

**MEMOIRS OF A RUSSIAN
GOVERNOR.
PRINCE SERGE
DMITRIYEVICH URUSOV**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649105687

Memoirs of a Russian governor. Prince Serge Dmitriyevich Urussov by Herman Rosenthal

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HERMAN ROSENTHAL

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A RUSSIAN GOVERNOR

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TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN
AND EDITED BY
HERMAN ROSENTHAL

AUTHORIZED EDITION



LONDON AND NEW YORK
HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS
MCMVIII

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INTRODUCTION

VOLUMES without number have been written on Russia and Russian affairs by outside observers, who reported the little they could see, blindly groping for the dark truth that lay below the surface. But never before has the truth about Czarism been told by one of the innermost circle; the truth about the intricate machinery of the autocracy; the schemes of the Police Department; the intrigues and corruption that underlie the fabric of government—never have these evils been laid bare by a Russian prince of the oldest families, a governor of many provinces, an administrator with the rare patriotism and courage to disclose the terrible secrets of a system of which he was a part. That is precisely what Prince Urussov has done in the volume before the reader.

Prince Urussov, the author of these memoirs, is not a revolutionist. He is not a destructive agitator, but a constructive patriot. A believer in a constitutional monarchy and one of the ablest representatives of the Constitutional Democracy in the first Duma, it has been his aim in exposing the legalized corruption of the civil government, the lack of harmony among the ministries, the brutality of the military and their incessant conflict with the state authorities, the unspeakable intrigues of the highest court cliques through which wholesale massacres even now are perpetrated with impunity, the wasteful extravagance of the great landholders, and the ignorance and the superstition of the masses, to arouse earnest, right-thinking men to sweep away these foul abuses and to co-operate in the sane upbuilding of the New Russia. As Governor of Bessarabia shortly after the terrible massacre of Kishinev, Prince Urussov inexorably traced the responsibility for that crime to the very government he served, and the secrets thus unearthed form an impor-

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tant part of his memoirs—memoirs that will for all time remain among the most notable documents in the history of revolutionary Russia.

Prince Serge Dmitriyevich Urussov, a descendant of a noble family distinguished for honorable services to the nation during a period of five hundred years, was born in the province of Yaroslav, March, 1862. He was educated in the classical gymnasium at Yaroslav and at the University of Moscow. After brilliantly completing his final examinations, he retired to his estate at Razva, in the province of Kaluga, where he displayed marked ability as administrator and landlord. He was elected Marshal of the Provincial Nobility, was re-elected three times, and served also as president of the provincial zemstvo and chairman of the justices of peace in the district. In 1902 Plehve, then Minister of the Interior, appointed him Vice-Governor of Tambov, where for the first time Urussov came to a full realization of the corruption and sycophancy prevailing among the office-holders. Six months later he was appointed Governor of Bessarabia, where he arrived soon after the terrible massacre in Kishinev, the details of which are so vividly described by Urussov in the following pages.

In November, 1904, he was transferred to Tver, then the centre of liberalism, in order to adjust the conflict between the peasants and the landlords. Shortly after his arrival in Tver he learned that the notorious Trepov, Chief of Police of Moscow, had been created Minister of Police with the rank of Vice-Minister. Urussov wrote a spirited letter to Bulygin, then Minister of the Interior, and insisted that he could not carry on his work of reconciliation under the control of a man opposed to the spirit of conciliation and known to be the author of many calamities. In spite of his slender means, grown slender because of his devotion to public service, Urussov voluntarily resigned his remunerative official position and returned to Razva. Here he was soon elected to represent his district in the first Duma. A few weeks later he was suddenly called to St. Petersburg by Count Witte, who was attempting to form a cabinet in accord with the Manifesto of October, 1905. Urussov was urged by Witte to accept the portfolio of Minister of the Interior, yet the Prince could only promise at the last moment to serve as associate to Durnovo, a man unwisely selected by Witte, who was responsible for the riots in

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the Jewish Pale and the bloody repressions throughout Russia after the publication of the Czar's Manifesto.

Urussov withdrew from the cabinet, and was elected by a large majority of his constituents to the first Duma. His conduct in the Duma was noted for its frankness and broad democracy, and freedom from narrow party affiliations. His maiden speech may be regarded as the most notable address delivered before the first Duma. In this now celebrated utterance on the pogroms,¹ he declared that one must perceive in them a uniform system of attacks carefully planned by the government as a matter of policy. Since that utterance events have demonstrated that the several ministries, and the inner court circles are the active instigators of the pogroms by means of the organizations of the so-called "True Russian Men." These men and their supporters at the court were designated by Urussov, in his speech on the Byelostok massacres, as "watchmen and policemen by education and pogromists by conviction."

After the dissolution of this first Russian Parliament, Urussov attached his signature to the protest drawn up by the Constitutional Democrats, even though he did not fully agree with the contents of the document. He then returned to his estate and began writing the memoirs of which the present volume forms a part. The Russian original was received with remarkable favor, and passed through many editions.

Of this work it may be truly said that sincerity of purpose and breadth and fairness of judgment are reflected in every sentence. The author is typical of the New Russia now slowly rising from the wreckage of the old. One of the ablest of the Constitutional Democrats, he is rendering yeoman service in fashioning constructive policies for the nation that is to be; and, though it may be years before the great ideal is realized, while such men as Prince Urussov are laboring with unselfish patriotism, no one can doubt that Russia will be free.

HERMAN ROSENTHAL.

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¹ Pogrom. Devastation, Destruction. An organized massacre in Russia for the destruction or annihilation of any body or class; chiefly applied to those directed against the Jews.—Murray's *New English Dictionary*, 1907.

