

The First World War and the Polarization of the Russian Right, July 1914–February 1917

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Historians tend to identify the Russian political Right at the beginning of the twentieth century with opposition to modernization and reform, and compromise with liberals and socialists.¹ But even if the major part of the Russian Right was anti-modern, it was not monolithic. The attitudes of those on the Right toward constitutional changes initiated during the Revolution of 1905 differed substantially.² The Great War amplified those differences and thereby stimulated the disintegration of the Right on the eve of the Revolution of 1917.

Some historians argued that this disintegration took place because some of those on the right crossed over to the side of their opponents. The biographer of Vladimir Purishkevich, a notorious member of the right in the State Duma wrote, “The majority of society re-oriented itself to the side of the opposition, including Purishkevich, who hurried to keep pace with this process.”³ Opponents of Purishkevich followed the same logic. I. I. Dudnichenko, a member of the right wing from Odessa, who doubted the depth of right-wing commitments of politicians from the capital before the monarchist convention in Nizhnii Novgorod in November 1915, wrote: “Is it reasonable to send invitations

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1. See, for example, Hans Rogger, “Russia” in Hans Rogger and Eugen Weber, eds., *The European Right: A Historical Profile* (Berkeley, 1965), 443–500; Heinz-Dietrich Löwe, *Antisemitismus und reaktionäre Utopie: Russischer Konservatismus im Kampf gegen den Wandel von Staat und Gesellschaft, 1890–1917* (Hamburg, 1978); Roberta T. Manning, *The Crisis of the Old Order in Russia: Gentry and Government* (Princeton, 1982); Francis W. Wcislo, *Reforming Rural Russia: State, Local Society, and National Politics, 1855–1914* (Princeton, 1990); Peter Waldron, *Between Two Revolutions: Stolypin and the Politics of Renewal in Russia* (De Kalb, 1998); Alexandra S. Korros, *Reluctant Parliament: Stolypin, Nationalism, and the Politics of the Russian Imperial State Council, 1906–1911* (Lanham, 2002); Iu. I. Kir’anov, *Pravye partii v Rossii, 1911–1917* (Moscow, 2001); S.A. Stepanov, *Chernaia sotnia: Chto oni sdelali dlia velichiia Rossii* (Moscow, 2013).

2. See, for details, J.A. Hosking and Roberta T. Manning, “What Was the United Nobility?,” in Leopold Haimson ed., *The Politics of Rural Russia: 1905–1914* (Bloomington, 1979), 142–83; Roberta T. Manning, *The Crisis of the Old Order in Russia: Gentry and Government* (Princeton, 1982), 325–71; Peter Waldron, *Between Two Revolutions: Stolypin and the Politics of Renewal in Russia* (De Kalb, 1998), 115–86; Mikhail Loukianov, “Conservatives and ‘Renewed Russia,’ 1907–1914,” *Slavic Review* 61, no. 4 (Winter 2002): 762–86.

3. A.A. Ivanov, *Vladimir Purishkevich: Opyt biografii pravogo politika (1870–1920)* (Moscow and St. Peterburg, 2011), 247.

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to Purishkevich and Vostorgov? Would they not do us harm?"⁴ A resolution of the convention described the editor of the right-wing daily *Kolokol*, V. M. Skvortsov, as "a person who openly deserted for the 'progressive' camp and is supporting the 'progressive bloc'."⁵ The influential rightist politician and ideologist K. N. Paskhalov reproached the leaders of the United Nobility for their indifference to the monarchists.⁶

Meanwhile, the objects of this criticism continued to associate themselves with the Right. Purishkevich repeatedly stated, "... I cannot leave the ranks of a Right, because arguably of those sitting on benches on the right, I am the staunchest [*samyi pravyi*]."⁷ Likewise, Skvortsov defined his newspaper as a right-wing one.⁸ A. D. Samarin, who became the Chairman of the Permanent Council of the United Nobility in December 1916, insisted that the key political principle of the organization was devotion to the Autocracy.⁹ The Russian Right was politically homogeneous neither before the war, nor during war time. Thus, it seems unproductive to claim that ideologists and politicians who parted ways with the majority of their fellows ceased to belong to the Right.

The aim of this article is to analyze the political differentiation of the political Right during World War I, concentrating not on their political actions, but on their political views and moods; not on what the rightists *did*, but on what they *thought* and *felt*.¹⁰ The present work is based mainly on personal correspondence and diaries, which give a nuanced picture of the political views and emotional reactions of their authors.

The "Spirit of 1914" and the Right

The outbreak of the war generated contradictory emotions among those on the right. On the one hand, the war was perceived as a threat to the conservative spirit in Europe, while on the other, it gave birth to outbursts of patriotism, rallying people around the Monarch.

4. N.N. Tikhonovich-Savitskii to N.N. Rodzevich, November 4, 1915. Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii (GARF), fond (f.) 102, opis' (op.) 265, delo (d.) 1036, list (l.) 1900.

5. "Soveshchanie upolnomochennykh pravyykh organizatsii i pravyykh deiatelei v Nizhnem Novgorode 26–29 noiabria 1915 g.," in *Pravye partii, 1911–1917: Dokumenty i materialy*, vol. 2 (Moscow, 1998), 502. See also, Archbishop Nikon to S.A. Nilus, August 31, 1915. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 1030, l. 1304.

6. K.N. Paskhalov to N.A. Maklakov, October 29, 1915. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 1036, l. 1830.

7. *Gosudarstvennaia Duma: Stenograficheskie otchety, sozyv chetvertyi, sessiia V* (Petrograd, 1916), stb. 261.

8. See "Na legkom tormoze vpered . . .," *Kolokol*, August 18, 1915, 1.

9. See Protokol zasedaniia Postoiannogo Soveta ob'edinennykh dvorianskikh obshchestv, January 19, 1917. GARF, f. 434, op. 1, d. 87, l. 3ob.

10. On political history of the Russian Right of this period see Iu. I. Kir'anov, *Pravye partii v Rossii*, 216–430; A.A. Ivanov, *Poslednie zashchitniki monarkhii: Fraktsiia pravyykh IV Gosudarstvennoi dumy v gody Pervoi mirovoi voiny (1914–fevral' 1917)* (St. Petersburg, 2006); A.A. Ivanov, *Pravye v rusском parlamente: Ot krizisa k krakhu (1914–1917)* (Moscow and St. Petersburg, 2013).

According to S.K. Glinka-Ianchevskii, the editor of the daily *Zemshchina* that was associated with right-wing politicians in the Duma, the conflict between Germany and Russia—"these two most powerful monarchies, the cornerstones of the Christian civilization,"—threatened the very existence of both.¹¹ But at the same time, however, the war facilitated political consolidation: "... The Russian people met the enemy well prepared for action, and all internal conflicts and disorders faded away at the moment when the first gust of the war storm blew," wrote an editorial in *Moskovskie vedomosti*, the eldest provincial conservative newspaper.¹² In the same vein, the title of *Kolokol's* editorial was "Russia is one family."¹³ Apparently, the representatives of the Right were candid in their public utterances, and their private papers contained the same message: "There are no grounds to be afraid for Petersburg, and local inhabitants do not express any fear . . . in general, in Moscow and Petersburg the mood is excellent, the reservists move quietly, the rumors are good,"—remarked the extreme rightist academician A.I. Sobolevskii.¹⁴ Members of right-wing factions in the representative chambers shared his view. "The war with the Germans is very popular, and the populace is ready for any sacrifices," wrote State Council rightist group member N.A. Zverev.¹⁵

Those on the right were sure that public unity rested on a conservative basis. S.L. Obleukhova, one of the leaders of the Union of Archangel Michael, stated: "Now, at least while the war lasts, there is no one left to struggle against as in the past, no revolutionaries, no cosmopolitans, no others. All of Russia has become *chernosotennoi* [Black Hundreds], extreme right wing."¹⁶ Especially important for the rightists was the fact that the Tsar became the symbolic center of patriotic consolidation. A.K. Varzhenevskii, one of the leaders of the Moscow province nobility asked rhetorically: "Could one expect four months ago that a crowd of many thousand students would sing on their knees in front of the Winter Palace?"¹⁷

Paradoxically, the war became a starting point for the improvement of Russia according to those on the right. According to *Moskovskie vedomosti*: "This war is God's miracle and God's mercy. It is a medicine, which is bitter and terrifying, but necessary to cure our disease. The war has regenerated our society right from the beginning: it has transformed us, made us healthy, strong and resolute."¹⁸ Duma right-wing faction member S.A. Volodimerov hoped that the war would weaken the influence of the liberal intelligentsia,

11. S. Glinka, "Dobilis' svoego!," *Zemshchina*, July 19, 1914, 3.

12. "Prezhde vsego—sderzhannost' i vyderzhka," *Moskovskie vedomosti*, July 30, 1914, 1.

13. "Vsia Rossiia—odna sem'ia," *Kolokol*, August 13, 1914, 1.

14. A.I. Sobolevskii to Iu.A. Kulakovskii, August 5, 1914. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 992, l. 1161.

15. N.A. Zverev to S.D. Sheremetev, August 10, 1914. Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv drevnikh aktov (RGADA), f. 1287, op. 1, d. 5122, l. 168.

16. S.L. Obleukhova to V.M. Purishkevich, August 20, 1914. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 994, l. 1324.

17. A.K. Varzhenevskii to S.D. Sheremetev, August 20, 1914. RGADA, f. 1287, op. 1, d. 5123, l. 176–176ob.

18. "Znachenie pervoi nashei pobedy," *Moskovskie vedomosti*, August 12, 1914, 1.

writing “Let the war storm clear . . . the suffocating fog of the liberal intelligentsia [*liberal'noġo intelligentizma*]. Russia will wake up to greatness and glory, free from liberalism.”¹⁹

The Right and the Russian Variant of “Sacred Unity”

Although those on the right were satisfied with the reaction of Russian society to the outbreak of the war, they held contradictory visions on how to use the rise of patriotism. During the first months of the war, rightists developed two diametrically opposed political strategies. Some of them decided that war and patriotic consolidation might help to curb (ideally—to get rid of) democratic institutions and procedures. On the contrary, their opponents interpreted the rise of patriotic feelings as proof of the efficacy of the policies of reform and supported the idea of the “Sacred Unity.”

A number of members of the Right disapproved of any dialogue with the opposition in principle. “The liberal course [in politics], which the liberal newspapers are writing about, scares me. What are the reasons for being so benevolent to the progressives and Yids? Because several times they have demonstrated on the streets with national flags [?],” N.N. Rodzevich wrote from Odessa.²⁰ Any rapprochement with the liberals disturbed B.V. Nikol'skii, a member of the extreme Right from St. Petersburg, as well. “Things are going properly in the Duma, except for the fraternization [*bratanie*] between [N.E.] Markov and [Vladimir] Purishkevich with [Pavel] Miliukov. They are worth each other,” he noted in his diary.²¹ Members of the extreme Right were especially irritated by the appeal of the Supreme Commander, the Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich, to the Polish people titled “To the Poles!,” which promised to reunite Poland after victory over Germany and Austria-Hungary and give it wide autonomy within the Russian Empire. Contributors to the extreme-Right publication *Russkoe Znamia* saw no reason to appeal to the Poles because of their “incessant hatred” of Russia.²² Sobolevskii ascribed this appeal to the government’s “nervousness [*nervnichan'e*].”²³

More respectable members of the Right also doubted the necessity of the policy of concessions. A.K. Varzhenevskii was afraid that Polish autonomy would weaken Russian influence in the empire.²⁴ “The government gives too many promissory notes, and it would be difficult to fulfill them,” N.A. Zverev supposed.²⁵ Another right-wing activist and member of the State Council,

19. S.A. Volodimerov, “Prosvety,” *Zemshchina*, August 22, 1914, 3.

20. N.N. Rodzevich to V.N. Rodzevich, 26 July 1914. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 991, l. 940.

21. Diary of B.V. Nikol'skii, entry for July 27, 1914. Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi istorichskii arkhiv (RGIA), f. 1006, d. 4b, l. 344.

22. *Russkoe znamia*, August 3, 1914, 1.

23. A.I. Sobolevskii to Iu.A. Kulakovskii, August 5, 1914. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 992, l. 1161.

24. A.K. Varzhenevskii to S.D. Sheremetev, August 4, 1914. RGADA, f. 1287, op. 1, d. 5122, l. 124ob. See also N.S. Mal'tsov to S.D. Sheremetev, August 7, 1914. RGADA, f. 1287, 1287, op. 1, d. 5122, l. 140ob.

25. N.A. Zverev to S.D. Sheremetev, August 12, 1914. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 993, l. 1236.

S.D. Sheremetev, agreed: “Our Supreme Chief [*Verkhovnyi nash Voevoda*] has indulged himself with risky and ambiguous appeals.”²⁶ These appeals confused right-wing sympathizers among high-ranking bureaucrats. The wife of Minister of Justice I.G. Shcheglovitov later recollected that her husband had called the document “the beginning of the end of Russia.”²⁷ Opponents of social and political compromise suggested using the war as the pretext to confine the influence of representative institutions. *Zemshchina*’s editor advised the government not to summon the State Duma or the State Council, and to make financial decisions without them.²⁸

At the same time, some on the Right interpreted the “Spirit of 1914” as an argument in favor of reforms and supported the policy of reconciliation with the opposition. The popular right-wing ideologist and conservative churchman I.I. Vostorgov admired the outburst of patriotism and supposed that the war might facilitate the necessary changes: “What a moment we are living through! The Unity of all people in Russia, future victories, inevitable to my mind, new conditions for church politics, a new [international] position of Russia and the Orthodox church in relation to the East and to the Slavic peoples, the disappearance of the necessity to make concessions and reforms under pressure from the bottom, and the possibility of carrying them out from the top, at the discretion of the government.” He supposed that the war strengthened the Duma: “It is impossible to abolish the Duma, the war has cemented it.” To his mind, the Right should not oppose social reforms: “We will not say a word against providing peasants with land and workers, with legislation securing their rights.” Besides, Vostorgov was ready to discuss giving equal rights to different national and confessional groups, and widening the rights of the Duma. He suggested seeking political support from the lower classes: “It is high time to give up on the nobles and capitalists. Our path is not the same as theirs. Our ideal is the Church and the People [*nash ideal—tserkovno-narodnyi*].”²⁹

According to Obleukhova, the Right needed to refine its policy and turn popular patriotism into a permanent factor in politics: “They [leaders on the Right] ought to transform themselves from a militant army into cultural workers, to support and strengthen this mighty spirit of nationalism through school reform and other means which could sustain the people at this high level of patriotism forever,” she wrote to Purishkevich.³⁰ The addressee shared the author’s enthusiasm and was ready for reconciliation with former enemies. Purishkevich asked to introduce her to the Kadet leader Miliukov, though in 1909 he stated that the latter’s name had become the “synonym for spiritual

26. S.D. Sheremetev to N.A. Zverev, August 19, 1914. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 994, l. 1311.

27. M. Shcheglovitova, “Moi vospominaniia o muzhe, Ivane Grigor’eviche Shcheglovitove.” Rossiiskii Gosugarstvennyi arkhiv literatury i iskusstva (RGALI), f. 1208, op. 1, d. 52, l. 48.

28. S. Glinka, “Ne opasno li?,” *Zemshchina*, August 25, 1914, 2.

29. I.I. Vostorgov to Bishop Makarii, August 9, 1914. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 993, l. 1209.

30. S.L. Obleukhova to V.M. Purishkevich, August 20, 1914. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 994, l. 1324. Italics added by author.

prostitution, high treason and servile submission to the will of the Jewish Kahal.”³¹

Henceforth, both the hardliners and the supporters of political dialogue developed and refined their arguments. In January 1915, Purishkevich stressed that the experience of socio-political unity in war time was important “for the development of a more noble [*blagorodnyi*] language for talks with each other, and in the future, a language for mutual understanding.”³² *Kolokol*’s authors conceptualized the idea of reconciliation. “Both liberals and conservatives found conciliatory ground in the feelings [associated with] statehood and nationality,” wrote the editor.³³ Right-wing intellectuals especially appreciated international and interconfessional cooperation. Columnist P.N. Ianov used the term “imperialism” in order to explicate the principle of cooperation. This term implied “peaceful cohabitation and mutual cooperation between the leading nationality and the dependent tribes, for the [purpose of achieving] common good and mutual benefit.”³⁴

In terms of international affairs, particular attention was focused on the question of Poland. In autumn 1914, a group of conservative intellectuals headed by the scion of the famous Samarin family, F.D. Samarin, began discussions on the future of Poland. Its results were summed up in the memorandum, “On the ‘Appeal’ of the Supreme Commander to the Polish People.” They argued that Polish autonomy could not lead to a long-lasting union between Russians and Poles, because the latter strove for independence. The future separation of Poland from the Russian Empire seemed to be the most reasonable way forward.³⁵

The majority of those on the right, however, preferred to solve political problems not by compromise but by an order from above. The supporters of this approach to national mobilization fixed the roles of the state and society in terms of master and slave. One of the leaders of the right-wing Duma members, N.E. Markov, insisted that the Duma’s duty was *to help* the government in its ventures.³⁶ *Russkoe znamia* wrote: “The government as an institution commissioned from above ought to play the leading role in common activities.”³⁷ The newspaper reproached the ministers inclined towards a political dialogue for “flirting with the public” [*zaigryvanii c obshchestvennost’ iu*].³⁸ The idea of a powerful state did not mean, however, that the hardliners refrained

31. See Ivanov, *Vladimir Purishkevich*, 194.

32. *Gosudarstvennaia Duma: Stenograficheskie otchety, sozryv chetvertyi, sessia III*. (Petrograd, 1915), stb. 141.

33. “Blagovest razdalsia,” *Kolokol*, October 16, 1914, 1.

34. Vitiaz’ [P.N. Ianov], “Politicheskie pis’ma,” *Kolokol* January 16, 1915, 1.

35. F.D. Samarin et al. *Po povodu “Vozzvaniia” Verkhovnogo Glavnokomanduishchego k Pol’skomu narodu* (Moscow, 1915), 15. According to L.A. Tikhomirov, the rightist ideologist and the former editor of *Moskovskie vedomosti*, the idea of independence of Poland, became popular among the members of the circle at the earliest stage of the discussions. See Diary of L.A. Tikhomorov, entry for October 21, 1914. GARF, f. 634, op. 1, d. 22, l. 217.

36. See E. D. Chermenskii, *IV Gosudarstvennaia дума i sverzhenie tzarizma v Rossii* (Moscow, 1976), 75.

37. *Russkoe znamia*, January 25, 1915, 1.

38. V., “K ukhodu g. Timashova,” *Russkoe znamia*, February 22, 1915, 1.

from criticizing its decisions. The appeal of Nikolai Nikolaevich remained the most important object of this critique. Markov was afraid of worsening the position of Russians in autonomous Poland.³⁹ K.N. Paskhalov stressed: "If you want the province [Poland] to remain calm, you should not encourage its striving toward separation." Instead, he recommended giving Poland "self-government . . . [while] strictly observing the interests of Russian statehood" at the same time.⁴⁰

The Foundation of the Progressive Bloc and the New Round of Conflicts on the Right

In the summer of 1915 the rightists took an active part in the debate on the causes of military failures and the best means of organizing the home front. The extreme rightists explained all the problems as a result of insufficient discipline and concessions to the opposition. They were irritated by the dismissal of two ministers who had been most friendly to them: N.A. Maklakov and I.G. Shcheglovitov. The reshuffle of the government made a "killingly nasty [*ubiistvenno-gadkoe*] impression" on Nikol'skii.⁴¹ The appointment of N.B. Shcherbatov and A.D. Samarin to the government was highly disturbing to the rightists because of their closeness to non-governmental organizations. Sobolevskii alluded to the eve of the Revolution of 1905, writing "The Spring here begins again, [this time] under Goremykin."⁴²

The idea of pressing the government in order to make it follow a hard line was born from these fears. At the end of June 1915 the Odessa Union of Russian People [*Odesskii Soiuz Russkikh Liudei*] suggested organizing an all-Russian convention of monarchists. Saratov rightists supported the idea, suggesting a preparatory "small convention" in their town.⁴³ Those who lobbied the government from the Right were pessimistic about the prospects for the new session of the representative institutions. The head of the right-wing group in the State Council, P.N. Durnovo, wrote: "From the very beginning of the campaign to expedite summoning the representative bodies, I thought this summoning not only useless, but politically harmful as well."⁴⁴

At the first day of the session Durnovo delivered a speech, in which he argued that only strict order and its unconditional implementation might bring victory.⁴⁵ His words excited Nikol'skii: "Durnovo's speech is excellent . . . how

39. See *Gosudarstvennaia Duma: Stenograficheskie otchety, sozvyv chetvertyi, sessia III* (Petrograd, 1915), stb. 130. See also, *Russkoe znanie*, January 16, 1915, 1.

40. K.N. Paskhalov, *Otzyv na zapisku "Po povodu 'Vozzvaniia' Verkhovnogo Glavnokomanduiushchego k Pol'skomu narodu*," F.D. Samarina i dr. (Moscow, 1915), 20, 35.

41. Diary of B.V. Nikol'skii, entry for June 8, 1915. RGIA, f. 1006, op. 1, d. 4b, l. 359.

42. A.I. Sobolevskii to Iu. A. Kulakovskii, June 16, 1915. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 1023, l. 148–148ob.

43. *Trudy Vserossiiskogo monarkhicheskogo soveshchaniia v g. Nizhnem Novgorode s 26 po 29 noiabria 1915 g.* (Petrograd, 1916), 6, 8–9.

44. P.N. Durnovo to E.A. Naryshkin, July 11, 1915. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 1025, l. 339.

45. *Gosudarstvennyi Sovet: Stenograficheskie otchety, sessia XI* (Petrograd, 1915), stb. 35.

strong, powerful, firm!”⁴⁶ Nevertheless, the diarist doubted whether the Tsar and the ministers would follow Durnovo’s advice.⁴⁷ The situation seemed very dangerous to him: “The weathercock has rushed to the left, and all the stakes are on the left. As far as I understand, the Tsar has not yet taken that path, but he does not see any support [from the Right].”⁴⁸ According to Maklakov, who after his dismissal from the government became one of the key figures among the rightists in the State Council, the monarch was surrounded by the people who “pretend to be . . . devoted to the Tsar, but [who] try to ruin his prerogative, and maybe the throne.”⁴⁹ The foundation of the Progressive bloc stimulated these fears and consolidated many rightists around Durnovo’s statement that order and discipline were the keys to victory. They tried to convince the government to take a hard line. P.N. Strukov, the Chairman of the Permanent Council of the United Nobility, warned the head of the government against surrendering to the opposition, because doing so would produce “instability of thought and inner confusion [*shataniia mysli i vnutrennei smuty*].”⁵⁰ The same message informed the resolutions of the Monarchist convention in Saratov, which took place August 27–29, 1915.⁵¹

In autumn 1915 the supporters of this line repeatedly blamed the government for tolerating the Progressive bloc, registering this discontent in their private correspondence. V. Zverev complained about the “manifestly favorable attitude of the reconstructed cabinet” to the bloc.⁵² Markov stated: “The corruption of the statehood spreads not from below, but from the Ministers’ offices. The infamous yellow (progressive) bloc of the State Duma and the State Council could have a chance to emerge only due to the efforts and under the guidance of some Ministers.”⁵³ The supporters of the hard line supposed that the government had all resources to reinforce the order quickly. “It is enough . . . to strip certain persons from their court ranks, to show Messrs. Ministers their right places . . . , to take in hand Mayors, who dared to pass political resolutions, and everything will become in order,” Maklakov wrote.⁵⁴

However, how to push the authorities to resolute actions remained an open question. Aleksandr I. Dubrovin, the head of the extreme right-wing Union of the Russian People, advised pressing for a harder political line,

46. Diary of B.V. Nikol’skii, entry for July 21, 1915. RGIA, f. 1006, op.1, d. 4b, l. 364.

47. Ibid., entry for July 23, 1915. RGIA, f. 1006, op.1, d. 4b, l. 364ob.

48. Ibid., entry for July 26, 1915. RGIA, f. 1006, op.1, d. 4b, l. 365.

49. N.A. Maklakov to K.N. Paskhalov, July 30, 1915. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 1026, l. 500.

50. “Pis’mo Postoiannogo soveta S’ezdov upolnomochennykh dvorianskikh obshchestv predsedateliu Soveta ministrov I.L. Goremykinu ot 23 avgusta, 1915 g.,” in *Ob’edinennoe dvor’anstvo: S’edy upolnomochennykh gubernskikh dvorianskikh obshchestv, 1906–1916* (Moscow, 2002), vol. 3, 854.

51. See *Trudy Vserossiiskogo monarkhicheskogo soveshchaniia v g. Nizhnem Novgorode*, 11–19.

52. V. Zverev to S.D. Sheremetev, September 2, 1915. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 1030, l. 1328.

53. N.E. Markov to N.E. Tatishchev, September 14, 1915. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 1014, l. 749.

54. N.A. Maklakov to N.F. Burdukov, September 22, 1915. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 1032, l. 1482–1482ob.

avoiding publicity: “Meanwhile we decided to do our work without noise, quietly/secretly/—to contact like-minded persons, better privately, and to get ready for resistance to the unlawful onslaught.”⁵⁵ Yet this kind of the “clandestine” activity did not satisfy many rightists. Rodzevich wrote to Dubrovin: “I agree with you that the times are terribly disturbing. Nevertheless, I disagree that we must be quiet; on the contrary, noise makes an impression on the authorities.”⁵⁶

There were also conflicting views as to whether it would be better to unite all the rightists or to turn only to the extreme elements among them for support. Though the difference between the extremists like Dubrovin and more moderate Duma rightists embarrassed Rodzevich, he concluded that mingling with the latter might become helpful for the former.⁵⁷ “The more numerous we are, the stronger our voice is,” seconded I.I. Dudnichenko.⁵⁸ The chairman of the Tula provincial Union of the Russian People, M.A. Orfenov, held the opposite view, suggesting that “a discussion of the latest events and affairs in the Union should involve only unionists and monarchists of ‘pure water’ [authentic], and not ‘margarine’ [phony].”⁵⁹ K.N. Paskhalov shared this position.⁶⁰

The rightists did not manage to overcome these disagreements. In November 1915, two conventions (in Petrograd and Nizhnii Novgorod) took place instead of one, although their resolutions elaborated on the same themes. The progressive bloc’s demand for a “ministry of confidence” was interpreted as an attempt to break the Fundamental Laws and violate the Monarch’s prerogative. Conciliation with the bloc was thereby deemed impossible, whereas the most complete state control over political, social, and economic activity of any kind was seen as highly desirable.⁶¹

But there were also notable differences between the conventions. The Petrograd convention was dominated by the metropolitan rightists, connected with factions of the legislative chambers, while in Nizhnii Novgorod the provincial followers of Dubrovin (Dubrovinists) played a more important role.⁶² This explains why the Nizhnii Novgorod convention adopted a more radical resolution, which insisted on the legal prosecution of the bloc’s participants.⁶³ On the other hand, the Petrograd convention was more resolute

55. A.I. Dubrovin to N.N. Rodzevich, September 20, 1915. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 1032, l. 1472.

56. N.N. Rodzevich to A.I. Dubrovin, October 7, 1915. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 1034, l. 1636.

57. *Ibid.*

58. I.I. Dudnichenko to N.N. Tikhonovich-Savitskii, October 25, 1915. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 1036, l. 1803.

59. M.A. Orfenov to N.N. Rodzevich, September 25, 1915. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 1033, l. 1508.

60. K.N. Paskhalov to N.A. Maklakov, October 31, 1915. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 1036, l. 1857.

61. See “Soveshchanie predstavitelei pravyykh partii i organizatsii i pravyykh deiatelei v Petrograde 12–13 noiabria 1915 g.,” in *Pravye partii*, vol. 2, 484–94; “Soveshchanie predstavitelei pravyykh partii i organizatsii i pravyykh deiatelei v Nizhnem Novgorode 26–29 noiabria 1915 g.,” in *Ibid.*, 496–520.

62. For more details see Kir’ianov, *Pravye partii v Rossii*, 237–59.

63. “Soveshchanie upolnomochennykh pravyykh organizatsii i pravyykh deiatelei v Nizhnem Novgorode,” in *Pravye partii*, vol. 2, 513–14.

in imposing its line on the government. One of the convention's participants wrote: "We are working out a political program for those in power."⁶⁴ The new leader of the rightist group in the State Council, A.A. Bobribskii, feared that this resolution had gone overboard, because "the Street [the mob], even a completely rightist one, ought not to give orders to the Sovereign or criticize his activities."⁶⁵

The extreme rightists did not plan to concentrate on influencing public opinion, and placed their hope for the realization of their projects instead on the authorities. A letter to Duma right-wing faction member G.G. Zamyslovskii said: "Insignificant groups of rightists bearing the names of different unions, will not bring much good. If that is necessary for people with the rightist views to occupy high positions in all offices; then we must secure it."⁶⁶ The rightist publicist N.A. Pavlov compared the voice of the public with "babble," muted by the "thunders of the world elements." He suggested consolidating power by limiting the number of decision-makers. "Now more than ever we need all the power of the authorities, but we are weakening it. We need to concentrate power in strong hands, to find the strong, resolute will, whereas we are allowing the work and life itself to be fritted away in councils, committees and dumas . . ."⁶⁷

The moderate rightists were also not satisfied with the situation in summer and autumn of 1915. "Everyone's nerves are so tired, so tired . . . and [there is] the helplessness of the people and complete decay of the authorities . . .," Vostorgov wrote.⁶⁸ At the beginning of the session, the leadership of the Duma rightists became confused and supported V.A. Bobrinskii's resolution on the necessity to have "confidence" in relations between the State and the population.⁶⁹ If Markov disavowed this step soon thereafter, Vostorgov continued to demonstrate his disengagement and contemplated different possible scenarios. "It seems to me that [forces of] the revolution are powerless now. But after the war it might be quite another story," he wrote in September 1915. "A strong movement is gathering momentum and a conflict between the government and the intelligentsia's opposition is brewing. The victory will be won by the side that firmly believes in its truth, right and strength."⁷⁰

Simultaneously, many provincial noble institutions refused to confront the Progressive bloc. Although Strukov represented his appeal to Goremykin as an expression of the opinion of all Russian nobles, a considerable part of

64. Unidentified person to Bishop Vasilii, November 22, 1915. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 1038, l. 2037.

65. "Pis'mo grafa A. Bobrinskogo predsedateliu soveshchaniia (s'ezda) monarkhistov v Petrograde I.G. Shcheglovitovu, 22 noiabria 1915 g.," in *Pravye partii*, vol. 2, 494–95.

66. "Devoted with heart V.B." to G.G. Zamyslovskii, November 29, 1915. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 1038, l. 2091.

67. N.A. Pavlov, "Ne meshaite . . .," *Moskovskie vedomosti*, November 25, 1915, 2.

68. I.I. Vostorgov to Bishop Makarii, June 5, 1915. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 1013, l. 40.

69. See *Gosudarstvennaia Duma: Stenograficheskie otchety, sozryv chetvertyi, sessia IV* (Petrograd, 1915), stb. 72. N.E. Markov stated later that he did not understand the maneuvers of the organizers of the Progressive bloc. See *Gosudarstvennaia Duma: Stenograficheskie otchety, sozryv chetvertyi, sessia IV* (Petrograd, 1916), stb. 2475.

70. I.I. Vostorgov to E.F. Vostorgova, September 7, 1915. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 1030, l. 1397.

the United Nobility censured him. A number of provincial noble organizations opposed the letter either on formal grounds (they had not given Strukov their consent to appeal to the Prime Minister), or because of their disagreement with its content, or for both reasons. This conflict contributed to the failure of the rightist group to successfully pass a single candidate to the State Council during the autumn 1915 election campaign.⁷¹

To give yet another example, Purishkevich spoke against the confrontation with the Progressive bloc. He argued that instead of mutual accusations, the government and the majority of the legislative chambers ought to combine their efforts in order to pacify the masses on the home front and to secure victory on the battlefields. He stressed that all the people were striving for victory, so fomenting an anti-revolutionary movement would undermine public unity and discredit only the Right. “Where is the Revolution now? Yes it exists, but in the minds of such politicians as Shcheglovitov, Dubrovin, Paskhalov, Toropov [a participant of the Petrograd Convention] and others. To summon this convention is not the mistake of the party, but the treason [committed by] the rightists, who alienated the masses by their untimely, groundless and blatant declarations.” Purishkevich recommended gathering a convention of the rightists not during, but after the war, designing it “not as a convention to fight a non-existent revolution, but as a convention of the rightists united to revise and work out political programs to formulate a more adequate policy of conciliation with non-Russians [*inorodtsy*], based on evidence regarding inorodtsy that I saw during the war.”⁷²

Contributors to *Kolokol*, like previously, agitated for political compromise and looked toward the government as the main actor on the political stage. The editorials of the newspaper insisted that it was the government’s duty to cooperate with society, which, in its turn, was believed to be interested in closer contact with the state.⁷³ V. Ruadze, a *Kolokol* columnist, argued that members of the extreme right undermined the mutual trust between the Tsar and his people when they insisted on his strict control over society.⁷⁴ At the same time, *Kolokol* censured the Progressive bloc for its inflexibility.⁷⁵ Its pages declared compromise as the most rational way to solve political conflicts.⁷⁶ Columnist P.N. Ianov compared the Russian political landscape with a river valley. The “progressive unity” [*progressivnoe edinenie*] occupied one bank—the bureaucracy and conservatives [including the rightists]—the other. It is worth noting that the author located the monarchy [*Tsarev kurgan*] on the same bank as “progressive unity,” and described it as “the hallmark of our genuine national-liberalism, understood as true freedom of thought, which has never encroached on our monarchic foundations.” As a consequence, the

71. M.A. Bibin, *Dvorianstvo nakanune padeniia tsarizma v Rossii* (Saransk, 2000), 86, 94, 108–9.

72. “Purishkevich o I.G. Shcheglovitove i ego blizkikh,” *Kolokol*, December 3, 1915, 3.

73. See, for example, Vitiaz’ [P.N. Ianov], “Pobedim li my?,” *Kolokol*, August 13, 1915, 1.

74. Vl. Smolenskii [V. Ruadze], “Vnutrennie nemtsy,” *Kolokol*, August 20, 1915, 3.

75. See Vitiaz’ [P.N. Ianov], “Zanevestivshaisia obshchestvennost,” *Kolokol*, August 20, 1915, 1–2.

76. “Vzaimnost’ programmnykh ustupok,” *Kolokol*, August 29, 1915, 1.

“governing circles” [*pravitel'stvennye krugi*] ought to bridge the space between the banks and to secure the synthesis of different values and the cooperation of conflicting political forces. Ianov argued that: “Our governing circles are not devoid of progressive intentions, but at the same time the liberal course must have a conservative foundation.”⁷⁷

Ianov declared that an exclusively right-wing political orientation was unreasonable: “Conservatism is the government’s rampart. This is certainly true, but not always and not everywhere. One must know which pillars of the state are to be safeguarded, and how this is to be done. . . . reaction contradicts genuine conservatism to the same extent as does the revolution and rootless radicalism.”⁷⁸ The editorials qualified appeals as an uncompromising fight with the Progressive bloc; as “dull and malicious advice to the highest authorities to keep society under tight control.”⁷⁹ On the contrary, protests against Strukov’s appeal to Goremykin were appreciated as expressions of the “revival of the nobility.”⁸⁰ The newspaper condemned the November conventions on the grounds that they hampered “the practical actions of the Tsar’s Government” and encroached upon the Monarch’s prerogative.⁸¹ *Kolokol* suggested an alternative political line, which it called “sound conservatism [*zdorovyi konservatizm*],” based on the “really practical union between the authorities and society on the grounds of mutual respect and collaboration for the glory of Russia.”⁸²

The consolidation of the conservative part of society in order to counterbalance its liberal segment was interpreted as a precondition for this union.⁸³ Ruadze explained his vision of the conservatives’ consolidation in a special memorandum titled “On the Militarization of the Right-Wing Movement in Russia.” He stated that “the monarchist unions have turned out to become not the buttresses of cautious and thoughtful governmental policies, but rather the instruments of caustic critique, which has brought the final disintegration to the rightist movement.” He suggested uniting the rightist organizations into the single “Party of the Tsar and the People” [*tsarsko-narodnaia partiia*]. He proposed to organize its management on a military basis, making the government its ruling center. Ruadze opposed the plans of extreme rightists to use state institutions for their own interests, instead entertaining a contrasting idea of transforming the Right into the political instrument of the government.⁸⁴

77. Vitiaz’ [P.N. Ianov], “Politicheskie pis'ma,” *Kolokol*, September 13, 1915, 2.

78. Vitiaz’ [P.N. Ianov], “Obshchee ruslo,” *Kolokol*, September 20, 1915, 1.

79. “V period bezdum'ia,” *Kolokol*, October 8, 1915, 1.

80. “Vozrozhdenie dvorianstva,” *Kolokol*, October 10, 1915, 1.

81. See Vl. Smolenskii [V. Ruadze], “K s'ezdu 'pravykh,’” *Kolokol*, November 18, 1915, 2; “Biurokraticheskii absoliutizm,” *Kolokol*, November 18, 1915, 1; Vl. Smolenskii [V. Ruadze], “Uzurpatory,” *Kolokol*, November 26, 1915, 2.

82. “Mir vnutrennii,” *Kolokol*, December 11, 1915, 2.

83. “Dva lageria,” *Kolokol*, December 9, 1915, 1.

84. See “Dokladnaia zapiska zhurnalista Vl. Ruadze (Vl. Smolenskogo) ‘O militarizatsii pravogo dvizheniia v Rossii,’” in Iu.I Kirianov, “Perepiska pravykh i drugie materialy ob ikh deiatel'nosti v 1914–1917 gg.” *Voprosy istorii*, 1996, no. 3: 155, 157.

The Rightists and the “Siege of Power”

In spite of all its activists' efforts, pressure from the Right did not bring satisfactory results to its supporters, neither under Goremykin, nor under B.V. Stürmer, who became the head of the government in January 1916. The extreme rightists considered the government's disagreement with their line as evidence of the inadequacy within the ruling bureaucracy and the political system as a whole.

The former rightist member of the Duma, A.S. Viazigin, expressed his negative attitude about the ruling elite: “It is very difficult to say who is more inclined towards revolution, the lower classes of right-wing persuasion or the leftist intelligentsia [*levye intelligentnye krugi*]. Characteristically, discontent unites them, and many times I have heard from the mouths of rightists the proverb: ‘Fish begin to stink from the head’ [*Ryba gniet s golovy*]. In the eyes of the Russian people, those in power shamed themselves scandalously.”⁸⁵ The chairman of the Nizhnii Novgorod convention, K.N. Paskhalov, resented not only the bureaucrats, but also the Tsar, who had not reacted properly, in Paskhalov's view, to the greetings of the assembly: “We are defending the sacred state ideal, which we consider the only salutary one for Russia, and instead of support, which we fully deserve, we receive nothing . . .”⁸⁶ D.A. Khomiakov called the Tsar “permanently evasive” and “weak-willed.”⁸⁷

Sometimes the rightists accused the ruling elite of enmity towards them: “Of course, we will remain faithful to our idea of the state structure of Russia, but this idea will never be implemented; we are crushed by both our enemies and by *those whose rights we defend*.”⁸⁸ The addressee, I.I. Dudnichenko, agreed: “Now monarchist organizations can count on themselves only, because we remain behind the closed doors of Russian statehood, and these doors were closed by precisely those people, who should have opened them wide.”⁸⁹ For Dubrovin these were the signs of a catastrophe that had already begun: “In fact, all of us are Don Quixotes—we are playing at a standoff and serving as targets for both the leftists and the authorities . . . the disintegration is proceeding on a massive scale and it is hardly possible to prevent or remove its causes—one cannot be more royalist than the King.”⁹⁰ “Everything dear to us is moving toward destruction, the foundations of the state are crumbling, every day confirms the fact of the universal collapse,” Paskhalov wrote

85. A.S. Viazigin to D.P. Golitsyn, November 30, 1915. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 1039, l. 2106.

86. K.N. Paskhalov to N.A. Maklakov, December 19, 1915. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 1040, l. 2280–2280ob.

87. D.A. Khomiakov to K.N. Paskhalov, January 20, 1916. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 1049, l. 135.

88. K.N. Paskhalov to I.I. Dudnichenko, January 22, 1916. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 1049, l. 159. Emphasis added.

89. I.I. Dudnichenko to K.N. Paskhalov, January 26, 1916. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 1049, l. 194.

90. A.I. Dubrovin to I.I. Dudnichenko, January 29, 1916. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 1050, l. 227.

to Maklakov.⁹¹ The visit of the Tsar to the State Duma in February 1916 seemed the most irritating. Varzhenevskii interpreted it as a symbolic surrender of the Autocracy to the representative institution.⁹² Sobolevskii refused to understand the reason for the visit at all.⁹³ For Nikol'skii, it was a cumulative result of "Judeo-Masonic intrigue," [*zhidovsko-masonskoi intrigi*] Rasputin's influence, and even the underhanded plotting of the "martinists," who "have pulled on all the strings and are ruining a dying dynasty, controlling its rotten lusts, weaknesses, neurasthenic fits and passions."⁹⁴

The critics recognized that the effects of the pressure from the Right were rather modest. "We do not have instruments to scare the government . . . we do not have in our hands either public organizations or the resources of the Yids. And if we summon the convention, which would be worthless because of the insignificant number of participants and the absence of influential persons, this would compromise our cause," Paskhalov remarked.⁹⁵

Military successes in 1916 did not change this mood. "The situation in Russia is not simply disturbing, it is terrible, perhaps more terrible than it was in 1905. Since that time the government has weakened itself by endless concessions to the destructive influences that become even more powerful due to these very concessions," Paskhalov wrote.⁹⁶ According to Dudnichenko, the country was slipping toward revolution.⁹⁷ A policy of concessions could not, by definition, fight it successfully. "The policy of concessions is a fatal mistake. It will never do any good. It led to the shock of the year 1905 and will lead to the more dangerous perturbations now. One must *fight* their enemies, not make *concessions* to them, which would be perceived as weakness."⁹⁸

The idea of radical political reform, which was widely disseminated among members of the Right before the war, did not disappear from rightist discourse during the war. As early as August 1914, S.A. Volodimerov expressed hope that the war experience would motivate a revision of the theoretical foundation for the peoples' participation in the legislative process. The idea of a *right* ought to be replaced by the idea of an *obligation*. Likewise, he argued that "the parliamentary game of the political arithmetic with legislative votes" ought to

91. K.N. Paskhalov to N.A. Maklakov, February 18, 1916. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 1051, l. 479ob.

92. A.K. Varzhenevskii to S.D. Sheremetev, February 13, 1916. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 1052, l. 401.

93. A.I. Sobolevskii to Iu.A. Kulakovskii, February 15, 1916. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 1052, l. 435.

94. Diary of B.V. Nikol'skii, entry for February 18, 1916. RGIA, f. 1006, op. 1, d. 4b, l. 378ob.

95. K.N. Paskhalov to N.N. Rodzevich, April 22, 1916. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 1054, l. 34.

96. K.N. Paskhalov to N.A. Maklakov, October 2, 1916. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 1056, l. 675.

97. I.I. Dudnichenko to N.N. Tikhmenev, October 15, 1916. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 1057, l. 766.

98. S. Glinka-Ianchevskii to M.V. Alekseev, October 18, 1916. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 1057, l. 796. Emphasis in the original.

give place to the “Orthodox Russian people’s highly moral [*vysokonravstvennoi*] duty to assist to the Tsar-Autocrat, through the Zemskii Sobor, with His Governmental matters.”⁹⁹

In August 1915 the editor of the rightist newspaper *Volga* and the Chairman of the Saratov convention, N.N. Tikhmenev, appealing to the monarchists, pointed to the importance of changing the Fundamental Laws, which he argued only bound the government.¹⁰⁰ The November conventions set the priorities in another way, however: the rightists represented themselves as the defenders of the Fundamental Laws, whereas the supporters of the “ministry of confidence” were represented as infringers on the legal order. Apparently, at this moment they still cherished hopes that if the government would follow the hard line, the situation might be improved without institutional changes.

During the first half of 1916 the idea of reforming political institutions became popular among the rightists again. They explained the necessity and urgency of the reform with the destruction of the country’s administrative mechanism. Tikhmenev wrote about the “unimaginable chaos” that would be produced by the rivalry between different centers of power, the Council of Ministers being the weakest among them.¹⁰¹ In May, N.N. Tikhanovich-Savitskii suggested a project to reform political institutions. The main aim was to strengthen the Tsar’s power, transforming the Monarch from the sovereign-official [*gosudar’-chinovnik*] to the tsar-master [*tsar’-khoziain*], who could pass laws without the State Duma and the State Council.¹⁰² In August 1916, *Russkoe znamia* published the article “Minister” by I.L. Tsytovich, who suggested establishing the “Supreme State Guardianship” [*Vyshee Gosudarstvennoe Popечitel’stvo*] subordinated directly to the Tsar in order to control the work of the particular ministries and the government as a whole.¹⁰³

Three months later, the leading columnist of *Russkoe znamia* D.I. Bulatovich suggested another variant of political reform. He placed the “Council of Patrons” [*Sovet shefov*] at the center of the projected system. This council would include persons responsible for different branches of state government, appointed by the Tsar. This Council of Patrons would perform the functions of the general political management and would represent the “governmental [*pravitel’stviushchuiu (pravitel’stvennyiu)*] power.” The council would guide the ministers, who would perform the “executive [*upravitel’nyiu*]” power.¹⁰⁴ “One must strictly separate three branches of power—the Supreme, Governmental, and Executive power, with the strict subordination of the second to

99. S.A. Volodimerov, “Prosvety,” *Zemshchina*, August 13, 1914, 3.

100. N.N. Tikhmenev, “Ko vsem monarkhicheskim organizatsiiam v Rossii,” in *Trudy Vserossiiskogo monarkhicheskogo soveshchaniia v g. Nizhnem Novgorode*, 19.

101. N.N. Tikhmenev to N.N. Rodzevich, May 9, 1916, GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 1054, l. 105ob.

102. “Osnovnye polozheniia narodnykh monarkhicheskikh soiuzov, predlozhennye predsedatelem Astrakhanskoi narodnoi monarkhicheskoi partii,” in *Pravye partii*, vol. 2, 552, 556.

103. I.L. Tsytovich, “Ministr,” *Russkoe znamia*, August 23, 1916, 2.

104. Liutsilii [D.I. Bulatovich], “Pervaia reforma,” *Russkoe znamia*, October 14, 1916, 2.

the first, and the third to the second,” Bulatovich wrote.¹⁰⁵ So, in his opinion, the subordination of various branches of authorities was preferable to their division. The author insisted also on effective governmental control over the non-governmental organizations.¹⁰⁶ All the projects, described above, appeared *before* the November session of the State Duma and the State Council, which opened the final phase of the confrontation between the representative institutions and the government. Their implementation would mean a “revolution from the Right,” or the “preventive counterrevolution.”

The status quo did not satisfy the more moderate rightists either: “. . . We need reforms and reorganization in many fields of administration . . .” Purishkevich declared in the Duma in February, 1916. While the extreme rightists aimed at strengthening the Tsar’s hold over the Government, he emphasized the necessity of its independence and the rational organization of work. The speaker advocated the non-governmental organizations, and stated that “without the help of the public forces and non-governmental sanitary organizations Russia could not fight, as it is fighting now . . .” He stated that the war changed his views on the nationality question: it transformed him from “hater” of the Poles into their “biggest friend.” His attitude to the Jews changed too. He did not deny his hostility to them, but refused to see them as responsible for all Russian failures. Well-known as one of the most uncompromising politicians before the war, during the war period he insisted on the necessity of common language and political dialogue. “. . . We must find a decent language for debate, and I am sure, we will find it, because, as I believe, we are used to respecting each other, being united by the patriotic impulse . . .”¹⁰⁷

Puriskevich developed these ideas in his brochure “What Wilhelm II Wants from Russia and England in the Great Battle of Nations.” To his mind, the war generated an unprecedented public unity, which was menaced not by the opposition, but by officialdom, scared by the patriotic activities of the masses.¹⁰⁸ It was evident to him “that after the war Russian progressive thought would win over the conservative, so that the liberal trend would dominate.”¹⁰⁹ Purishkevich’s evolution embarrassed his former collaborators. “Where does Purishkevich go?! Did he really decide to part with us?!” Dudnichenko asked in February 1916.¹¹⁰ Eight months later, even before the beginning of the last Duma session he gave a positive answer to the latter question.¹¹¹

105. Liutsilii [D.I. Bulatovich], “Pervaia reforma,” *Russkoe znamia*, 1916. October 15, 1916, 1.

106. Liutsilii [D.I. Bulatovich], Vtoraia reforma, *Russkoe znamia*, October 19, 1916, 1; See also Liutsilii [D.I. Bulatovich], Vtoraia reforma, *Russkoe znamia*, October 20, 1916, 2.

107. *Gosudarstvennaia Duma: Stenograficheskie otchety, sozvyv chetvertyi, sessia IV* (Petrograd, 1916), stb.1499, 1500, 1502–03, 1504–05.

108. V.M. Purishkevich, *Chego khochet Vil’ gel’ m II ot Rossii i Anglii v velikoi bitve narodov* (Petrograd, 1916), 79–80, 88, 111.

109. *Ibid.*, 136–37.

110. I.I. Dudnichenko to A.I. Dubrovin, February 21, 1916. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 1053, l. 505.

111. I.I. Dudnichenko to L.I. Samarskii-Lipitskii, October 30, 1916. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 1058, l. 874. On the war’s influence on the political views of Purishkevich see: I.K.

During 1916 the hot discussion on Strukov's appeal to Goremykin rocked the United Nobility. Some provincial noble associations did not only censure him, but left the organization. According to the manager [*upravliaushchii delami*] of the Permanent Committee of the United Nobility S.A. Panchulidzev, by the beginning of February 1916, four provincial corporations had left, while 22 publicly disapproved of Strukov's appeal.¹¹² The convention of the provincial marshals of the nobility on May 12, 1916 came to the conclusion that Strukov substituted his own opinion for the opinion of all the nobility. The second convention of the marshals of the nobility, held in August 1916, spoke out in favor of limiting the Permanent council's power and re-electing it.¹¹³ Thus, a considerable part of the United Nobility, which traditionally supported right-wing hard-liners, preferred to break with them.

Among the rightist mass-media, *Kolokol* remained the most consistent follower of the flexible line. Summing up the results of Goremykin's premiership, the newspaper reproached him for authoritarianism and ignoring the opinion of his colleagues and the public.¹¹⁴ P.N. Ianov expressed the hope that the new Premier, B.V. Stürmer, would behave in another way and begin dialogue with the Progressive bloc in order to solve "certain questions of reorganization [*konkretnye voprosy preobrazovatel'nogo kharaktera*]."¹¹⁵ Analyzing Stürmer's and the bloc's declarations, the editor of the newspaper did not see any insurmountable contradictions between them.¹¹⁶ *Kolokol* identified itself as the representative of "state conservatism"—an ideology of the "third path" that resisted both revolution and reaction. Defending "reasonable freedom" and "popular initiative," it condemned "state-paid hurrah-patriotism and slave-like attitudes." Petr Stolypin was declared the model representative of this type of conservatism because he had been "an adherent and bearer of the principles of national evolution and gradual progress." Liberal and conservative ideas were to supplement each other "in harmonious combination."¹¹⁷ The authority of the state ought to be combined with wide public initiative.¹¹⁸ In contradistinction to the extreme rightists, *Kolokol* appreciated the contribution of the Duma to the war effort and to securing communication between the state and population.¹¹⁹

Kiryakov, *Rossiiskie parlamentarii nachala XX veka: Novye politiki v novom politicheskom prostranstve* (Perm, 2006), 176–78; Ivanov, *Vladimir Purishkevich*, 218–36; Jack Langer, "Fighting the Future: the Doomed Anti-Revolutionary Crusade of Vladimir Purishkevich," *Revolutionary Russia*, vol. 19 (2006), no. 1: 43.

112. S. Panchulidzev to A.P. Strukov, February 1. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 1050, l. 271ob.

113. According to M.A. Bibin, the letter did not receive support from the majority (23) of provincial noble organizations, which took part in the United Nobility. See M.A. Bibin, "Sovet Ob'edinennogo dvorianstva i progressivnyi blok v 1915–1916 gg.," *Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta, seriia Istorii*, 1980, no. 1, 40–42.

114. "Zadachi prem'era," *Kolokol*, January 26, 1916, 1.

115. Vitiaz' [P.N. Ianov], "Pravitel'stvo i progressivnyi blok," *Kolokol*, February 7, 1916, 1–2.

116. "Dve deklaratsii," *Kolokol*, February 11, 1916, 1.

117. V. Petrovich, "Gosudarstvennyi konservatizm," *Kolokol*, February 19, 1916, 1.

118. "Edinenie mestnykh pravitel'stvennykh i obshchestvennykh vlastei," *Kolokol*, May 7, 1916, 1.

119. K. Rudin, "Deputatskie polnomochiia," *Kolokol*, August 18, 1916, 1.

Kolokol considered the consolidation of purely conservative elements to be the most important preliminary condition for this highly desirable liberal-conservative consensus: “The establishment of the Progressive bloc looks quite natural, but our liberals, to be honest, must recognize the civil rights of the representatives of the other stream.”¹²⁰ The rightists, in their turn, had to get rid of their contempt for the law and refrain from the abuse of power.¹²¹ The war demonstrated the necessity of changing the programs of the rightist political unions, established during the Revolution of 1905 in order to spread their influence over all groups of the population. The main political aim of the Right would be to “maintain the unity of all Russian citizens, who remain faithful to their duty towards the Tsar and the motherland.” An important element of this strategy would be the conciliation between various national groups. *Kolokol’s* author proposed “to engage not only native Russians, but also inorodtsy into creative activity on the all-Russian scale, if these non-Russians, by the virtue of their spirit, gained the honorable right to work for the good of the motherland in the ranks of the Russian patriots-monarchists.”¹²²

The “Assault on Power” and Further Differentiation of the Right

On the eve of the new session of the legislative chambers on November 1, 1916, all rightists, regardless of their differences, doubted whether the government in power might stop the country’s tilt toward catastrophe, as the personal correspondence and public declarations reveal. The more moderate rightists, as well as the extreme ones, felt the approach of the crash: “We are sliding downhill. There is a yawning abyss under us. Disturbances and riots are ripening in the life of the State. The revolution is ready to the smallest detail [*do poslednego bantika*], but where is the counterrevolution? It is invisible. Our days are waning in a bloody glow,” wrote I.I. Vostorgov in the beginning of October, 1916.¹²³ Three weeks later he continued, “No reliable hopes for the future remain. Only God’s miracle might save us, but one has to deserve the miracle at least by humbleness and by being aware of a sin. And we have neither of the two.”¹²⁴ Obleukhova experienced anxiety, too.: “Dissatisfaction and indignation unite everyone and everything. The smallest spark is enough to start a mass pogrom.”¹²⁵

These anxieties constituted the emotional background for Purishkevich’s withdrawal from the right-wing faction, which finally led to its break-up. At the meeting of the faction on November 18, Purishkevich exposed the main ideas of the speech that he was going to deliver the next day, but did

120. R. Novyi, “Otradnyi fakt,” *Kolokol*, August 13, 1916, 2.

121. “Germanoslavianofily,” *Kolokol*, September 6, 1916, 1.

122. V.R., “Dumy i vpechatleniia (Ob Otechestvennom patrioticheskom soiuze),” *Kolokol*, September 30, 1916, 1. On the Home patriotic union see Kir’ianov, *Pravye partii v Rossii*, 219–26; 281–88.

123. I.I. Vostorgov to N.Ch. Zaionchkovskii, October 4, 1916. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 1056, l. 692.

124. I.I. Vostorgov to V.D. Gnilev, October 26, 1916. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 1058, l. 846.

125. S.L. Obleukhova to V.M. Purishkevich, October 12, 1916. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 1057, l. 754.

not receive support from his colleagues. He then left the faction and strongly criticized the government in his Duma speech on November 19.¹²⁶ Three days later N.E. Markov attempted to repudiate Purishkevich's accusations, but this only led to a scandalous exchange between Markov and the Chairman of the Chamber, M.V. Rodzianko. As a result, Markov was excluded from the Duma's work for 15 sittings, while the predominant majority of the members of the right-wing faction left it and organized a new grouping named the "Faction of Independent Rightists."¹²⁷

The XII Congress of the United Nobility became one more expression of the tendency towards the consolidation of the moderate rightists and their political rapprochement with the opposition. On December 1, 1916 the congress adopted a resolution, which stated that the "monarchic principle, which has served as the basis of the state for centuries, is wavering in its own foundations." The resolution further averred that "irresponsible dark forces" obtained influence over the "highest authorities" [*verkhi vlasti*] and the "administration of the Church" [*upravlenie tserkovnoe*]. The practical recommendations included a combination of traditional conservative motifs ("to establish a strong government, [informed] by the Russian [way of] thinking and feeling"), liberal rhetoric ("[the government should] have people's confidence and be able to work in concert with the legislative chambers"), and elements of bureaucratic discourse ("armed in the face of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers with a plenitude of power and a common program").¹²⁸ The changes in the leadership of the organization were quite adequate to the resolution. The chairmanship was given to A.D. Samarin, who, having been excluded from the government in autumn 1915, had a reputation of advocating dialogue with the Progressive bloc. These political changes, as well as the new leadership of the United Nobility, were coolly received by the Tsar.¹²⁹

By the end of 1916 and the beginning of 1917, the majority of the Duma rightists and the United Nobility were moving to the left, towards the Progressive bloc, whereas *Kolokol* was drifting in the opposite direction. It began to associate instability not with the actions (or lack thereof) of the government, but with the activity of the Progressive bloc. An editorial from November 15, 1916 noted that "everything in the bloc is temporary, accidental, unsystematic, unaccountable, and inconsistent, devoid of a program."¹³⁰ So the only way out was "to rely on the government only, and to support it with all our powers."¹³¹

126. See for details Ivanov, *Vladimir Purishkevich*, 239–53.

127. According to A.B. Nikolaev, on the eve of the February Revolution this group joined the Progressive bloc. See A.B. Nikolaev, "Protokol zasedanii: soveshchaniia Gosudarstvennoi dumy s predstaviteliami fraktsii, chastnogo soveshchaniia chlenov Gosudarstvennoi dumy i Vremennogo komiteta Gosudarstvennoi dumy 27 fevral'a–3 marta 1917 goda," in *Tavrisheskie chteniia 2011. Aktual'nye problem istorii parlamentarizma* (St. Petersburg, 2012), 235.

128. *Ob'edinennoe dvorianstvo: S'ezdy upolnomochennykh gubernskikh dvoriannskikh obshchestv*, vol. 3, 713.

129. M.A. Bibin, *Dvorianstvo nakanune padeniia tsarizma v Rossii*, 234.

130. "Pereotsenka politicheskikh sobytii," *Kolokol*, November 15, 1916, 1.

131. "Rol' doigryvaetsia," *Kolokol*, December 15, 1916, 1.

The government, in its turn, had to move toward society and to follow the policy of “enlightened conservatism,” associated with the bureaucrats, with a reputation of proponents of political dialogue—A.V. Krivoshein, A.N. Naumov, S.D. Sazonov, and P.N. Ignat’ev.¹³² Still, the Tsar should remain in the center of the public consolidation: “Russia needs the union of all the parties, of all the estates under the Sovereign Scepter of the Monarch, the single radiant source of truth and mercy.”¹³³

The extreme rightists interpreted what was happening in the legislative chambers, whose session began on November 1, as a direct attack on the Monarchy. They saw the manifestation of the revolutionary wave in the critique of the government, raised by the Progressive bloc in order to seize power. But in spite of all that, the high-ranking bureaucrats still did not want to support the Right. N.A. Zverev wrote: “We are living through hard times. Steel nerves are needed to stand the strikes both from the Right and the Left. And I do not know which of them are more painful; for me personally the strikes from our former colleagues, first and most of all, from B.V. Stürmer, are especially painful.”¹³⁴ The government’s actions lacked firmness, according to its critics from the Right: “The intrigues of the Messrs., covering themselves with society as a shield [*shchitom obshchestvennosti*] did not meet any resistance; on the contrary, the government creeps in front of them,” K.N. Paskhalov wrote to Maklakov and offered him to head the struggle against this “common fatal trend.”¹³⁵ Dubrovin recommended dissolving the Duma until the end of the war.¹³⁶

On November 26, 1916 N.A. Maklakov delivered a major speech in the State Council. He attached special importance to strict government control over non-governmental organizations, because they were busy with fighting not the enemy, but the authorities: “It [the home front] *does everything for the war, but this is a war against order*. It does everything for victory, but this is victory over authority.” The government could not cope with this challenge, so “*the triumphantly hypertrophic development of society is transformed into its dictatorship, and the atrophy of authority is transformed into its agony*.” Maklakov demanded a stop to the disintegration of the administrative system: “*The government does not have and ought not to have a more urgent task; there is not, and ought not to be a more vital program than the revival of the law violated by everybody, than the strengthening of state order. It must be strengthened at any price and safeguarded strictly and indefatigably.*”¹³⁷

132. “Tragediia progressa,” *Kolokol*, January 20, 1917, 1.

133. “Ot doveriia k pravde,” *Kolokol*, February 1, 1917, 1.

134. N.A. Zverev to S.D. Sheremetev, November 6, 1916. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 1059, l. 939.

135. K.N. Paskhalov to N.A. Maklakov, November 21, 1916. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 1062, l. 1204.

136. See A.I. Dubrovin, “Vlast’ i ‘oni,’” *Russkoe znamia*, November 23, 1916, 2. Personal correspondence gives evidences that this idea was rather popular among the extreme rightists. See, for example, N.N. Rodzevich to E.A. Orlova, November 8, 1916 r. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 1059, l. 980.

137. “Rech’ N.A. Maklakova 26 noiabria 1916 g. v zasedanii Gosudarstvennogo Soveta,” in A.P. Nenarokov and V.V. Zhuravlev, eds., *Pervaia mirovaia voina v otsenke sovremennikov: vlast’ i rossiiskoe obshchestvo, 1914–1918, v chetyrekh tomakh. Tom 2.*

As time passed, the extreme rightists began stressing the necessity not only of restoring order, which turned to be insufficiently vital, but to building a new one. In December, D.I. Bulatovich worked out a new political project based on the conception of corporatism. He placed entrepreneurs and workers together with landowners and peasants in the “productive class” (the first element of each pair was identified as the “accumulated labor”—capital; the second one—as the “available labor”). The “productive class” was opposed to the parasitical “mediatory class.” Bulatovich characterized the State Council and the State Duma as “artificially-constructed strongholds where the ideas of the mediatory class reside, being the most harmful to the state.” Therefore, these institutions deserved abolition. State control was to become the main instrument of the struggle with the “mediatory class.” Bulatovich recommended simplifying the laws, and strengthening the state’s influence in the court, self-government, press, and education. The state ought to maintain the clergy and make it take part in productive labor. The obligation to work productively would be imposed on other groups of the population.¹³⁸

In January 1917 Bulatovich returned to the problem of control over the bureaucracy and suggested to form the special “Governmental Corps,” whose members could participate in the government’s proceedings. This institute should strengthen the supervision over high-ranking bureaucrats and prevent the “most harmful veering off course to one side or another.”¹³⁹ He stated that basic Christian principles of the state management were the ideals of one-man command [*edinonachalie*] and all-embracing control from above: “The ideal form of government based on Christian Statehood is the same that has until now been recognized by everyone as ideal for any army: a single person is placed at the head of the state, as at the head of a Christian army, holding in his hands all the threads of management—all the commands.”¹⁴⁰

Tsytovich, the author of the previously mentioned August 1916 article “Minister” in *Russkoe znamia*, published in January 1917 the brochure “Supreme State Guardianship” [*Vyshee Gosudarstvennoe Popechitel'stvo*]. To his mind, all that happened after the publication of his article in August 1916 confirmed his conclusions: neither the Duma, the State Council, nor the government could solve the current problems or even envision strategic perspectives. Only the “Supreme State Guardianship,” subordinated directly to the Tsar and aimed at securing the control of supreme authority over the bureaucracy, could achieve these goals.¹⁴¹ N.N. Tikhonovich-Savitskii continued to insist on the revision of the Fundamental Laws. In January 1917 he wrote to G.G. Zamyslovskii, inducing him to prepare three variants of the revision: “1) with deep changes, 2) with medium changes, 3) with insignificant, easily acceptable changes.” In addition, he recommended “to leave a loophole in

Konservatory: velikie razocharovaniia i velikie uroki (Moscow, 2014), 487–88. Emphasis in the original.

138. Liutsilii [D.I. Bulatovich], “Put’ i vekhi,” *Russkoe znamia*, December 11, 1916, 1.

139. Liutsilii [D.I. Bulatovich], “Tri mysli,” *Russkoe znamia*, January 20, 1917, 1–2.

140. Liutsilii [D.I. Bulatovich], “Khristianskaia gosudarstvennost,” *Russkoe znamia*, January 26, 1917, 1.

141. I.L. Tsytovich, *Vyshee gosudarstvennoe popechitel'stvo* (Kiev, 1917), 11–12.

each of them, which would provide further improvement of the Fundamental Laws by the Sovereign's initiative [*v poriadke Verkhovnogo Upravleniia*]."¹⁴²

Tikhanovich-Savitskii appealed to Tsarina Alexandra Feodorovna with the suggestion "not to postpone changing the traitorously composed Fundamental Laws," however the position of the Emperor and his wife on this issue raised his doubts. Tikhanovich-Savitskii thus recommended to "surround the Sovereign in Tsarskoe Selo and in the headquarters with the rightists only . . . and to be closer to the Tsarina to prevent her from leaving us."¹⁴³ The author was aware that breaking the status quo by the Right might provoke bloodshed, so he asked N.A. Maklakov if he was ready to suppress potential resistance to political changes, in case Maklakov would return to the post of Interior Minister, and requested to him name the most reliable generals.¹⁴⁴

Other representatives of the extreme Right raised the question of political reconstruction too. By the end of 1916 and the beginning of 1917, the circle headed by the influential conservative politician A.A. Rimskii-Korsakov worked out several projects for institutional change, one of which was presented to Nicholas II by N.D. Golitsyn.¹⁴⁵ Its author, member of the State Council right-wing group M.Ia. Govorukha-Otrok, suggested dissolving the State Duma and declaring the revision of the Fundamental Laws. According to him Russian constitutional reform, begun in 1905, had utterly failed. The author picked two main drawbacks of political structures designed by the Fundamental Laws of 1906: the incorrect division of power between the Monarchy and the representative institutions, and the "absolute inadequacy of the Duma electoral law."

To overcome the first drawback, Govorukha-Otrok planned to transform the legislative body into a consultative one. He planned to solve the second problem by reforming the electoral legislation on an estate basis. In addition, he wanted the number of elected candidates to exceed the number of seats, because this would allow the final choice to be made on the basis of "drawing lots, or, the best by the Emperor's grace." He recommended the government form a special structure capable of securing the pro-government majority in the Duma. Also, Govorukha-Otrok recommended changes in the membership and competence of the State Council. The members of the Progressive block were to be dismissed. Bills were to be sent to the Tsar together with the opinions of the majority and the minority, giving him the possibility to make any final decision he wished.¹⁴⁶

Evidently, the debate on constitutional reform continued up to the February events. On February 15, 1917, Tikhanovich-Savitskii called for the revision

142. N.N. Tikhanovich-Savitskii to G.G. Zamyslovskii, January 18, 1917. GARF, f, 102, op. 265, d. 1069, l. 119.

143. N.N. Tikhanovich-Savitskii to N.A. Maklakov, January 31, 1917. GARF, f, 102, op. 265, d. 1070, l. 10ob.

144. *Ibid.*, l. 11.

145. See for details D.I. Stogov, *Pravomonarkhicheskie salony Peterburga—Petrograda (konets XIX—nachalo XX veka)* (St. Petersburg, 2007), 205–30.

146. "Zapiska, sostavlennaia v kruzhe A.A. Rimskogo-Korsakova i peredannaia Nikolaiu II kn. Golitsynym," in *Pravye partii*, vol. 2, 591–92, 593, 595.

of the Fundamental Laws again, admonishing to “get busy with the Fundamental Laws . . . as long as we do not correct them, we achieve nothing; [everything will be just] treading water [*tolchenie vody v stupe*].”¹⁴⁷

In historical perspective, the victory over the 1905 Revolution symbolized by the dissolution of the Second State Duma and the promulgation of the June 3, 1907 electoral law turned out to be a pyrrhic one. The power of the Sovereign remained seriously limited, the government had to reckon with the representatives of the population, and the liberal opposition preserved substantial political influence. The counterrevolutionary forces split, and on the eve of World War I, the rightists parted into three organizations: the Union of Russian People, the Union of Archangel Michael, and the All-Russian Dubrovinsk Union of the Russian People. Conflicts between them were caused not only by clashes of leaders’ personal ambitions, but also by different opinions over principle political questions. The war gave additional stimulus for the fragmentation of the Right. For some of its members, the “Spirit of 1914” became the serious argument in favor of the democratic institutions and procedures. These rightists called for the adaptation of conservative forces to the post-1905 Revolution political structure. Their opponents were afraid that the wave of patriotism would soon wane. They believed that strict governmental control over non-governmental institutions is a more reliable means of maintaining social stability than the dialogue between the state and society. Later on, this position became the basis on which the Right’s plans to undermine the status quo were laid, and on which the ideas of removing democratic institutions and practices from Russian politics were based. The war widened the political range of the Russian Right in opposite directions, including the conservative-liberal consensus on the one hand and the radical Right on the other. All this aggravated the conflict within the Right and led to its polarization.

The motivation to reconstruct the established political order turned out to be much stronger than the desire to preserve it. The rightists, regardless of the nuances of their ideological stances, took the war as an opportunity for political reconstruction; again, the drive for the change was stronger than the drive for preservation. The threat to the Monarchy and the Monarch elicited from the Russian Right not so much a desire to defend the old order as to come to terms with the fact that it was not worth defending. This largely explains the passivity of the Right during the February-March 1917 days. It is worth noting that for many of them, the desire to not become involved in political events began long before February 1917. Already in June 1915, B.V. Nikol’skii noted in his diary: “I am dead to politics, or I have not yet been resurrected.”¹⁴⁸ I.I. Vostorogov expressed similar feelings in September 1915: “From all sides, the monar-

147. N.N. Tikhanovich-Savitskii to G.G. Zamyslovskii, February 15, 1917. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 1070, l. 61.

148. Diary of B.V. Nikol’skii, entry for June 18, 1915. RGIA, f. 1006, op. 1, d. 4b, l. 360. One and one-half years later he maintained: “I am completely uninvolved with politics, as never does anything good come from it.” (Diary of B.V. Nikol’skii, entry for January 13, 1917. RGIA, f. 588, op. 1, d. 1133b, l. 65ob.)

chists, now startled, call me to lead them. I, of course, will not abide.”¹⁴⁹ It is worth noting that these sentiments were set down by the pens of normally incredibly active and effective personalities, representing competing segments of the Russian Right. Having come into being as an instrument for the defense of traditional autocracy, the Right refused to defend it in its post-revolutionary reincarnation as a dualistic monarchy.

149. I.I. Vostorgov to E.F. Vostorgova, September 7, 1915. GARF, f. 102, op. 265, d. 1030, l. 1397.