

signs of the times; they probably seclude the Czar behind veils of ignorance and prejudice; they disguise their self-interest under seeming devotion to national interests; and they sacrifice the whole people for the benefit of a small ruling class. "The Empire is governed by a handful of men, Ministers of State, and chief among them are M. Witte; an "expert in monopoly and exploitation," and M. Pobiedonostsev, late Over-Procurator of the Holy Synod, an inquisitor with heart of ice and hand of steel, in the robes of an ecclesiastical chief shepherd. These men recognize no responsibility, and are "a junta of outlaws depending on armed force." As to Plehve, who was assassinated by Saranov, a man into whose soul the iron had entered, he was a terrorist compared with whom, Mr. Perris says, "Abdul Hamid is a bungling rustic in crime." He sowed the wind and reaped the whirlwind.

"Laws enough there are in Russia," one has said, "but no law." Until a few months ago, to be suspected of being a dissenter rendered the person concerned liable to be condemned to life-long imprisonment and exile. Muraviev stated last year that the political cases dealt with during the last decade had increased twenty-seven fold. According to a report of the Ministry of Justice, 2,953 persons were arrested on suspicion during the first three months of 1903; that is, at the rate of over 11,000 a year. Many thousands of workmen, students, and others were exiled without any inquiry whatever. The new exile districts selected since the *ukaze* of 1900 are the desert tundras and marshes of the Arctic circle, where the temperature is that of Central Greenland; where the exiles are badly clad, and doomed to live in the squalid shanties of the half-savage natives on the

verge of starvation. "Fifty per cent. of the exiles die raving mad." Many of these men have never been tried, and they represent the educated classes as well as the town-workman and the *mujik*. The story of Sakhalien, now in the hands of the Japanese, reveals deeper, more obscene and disgusting horrors still, on which we dare not enter. Often the nervous system breaks down utterly, the victim is the prey of hallucination, and suicides are numerous; the misery is stereotyped in the faces of all but the noblest and strongest. Mr. Henry Norman visited in 1900 the prison at Irkutsk, where he found 1,024 persons crowded into a place meant to hold 700, and he avers that "the faces of these men, from wild beast to vacant idiot, haunted me for days."

Taxed to the hilt, the people dread fresh taxation. The national debt had reached £750,000,000 in 1894. It is impossible to state to what it has now risen. The credit of Czardom is shaken at home and abroad. The huge sum of £272,000,000 owing to the Treasury does not lighten the load which Russia's subjects have to bear. Mr. Perris, in a highly luminous chapter on "the tariff," computes that the tariff costs the Russian people in imports and native productions considerably more than £100,000,000 yearly, or ten times as much as the direct taxes of the Empire; of which enormous sum three-quarters go into the pockets of private capitalists who are concerned only to make investments highly remunerative, and the remainder to the State to carry on a hated war for which there was nothing to compensate.

And now a conflagration more dangerous than the discontent of workmen and the *mujik* swept from one end of the land to another, threatening and in some sense effect-