

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT

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**THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTIONARY
MOVEMENT.**

THE
RUSSIAN REVOLUTIONARY
MOVEMENT.

BY
KONNI ZILLIACUS.

TRANSLATED BY THE AUTHORITY AND AT THE
REQUEST OF THE AUTHOR.

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PREFACE.

THE following historical sketch of the revolutionary movement in Russia was originally written with the sole object of enlightening public opinion in a country—Finland—where knowledge of this movement was perhaps even scantier than elsewhere. In the Finnish Grand Duchy the loyalty of the people to the sovereign, fostered by the fidelity of the successive Russian rulers to the compact entered into by Alexander I. with the Finnish “Estates,” had always been too sincere to suffer any sympathies to be entertained for those who opposed Tsardom in Russia. The various revolutionary attempts had caused the same horrified astonishment in Finland as in other foreign countries. Alexander II. had liberated the Russian serfs; he had proved liberal in all his dealings with Finland: therefore Finns as a rule regarded those who repeatedly attempted to kill him as criminals. That the Tsar-liberator also had sanctioned the ruthless policy of Muravieff the “hangman” in Poland, and had done his best to curtail the very reforms introduced in the beginning of his reign, hardly anyone in Finland took into account, because hardly anyone in Finland knew the truth about the state of affairs in Russia.

The same causes produced the same effect during most of the reign of Alexander III. He was loyal to his Finnish subjects, and the Finns were loyal to him, never troubling their heads very much about the interior development within Russia.

It was reserved for Nicholas II., the son and successor of Alexander III., to revolutionise the relations that had existed for ninety years between Russia and Finland. When in 1899 the policy of unification suggested to him by foolishly short-sighted advisers caused him to break his solemn promise to rule Finland in accordance with its constitution, he compelled the Finns to seek for friends and allies in the uneven struggle forced upon them. Everyone, while comprehending that the ultimate aim of the new policy was nothing less than the complete annihilation of Finland as an autonomous state and of the Finnish people as a distinct national unit, comprehended also that Finland would be unable single-handed to carry on the fight against autocracy with any chance of success. Yet it was evident that no allies might be counted upon in the Western world, no Power having any reason to step into the arena for Finland's sake, even though every civilised nation expressed sincere sympathy with the Finns, and strongly condemned the faithlessness of the Tsar and of his Government.

The only possible allies were clearly to be looked for in Russia itself among the men who for many years had been relentlessly fighting autocratic despotism. It was becoming necessary to arrive at an understanding with the different opposition parties in the Empire in order to unite forces with the men who, in spite of the tremendous odds against them, had succeeded in causing the foundations of the throne of the Tsar to shake and tremble. But these very men were in Finland regarded as criminals, or at the best as utopians of a dangerous kind, wholly incapable of anything but destructive work.

Under such circumstances the first thing to be done was manifestly the work of enlightening public opinion in Finland in regard to the internal development and the revolutionary movement in Russia. Advanced members of the Finnish

opposition immediately took this work in hand, publishing in every issue of the clandestine papers accounts of occurrences in the Empire, and advocating in the same widely spread publications an alliance with all other parties struggling for liberty and human rights in the Tsar's dominions.

The book now put before Anglo-Saxon readers was written as part of this work of enlightenment. In order to give a comprehensive idea of the relation of causes to effect, it had to describe the internal policy pursued by the different rulers of Russia, as well as the still more revolutionary opposition engendered by this very policy. In order again to render the description accessible to the great mass of readers, it was necessary to concentrate the material as much as possible, and to leave out much that Russian friends had supplied and might reasonably have expected to find mentioned in the following pages.

Some reviewers have expressed doubts in regard to the impartiality of the author as manifestly an enemy of Russian autocracy. No partiality has wittingly dictated the opinions expressed, nor have any statements of facts been made without as far as possible having been checked as to correctness by reference to other than revolutionary sources of information. Yet so far as personal impressions and feelings go the author unhesitatingly pleads guilty of partiality to the fighters against autocratic despotism, in the same degree as a lawyer is guilty of partiality to the cause he defends.

The self-sacrificing enthusiasm and the death-despising devotion to ideals which meet the student at every turn in the history of this movement make it difficult to assume and maintain a thoroughly impartial attitude. The pure, altruistic exaltation which has driven the well-nigh countless victims of the struggle to flight into foreign lands, to death on the scaffold or in the icebound wilds of Siberia, affects the

coolness of the spectator, and renders it impossible to weigh to a nicety the faults and the merits of the men and women, of the young girls and boys, who have cheerfully given their liberty and their lives to the great cause of freedom. The beauty of their sacrifices causes the political errors they may have committed to pale into insignificance, and sheds so hideously glaring a light on the crimes of autocracy that the good it has done or has wished to do mayhap disappears too completely from view. Never was there fought an apparently more hopeless fight; never anywhere was the disproportion between the forces of the combatants greater; nor, on the other hand, was ever the inability of mere material power to withstand the onslaught of ideas more convincingly proved. For notwithstanding the might of the Russian Tsars, notwithstanding the paucity of their own numbers, notwithstanding the inhuman cruelty displayed against them, the revolutionaries have gradually forced autocracy to the very brink of the grave whither it is bound ignominiously to descend in no distant future.

If the present work is able to give the reader a comprehensive idea of the long-protracted struggle which at last has brought victory within sight its aim will have been accomplished, for in so doing it cannot fail to propagate hatred of autocratic despotism as practised in Russia, and to gain sympathies for those staking their lives and their all for the good of their brethren, the innumerable victims of oppression in the huge Russian Empire.

THE AUTHOR.

LONDON, *June*, 1905.

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