate demands of the zemstvos. The spring of 1902 saw the spread of rural unrest, and the April assassination of Minister of Interior Sipiagin brought more repressive policies from new Minister of Interior Plehve. A general strike in southern Russia during the summer of 1903 accented the seriousness of the domestic crisis and generated speculation in the European press of a revolutionary tide in Russia.⁴⁵

A nationalist at heart, Suvorin defended Russia against the "lies" circulating in the European press. Worker unrest was created by rapid and unprecedented industrial development. Russia's industrial development, occurring in less than fifty years, transformed the society so dramatically that education and legislation could not keep pace with changing conditions. Russia would now give equal time to these

⁴⁴Ibid., January 1 (January 14), 1902, p. 7.

⁴⁵London Times, September 4, 1903, p. 4.

reforms.⁴⁶

While domestic discontent mushroomed, the zemstvos progressed in their struggle against the government's reactionary policies. The government's punitive measures had unwittingly tended to strengthen zemstvo opposition. "Beseda," a small group of zemstvo oppositionary elements led by N. Shipov, rallied progressive leaders by holding periodic conferences and planning activities throughout Russia. In 1901, these activities gave impetus to the publication of a journal, Osvobozhdenie. Published abroad, the journal was dedicated to all phases of reform and attempted to unite those interested in the political liberation of Russia. Additional stimulus to the zemstvo movement developed in early 1902, when Witte's study of agricultural problems encouraged the first all-Russian congress of zemstvo leaders in Moscow to demand participation of the zemstvos in government policy-making.⁴⁷ These demands were repeated at the April, 1902, congress. Next, the new liberal organization, Soiuz Osvobozhdeniia, aimed at establishing a democratic constitutional regime in Russia, was founded in July, 1903.⁴⁸ As a result of these activities, the zemstvos, in August, 1903, formed the basis

⁴⁶Novoe vremia, July 30 (August 12), 1903, p. 2.

⁴⁷D. N. Shipov, Vospominaniia i dumy o perezhitom (Moscow, 1918), pp. 152-58.

⁴⁸I. P. Belokonski, Zemskoe dvizhenie (Moscow, 1914), pp. 174-75, 191-92.

of a new reform movement.

Meanwhile, the general strike had drastically undermined the Tsar's confidence in Witte's domestic policies and contributed to the minister of finance's downfall in mid-August, 1903. With the departure of Witte, Suvorin transferred his support to the zemstvos as acceptable institutions to foster reforms. It was almost three months after Witte's fall, however, before Suvorin published his support for the small, moderate zemstvo element led by D. N. Shipov. Suvorin's views became known in his rebuttal to Prince Meshcherskii's attacks on Shipov and seventeen other zemstvo leaders for leaving a meeting with Kokovtsov's agricultural commission. Suvorin scolded the Grazhdanin editor for insulting the zemstvo leaders. The zemstvo leaders were determined to eloquently express their opinions regarding rural life and Russia would profit from their experience.⁴⁹ In defending the zemstvo leaders, Suvorin broke his silence on zemstvos and their activities, which had lasted while Witte was in power. Since Witte was an avowed opponent of the zemstvos, Suvorin's silence until Witte's fall was not surprising.⁵⁰ Furthermore, Suvorin's support for Shipov and his followers showed his sympathy for the Slavophile element which made up a small, rather conservative, wing of the

⁴⁹Novoe vremia, October 31 (November 12), 1903, p. 3.

⁵⁰S. I. Witte, Konspekt lektsii o narodnom i gosudarstvennom khoziaistve (St. Petersburg, 1912), p. 183.

zemstvo movement.

In contrast to Meshcherskii, Suvorin asserted that he did not fear another reform period as dangerous or revolutionary. Russia needed reasonable and creative reforms. The source of these reforms must be the government if revolution from "below" was to be avoided. Yet, at the same time, Kokovtsev's recent request for advice from zemstvos leaders was an important step in allowing responsible elements to participate in government affairs. The zemstvos were not seeking to formulate legislation; their role was to provide the government with the opinions of the people. Shipov was representing the "petition" of the people to the Tsar.⁵¹ By urging the government to continue seeking the participation of the Shipov-led zemstvos, Suvorin cast his support with those zemstvo elements who desired progressive reforms while preserving the autocracy.

The zemstvos, Suvorin recalled, had emerged a half century earlier, when the government sought to renovate Russian society by initiating "lawful order" in place of the disorder, slavery and arbitrary legal system of the eighteenthies. He conceded that efforts to develop "lawful order" eventually would lead to parliamentarianism and currently the vast majority of zemstvos leaders favored such a movement. Suvorin, however, did not believe Russia was prepared for

⁵¹Novoe vremia, November 3 (November 16), 1903, p. 2.

parliamentary institutions, contending that Russia required a well-developed legal system and strong local political institutions before a parliament could be introduced.⁵²

Thus, he openly rejected the desires of some of the more liberal zemstvo leaders for a representative legislative body operating within the framework of a constitutional monarchy. Instead, he preferred the more gradual participation of the zemstvos in Russian life and their serving as an advisory organ to the government on local affairs.

Suvorin's interest in the zemstvos reflected his opinion that the pressing needs of agriculture were at the source of growing unrest. While the government made an intensified effort to improve industry, the important needs of agriculture were neglected. Russian agriculture was currently in dire distress because, due to the government's neglect, the peasants continued to cultivate the lands with primitive farming techniques and lived in poverty. The government must exert the same determined efforts to develop agriculture as it was applying on behalf of industry. Without extraordinary initiative by the government, Suvorin predicted the agriculture question, which influenced all Russia's problems, would not improve. The millions spent annually to combat chronic famines were much larger than the small sums

⁵² Ibid., November 8 (November 21), 1903, p. 3.

appropriated to improve agriculture.⁵³ The zemstvos could effectively help the government solve these rural problems since they were self-governing institutions which had already produced systematic programs to improve local conditions.⁵⁴

Nevertheless, the prevailing reactionary circles in the government continued to regard the zemstvos as a threat to autocracy. Minister of Interior Plehve pursued his repressive policies against the zemstvos and joined forces with the ambitious Bezabrazov Circle in diverting the attention of the nation to the Far East.⁵⁵ By early December, the critical negotiations with Japan were replacing domestic reforms as the leading issue before the Russian public. Suvorin opposed these tactics and deplored the possibility of war with Japan.⁵⁶ Instead, the publisher preferred that domestic reforms remain the chief concern of the government and people.

The favorable comments of Suvorin on zemstvo activities and his prediction of another political "spring" drew further criticism from Prince Meshcherskii. In contrast to Meshcherskii, who blamed the reforms for the Polish insurrection and the "nihilism" that followed, Suvorin repeated his sympathy for a repetition of the reforms of the sixties.

⁵³Ibid., November 5 (November 18), 1903, p. 3.

⁵⁴Ibid., November 16 (November 29), 1903, p. 3.

⁵⁵Witte, Vospominaniia, I, 262.

⁵⁶Novoe vremia, November 18 (December 1), 1903,
p. 2.

These reforms were beneficial to Russia but were poorly received because Russian society was largely illiterate and did not fully comprehend or appreciate their significance. Furthermore, the administration's bungling alienated a sector of educated citizens. Unfortunately, during the remainder of Alexander II's reign, the government ignored disenchanted elements and wasted time and energy in fighting wars rather than using its resources to effectively complete the reforms. Under Alexander III, Russia remained at peace and the reform movement resumed progress in local and national education, in the organization of financial affairs, in the development of industry and in the establishment of noble and peasant banks. Nicholas II had already completed two important feats: the Trans-Siberian Railway and financial reform. The government accomplished all this in only forty years, when it was popular to believe the government's domestic program was stagnant and internal reforms were suspended.⁵⁷ As a journalist who had lived through the reigns of four tsars, Suvorin declared Russia was on the brink of another "creative" era like the sixties and not in the midst of "doom," as popularly conceived.⁵⁸ The vast majority of the Russian people were rational and supported civil order but they insisted on actively participating in Russian life and on assurance of their

⁵⁷ Ibid., December 3 (December 16), 1903, p. 3.

⁵⁸ Ibid., December 12 (December 25), 1903, p. 3.

legal rights.⁵⁹

In late December, 1903, Suvorin praised the progress reports of the Commission on the Needs of Agriculture as indicative of the Tsar's intentions to introduce other creative reforms from above and complete the renovation of Russia begun in 1861. Furthermore, a review of the materials compiled by the commission proved the contributions of the zemstvos to Russia. The sixty-volume report of the commission offered an excellent study of agricultural problems and Suvorin urged the government to carry out the reforms suggested.⁶⁰

In the face of the growing crisis with Japan, Suvorin made his last appeal to the government not to postpone important domestic reforms because of foreign affairs. As a prime example of neglect, Suvorin cited the judicial system which was partially revamped in 1867. The new court reforms were only superficial and did not fundamentally improve the legal system. Subsequent reform attempts failed to materialize and the stagnation in the courts contributed to popular misunderstanding and discontent. The educational system suffered from the same dereliction, giving rise to the recent controversy between classicists and realists. The institution to solve these problems was the zemstvo to

⁵⁹Ibid., December 3 (December 16), 1903, p. 3.

⁶⁰Ibid., December 16 (December 29), 1903, p. 3.

which the "best people" were elected and which had gained considerable experience in the last fifty years. Reforms were neglected, Suvorin lamented, because the zemstvos were not given full responsibility in these areas. It was the recent activities of the zemstvos that stirred the beginning of another "spring." Despite the barbs by another journalist against his support of reforms and zemstvos, Suvorin predicted that widespread public discussions would show the existence of a serious movement demanding reforms despite the threat of war with Japan. Political reforms at home were far more important than territorial claims at stake in the Far East; the government must not be diverted from domestic reforms.⁶¹ Unfortunately, Suvorin's plea went unheeded. In a few weeks, Russia plunged into the disastrous war with Japan and the movement for reform subsided momentarily while public attention focused on the war.

Originally, Suvorin's reform desires had begun with his support for the Witte system which sought to overcome Russia's industrial backwardness. Witte's program encouraged Suvorin to champion progressive reforms in Russia's educational system. He also favored improvement in the treating of minorities, hoping that the change would result in the rapid assimilation of minorities into Russian society. When Witte was forced to resign and the stepped-up zemstvo

⁶¹Ibid., December 23, 1903 (January 5, 1904), p. 3.

movement stirred hopes for a new "spring" of political reforms, Suvorin favored a repetition of the reforms "from above" that characterized the 1860's. A nationalist and a firm believer in autocracy, he carefully supported only those progressive reforms which he felt would both retain the Russian autocratic political system and accelerate the modernization of Russia.

CHAPTER VII

WAR INTERRUPTS THE "COMING OF SPRING."

The outbreak of war changed the high priority Suvorin placed on domestic reforms. He foresaw that a military victory over Japan would be difficult to achieve and shifted his emphasis towards encouraging an enthusiastic public commitment to winning the war. The series of military defeats and bureaucratic blunders that marked the conduct of the war, however, soon caused Suvorin to renew his interest in limited internal reforms as a necessary step towards victory. When domestic discord and revolutionary activities reached high proportions, Suvorin increased his support of reforms still further, hoping that the prospect of political change from above would quell the disorder and unite a dissident population behind the war.

The Japanese attack on Port Arthur triggered the disruption of reform discussion and directed public attention on the Far East. Suvorin summarized the prevailing attitude on February 25, 1904, when he wrote that the Japanese threat pushed aside his early dreams of "spring" and focused his

concern on Russia's victory.¹ The Russian people were equally caught up in this patriotic spirit, he claimed, dismissing rumors that there were Russians who desired defeat for their country because they believed defeat would bring changes in Russia similar to the reforms which followed the end of the Sevastopol campaign in 1856. According to his own memories of the period, the defeat of Russia at Sevastopol was not responsible for ushering in the era of reforms. On the contrary, victory would have brought the same reforms because the reform movement was strong before the Sevastopol campaign. Russia was moving towards political maturity again and a military victory rather than a crushing defeat would be the best assurance of progressive reforms. France's slow development since her humiliation by Germany in 1870 was ample evidence of the devastating effects military losses could have upon a country.² Thus, with Russia immersed in war, Suvorin strongly opposed internal discord and, during the next four months, concentrated on stimulating patriotism while avoiding discussion of domestic issues.

By the end of June, 1904, however, Russia's obvious military ineptness prompted Suvorin to criticize

¹E. Maevskii, "Obshchaia kartina dvizheniia," in Obshchestvennoe dvizhenie v Rossii v nachale XX-go veka, ed. by L. Martov, II (St. Petersburg, 1910), 36.

²Novoe vremia, February 10 (February 25), 1904, p. 3; March 19 (April 1), 1904, p. 2; May 5 (May 18), 1904, p. 3.

Russian education, noting that in the vital area of scientific instruction, Russian students were far behind their European and American peers. Undoubtedly, Russia's weak educational system contributed to Russian backwardness in agriculture, culture and industry, as well as to the current military crisis in the Far East.³ The navy's deficiencies in technical education were a major factor contributing to combat losses against Japanese naval forces. Such shortcomings were a manifestation of Russia's need to develop technical education in all spheres of Russian life.⁴

Suvorin's comments on the Russian educational system constituted an indirect attack on the policies of Minister of Interior Plehve who resumed influence over Russian education with Witte's exit from political power. Under Plehve's guidance, the reform-oriented Minister of Education Vannovskii was succeeded by the conservative G. von Sanger and later by the reactionary V. Glazov. By the early summer of 1904, Plehve had resurrected the reactionary Tolstoi educational system and was seriously impeding advances in technical education.⁵ Suvorin's position reflected the growing interest in internal reforms among the Russian public and the zemstvo movement during the summer of 1904. Where war

³Ibid., June 10 (June 23), 1904, p. 2.

⁴Ibid., June 28 (July 11), 1904, p. 2.

⁵Ol'denburg, Tsarstvovanie imperatora Nikolaia II, I, 195-96.

patriotism had initially distracted public attention from domestic reforms, the string of military defeats now caused the population to look internally for explanations of Russia's poor performance.⁶ Opposition to Plehve's repressive domestic policies began to revive and culminated in his assassination on July 28, 1904 by a revolutionary terrorist. Plehve's death signaled the need for the Tsarist government to consider reforms.⁷

Plehve's assassination was not welcomed by Suvorin whose immediate public reaction was to condemn political assassination as an irrational measure to gain "freedom" for the Russian people. Plehve's assassination would only rally the enemies of Russia's development and delay moderate and peaceful reforms. Although he did not champion Plehve's repressive policies, Suvorin regarded his assassination as the murderous act of a madman. History proved that assassination was a political mistake; Plehve's assassin did not represent the general views of Russian society. Nevertheless Suvorin pointed out that in the last two years many important problems were unresolved because Russia's poorly-organized ministers and administration failed to deal effectively with them. Petty squabbles among the ministers had

⁶Pavlovich, "Vneshniaia politika i russko-iaponskaia voina," pp. 20-21.

⁷E. N. Trubetskoi, "Voina i biurokratsiia," Pravo, XXXIX (September 26, 1904), 1,872-875.

prevented decisive action before the war; now, the people expected the ministers to unite and concentrate their efforts on winning the war.⁸ Thus after a considerable period of silence on domestic issues, Suvorin found that certain internal conditions were subverting the war effort and accelerating public aspirations for reform. At least some aspects of the "spring" about which he dreamed could not wait until the war's end. Not only were reforms necessary for the sake of managing the war, but Suvorin now appeared to believe that some progress in the direction of reforms would be necessary to keep the people behind the war effort.

To end ministerial discord Suvorin urged the Tsar to create a "cabinet of ministers" as a replacement for the current system in which the ministers each reported directly to the Tsar and met only infrequently in a Council of Ministers presided over by the Tsar. Liberals and conservatives both supported a true policy-making cabinet of ministers headed by a prime minister as essential to ending obsolete government practices. A united cabinet of ministers would provide a stable government responsive to the needs of the population and would strengthen the state in the immediate future. The separate policies of ministers only complicated state business and impeded its advance. A cabinet would be an important change in the governmental system which had

⁸Novoe vremia, July 16 (July 29), 1904, p. 2.

provided leadership and reforms "from above" since Peter the Great opened the window to Europe. However, Suvorin claimed, the governmental system established by Peter was sound and most importantly was designed for creative change by the Tsar.⁹ Hence, Suvorin adopted a moderate position which looked to the Tsar as the catalyst for change and did not seek fundamentally to alter the autocracy.

In conjunction with ministers united behind a solid government program, Suvorin suggested, the zemstvos could provide excellent assistance to the government bureaucracy. Contrary to Meshcherskii's charges, the zemstvos would provide government officials with independent advice and candid criticism. Only the coordinated efforts of the ministers, government officials and zemstvos could cope with Russia's problems.¹⁰ With military operations faltering in the Far East and public confidence in the government crumbling, Suvorin urged a reversal of Plehve's reactionary programs, the adoption of moderate policies designed to promote reforms and the extension of government participation to include the zemstvos.

Meanwhile Nicholas II gave serious consideration to a new minister of interior who would continue Plehve's policies, but the major defeat for the Russian army at

⁹Ibid., July 19 (August 1), 1904, p. 2.

¹⁰Ibid., July 25 (August 7), 1904, p. 2.

Liaoyang accelerated the reform movement. As a result, Nicholas II chose Prince P. D. Sviatopolk-Mirski as minister of interior on September 8, 1904. The new minister, who was considerably less conservative than Plehve, promised policies which would restore mutual "trust" between the people and state. His assurance that a "political spring" had begun was welcomed by the public and created a brief period of optimism.¹¹

Privately Suvorin welcomed Sviatopolk-Mirski but publicly he remained silent.¹² Instead, the encircled defenders of Port Arthur and the defeats inflicted on Kuropatkin's forces occupied Suvorin's attention as he attempted to rally war support. Claims that the war was not popular, Suvorin insisted, were not true.¹³ With Russia's honor and army threatened, political differences over domestic questions were subordinated to the cause of victory. However, he claimed that the patriotism responsible for the mass support of the war was also producing the "political spring" he had expected before the war.¹⁴ Suvorin, therefore, characterized the reform movement as a product of the

¹¹Pavlovich, "Vneshniaia politika i russko-iaponskaia voina," p. 25.

¹²Suvorin, Dnevnik, pp. 320-21.

¹³Novoe vremia, August 28 (September 10), 1904, p. 2.

¹⁴Ibid., August 30 (September 12), 1904, p. 2.

patriotic enthusiasm generated by the war effort rather than a manifestation of domestic unrest and dissatisfaction with the autocratic government. He appears to have been attempting to establish a cause and effect relationship between support for the war and reform, while at the same time minimizing the seriousness of the growing domestic discontent. Thus, when Suvorin rejected an offer from President Roosevelt to mediate, he denied that Russia's domestic problems necessarily symbolized the decline of the population's patriotism. On the contrary, the Russian people wanted victory in the Far East because reforms would accompany it. Suvorin was certain the people's reform aspirations would be rewarded by the Tsar when victory brought peace.¹⁵

Meanwhile the new minister of interior's moderate pronouncements engendered a large-scale, enthusiastic response from the public and moderate elements of the zemstvo movement under D. N. Shipov's leadership led in consolidating a national reform movement.¹⁶ The increased activities of the zemstvos inspired the liberal zemstvo wing organized under the Union of Liberation to pressure for democratic reforms and a constitutional monarchy.¹⁷ In early

¹⁵Ibid., October 11 (October 24), 1904, pp. 2-3.

¹⁶Shipov, Vospominaniia i dumy o perezhitom, pp. 240-43.

¹⁷Chernyshev, Agrarno-krestianskaia politika za 150 let, p. 268.

October, with the assistance of Sviatopolk-Mirski, Shipov joined with Union of Liberation leaders in calling for a third zemstvo congress to meet in early November, 1904.¹⁸

Sviatopolk-Mirskii's promises to restore "public confidence" and his interaction with the zemstvos excited Suvorin, who hoped the forthcoming zemstvo congress was the beginning of serious "creative" activities. Only by involving progressive elements in its affairs could the government counteract the spread of revolutionary ideas. Participation of citizens in government affairs was the fastest course to renewed harmony.¹⁹

Throughout October the congress appeared to have the Tsar's sanction. However, on the eve of the congress, the Tsar refused to approve the meeting because liberal zemstvos leaders made clear their intentions to discuss broad political reforms. Despite the Tsar's objection, the zemstvo congress met in St. Petersburg from November 6 to 9, 1904, and adopted "eleven points" which demanded moderate democratic reforms.²⁰

These "eleven points" became the rallying point

¹⁸Shipov, Vospominaniia i dumy o perezhitom, pp. 244-53.

¹⁹Novoe vremia, September 21 (October 4), 1904, p. 2.

²⁰Shipov, Vospominaniia i dumy o perezhitom, pp. 254-85.

for reform elements throughout Russia.²¹ In essence, these points constituted a national program requesting the Tsar to grant civil liberties and summon a representative national assembly.²² In mid-November, the "eleven points" were submitted to the minister of interior and the Tsar for consideration. While the government studied these demands, a "banquet movement" began on November 20 and spread throughout Russia. The dinner participants, representing most professional bodies, lawyers, doctors, engineers, and teachers, expressed agreement with the demands of the zemstvo leaders. These banquets were evidence of widespread public support for reforms.²³ By early December, the professional and educated classes were almost unanimous in endorsing the zemstvo resolutions.

As the government appeared to be compromising on the "eleven points," Suvorin commented favorably in his

²¹Suvorin, Dnevnik, p. 322.

²²The "eleven points" included freedom of speech, association, press, and religion; no punishment without judicial proceedings; the inviolability of person and home; the responsibility of officials for violations of the law; equality of rights for all citizens; peasant reforms; expansion of zemstvo responsibilities and calling of an assembly of "representatives of the people." The entire text of the program is found in Shipov, Vospominaniia i dumy o perezhitom, pp. 150-52.

²³N. Cherevanin, "Dvizhenie intelligentsii" in Obshchestvennoe dvizhenie v Rossii v nachale XX-go veka, ed. by L. Martov, II (St. Petersburg, 1910), 146-63.

memoirs on the national movement.²⁴ In Novoe vremia he wrote that public activities in support of the zemstvo demands were the basis of the "political spring" that he forecasted a year earlier. However, he cautioned that political change in Russia would be much slower than in Europe. The minister of interior would have to study the moods and abilities of various groups demanding reforms before he could act. Hence, the minister was following a policy of laissez faire, laissez passir. Furthermore, the war effort complicated extensive political reforms. Despite these difficulties, Suvorin insisted the demands for reforms and the social-political awakening was passing beyond small political circles to the masses. The leadership of this reform movement was provided by Shipov and M. A. Stakhovich, whom Suvorin viewed as spokesmen for the progressive elements of the nobility and leaders really representative of Russia. He claimed they typified sensible thinking Russians and did not merely repeat Slavophile arguments or copy western ideas as M. M. Speranski did in preparing his constitutional project. Instead, they offered an independent view of the Russian population's needs. Suvorin declared his support for Shipov's and Stakhovich's concept of a representative assembly which would act as a consultative body and would bring cooperation between the people and their government. Creating this

²⁴Suvorin, Dnevnik, p. 326.

representative assembly would assure reforms through peaceful evolution rather than violent revolution. Political freedom and a representative assembly were the immediate needs of the Russian people and Suvorin urged the Tsar to grant zemstvo demands. The Tsar and Russian people must work together on resolving domestic needs in order to avoid undermining the war against Japan.²⁵ In supporting Shipov and Stakhovich, Suvorin once again allied himself with moderate elements within the zemstvo movement who favored continuance of the autocracy and victory in the war with Japan.

In an effort to pacify society and stem revolutionary feelings, the Tsar and the Council of Ministers discussed the possibility of zemstvo representatives participating in legislation. As a result, on December 25 the Tsar issued a ukaze promising a series of reforms, including freedom of speech, religious tolerance, and local government. At the last minute the Tsar had decided not to include any mention of a representative assembly.²⁶ Suvorin praised the Tsar's ukaze promising improvements, proclaiming that it proved the "political spring" was real. The Tsar's program of government reforms surpassed the peasant emancipation. The government's project to "find the best means" and

²⁵Novoe vremia, November 30 (December 13), 1904, p. 3.

²⁶B. B. Veselovskii, Krestianskii vopros i krestianskoe dvizhenie v Rossii, 1902-1906 gg. (St. Petersburg, 1907), pp. 27-28.

resolve Russia's vital problems was a challenging task but the Council of Ministers working with the zemstvo representatives would undoubtedly provide a favorable answer to popular demands for civil liberties and freedom from the arbitrary abuses of government bureaucracy. In a concluding burst of optimism, Suvorin proclaimed Russia was entering a Renaissance.²⁷

The failure of the autocratic government to include plans for a representative assembly in the ukaze of December 25, 1904 generated increased radicalism by the beginning of the new year and dealt a blow to Shipov's leadership of a loyal zemstvo movement. Mass movements now loomed as the main effort to secure reforms from the Tsar and news of the fall of Port Arthur heightened the spread of disorders and strikes among workers and peasants.²⁸ Suvorin reacted to Port Arthur's surrender with an emotional appeal for Russian patriotism and condemned the growing discord arising from the mass movements. Above all, he feared the possibility that a revolution would cause the complete collapse and defeat of Russia in the Far East. In the face of Japan's threat, Suvorin hoped the people would reject revolutionary ideas

²⁷ Novoe vremia, December 15 (December 28), 1904, p. 3.

²⁸ Pavlovich, "Vneshniaia politika i russko-iaponskaia voina," pp. 20-21.

and unite behind their Tsar.²⁹ However, the workers did not follow the course of action which Suvorin outlined. Two weeks later, on January 22, 1905, a peaceful procession of St. Petersburg workers seeking to present a petition to the Tsar were fired upon by Russian troops. As news of this "Bloody Sunday" massacre spread, it further discredited the government and accelerated domestic turbulence. By late January, large segments of Russia's professional classes, workers and students were engaged in "sympathy strikes" demanding reforms.

The paramount demand of the nation-wide revolutionary movement was for a constituent assembly.³⁰ Whether such an assembly should be an authentic parliament or merely a consultative body emerged as a central issue of debate between radical and moderate reform elements. Suvorin chose the latter position and publicly advocated calling a Zemskii Sobor to remedy the domestic crisis brought on by the events of "Bloody Sunday." Although his position was a moderate one, Suvorin found it necessary to defend his demand from attacks by the reactionary former editor of Russkoe delo, Sergei Sharapov. Sharapov, an extreme Slavophile, condemned Suvorin's appeal for a Zemskii Sobor as a threat to the

²⁹Novoe vremia, December 24, 1904 (January 6, 1905), pp. 3-4.

³⁰Trubetskaia, Kniaz S. N. Trubetskoi: vospominaniia sestry, pp. 91-99.

autocracy.³¹ In reply, Suvorin declared Sharapov was confused on the historic role of the Zemskii Sobor in assisting the autocracy. The history of Moscovy clearly showed the Zemskii Sobor provided sensible advice to the Moscow Tsars. These "representatives of the Russian people" strengthened the autocracy and, even more importantly, elected Michael Romanov, Tsar. Following the Smutoe vremia, the Zemskii Sobor ably assisted the youthful Tsar in freeing Russia from domestic trouble and foreign invaders. Unfortunately, when a bureaucracy was created later to assist the Tsars, the Zemskii Sobor fell into disuse. It was not until Catherine II summoned a legislative commission that an attempt was again made to consult with national representatives. The materials of Catherine's commission, kept secret for almost a century, revealed that commission deputies contributed opinions on the condition of Russia, as well as suggestions on decentralizing the governmental system.³² The published materials of Catherine's commission inspired Alexander III to consider convoking a Zemskii Sobor to reform Russia and unite the people with the Tsar. Regretfully bureaucrats, and especially the minister of interior, obstructed this project because they failed to

³¹Novoe vremia, January 16 (January 29), 1905, p. 4.

³²Ibid.

understand the historical role of the Zemskii Sobor.³³ Hence, Alexander III did not summon a Zemskii Sobor and the project remained dead until 1902, when Plehve objected to popular demands for a Zemskii Sobor.³⁴ The Zemskii Sobor, Suvorin claimed, was an institution consistent with Russia's historical development. Russia should not make the irreparable mistake of France in 1789 when the Estates General under the manipulation of the third estate broke with France's historical past and eventually adopted a written constitution. Instead, Russia should follow England's more natural political development and through the Zemskii Sobor should gradually adopt an unwritten constitution.³⁵

By early February, Suvorin turned his attention to strikes by the intelligentsia, which he found difficult to accept as legitimate. Unlike the workers who struck mainly for economic reasons, the intelligentsia's aims were primarily political in character and seemed to contradict the many privileges the intelligentsia had received under

³³Paul Miliukov, Russia and Its Crisis (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1905), pp. 311-18.

³⁴V. A. Rosenberg, Iz istorii russkoi pechati: organizatsiia obshchestvennago mneniia v Rossii i nezavisimaia bezpartiinaia gazeta "Russkiiia vedomosti" (1863-1918), (Prague, 1924), p. 158.

³⁵Novoe vremia, January 16 (January 29), 1905 p. 4.

Russia's bureaucratic system.³⁶ Suvorin's criticism of the intelligentsia focused on their demand for a parliament and their rejection of a Zemskii Sobor. He condemned the small minority of professors and students in the universities who, in striking for a parliament, prevented other professors and students from pursuing their scholarly interests. Opponents of a parliament found it impossible to express their views because of threats from this small minority. Suvorin claimed he had received many letters from students and their families expressing concern about intimidation for opposing radical or revolutionary students. By preventing non-strikers from attending classes, the striking students violated academic freedom and ultimately contributed to continuing the technical inferiority of Russia evident in the war.³⁷ The strikes in the universities only accented the backwardness of Russian education and the poor quality of students, who now were squandering millions of rubles appropriated for their education.³⁸ Above all, Suvorin wanted the schools to remain open and he condemned any attempt either by the strikers or the government to close them.³⁹ Instead he suggested that professors and students

³⁶Ibid., January 25 (February 7), 1905, pp. 2-3.

³⁷Ibid., February 6 (February 19), 1905, p. 3.

³⁸Ibid., February 3 (February 16), 1905, p. 3.

³⁹Ibid., February 9 (February 22), 1905, p. 3.

pursue L. N. Tolstoi's advice for "passive resistance" against the government's objectionable policies. Although he admired the students for their ideals and was concerned because students died on "Bloody Sunday," Suvorin argued that the students would lose far more in a strike than they would gain.⁴⁰

Pointing to the example of France, Suvorin warned the intelligentsia to consider the consequences of initiating a constitution and using a strike or a revolution to achieve their goals.⁴¹ He condemned all the Russian intelligentsia participating in the strike movement. The extent of these strikes threatened revolution and eventual civil war. The intelligentsia was imprudently contributing to this frightening threat and ignoring rational thinking.⁴² Furthermore Suvorin censured the intelligentsia for its lack of patriotism and its failure to support the war effort.⁴³ Suvorin, therefore, was disenchanted with the intelligentsia on two major counts, involvement in movements which he felt could destroy the present political structure and lack of commitment to winning the war. The intelligentsia's "irrational" actions exemplified the vital need for a Zemskii Sobor which

⁴⁰Ibid., February 3 (February 16), 1905, p. 3.

⁴¹Ibid., February 9 (February 22), 1905, p. 3.

⁴²Ibid., February 3 (February 16), 1905, p. 3.

⁴³Ibid., January 25 (February 7), 1905, p. 3.

offered a rational and peaceful means to achieve reforms. Suvorin hoped convoking a Zemskii Sobor would influence the intelligentsia to abandon the strike and concentrate on peaceful reforms.⁴⁴

The revolutionary movement, Suvorin charged, was interfering with the government's conduct of the war and weakening Russia's military position. He claimed numerous letters from peasants condemned the revolutionaries for subverting the war effort and agreed that the revolutionary movement was influenced by Russia's enemy, the Japanese, who hoped to force the government into concluding an unfavorable peace. For this reason he abhorred the revolutionary movement's demands for peace and instead urged the government to convoke a Zemskii Sobor which could also discuss the war. He categorically rejected the government's position that a Zemskii Sobor could be summoned only in peacetime.⁴⁵

Meanwhile, the Tsar, alarmed by the spread of disorders and the assassination of officials, considered measures for "pacifying society." Following the advice of his top officials, particularly Minister of Finance Kokovtsev, on March 1, 1905, the Tsar issued a ukaze in which he announced his intention to summon an imperial дума of elected deputies to participate in the preliminary discussion of

⁴⁴Ibid., February 3 (February 16), 1905, p. 3.

⁴⁵Ibid., February 14 (February 27), 1905, p. 3.

legislative measures.⁴⁶ On the same day A. G. Bulygin replaced Sviatopolk-Mirskii as minister of interior and was directed to solicit popular opinions as to the nature of the prospective дума. Issued while Russia was suffering defeat at Mukden, the Tsar's compromise was not enough to satisfy the country. The zemstvos and educated classes continued their demands for a genuine parliament based on English or French models.⁴⁷

Suvorin greeted the Tsar's ukaze with jubilation, proclaiming that all his life he impatiently waited for the day in Russian history when the Tsar would summon the voice of the people. The Imperial Duma was equal to a Zemskii Sobor and would subject all future legislation to mature and rational public consideration.⁴⁸ Obviously Suvorin was satisfied by the Tsar's concession and was willing to accept a consultative assembly with no limitations on the autocracy. However, not everyone shared Suvorin's enthusiasm. In the wake of the Tsar's ukaze, new societies were organized to formulate reform proposals. The new organizations began to take on the character of political parties which were still

⁴⁶V. N. Kokovtsov, Iz moego proshlago: vospominania, 1903-1919gg, I, (Paris, 1933), 64.

⁴⁷V. A. Maklakov, Vlast i obshchestvennost na zakate staroi Rossii, vospominaniia (Paris, 1936), pp. 357-61.

⁴⁸Novoe vremia, February 17 (March 2), 1905, p. 3.

illegal.⁴⁹ Suvorin noted the formation of constitutional, progressive and revolutionary groups. The latter, he considered the most effective group but he condemned its dedication to destroying order. Instead he supported a moderate group which would work harmoniously with the Tsar within the framework of the autocratic system.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, earlier comments show he recognized that political conditions in Russia were forcing various elements to form militant organizations.⁵¹

By mid-March, Suvorin lamented that the domestic strife was comparable to the war tragedy. Russia was in a constant state of chaos and almost every citizen was concerned about his national pride after Russia's series of military defeats. The domestic breakdown from strikes added to this horror. The most unfortunate action was the closing of Russia's schools.⁵² Suvorin joined with Prince Meshcherskii in condemning the minister of education for the "criminal and disgraceful" act of closing all universities and other higher institutions of learning. Displaying his

⁴⁹V. A. Maklakov, Vlast i obshchestvennost na zakate staroi Rossii, vospominaniia (Paris, 1936), pp. 357-61.

⁵⁰Novoe vremia, February 22 (March 7), 1905, p. 3.

⁵¹Ibid., February 12 (February 25), 1905, p. 3.

⁵²Ibid., February 26 (March 11), 1905, p. 3.

increasing impatience with bureaucratic ineptness, Suvorin charged that the minister of education's action was indicative of the government's arbitrariness which Pirogov had sought to eliminate by seeking self-government of the universities. It was imperative that the minister of education acknowledge that closing the universities was an extreme measure imposed upon a majority of non-striking professors and students. Furthermore, Suvorin criticized the government's silence on the future of the universities after their closing.⁵³ The government's constant silence characterized its attitude towards the public and left the people uninformed; this weakened the government's influence and power. Along similar lines, Suvorin was firmly convinced that the entire domestic crisis could have been averted if the government had kept the press well-informed on its policies before the tragic events of January 22. The public alarm aroused by Father G. A. Gapon could have been calmed by the press; but, unfortunately, Minister of Interior Sviatopolk-Mirskii did not confide the government's position until January 24. Suvorin himself was not told of the government's conciliatory intentions until late in the evening of January 21 when it was too late to effectively influence public attitudes. The press, Suvorin asserted, was sympathetic to the government and, with the government's confidence, the

⁵³Ibid., March 15 (March 28), 1905, p. 3.

press would strive to maintain order. For example, when the Tsar announced his intention to summon a Zemskii Sobor, the press zealously publicized his action. The government bureaucracy should acknowledge the power of the press and utilize its effectiveness.⁵⁴ Suvorin's comments reveal that he not only understood that mass media could be utilized to influence public opinion but also that he was willing to allow the government to utilize the private press in that manner.

In the early spring moderate elements began to form political groups and, since political parties were illegal, began to meet in private quarters to conduct their business meetings.⁵⁵ Suvorin looked favorably upon these meetings of "moderates" as a return to "reason" in Russian political affairs. The men meeting in these "secret apartments" were senators, rich landowners, zemstvo leaders and leaders of the nobility, who labored to overcome the revolutionary movement and introduce "reasonable" reforms. Basically, these leaders united around the "eleven points" adopted by the zemstvos. However, they remained vague as to the nature of the representative institution which they desired. In contrast, the revolutionary parties explicitly demanded a constituent assembly elected by secret ballot. Suvorin made

⁵⁴Ibid., March 3 (March 16), 1905, p. 2.

⁵⁵Trubetskaia, Kniaz S. N. Trubetskoi: vospominaniia sestry, pp. 120-26.

clear his disapproval of a constituent assembly. Such an institution would not govern Russia nor solve problems and therefore would not serve the needs of the people. Most importantly, the peasants would not be adequately represented.⁵⁶ Suvorin believed that only a Zemskii Sobor would assure the Russian peasants representation and he supported the concept of universal suffrage.⁵⁷ He did not, however, favor national elections to the Zemskii Sobor since he believed this electoral system would not necessarily elect the "best" persons. Unlike the United States and Western Europe, Russia was an empire composed of numerous nationalities in addition to a wide spectrum of political groups. Determination of election districts must be made only after due consideration of the geographic history and ethnographic influences on the population of an area. While speaking Russian was an essential qualification, Suvorin did not regard formal education as necessary. An education requirement would only restrict the peasants from the Zemskii Sobor at a time when their role was increasingly important. The peasants were improving their economic and educational conditions in comparison to peasants in the Zemskii Sobor of earlier centuries; self-education was changing the peasants and they could certainly contribute to the Zemskii

⁵⁶Novoe vremia, April 2 (April 15), 1905, p. 3.

⁵⁷Ibid., January 29 (February 11), 1905, p. 3.

Sobor.⁵⁸ Suvorin also encouraged the election of women and when he was denounced by a Grazhdanin critic, reiterated his faith in the ability of women to participate in government.⁵⁹ Yet he argued that religious requirements should be applied to non-Christians and singled out Jews for exclusion from a Zemskii Sobor.⁶⁰ The upper classes in the Zemskii Sobor would be influential. However, Suvorin denied that nobles should have the same veto power which that class had earlier in the Polish diet, pointing out that such absolute veto power had led to Poland's downfall.⁶¹

The Zemskii Sobor was the proper basis for the Russian nation but Suvorin feared the substitution of a constituent assembly if the parties for peaceful reforms failed to unite and consolidate their power. Only the Zemskii Sobor would offer a program beneficial to both workers and peasants; therefore, the moderate parties must immediately counteract extremist propaganda directed towards the peasants and workers.⁶² Furthermore, peaceful moderates must make their aspirations known to the government. Suvorin acknowledged the leadership of Shipov and I. I. Petrunkevich

⁵⁸Ibid., February 2 (February 15), 1905, p. 4.

⁵⁹Ibid., February 4 (February 17), 1905, p. 3.

⁶⁰Ibid., February 2 (February 15), 1905, p. 4.

⁶¹Ibid., February 3 (February 16), 1905, p. 3.

⁶²Ibid., April 2 (April 15), 1905, p. 3.

in uniting peaceful progressive elements. They were joined by Prince S. S. Trubetskoi and several other zemstvo leaders in Moscow and by the members of K. F. Golovin's political salon in St. Petersburg. Suvorin claimed all the classes of Russia were represented in this movement which was dominated by zemstvos consisting of landowners, merchants and the clergy. These three estates had been an important nucleus in securing the liberation of the peasants and now once again would replace the intelligentsia in leading the people.⁶³

In late April, Suvorin returned from a visit to Tul'sk province where he claimed peace and tranquility reigned among the peasants. He saw no evidence of agrarian disorders and found the population calm. The peasants in Tul'sk disapproved of agrarian disruption and especially condemned strikes by professional classes. These peasants who represented Russia's spirit were disillusioned by the revolutionary threat to their country and were primarily concerned about the victory of Russia against Japan.⁶⁴ Presumably Suvorin reported his trip in an attempt to convince the public that the mainstream or "spirit" of Russia disdained the current internal disorders and concurred with his contention that the issue of top priority should be winning the war.

⁶³Ibid., April 3 (April 16), 1905, p. 3.

⁶⁴Ibid., April 17 (April 30), 1905, p. 3.

On Easter, 1905 the Tsar released a declaration of religious freedom for all Slavic Christians. Suvorin praised this historic ukaze for creating a "brotherly attitude" towards Polish Catholicism. Religious freedom for all Slavic Christians reduced misunderstandings between Catholic and Orthodox Christians. Optimistically, Suvorin regarded the granting of religious freedom as strengthening civil liberties and freedom of the press. The ukaze ended persecution of the Old Believers who remained loyal Russians under all the years of oppression.⁶⁵ The creation of religious freedom also revived the possibility of re-uniting the entire Russian church, which could bring added unity to the Russian people. Apparently Suvorin welcomed any type of rapprochement which could reduce the current discord.

A zemstvo congress, meeting on April 22-26, split on the question of the nature of a national representative assembly and how delegates should be elected.⁶⁶ On May 4 Suvorin reported that the majority of zemstvo leaders supported a constituent assembly while the minority under Shipov favored a Zemskii Sobor. In an attempt to bolster Shipov's position, Suvorin quoted Professor Maxim Kovalevskii's statement asserting that zemstvo leaders who

⁶⁵Ibid., April 20 (May 3), 1905, p. 3.

⁶⁶Shipov, Vospominaniia i dumy o perezhitom, pp. 266-67.

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supported a constituent assembly did not really understand the meaning of parliamentary government. Shipov and his followers, Suvorin claimed, realized western political institutions could not simply be adopted to Russia in the same fashion as western technology or inventions. Russia's history, customs and educational level dictated the characteristics of political institutions. This meant Russia's representative assembly must be a Zemskii Sobor.⁶⁷ At the same time, Suvorin offered critical remarks about a constitution. A constitution not only outlines the rights of citizens but it also specifies duties and restrictions. To prove his point, he cited rather esoteric examples of restrictions on public gatherings in Germany or England. Despite popular beliefs to the contrary, Suvorin argued that a constitution did not completely eliminate arbitrariness. Freedom demanded laws as well as respect for law and order. The difficulty of insuring both freedom and order was illustrated in the present upheaval where, under the guise of freedom, professional criminals often used political activities for their personal gains. The large body of ruffians who threatened disorders in St. Petersburg and province capitals on May 1 were indicative of the fact that laws were only meaningful if they protected the peaceful citizens.⁶⁸

⁶⁷Novoe vremia, April 21 (May 4), 1905, p. 3.

⁶⁸Ibid., May 5 (May 18), 1905, p. 3.

Suvorin observed that demands circulating in Russia showed that all classes were primarily interested in developing their own interests under the guise of "self-determination." When the Jewish population petitioned Witte, Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Suvorin commented that the Jewish petition was a demand for payment on a promissory note comparable to the Shakespearian character Shylock's demand for a pound of Christian flesh.⁶⁹ In his rejection, Witte informed the Jewish petitioners that over one hundred million Russian peasants did not have equal rights but remained loyal and productive citizens. To give the Jewish population rights similar to the Poles and Finns would be unjust. Suvorin welcomed Witte's refusal and launched an attack on the Jews for their wealth and powerful position in France, England and Germany. He charged the Jewish minorities in these countries exercised a disproportionate influence over the press, banking, trade and other business activities. Russia could ill afford to allow the Jewish population to acquire a comparable position in Russian business and society.⁷⁰ The strength of Suvorin's anti-Semitic feelings is shown by the fact that, despite Jewish offers to raise funds for Russia's war effort and influence an end to the

⁶⁹S. I. Witte, Memoirs, trans. by Abraham Yarmolinsky (New York: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1921), pp. 381-82.

⁷⁰Novoe vremia, May 11 (May 24), 1905, p. 3.

revolutionary movement, Suvorin still urged Witte and the government to reject the Jewish petition.

By the end of May the defeat of the Russian fleet in Tsushima Strait created a defeatist mood among the population and heightened the potential for revolution.⁷¹ Recounting the misfortunes that befell Russia, Suvorin placed the blame for the terrible situation on the shoulders of the incompetent Russian bureaucracy. Now Russia could no longer wait for the Bulygin commission, the group appointed by the Tsar to plan a representative assembly, to complete its work. The terrible war news coupled with popular demands for reforms made an immediate calling of a Zemskii Sobor essential.⁷² Then domestic problems would be resolved by Russia's more rational representatives who recognized the struggle against Japan must be given priority over domestic needs.⁷³ Since the fall of Port Arthur, Suvorin had repeatedly called for a Zemskii Sobor as the only means to revive Russia's patriotic feelings. Suvorin's insistence on an immediate meeting of the Zemskii Sobor was seconded by Prince Meshcherskii in Grazhdanin. The two writers viewed the Zemskii Sobor meeting as paramount to returning patriotism and unity to the Russian people. The increasing violence

⁷¹Pavlovich, "Vneshniaia politika i russko-iaponskaia voina," p. 30.

⁷²Novoe vremia, May 18 (May 31), 1905, p. 3.

⁷³Ibid., May 19 (June 1), 1905, p. 3.

by the revolutionaries on the left and the "Black Hundreds" on the right drew equal condemnation from Suvorin who insisted that the wishes of the people were not really represented by these violent groups.⁷⁴

Suvorin's call for the Zemskii Sobor evoked criticism that he and Novoe vremia had not consistently supported a representative assembly. He countered by asserting that his public support of a representative assembly dated back to December 12, 1904, when he backed the demands of the zemstvo congress. He further claimed that after the fall of Port Arthur he had advised the Russian government to seek consultation with an assembly of the people on the issue of continuing the war. Moreover, on January 24, in the aftermath of "Bloody Sunday," he and about fifteen or twenty other representatives of the press met with Minister of Interior Sviatopolk-Mirskii to discuss the condition of Russia. In this meeting, Suvorin urged that the Tsar immediately declare his intentions to convoke a Zemskii Sobor and appoint an election commission. The time originally suggested for the Zemskii Sobor meeting was autumn when the harvest was completed and Russia was nearing victory in the war. However, this was previous to Russia's crushing defeat at Mukden and the destruction of the Baltic squadron. It was these defeats and the heightened domestic turmoil which made

⁷⁴Ibid., May 21 (June 3), 1905, p. 3.

it necessary to call the Zemskii Sobor immediately, and thus Suvorin claimed his present position was not a contradiction of his earlier stance.⁷⁵

When Prince Meshcherskii called for immediate peace, Suvorin maintained that such a "disgraceful peace" would only magnify internal discontent. Only a Zemskii Sobor could decide the issue of peace or war in a fashion acceptable to all the Russian people.⁷⁶ Even when President Roosevelt's offer to mediate peace was accepted by the Tsar, Suvorin continued to insist on the Zemskii Sobor as the sole representative institution with the mutual "trust" and "consent" of the people and the government to decide peace or war.⁷⁷

The headline "Revolution in Odessa" in the Pravitel'stvennyi vestnik and reports in the London Times depressed Suvorin who condemned the revolutionary mutiny on the battleship Potemkin. Suvorin depicted the Potemkin mutineers as traitors to Russia who threatened Russia's honor and weakened the war effort. These disgraceful revolutionary actions held the frightening spectre of burning, destruction and civil war if these madmen did not stop.⁷⁸ In the face

⁷⁵Ibid., May 22 (June 4), 1905, p. 3.

⁷⁶Ibid., June 1 (June 14), 1905, p. 3.

⁷⁷Ibid., June 11 (June 24), 1905, p. 3.

⁷⁸Ibid., June 22 (July 5), 1905, p. 2.

of increasing violence, Suvorin supported the deputation of Russian leaders who met with the Tsar on June 6 requesting peaceful reforms.⁷⁹ He lamented, however, that disunity within the government and moderate parties as well as their political ineptness made it easy for the revolutionary parties to operate. The revolutionaries declared that power was in the hands of the people and that the people must destroy the government and establish a "democratic republic." To this destructive cry, Suvorin replied that the majority of the people were basically comfortable with their "old home" and would follow the lead of the peaceful parties.⁸⁰

On August 19, the Tsar announced plans for the Imperial Duma and a reform program. Suvorin welcomed the Tsar's announcement as another significant step in the "fifty year revolution" which began with the liberation of the peasants. Although the Tsar did not grant the constitution demanded in the press, Suvorin believed the differences between all the classes in Russia could be resolved in the Imperial Duma.⁸¹

Less than two weeks after the Tsar announced the

⁷⁹Trubetskaia, Kniaz S. N. Trubetskoi: vospominaniia sestry, pp. 137-44.

⁸⁰Novoe vremia, June 23 (July 6), 1905, p. 3.

⁸¹Ibid., August 7 (August 20), 1905, p. 3.

creation of a Duma, Witte signed the Treaty of Portsmouth and ended the Russo-Japanese War. Suvorin, who regarded the peace treaty as a defeat for Russia, criticized the revolutionary movement for its detrimental influence on the war effort and peace discussions. Fortunately for Russia, Witte, who was a talented and energetic representative, managed to overcome the handicap created by Russia's domestic disorders. Although Suvorin was not pleased with peace, he accepted the peace treaty and immediately focused his support on the pending Imperial Duma. Suvorin regarded the peace treaty as a sign of Russian failure to meet the "test" of war and he was now concerned lest Russia fail in peace and be totally ruined. The Imperial Duma held all Russia's hopes for the future.⁸²

With peace in the Far East, Suvorin was once again free to concentrate on domestic issues. He had opposed the imprudent Bezabrazov policies which led to the military conflict with Japan because Russia had fulfilled its vital needs in the Far East with the acquisition of the Trans-Siberian railway and Port Arthur. Building the railway had taxed the country's resources and now other obstacles to Russia's modernization increasingly concerned Suvorin. He, therefore, supported Witte's industrialization policies, expansion of educational opportunities for the masses,

⁸²Ibid., August 17 (August 30), 1905, p. 3.

participation of national representatives in governmental decision making on a consultative basis and other reforms which he felt would overcome Russia's "backwardness." The Japanese attack on Port Arthur, however, compelled Suvorin to temporarily abandon the reforms which he had advocated. He foresaw the magnitude of the Japanese threat and placed heavy emphasis on encouraging enthusiastic public support for the war; but he soon recognized that the "coming of spring" could not wait. The barrage of defeats exposed the ineptitude of the bureaucracy and made obvious the need for improvements in governmental operations. In addition, disorder and strikes in favor of freedom of speech, citizen participation in governmental processes and other reforms were gaining momentum. At the same time opposition to the war began to spread rapidly. Suvorin reacted by shifting some attention back to internal reform in hopes of encouraging a war-weary people on to victory. He first attempted to argue that victory would bring reforms; but as it became clear that the population would not wait, he placed greater emphasis on immediate action and heralded even minor conciliatory gestures of the Tsar as giant steps towards the "coming of spring." As the revolutionary movement mushroomed, Suvorin increasingly emphasized the need for a Zemskii Sobor as the only Russian institution which could solve current problems; and after the defeat of Tsushima he advocated an immediate convocation of the

zemskii Sobor in the hope that it would unite the people behind the war. He continually rejected demands for a constituent assembly, supporting only those elements who favored preservation of the autocracy. Meanwhile, his pleas for Tsarist concessions to encourage support for the war remained virtually ignored. The issue of victory, however, was solved in a disappointing manner when Witte concluded peace at Portsmouth. Nevertheless Suvorin could again give his full attention to domestic matters and prospects of the Imperial Duma presented some hope to the troubled Suvorin.

CHAPTER VIII

APOLOGIST FOR THE OCTOBER MANIFESTO

The end of the war and the Tsar's promise of a consultative Duma did not bring an end to domestic disorders. During the months of September and October, 1905, a general strike paralyzed the country and forced yet another concession from the Tsar, the October Manifesto. With the October Manifesto, Nicholas II promised the introduction of civil liberties, extension of suffrage beyond the limits of the August 6, 1905 ukaze, and legislative authority for the Imperial Duma.¹ Since it embodied many of the moderate reforms which he had advocated, Suvorin endorsed the October Manifesto and he severely criticized those political groups which continued to press for more radical concessions. In the face of continued disorders, he chided Witte's government for its permissive stance, urging instead that the government reassert its control over the population. As relative peace was restored in the cities, he further attacked the government bureaucracy for its failure to convoke the Duma

¹V. Ivanovich, Rossiikiia partii soiuzy i ligi (St. Petersburg, 1906), p. 1.

and for its attempts to restrict the Duma's powers. Although he basically supported Witte's government, Suvorin had come to view the Duma as the only forum where major problems could be solved. Hence he increasingly concerned himself with the question of which elements in society should have the most influence in the Duma.

The August 6 ukaze announcing a Duma had failed to stem growing unrest. Agrarian disorders mounted in September and by the end of the month confusion and revolutionary upheaval dominated vast sections of Russia, including Poland, the Caucasus and Siberia. Finally, in October a railroad strike spread rapidly across the country and provided the stimulus for a general strike which brought Russia to a standstill. Faced with a choice between bloody repression or compromise, Nicholas II chose the latter and issued a Manifesto on October (17 O.S.) 30. To implement the concessions of the October Manifesto and to reestablish the government's authority, Nicholas returned Witte to power as prime minister.² Although the October Manifesto succeeded in satisfying many Russian citizens, the Tsar's concessions did not entirely eliminate opposition and restore order. In early November, Witte faced the difficult task of organizing a cabinet and government capable of winning public confidence.

During the two eventful months preceding the

²Sergius Iu. Witte, *Vospominaniia*, ed. by A. L. Sidorov, III (Moscow, 1960), 42-45.

granting of the October Manifesto, Suvorin was vacationing in Italy. Trips to Europe were a frequent activity for the wealthy editor and, therefore, his absence from St. Petersburg was not unusual. When the news of the October Manifesto reached Suvorin in Italy, however, he immediately departed for St. Petersburg. Because of the railway strike, Suvorin was forced to take a long indirect route, reaching the Russian capital by boat from Norway.³ Meanwhile he was unable to receive information from Russian sources regarding events there and could not formulate his opinions until after his return.

In his first article on the political situation, Suvorin expressed his immediate surprise over the news of the revolution, the weakness of the government and the granting of the Manifesto. Nevertheless, he endorsed the October 17 ukaze saying the Tsar had given the people a "radical" constitution which would calm emotions and end the revolution. The granting of political freedom by the Tsar was not too "late." Russia was now a "free country" and the constitution would reunite the people. Saying it was time for the revolutionary disorders to end, Suvorin urged Witte to take action against those elements which rejected the Tsar's concessions.⁴

³Novoe vremia, October 29 (November 11), 1905, p. 3.

⁴Ibid.

As the new government under Witte's leadership sought to restore order, the extreme left rejected the October Manifesto and vowed to continue the revolutionary struggle.⁵ Although the moderates, made up largely of the newly-formed Kadet Party, abandoned revolutionary activities, the vast majority was dissatisfied with the Manifesto and chose to oppose Witte's government in the Duma.⁶ The majority in the zemstvo movement sided with the Kadets, while a small minority led by Shipov supported the October Manifesto but refused to accept posts in the Witte government.⁷ The attitudes of both the revolutionaries and moderates left Witte's government with little significant popular support.

One of Witte's first attempts to gain public trust was to meet with leaders of the press and seek their assistance. Although Suvorin was not present, Novoe vremia was represented at the stormy and unproductive session in which Witte was rebuffed by most of the press.⁸ Nevertheless, it

⁵"Listovk tsentral'novo komiteta RSDRP "K russkomu narodu" po povodu manifesta 17 oktiabria s prizyvom k prodolzheniiu bor'by." Revoliutsii 1905-1907gg. v Rossii: Dokumenty i materialy: Vserossiiskaia politicheskaiia stachka v oktiabre 1905 goda, I (Moscow, 1955), 197.

⁶S. L. Frank, Biografia P. B. Struve (New York: 1956), p. 49.

⁷Shipov, Vospominaniia i dumy o perezhitom, pp. 338-45.

⁸"Interv'iu S. Iu. Witte s predstavileliami pechaty," K.A., XI-XII (1925), 99-105.

seems probable that Witte, based on earlier contacts, sought and obtained Suvorin's support. When the October Manifesto and Witte's government were attacked by revolutionary elements during a second general strike, Suvorin defended the government and echoed Witte's appeal for press repudiation of revolutionary propaganda. Suvorin argued that no one really wanted violence, strikes and ruin. Journalists could succeed in quelling disorders by rationally interpreting the Manifesto and government policies until the Duma assembled.⁹ Suvorin's stance during a period of relative freedom of the press reflected his faith in the October Manifesto and his intentions to support Witte's government as well as his belief in the power of the press.

Witte attempted to deal with the second general strike which the St. Petersburg Soviet called on November 14 by following a policy of moderation.¹⁰ He made a direct appeal to the Soviet for an end to the strike, but the appeal proved fruitless and the general strike continued.¹¹ Witte then chose to wait until the strike movement weakened before taking repressive measures to establish order and introduce reforms.¹²

⁹Novoe vremia, November 8 (November 24), 1905, p. 4.

¹⁰Witte, Vospominaniia, III, 139.

¹¹Tysiacha deviat'sot piatyi god v Peterburge, II (Moscow, 1925), 39.

¹²H. D. Mehlinger and J. M. Thompson, Count Witte and the Tsarist Government in the 1905 Revolution (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972), pp. 84-85.

Meanwhile Witte appealed to other elements in the society for support against the strikers.¹³ When Witte asked the Congress of Zemstvo and City Leaders meeting in Moscow for assistance, however, Suvorin criticized Witte's overly cautious stand against the anarchy caused by the general strike. Witte's admission to the zemstvo leaders that the government was weak astounded Suvorin, who felt that the government's feeble policies only delayed the implementation of the new political freedom and legal order. Witte's efforts to appease the revolutionaries and radicals constituted a disastrous policy. The government had made a mistake in furnishing a constitution which provided only the means to revolution and neglected protection for society. Instead of appealing for trust, Suvorin demanded that the government act forcefully to command confidence and obedience. In addition, Suvorin recommended an immediate meeting of the Duma and urged Witte to reject the suggestion of radical zemstvo leaders that a constituent assembly be summoned. A constituent assembly would only bring anarchy and prevent Russia from reaching a peaceful and orderly settlement of its complex problems.¹⁴

In an effort to combat revolutionary activities, Suvorin condemned the St. Petersburg Soviet's call for a

¹³E. D. Chermenskii, Burzhauzlia i tsarizm v revoliutsii 1905-1907gg. (Moscow, 1939), p. 151.

¹⁴Novoe vremia, October 30 (November 12), 1905, p. 4.

second general strike but he regarded the Soviet as a powerful enemy whose determination and courage were admirable. The Soviet's program to win additional demands for the workers was attractive and its appeals to "comrades" were flattering.¹⁵ However, Suvorin observed that many workers ignored the Soviet's call for another general strike. He believed the unity of the revolutionary movement was broken by the promises of the October Manifesto and the general strike could not succeed in destroying the government.¹⁶ Fortunately, he concluded, the Soviet had not attracted support from the peasants, bourgeoisie and nobility who were now looking to the government for leadership.¹⁷ Presumably Suvorin regarded these three classes as receptive to the new government and the October Manifesto.

In Suvorin's view, a small minority in the Congress of Zemstvo and City Leaders meeting in Moscow was representative of Russia's finest and most sensible leaders. This minority supported the Manifesto and opposed continued revolutionary activities.¹⁸ Suvorin particularly praised Prince E. N. Trubetskoi for his efforts to moderate radical demands. However, when the radical elements under Miliukov and

¹⁵Ibid., November 28 (December 11), 1905, p. 2.

¹⁶Ibid., November 8 (November 24), 1905, p. 4.

¹⁷Ibid., November 28 (December 11), 1905, p. 2.

¹⁸Gurko, Features and Figures of the Past, pp.

Petrunkovich dominated the congress and its resolutions, Suvorin charged the congress was an "imposter" for the Imperial Duma. "Revolutionary" leaders in the congress were ignoring the needs of all sides of Russian society in preference to their own demands.¹⁹ Many congress leaders, Suvorin asserted, did not realize Russia had two governments, one led by Witte and the other by the St. Petersburg Soviet. The congress leaders, who represented primarily rural areas, did not understand the power of the Soviet in Russia's urban centers or the effectiveness of a general strike as a weapon against the government. This strike power placed Russia at the mercy of anarchism. Suvorin observed that a gifted anarchist theoretician argued that acquiring power was more important than acquiring rights in achieving freedom. The Moscow Congress and Witte did not fully understand the Soviet's grasp of the concept of power. In particular, Witte failed to realize the necessity of establishing the power of a new government by convoking the Imperial Duma immediately. Instead, Suvorin lamented, he intended to rely on military forces to crush revolution. Russia could best be saved by its own rational power and by the leadership of strong government officials. But only the "weak" voice of Witte's government was heard. Furthermore, Witte chronically failed to keep his promise to confer with the people.

¹⁹ Novoe vremia, November 15 (November 28), 1905, p. 3.

Without a Duma, Witte's government was autocratic because he consulted only with the Tsar. In addition, the press and the public demanded action against the revolutionaries. In the face of all these outcries, Suvorin wondered why Witte remained inactive and silent. Witte's inaction only promised further violence for Russia.²⁰ Suvorin, therefore, continued his attempts to prod Witte into forcefully crushing the revolutionary movement. He also considered the calling of the Duma an essential step in assuring the future viability of the Russian political system. Russia not only needed the opinions of the public in solving current problems; but without the convocation of the Duma the Tsar's promises to the people went unfulfilled.

Suvorin's discussion of the government's weak leadership continued into early December when he complained that the legal government appeared to be powerless. This was unfortunate because a month after receiving political freedom, Russian society was cast back into the same general strike and riot conditions existing before the October Manifesto.²¹ Suvorin observed that the revolutionaries acted more quickly than the government. Political developments which took months and years during the French Revolution were occurring in Russia within a span of weeks. The

²⁰Ibid., November 18 (December 1), 1905, p. 3.

²¹Ibid., November 24 (December 7), 1905, p. 2.

technological advances in the press, railways and telegraph were significant factors in the rapid spread of Russia's revolutionary activities. In a very short time the revolutionaries could excite large parts of the country and effectively stage political strikes. The government responded sluggishly to these activities and Suvorin believed the critical issue facing Russia was whether Witte would be "strong-willed" and restrain the anarchist drive to create a republic.²² Suvorin maintained that Witte should convoke the Duma in January and no later than February.²³ Admittedly, the Duma was not a guarantee of freedom from revolution, but Suvorin was convinced that the Duma would force ministers to act and end the discord and hostilities among groups.²⁴ Delaying the meeting of the Duma until March would only aid revolutionary elements.²⁵ The lingering question of Duma elections encouraged further agitation and gave the revolutionaries an opportunity to capitalize on the weakness of the new government. The Moscow Soviet terrorized Moscow and added to the uncertainty. It was the responsibility of Witte to break the power deadlock by immediately holding elections

²²Ibid., November 25 (December 8), 1905, p. 3.

²³Ibid., November 28 (December 11), 1905, p. 2.

²⁴Ibid., November 29 (December 12), 1905, p. 2.

²⁵Ibid., November 28 (December 11), 1905, p. 2.

and convoking the Duma.²⁶

Suvorin discussed Witte's views with the English journalist, Dr. E. J. Dillon, who had recently interviewed the prime minister. When told of Witte's claim that the revolutionaries could not be victorious without the assistance of society, Suvorin retorted that only through the Duma could the power of the people help Witte to cope with the new revolutionary crisis. However, Suvorin regarded as erroneous Witte's view that society must be calm before convoking the Duma. All the educated and professional classes placed their faith in the October Manifesto and the government, but believed it was essential for the Duma and not Witte's government to legislate new laws. Consequently, Witte's laws would not be regarded as valid by the public until the Duma confirmed them. At the same time, Witte mistakenly condemned many supporters of the October Manifesto as revolutionaries and failed to recognize new political parties were emerging which were firm in seeking immediate implementation of political freedom. Nevertheless, Suvorin was confident that Witte wished to implement the promises of the October Manifesto even though he did not seem to realize the need to unite the country in the Duma in order to defeat the revolutionary movement.²⁷ Although Suvorin continually criticized Witte's

²⁶Ibid., November 29 (December 12), 1905, p. 2.

²⁷Ibid., December 3 (December 21), 1905, p. 3.

inaction, he did not wish to see the prime minister resign. When the radical press in late December demanded Witte's removal, Suvorin made it clear that even though Witte made mistakes, without Witte's leadership Russia would be destroyed. Russia could not last a week without Witte.²⁸

Moscow was the scene of Witte's decisive confrontation with the revolutionaries. On December 20, the Moscow Soviet called a general strike that developed into an armed uprising. In this crisis, Witte's government acted swiftly and forcefully to quell the disturbance and restore order. Within two weeks of its outbreak, the governor-general in Moscow, Admiral F. V. Dubasov, ruthlessly suppressed the uprising.²⁹ At the same time, rebellious activities initiated in other cities were crushed by government forces. By mid-December, Witte's moderate and indecisive policies towards the revolutionaries were abandoned for policies of repression and reaction to restore order.³⁰

In Suvorin's view, the end of the armed uprising in Moscow marked a turning point for Witte's government.³¹

²⁸Ibid., December 17 (December 30), 1905, p. 3.

²⁹Chermenskii, Burzhuazii i tsarizm v revoliutsii 1905-1907gg., pp. 224-26.

³⁰T. H. von Laue, "Count Witte and the Russian Revolution of 1905," American Slavic and East European Review, XVII (February, 1958), 39-40.

³¹Novoe vremia, December 29, 1905 (January 11, 1906), pp. 3-4.

Suvorin interpreted the renewed peace as a sign that the revolution was ending and the vast majority of citizens were expressing their confidence in the Tsar and the October Manifesto.³² In summarizing the crisis, Suvorin wrote that Witte assumed power in an almost hopeless situation and produced the October Manifesto in an energetic effort to remove the danger to the government. Unfortunately, Witte's actions did not destroy the revolutionary movement. Instead, the government's weakness inspired another general strike and sparked widespread peasant disorders. Witte's use of "temporary" laws and his procrastination in holding elections for the Duma aided the revolutionaries. Fortunately, the Moscow uprising forced Witte's government to crush the revolutionaries, bringing an end to the stalemate.³³

The government's policy of repression proved successful and the beginning of the new year found the revolutionary movement in sharp decline. The Russian public exhausted by the chaos welcomed the return to peaceful activities.³⁴ Freed from revolutionary pressures, the government and public now concerned themselves with the moderate reforms promised in the October Manifesto and preparations for

³²Ibid., December 11 (December 24), 1905, p. 3.

³³Ibid., December 29, 1905 (January 11, 1906), pp. 3-4.

³⁴W. S. Woytinsky, Stormy Passage: A Personal History through Two Russian Revolutions to Democracy and Freedom, 1905-1960 (New York: Vanguard Press, 1961), p. 91.

the meeting of the Duma.³⁵ Suvorin summed up the public's mood in his New Year's day article when he expressed his joy over the government's restoration of power and the return of normal activities. In an optimistic note, Suvorin predicted that in the new year the Duma would bring freedom and equality because it would be composed of national representatives candidly expressing the popular will in legislation. The representatives would come from all areas of society and include educated, illiterate, rich and poor persons. For the first time in Russia's history, "honest thinking persons" would impartially judge Russia's affairs and produce effective laws.³⁶

Although he praised a Duma representing all classes, Suvorin had earlier indicated that he wanted the bourgeoisie and nobility to be the two most influential classes in the new political system. Since the October Manifesto, Suvorin had looked to the bourgeoisie for leadership in guiding peaceful political development.³⁷ Suvorin was well aware that Russia did not have a large bourgeoisie,³⁸ but he felt that Moscow's commercial classes were rapidly filling the bourgeoisie role. Suvorin believed that the commercial

³⁵Chermenskii, Burzhuaizlia i tsarizm v revoliutsii 1905-1907gg., pp. 232-38.

³⁶Novoe vremia, January 1 (January 14), 1906, p. 6.

³⁷Ibid., October 30 (November 12), 1905, p. 4.

³⁸Ibid., July 17 (July 30), 1905, p. 3.

classes were largely responsible for Moscow's rise to a center of political leadership. Because of their extensive experience with economic affairs, workers and the government bureaucracy, however, the Moscow bourgeoisie had been particularly alert to the need for reforms and reorganization. When the Japanese war accelerated class strife and exposed domestic weakness, the bourgeoisie joined in demanding a constitution and supporting revolutionary activities. However, revolutionary excesses after the October Manifesto caused the bourgeoisie to split from the revolutionary ranks. During the Moscow Zemstvo Congress, A. I. Guchkov, representing the "progressive" voices of the bourgeoisie, had defended the new government against the continued revolutionary threat. These progressive voices of the wealthy and powerful bourgeoisie, Suvorin concluded, were emerging as a formidable political force.³⁹

The Russian nobility was the other class which Suvorin viewed as an important and desirable influence in the new government. He defended the nobility from the attacks of revolutionaries seeking extinction of the noble classes. At the same time, Suvorin criticized the nobles for failing to defend their estates and their hereditary land rights against peasant seizures. Unless members of the nobility joined in demanding their rights, the revolutionaries would eliminate

³⁹Ibid., December 14 (December 27), 1905, pp. 2-3.

them. This would be a tragic loss because the nobility supplied the talent and leadership for the bureaucracy, military and society. Most importantly, eliminating the nobility would destroy the source of Russia's enlightenment and culture. As the first step in renewing leadership, Suvorin urged the nobility to curb agrarian disorders, arouse the government from inaction and exercise noble power against revolution. In addition he claimed that the nobles should petition Witte to hold elections and immediately convoke the Duma, since Witte and the Tsar would not ignore a petition from the nobles.⁴⁰ Suvorin, therefore, viewed the nobility as a powerful potential ally of Witte's government and a countervailing force against the revolutionaries. But he feared that the position of the nobility was severely jeopardized by radical solutions to the land question. In suggesting an immediate meeting of the Duma he apparently felt that the nobility would be able to resolve the land question in its favor within the Duma framework.

Land was indeed a volatile issue. In fact, the peasant question succeeded the urban strikes as the main problem facing Witte's government, as peasant disturbances remained high in January, 1906.⁴¹ For several years, Witte had advocated elimination of the peasant commune and the

⁴⁰Ibid., December 16 (December 29), 1905, p. 3.

⁴¹B. B. Veselovskii and others, eds., Agrarnyi vopros v sovete ministrov (1906g.), Moscow, 1924, pp. 70-71.

creation of a private landowning peasant class; but the government's failure to implement land reforms made the disenchanted peasants susceptible to revolutionary agitation.⁴² The peasant disorders, sparked by a poor harvest in late 1905, gained momentum following the promulgation of the October Manifesto.⁴³ Under the influence of Socialist Revolutionary and Social Democratic agitators, peasants interpreted the new "freedom" as the right to drive out landowners and seize large estates.⁴⁴ At the height of the peasant violence in late October, Witte's government considered a proposal from D. F. Trepov for compulsory alienation of noble lands to the peasants.⁴⁵ However, on November 3, Witte chose instead to cancel all redemption dues and commissioned a leading agricultural expert, N. N. Kutler, to devise an alternative plan to give more land to the peasants.⁴⁶ Kutler's program retained forcible expropriation of noble lands as an essential part of his solution to peasant land

⁴²T. H. von Laue, Sergei Witte and the Industrialization of Russia (New York: Atheneum, 1969), pp. 115-16.

⁴³G. T. Robinson, Rural Russia Under the Old Regime (New York: Macmillan Co., 1949), pp. 174-80.

⁴⁴S. N. Prokopovich, Agrarnyi krisis i meropriiatiia pravitelstva (Moscow, 1912), pp. 46-49.

⁴⁵Sergius Iu. Witte, Vospominaniia, Ed. by A. L. Sidorov, II (Moscow, 1960), 172.

⁴⁶Veselovskii, Agrarnyi vopros v sovete ministrov (1906g.), pp. 3-4, 30-48.

hunger and by the middle of January, 1906, it was the main project under consideration by Witte's government. However, Kutler's plan was severely attacked by nobles and large landowners.⁴⁷

By the end of January, opponents succeeded in gaining support from the Tsar who made several public pronouncements against the Kutler plan. Nicholas based his opposition on the principle of "the inviolability of private property."⁴⁸ Suvorin, who had already expressed his dedication to the defense of private property and his opposition to expropriation of noble lands, joined in condemning Kutler's project. The target of Suvorin's attack was Kutler's Jewish assistant, Professor A. A. Kaufman, a member of the Kadets. Reflecting his habitual anti-Semitic stance, Suvorin questioned the government's reliance on "Jews" for assistance in solving the problems of the Russian people. Jews helped create the revolution and now Kaufman was being used by the bureaucracy to prepare a legislative project. The Council of Ministers must resolve this important question with the help of Russian landowners and peasants rather than the advice of Kaufman who was a close associate of members of the radical Jewish Bund which stood for expropriation and elimination of

⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 63-70.

⁴⁸"Sovremennik," pseud., Nikolai II, razoblachenii (Berlin, n.d.), pp. 324-26; Veselovskii, Agrarnyi vopros v sovete ministrov (1906g.), pp. 72-80.

landowners. Although Suvorin admitted his respect for Jewish artistic talent, Russia's legislation to resolve agricultural problems must not be determined by Jews whom he did not regard as loyal to Russia and the principles of private property. Furthermore, the secrecy surrounding the discussion of Kutler's project raised serious concern among landowners that Jewish capitalists would profit from the expropriation of noble lands. In defense of the landowners' rights, Suvorin insisted that all government discussion of the land question must be public and the rights of the landowners represented.⁴⁹ Thus, Suvorin joined with the noble classes in repudiating Kutler's project. Suvorin's position reflected the returning confidence of the nobility and landed classes. Shortly after, Witte, under pressure from the Tsar, obtained the resignation of Kutler.

The removal of Kutler did not end Witte's efforts to resolve the land question before the meeting of the Duma. In January, a special commission entitled "On the Study of Immediate Measures to Improve the Conditions of Peasant Landholdings" had been established under the chairmanship of A. P. Nikol'skii. The February report of Nikol'skii's commission to the Council of Ministers urged the government to take immediate steps in assisting the peasants acquire land. The commission further recommended that the government

⁴⁹Novoe vremia, January 19 (February 1), 1906, p. 3.

place the land project under the control of local zemstvo leaders.⁵⁰ Opponents of the commission's recommendations feared that the designation of local land commissions would make the program vulnerable to dominance by left-wing zemstvo members who would implement their own radical programs. In addition Nikol'skii's program neglected to reaffirm the principle of private property to the satisfaction of the nobles and landowners. Finally, dissenters viewed Witte's efforts to implement a land reform program as an attempt to usurp a prerogative of the Duma.⁵¹

While Witte's government considered Nikol'skii's program, reports reached St. Petersburg of renewed peasant attacks against landowners in Saratov Province. When reports of excesses against landowners in Saratov province reached St. Petersburg, Suvorin reacted by repudiating the misconceptions of the peasants regarding the October Manifesto. He charged that the radicals at the Moscow Congress of Zemstvos deliberately misled the peasants with extreme statements on the land question and the government's passive attitude on the issue perpetuated peasant confusion. The radicals in the Moscow Congress conveniently chose to ignore those parts in the French Declaration of the Rights of

⁵⁰S. M. Dubrovskii, Stolypinskaia zemel'naia reforma (Moscow, 1963), pp. 95-101.

⁵¹Veselovskii, Agrarnyi vopros v sovete ministrov (1906g.), pp. 126-31.

Men outlining property rights. Unfortunately, the October Manifesto did not explicitly state a principle of property rights and the position of landowners remained in doubt. Suvorin deemed it essential that the government guarantee by law the rights of property. Government land policies involving expropriation were only a repetition of the notorious "Zubatovism." Suvorin predicted that if the "Zubatovism" approach to the workers question brought revolution, government involvement in expropriation of lands would certainly strengthen the revolutionary movement on the countryside.⁵²

Despite his condemnation of peasants for their violence against landlords, Suvorin claimed that the peasants were good and reasonable men who wished the land question to be decided by the Duma. Bureaucrats, however, were interfering by devising projects to settle the land question before the Duma met. Adding to peasant disenchantment was the fact that the bureaucrats who were preparing projects were not experts on Russia's agricultural economy. Even Witte's talent and experience did not qualify the prime minister to produce a satisfactory settlement of the land question. The landowners faced the greatest risks under the arbitrary bureaucracy's unskilled projects. Fortunately, the Tsar, who recognized the landowners' rights and their

⁵²Novoe vremia, February 2 (February 15), 1906, p. 3.

importance in the rural economy, endeavored to protect the future of the landowner class.⁵³ It seems likely that Suvorin's personal wealth, publishing empire and large rural estate influenced his concern over the land question and his advocacy of the principle of private property.

The early months of 1906 saw a great deal of organizational activity by Russia's political parties. The electoral law of December 24, 1905, had extended universal suffrage to most Russians under an indirect electoral system.⁵⁴ In addition, the moderate forces in Russia desired early elections for the Duma⁵⁵ and in January, 1906, Witte moved to arrange for elections. On February 8, the government announced plans to convoke the Duma on April 27.⁵⁶ Suvorin greeted the news with joy, maintaining that society remained backward largely because of the bureaucracy's current oppression and society's lack of participation in the government. He believed the Duma would unite Russia, organize reforms and guarantee political freedom for all Russians. In addition, the Duma would provide Russia with new

⁵³Ibid., February 3 (February 16), 1906, p. 3.

⁵⁴S. M. Sidel'nikov, Obrazovanie i deiatel'nost pervoi gosudarstvennoi dумы (Moscow, 1962), pp. 72-75.

⁵⁵A. V. Piaskovskii, Revoliutsiia 1905-1907gg. Rossii (Moscow, 1966), p. 179; Witte, Vospominaniia, II, 322.

⁵⁶Sidel'nikov, Obrazovanie i deiatel'nost pervoi gosudarstvennoi dумы, p. 87.

laws which would include rights of private property and legal protection for everyone. Also, the Duma would eliminate bureaucratic interference and obstruction of the people's participation in the government.⁵⁷

The election campaign for the Duma saw numerous parties emerge representing a variety of political convictions. However, most of the parties were weak and inexperienced in the area of political campaign practices. Consequently, the strongest and best-organized party, the Kadets, emerged from the outset of the campaign as the most effective party and the assured winner in the elections. The slightly leftist Kadets drew their support largely from the progressive elements of the zemstvo movement, liberal intelligentsia and professional classes. Founded in October, 1905, the Kadets adopted a party program calling for civil liberties, universal suffrage, a constituent assembly and expropriation of lands with compensation. With this program, the Kadets joined with the revolutionaries in supporting the two general strikes and rejecting the October Manifesto. But the peasant violence and the Moscow uprising led the Kadets to moderate their party program and participate in the Duma elections.

At their second party congress held in Moscow in January, 1906, the Kadets abandoned their support for

⁵⁷ Novoe vremia, February 15 (February 28), 1906, p. 4.

revolutionary tactics and a constituent assembly and instead began preparation for the forthcoming elections. Although the Kadet program excluded these earlier revolutionary positions, the Kadets continued to propose radical positions. For example, the Kadets demanded equality for the Jews, autonomy for Poland, freedom of religion for all other nationalities and exclusion of the Russian language from schools where Russians were a minority.⁵⁸ Identifying himself as a nationalist, Suvorin attacked the program adopted at the Kadet Party Congress in Moscow. The October Manifesto in no way included these freedoms for minorities nor did the Manifesto grant these minorities the right to persecute Russian citizens for objectionable government policies. Since the source of Russian "reason" and "spirit," the Duma, did not exist, Suvorin asserted Russian citizens were not responsible for government policies in the borderlands.⁵⁹

Suvorin's strong nationalistic feelings seemed to orient him towards membership in the extreme nationalistic party, the Union of Russian People. However, Suvorin denied membership in this party of "hatred" and "passion," stating that he preferred to remain outside a party and place his political faith in Russia and the people. In his view the Russian spirit was incorporated in the October Manifesto. The

⁵⁸Pravo, January 15, 1906, no. 2, pp. 154-58.

⁵⁹Novoe vremia, February 20 (March 5), 1906, p. 2.

new political freedom restored Russian dignity and Suvorin hoped for a revival of patriotism.⁶⁰

Witte, too, chose to remain outside the ranks of an organized party but he did not share Suvorin's faith in the ability of the people to resolve major issues within the Duma.⁶¹ During February, the Crown Council met to consider legislative measures determining the powers of the Duma and limits on its authority. Ultimately these measures were incorporated into the Fundamental Laws. Fearing the public was politically immature, Witte wished to limit the authority of the Duma.⁶² Suvorin, however, did not share Witte's view and repudiated Witte's position published in Witte's semi-official newspaper Russkoe gosudarstvo. The government was treating its citizens like children, Suvorin fumed. The government's rude attitude towards the people's participation in the Duma characterized the chronic contempt of the ruling circles for the Russian public. Now when Russians were free to meet and resolve the peasant question, as well as the clash between the propertied and non-propertied classes, the

⁶⁰Ibid., February 20 (March 5), 1906, p. 2.

⁶¹Mehlinger and Thompson, Count Witte and the Tsarist Government in the 1905 Revolution, p. 75; Novoe vremia, February 27 (March 12), 1906, p. 2.

⁶²"Tsarskosel'skie soveshchaniia: Protokoly sekretnavo soveshchaniia v fevrale 1906 goda pod predsedatel'stvom byvshavo imperatora po vyrabotke Uchrezhdenii Gosudarstvennoi Dumy i Gosudarstvennovo Soveta," Byloe, V-VI (November-December, 1917), 292-304.

bureaucracy again interfered and wanted to impose restrictions. Instead of these repressive limitations, Suvorin argued the government should raise the citizens' hopes and confidence by energetically inviting them to assist the government in transforming Russia.⁶³ The current "distrust" between educated society and the government, Suvorin claimed, began with Sviatopolk-Mirskii's failure to resolve Russia's problems. Now, the reluctance of the government to grant political freedom except under threat further destroyed educated society's trust. Furthermore, the new government's "passive role" against the strikes following the October Manifesto convinced society the present government could not effectively govern a great country without the meeting of a Duma.⁶⁴

In another rebuttal of the Witte government's position, Suvorin charged that Witte's newspaper Russkoe gosudarstvo insulted the bourgeoisie by ignoring the contributions of this class. Since the origin of Russia, the merchant class consistently supported the government and persistently worked to develop trade and manufacturing. Now Rosskoe gosudarstvo foolishly dared to scorn the bourgeoisie for ignorance, political arrogance towards the government and political opportunism. The government by taking this

⁶³Novoe vremia, February 27 (March 12), 1906, p. 2.

⁶⁴Ibid., March 5 (March 18), 1906, p. 3.

disparaging position would only further alienate itself from this influential class as it had from the nobility and zemstvos.⁶⁵

The Russian bourgeoisie Suvorin defended tended to provide the support for the Union of October 17, or the Octobrist Party. The leadership of this party was provided by Shipov's minority group which split from the Congress of Zemstvo and City Leaders in November, 1905. Shipov joined with a group predominantly composed of Moscow industrialists and merchants led by A. I. Guchkov to found the Octobrist Party in late 1905. The Octobrist program supported the October Manifesto but did not demand going beyond it. The party wanted civil liberties, the Duma and a constitutional monarchy. The strong nationalist orientation of the Octobrists favored increasing Russia's military power and prestige. Octobrist leaders were generally supportive of Witte's government but highly critical of the government's weakness against the revolutionary movement and urged speedy convocation of the Duma as the best means to assure order.⁶⁶ Throughout the elections for the Duma, the Octobrists offered opposition to the Kadets whose program they regarded as too radical. However, the April election results gave the Kadets a clear-cut victory over the Octobrists.

⁶⁵Ibid., March 7 (March 20), 1906, p. 3.

⁶⁶Chermenskii, Burzhuazlia i tsarizm v revoliutsii 1905-1907gg., pp. 232-38.

The news of Kadet Party victories in the Duma elections did not surprise Suvorin who would have preferred an Octobrist Party victory. Although he was not a member of the Octobrist Party, Suvorin acknowledged this party as his preference for leadership in the Duma. In contrast to the Kadets and revolutionaries, the Octobrist Party program was not merely "propaganda" and "daydreams" to gain voter support. Unfortunately, the Octobrists were complacent in their campaign activities and did not realize the necessity to actively campaign against the Kadets. In addition, the Octobrist leaders were victims of their own "honesty" in presenting their program to the voters.⁶⁷ Thus, Suvorin recognized that the political inexperience of the Octobrists contributed to their poor showing.

Although he was not pleased with the election results, Suvorin renewed his support for the Duma. Since the Duma was not composed of extremist parties, Suvorin believed the Duma would unite the Russian people. Furthermore, the Duma would reunite the Russian people with the Tsar who was honoring his promises. The Duma would prove that Russia was not politically bankrupt as the extremist parties charged and trust would return to Russia.⁶⁸

In evaluating the political parties after the

⁶⁷Novoe vremia, March 22 (April 4), 1906, p. 2.

⁶⁸Ibid., March 27 (April 9), 1906, p. 2.

elections, Suvorin conceded the Russian peasant was the basis of all political power. The Kadet Party was naturally most likely to win peasant support, while the parties on the right, which tended to represent the nobility, could hardly expect to engender peasant enthusiasm. The official name, the Constitutional Democratic Party, made the Kadet Party sound like the spokesman for popular freedom; the Kadet name and program conveyed a militancy for a new society and future. However, Suvorin challenged whether the Kadets really represented the principles stated in the party name. The Kadets stood between a constitution and a revolution and Suvorin viewed them as being closer to the latter.⁶⁹

Suvorin stated his desire for a "progressive" party which stood for "Russian nationalism." He would have chosen the title "national-democratic" for this party and suggested a platform advocating political freedom, economic planning and tolerance for national cultures who did not threaten Russian nationalism. However, the Jewish population was excluded from participation in Suvorin's political scheme. The Jews, Suvorin charged, had been instrumental in exciting the revolutionary disorders. The Kadet success in the elections was largely the result of large financial contributions from the Jewish population which was notorious in Europe for its political bribery. By comparison, most Russian political

⁶⁹Ibid., March 28 (April 10), 1906, p. 3.

parties did not have equally large financial funds to support political propaganda.⁷⁰

When A. A. Stolypin and A. A. Pilenko announced that the Octobrist Party would cooperate with the Kadets in working for a constitutional government, Suvorin condemned their tactics. Russia had no previous parliamentary experience and it was likely that under the new regime public opinion would change often. The Octobrists were too hasty in attributing the Kadet victory to widespread dissatisfaction with the government. Suvorin believed the political climate could change to favor the Octobrists. The Kadets were victorious largely because naive voters believed their passionate propaganda. Also, the Kadets capitalized on their party's name while the Octobrists were restricted. Suvorin urged the Octobrists to avoid cooperation with the Kadets and concentrate on unifying their own party membership. In addition, the party leadership must form a headquarters staff and commander-in-chief similar to the military organization suggested by Kuropatkin during the war. The party could then concentrate on its opponents' weaknesses in the parliamentary struggle and prepare a strong program.⁷¹

Shortly before the Duma was scheduled to meet, Suvorin analyzed the results of the past year. The Duma was

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Ibid., April 2 (April 15), 1906, pp. 2-3.

meeting almost a year after the disastrous war strained Russia's domestic tranquility. The year was one of constant turmoil and threats to the survival of Russia. Questions were raised regarding all facets of Russian society and now the Duma was finally meeting to decide these questions. Finally, after forty years of hearing a negative reply to the petition of the Russian people for a voice in the government, the Russian people were going to have their share in government when the Duma convened. Even if only a small number of these representatives were talented leaders, Suvorin predicted Russia would benefit.⁷²

On the eve of the Duma, Suvorin observed that if the political parties united in a patriotic spirit of selflessness under talented leadership, then there was nothing the Duma could not accomplish.⁷³ As rumors circulated that Witte would resign when the Duma met, Suvorin praised Witte for his service to the Russian government and people. Although he confessed to differences with Witte, Suvorin regarded him as a source for many of the reforms introduced. Witte's reform efforts dated back to December, 1904, when the Tsar promised improvements in Russian government and society. Undoubtedly, history would view Witte as one of Russia's most talented leaders in domestic and foreign affairs.

⁷²Ibid., April 9 (April 22), 1906, p. 3.

⁷³Ibid., April 11 (April 24), 1906, p. 2.

As for the reforms, Suvorin regarded these as granting the Russian people the most desirable degree of freedom possible. This reform era ushered in a reasonable government guided by law and justice. The "party" system opened government business to public discussion. Perfect peace in society was not possible but a way was now open through the Duma. Unfortunately, Witte might be lost to the government at this time, a move which Suvorin viewed as a serious loss to the Duma and the Russian people. Even the Kadets, Suvorin said, were alarmed at the possible resignation of Witte. Witte was dedicated to reforms and even though his continuance as prime minister assured the Duma of a formidable political adversary, Witte's resignation would be a severe loss to the government's reform efforts. Therefore, Suvorin hoped this extreme measure would not occur.⁷⁴ Meanwhile in Suvorin's view, the Duma held the fate of Russia.

Thus Suvorin, who had earlier advocated the calling of a Zemskii Sobor to act as a consultative body, now supported a Duma with legislative powers. The granting of the October Manifesto had surprised Suvorin, but he welcomed it as a means of curbing the revolutionary movement. When the Manifesto did not bring the peace he anticipated, however, Suvorin urged Witte's new government to take strong and decisive action against the revolutionaries. While he

⁷⁴Ibid., April 19 (May 2), 1906, p. 3.

basically supported Witte's government, he disagreed with Witte's failure to immediately convoke the Duma, believing that the people would be unwilling to accept Witte's "temporary laws" and the continued Tsarist domination for more than a brief period. Furthermore, Suvorin feared revolutionary or bureaucratic solutions to such major issues as the land question. He increasingly looked to the nobility and the bourgeoisie as the elements which should have heavy leverage in Russia's decision-making processes, and he felt these two groups could wield major influence in the Duma if it were called immediately. Even after the Kadet victories in the elections, Suvorin continued to support the Duma in spite of the fact that the Kadet program was more radical than he would have liked. While he disavowed membership in any of the existing parties, he hoped the Octobrist Party would be more successful in future Duma elections. His own formula for a "national-democratic" party, however, revealed a nationalistic orientation which had pervaded his writing throughout his journalistic career. Russia had suffered a disastrous war and a tragic revolution. Now Suvorin hoped the coming Duma would rekindle the nationalism which he considered the lifeblood of Russian society and which he had continually attempted to encourage in his "Malen'kiia pis'ma."

CHAPTER IX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Aleksei S. Suvorin, who began his life in a peasant village had become by 1900 owner and publisher of Novoe vremia, Russia's largest newspaper. Thus he occupied a unique vantage point from which to observe and comment on the domestic and foreign crises confronting Russia during the turbulent years 1900 to 1906. Through a Novoe vremia series, "Malen'kiia pis'ma," Suvorin was able to express his personal views on a variety of major events and issues. Based largely on themes of nationalism and progressive reforms, his polemics received wide circulation throughout Russia.

Typical of his concern with national interests, Suvorin encouraged a policy of peaceful expansion in the Far East, believing that the trans-Siberian railway and a warm-water port were essential to Russia's future economic progress. When the Boxer Crisis threatened Russia's railway interests in the summer of 1900, however, Suvorin supported Witte's use of limited military force to occupy Manchuria and protect the railway. Nevertheless, he opposed permanently

annexing Manchuria, concurring with Witte that such a move could jeopardize Russia's important current holdings. When the intrigues of the Bezabrazov Circle threatened to provoke open confrontation with Japan, Suvorin vigorously opposed war, preferring instead to concentrate on needed domestic reforms. Enthused by Witte's efforts to overcome Russia's backwardness, Suvorin urged reforms in several major areas. He championed changes in the educational system, particularly the expansion of educational opportunities and an increased emphasis on Russian culture at the expense of classical studies. He also favored improvement in the treatment of minorities, hoping to encourage their rapid assimilation into Russian society. After the Bezabrazov Circle forced Witte's resignation, Suvorin increasingly turned to the zemstvo movement as the vehicle to help bring about reforms by assisting the government in an advisory capacity. The changes he advocated were mainly steps which he felt would bolster Russian nationalism and overcome the country's backwardness while preserving its unique culture. Ultimately reforms would come "from above," thus reuniting the people and the Tsar.

The outbreak of war, however, interrupted Suvorin's plans for reform. When Japan attacked Port Arthur, he promptly shifted his emphasis towards encouraging patriotism and full participation in winning the war. Dreams of "spring" must wait, he concluded, but the numerous war reversals soon

forced him to revise his forecast. While at first he had attempted to maintain popular support for the war by claiming only victory would bring reforms, defeats at Mukden and Tsushima engendered Suvorin's increased interest in immediate changes. He stepped up his criticism of the bureaucracy and began to call for a Zemskii Sobor to resolve the war issue. These efforts, however, were primarily aimed at winning the war, since he continued to prefer the postponement of most internal changes. He felt that certain improvements in the bureaucracy would strengthen Russia's battle potential and hoped a Zemskii Sobor could rekindle war patriotism. As defeats mounted and popular discontent with the war increased, the Tsar, much to Suvorin's chagrin, conceded to negotiate peace. Although he praised Witte's negotiating skill, the Treaty of Portsmouth disappointed Suvorin, who believed that the Russian nation had failed an important test of its international power. He wondered, in the face of defeat, whether Russia would be able to meet its impending domestic test and looked forward to the summoning of the recently-announced Imperial Duma.

While Suvorin vacationed in Western Europe, a general strike culminated in the issuance of the October Manifesto. Although Suvorin considered the Manifesto, which granted political freedom and gave legislative powers to the Duma, a radical document, he accepted it. He also supported Witte's "new" government which assumed leadership simultaneously

with the granting of the Manifesto. As a result, he strongly criticized the revolutionary elements for their renunciation of the Manifesto and their demands for a constituent assembly, claiming that convoking such a body would be inconsistent with Russia's current institutional framework and would interfere with the gradual political development of the country. In the face of continuous upheaval, Suvorin expressed dissatisfaction with the Witte government's failure both to take strong action against revolutionary elements and to call the Duma immediately. When a second general strike forced the government into action and brought relative peace to the urban areas, Suvorin began to concentrate on those elements which he felt should wield a heavy influence in the Duma. Since the zemstvo leaders had grown increasingly radical, Suvorin now looked to the bourgeoisie and the nobility for leadership, hoping that these two groups would be successful in the elections finally called by Witte. Even after the liberal Kadets won impressive victories in the elections, Suvorin continued to support the impending Duma, believing that it would reunite the Russian people and rekindle national sentiments. He overtly disassociated himself from the Union of Russian People, calling it a party of "hatred" and chided the Octobrists, a moderately-rightist party more to his liking, for joining in a coalition with the Kadets before the Octobrists had matured as a political party. His own formula for a "national-democratic" party was built on

nationalistic and progressive concepts which typified his basic philosophy.

His approach to foreign affairs and domestic problems was dictated by his desire to foster Russia's national interests. Thus the reforms which he advocated were essentially directed towards progress which would strengthen the nation rather than promote individual welfare or democratic ideas. Even his concept of the autocratic government's role was consonant with a concern for national interests. The origin of the Russian state he traced to Smutnoe vremia when the representative Zemskii Sobor rescued Russia from foreign invasion and reestablished autocratic rule. Since that time the autocratic system had served Russia by providing the source of leadership, and, in each succeeding century, the autocrats had provided Russia with "reforms from above." However, Suvorin recognized that Russia's existence at the turn of the twentieth century was threatened by backwardness. Consequently, he looked to the Tsar and his government for progressive reforms to strengthen the state. He viewed the Witte system as a determined effort to overcome Russia's weaknesses. Other progressive reforms, such as changes in education and in the status of minorities, were equally important to assuring Russia's future greatness. Even his anti-Semitic position was directed primarily against a cultural and national orientation which he felt endangered Russia's unity. When the war with Japan exposed Russia's

external and internal frailty, Suvorin attempted to tap the same patriotic spirit which he believed had enabled Russia to emerge victorious and revitalized from Smutnoe vremia, the Napoleonic Invasion, and the Russo-Turkish War. Hence, he looked to a meeting of the Tsar and the people in some type of representative body, preferably a Zemskii Sobor, as the means to resurrect Russian patriotism to rescue Russia from defeat by Japan and revolutionary disorders. Consequently, he welcomed the consultative Duma announced in August and even accepted a legislative Duma which the October Manifesto incorporated as consistent with Russia's historical tradition of "reform from above."

Thus, the themes of nationalism and historical evolution ran through Suvorin's writings causing him to advocate changes which would encourage Russification and patriotism, modernize the country, and enhance Russia's international prestige and power. The emergence of political parties, however, changed the political arena, and Suvorin's increasing support of the interests of the nobility and the middle class began to move him in a conservative direction. With the meeting of the Duma a new era in Russia's political history began and forced Suvorin to alter his views and convictions to meet the rapidly changing situation.

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