

capitalists and exploiters and poor corrupt officials, robbers of the Russian people.

"We pray your Majesty graciously to receive our demands, which are inspired by a desire for your Majesty's and our welfare and the consciousness of the necessity of escape from an intolerable situation. Russia is too great and her needs are too varied and numerous for officials only to rule. National representation is indispensable, as only the people themselves know the country's real needs.

"Refuse not by aid, but order a convocation of representatives of all classes, including workmen. Let all be free and equal in the elections, and to this end permit the election of a constituent assembly and general secret ballot. That is our chief demand, in which all else centers. It is the sole balm for our wounds, which will otherwise speedily bring us death.

"A single measure, however, will not heal all our wounds. Therefore we acquaint you frankly and openly on behalf of the whole of the Russian working classes, as to a father, with our further demands.

"There, sire, are our principal needs, satisfaction whereof can free Russia from slavery and misery, make her prosperous, and enable workmen to organize in defence of their interests against the capitalist exploitation and official robbery which are stifling the people. Order and swear they shall be satisfied, and you will make Russia happy and glorious and inscribe your name forever in the hearts of our people and their posterity, while should you refuse and reject our prayer we will die in this square before your palace. We have nowhere else to go.

"Only two paths are open to us: either towards liberty and happiness or to the grave. Should our lives serve as a holocaust for suffering Russia we shall not regret the sacrifice, but shall bear it willingly."

It takes no spirit of prophecy to see that the old order of things in Russia draws to its merited end. Last Sunday's massacre is probably the prelude to a cataclysm such as the world has beheld since the five terrible years that followed

the meeting, in 1789, of the states-general at Versailles."

The Neue Freie Presse (Vienna) is believed to speak with authority because it has peculiarly competent representatives in St. Petersburg, while its comment upon the information thus supplied is based upon much first-hand study of Russian institutions. The conclusion of this journal is that Russia has entered a phase quite unprecedented in the Moscovite world, and that the constitutional results of the zemstvo congress will be sweeping. To quote:

"The fact that this zemstvo congress could assemble in St. Petersburg, to discuss a fundamental modification and reform of the whole nature of the Government is avowed hostility to the autocratic system and its bureaucracy—this fact and this alone is a thing hitherto unheard of in Russia. It signifies in itself a mighty transformation, even though it be but the first timid manifestation of a future decisive alteration in the historic aspect of Russia. It is indeed that ventures to show itself in the spring weather, a bud full of promising growth beneath a stretch of sky where as yet never a sign of spring such as this was to be seen. Whereas elsewhere constitutionalism manifests itself through savage parliamentary struggles and the parliamentary system itself lends itself to its own disparagement through forbidding aspects, there appears in Russia—actually in Russia—the presage of a change in the direction of a constitution and the parliamentary system. A threatening storm of war tempts it irresistibly forth from the depths of the popular soul into the light—so irresistibly that the autocratic Czar and the all-potent bureaucracy are no longer able to rid themselves of it fully. They endure the zemstvo congress which otherwise, by a single word of authority, might have been swept out of the winter place like so much chaff. They tolerate the assemblage of provincial representatives from all parts of the vast empire for the discussion of the need of the introduction of a constitutional system into Russia. They endure, in a word, what formerly has appeared to the autocracy, like the fearful specter of revolution. . . . The great historical process has begun. It