

A PROJECT OF A GENERAL PLAN FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF POPULAR SCHOOLS

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I.

The other day I read the Project of a General Plan for the Establishment of Popular Schools. That reading produced upon me an effect such as a man must experience when he receives the sudden news that the young grove, which he has known and loved so much, and which he has seen growing up under his eyes, is to be changed into a park, by cutting out here, clearing off and lopping there, by pulling out young shoots by the root and laying out pebble walks in their place.

The general idea of the Project is this: Considering it necessary to disseminate popular instruction, and surmising that the education of the masses has not yet begun and that it is hostile toward its future education ; surmising that the statute of the year 1828, prohibiting persons not specially entitled to do so from opening schools and teaching, is still in force; surmising that the masses will never consider their own education without compulsion from without, or that, having undertaken it, they will not be able to carry it on, – the government imposes on the people a new, the largest of all the existing taxes, the school tax, and entrusts the officials of the ministry with the management of all the newly opened schools, that is, the appointment of teachers and choice of programmes and manuals. The government, in consideration of the new levy, puts itself under obligation before the people of finding and appointing fifty thousand teachers and of founding at least fifty thousand schools. However, the government has constantly felt its inadequacy in managing the existing parochial and county schools. All know that there are no teachers, and nobody dissents from that view.

This idea, so strange in all the barrenness of its expression to any Russian who knows his country, is in the Project shrouded in all kinds of excuses, expressions of intentions, and grants of privileges, which not one Russian has heretofore ever thought of doubting. However, it is not a new idea.. It has been applied in one of the greatest countries of the world, namely, in the North American States. The results of the application of this idea in America have been comparatively very brilliant; nowhere has public education developed so fast and so universally. That is quite true. But, if America, beginning its schools after the European States, has been more successful in its public education than Europe, all that follows from it is that it has fulfilled its historic mission, and that Russia, in her turn, must fulfil hers. By transplanting on her soil the American compulsory system (by means of levies), she

would commit the same mistake that America would have committed if, in founding its schools, it should have applied the German or the English system. The success of America is due to the fact that its schools have developed in accordance with the time and the surroundings. Russia, it seems to me, ought to proceed in the same way ; I am firmly convinced that for the Russian system of public education not to be worse than the other systems (taking into consideration all the conditions of the times it must be better), it must be independent and not like any other system.

The law of the school tax has been enacted in America by the people itself. If not the whole nation, at least the majority was convinced of the necessity of the proposed system of education, and had its full confidence in the government, to which it has entrusted the establishment of schools. If the levy has appeared in the nature of a compulsion, only an insignificant minority is affected by it.

As is well known, America is the only country in the world which has no peasant class, not only de jure, but even de facto, in consequence of which there could not in America exist that difference of education and that difference of opinion concerning education, which exists in our country between the peasant and the non-peasant population. Besides, America, in establishing its schools, was, I suppose, convinced that it had the essential element for the establishment of schools, – the teacher.

It we compare Russia and America in all their respects, the impropriety of transferring the American system upon Russian soil will become manifest to us.

I now turn to the Project itself. Chapter I. General Considerations.

§1. In order to strengthen the masses in their religious and moral concepts and offer the whole peasantry and the lower classes of the urban population primary, general, and necessary information, schools in sufficient number, in proportion to the population, are to be established throughout the Empire by rural and urban Communes.

What does it mean " establish " ? By what process ? We may be convinced that the people will take no part in the establishment of these schools; the people will only look upon the school tax as an increased burden. Who will select the place to build the school on ? Who will appoint the teacher ? Who will invite the children and will get the parents interested to send them ? All those are questions to which I found no answer in the Project. All that will be done by officials of the Ministry of Public Instruction and by the justices of the peace with the cooperation of the local police; but in what manner and on the basis of what data ?

Are to be established throughout the Empire in sufficient number, in proportion to the population. Leaving out of consideration the impossibility of subjecting the whole population of Russia to the same treatment as regards popular education, it seems to me, in addition, to be exceedingly inconvenient and dangerous in this

manner forcibly to bring education to one common level. There are Governments, counties, and districts where there is a great need of schools (where the need is as great as two and three hundred pupils to every thousand of population), and where there is a need of schools with more extended programmes. On the other hand, there are localities where the need has not yet risen as high as fifty or even ten in every thousand of the population, and where the compulsory school will either be injurious, or, at the very least, the means set aside for the popular education will be wasted uselessly.

I know localities within a distance of twenty versts of each other; in one of these there is a free school, and nobody sends his children there; in the other, children are glad to walk a distance of three versts, and their parents are only too glad to pay fifty kopeks a month. The compulsory establishment of the school, in proportion to the population, produces in the first mentioned locality nothing but suspicion of the school and rage against it, while in the second the average proportion of the whole of Russia will be insufficient. Consequently the compulsory establishment of schools in proportion to the population would be partly an injurious and partly a useless waste of the money set aside for the popular education.

§2. The popular schools have a course of primary instruction as defined by the Ministry of Public Instruction.

It seems to me impossible to define a course for the popular schools.

Chapter VI. gives us a fine example of such an impossibility. There, for example, writing is not included in the programme, and, according to the sense of a note, writing may be taught only by special permission of the educational authorities.

§3. The popular schools are open institutions, that is, they are intended only for day scholars.

This article belongs to that order of many similar articles in the law, where a circumspect and serious explanation is given of that which nobody would doubt in the least. The appearance of such negative articles involuntarily makes us think that they were written solely in order to swell the volume of the Project, or because there happened to be some members on the committee who had insisted that the popular schools be made boarding-schools.

§4. For the purpose of a constant and immediate control of each school, the Communes and municipalities, at whose expense the schools are supported, are entitled, to elect curators of either sex; where such curators shall not be elected, the inspection of the school is incumbent on the justice of the peace.

Who will choose these curators? Who will want to be a curator? And what do these curators mean? What is meant by inspection of schools? All that does not appear from the law.

The money will not be in the hands of the curator; the appointment and discharging of the teachers does not depend on the curator; the change of the school programme is not in the curator's power; what, then, I ask, is a curator? People who take delight in the name and who for it will sacrifice their money. Out of respect to the human race, I cannot admit that any one will be willing to assume that strange office, or that the municipalities and Communes will want to elect anybody to such a doubtful honour.

§5. In their scholastic relations all the popular schools of the Empire are in charge of the Ministry of Public Instruction, and are governed by specially appointed directors of schools for each of the Governments.

§6. The material part of each school is managed by each Commune, at whose expense the school is maintained.

§7. No pay for the instruction of the pupils is levied except in the cases provided for in Arts. 25, 26.

Art. 7, with its reference to Arts. 25, 26, belongs to the category of those serio-official articles which have been mentioned before. It means that the peasants who have already paid thirty kopeks a head for the school are fully privileged not to pay a second time for their children.

Articles 6 and 7 are far from being definite. What means the educational part, the maintenance of which is left to the director of schools, and what is the material part, which is left to the Commune? The appointment and dismissal of teachers, the arrangement of the school, the choice of a place for it, the teacher's pay, the choice of books and programmes, – all that depends on the Ministry of Public Instruction. What, then, does the remaining part, which is left in charge of the Commune, consist in? In the purchase of dampers and latches, in the choice of the left or right side to cut a door through, in the hire of a janitor for the school, in washing the floors, and so forth. Even in this case the Commune is granted only the right to pay for everything out of its own money. What is to be built and how, – all that is attended to by the law, and will be carried out by the educational authorities.

According to Art. 5 there is to be a director of schools.

Each director will have from three to five hundred schools under his charge. It will be impossible for him to visit all the schools once a year, consequently the business of the director of schools will be carried on from his office.

Chapter II. The Establishment of Schools.

I shall omit Articles 8 and 9, which deal with the town schools, which I have not studied and about which I, consequently, cannot judge.

§10. In the rural districts every parish is obliged to have at least one popular school.

The word " obliged " leaves no doubt as to whether the peasants, in accordance with the meaning of the Project, will be compelled to open schools, or not. The only questions that arise are : (1) What is a parish (the writers of the Project must have had in mind a township) ? and (2) What will be the procedure in case (which will happen most frequently) the peasants will refuse to take any interest whatever in the establishment of the schools, and will pay their school tax only under the pressure of police measures ? Who will select the place, the building, the teacher, and so forth ?

§11. The parishes, whose means are not sufficient for the maintenance of schools, may, in lieu of establishing a school, hire a teacher at the Comm/une's expense for the purpose of giving instruction gratis to the children of said parish in a house set aside for him, or in the assembly house, or by rotation in the houses of the peasants.

§12. The rules laid down in the preceding Art. 11 will also guide the separate settlements, remote from parish churches, when, on account of such remoteness and incon-venient communication, it becomes difficult to send the children to the respective parish school.

Articles 11 and 12 are, on the one hand, quite incomprehensible, and, on the other, belong to the category of elucidatory official articles, mentioned above.

When the parishes hire a teacher and rent a hut, what keeps this from being a school, and why may the parishes only do it ? I used to think that when we have pupils, a teacher, and a place in which to teach, we have a school; why, then, are a teacher, a schoolroom, and pupils not a school ? But if we are to understand that small, remote Communes have the right to choose their own teachers, without conforming to the law about the maintenance of the teacher, as laid down in the Project, and without writing the word " School " over the hut, – then no one has ever doubted this right, and all have made use of this right, and always make use of it, notwithstanding the prohibition of the law, which is unable to keep a father, uncle, or godfather from teaching one, two, three, or fifteen boys. All it says in this article is that the teacher is to be hired by the Commune, but this is in the majority of cases inconvenient, because all schools which are freely established are generally maintained by contributions from the parents, and not from the whole Commune, which is both more convenient and more just.

§§13, 14, and 15. Where no possibility presents itself of arranging a separate school for girls, boys and girls shall be taught in one and the same school, by one and the same teacher, but at different hours of the day or on different days of the week. In places where there is no separate school for girls, the Commune may hire a lady

teacher to help out the male teacher. Girls up to the age of thirteen years may be admitted to instruction with the boys of the same age.

The girls, of whom mention is made in Art. 13, being above the age of thirteen years, are called maidens by the people, – and to suppose that the maidens would be permitted by their parents, or would themselves choose, to go to school with small boys, and to prescribe rules for them, in order to secure the popular morality, is the same as to prescribe laws for what is not and never can be. With the present popular view of education even the thought of it is out of the question. Even if such a case should arise in the next generation, Art. 14 has provided for it, giving the Commune the unheard-of right to hire, again at their own expense, a lady teacher. The instruction of women in schools has not yet begun, and I dare think that Articles 13, 14, and 15 have not divined all possible cases that may arise during such instruction. It seems to me in general that it is exceedingly difficult to vest in legal forms that which is not yet, and has not yet begun.

Chapter III. The Maintenance of the Schools.

I omit the articles dealing with the town municipalities.

Articles 20, 21, 22, and 23 decree a compulsory levy on the parish for the maintenance of the schools and for a Government fund.

We must repeat once more that, in spite of the seeming definiteness of these articles, we do not comprehend many very essential things ; namely: Who apportions the necessary amount of money for the schools ? Who receives this money, and under what conditions ? Have the Communes the right to declare themselves poor on the basis of Articles 10 and 11 ? I am sure that all the Communes without exception will be anxious to invoke this right, and therefore its elucidation is exceedingly important. From the above mentioned articles it appears only that the writers of the Project propose to burden the rural population with a tax, which is to be used for the establishment of schools and for the formation of a Governmental fund. By an extremely faulty calculation, attached to the law, twenty-seven and one-half kopeks from each soul will fall to the share of each peasant. This tax is enormous, and in reality it will be more than increased sixfold, for (p. 18) the calculation there adduced is based on the statistical data furnished by Academician Vcse-Idvski, in a memoir of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society, and not only is groundless, but must contain some typographical error. It is hard to believe that the members of the committee should have known so little the conditions of the country in which they live, and the conditions of the popular education, to which they have devoted their labours.

The number of children subject to primary instruction, that is, of those between the ayes of eight to ten years, forms about five per cent, of the whole mass of the population.

The number of children subject to primary instruction will be three times the figure mentioned, because, no doubt, it is known to everybody who takes the trouble of visiting a popular school that the normal school age is not from eight to ten years, but rather from seven to thirteen, or, more correctly, from six to fourteen years. At the present time, with the insufficient dissemination of schools, there are in the Yasenets township 150 pupils to one thousand souls, in the Golov^nkov township sixty pupils to four hundred souls, and in the Trasnen township seventy pupils to five hundred souls. With the present undeveloped condition of the schools there are everywhere not five per cent., but twelve per cent, and fifteen per cent. It must be kept in mind that by far not all the children study now, and that the girls form but one-twentieth of all the pupils.

Consequently, to one thousand of the male population, proceeds the Project, we must assume about fifty boys who, on account of age, are subject to primary instruction, and in the same number of the female population there will be about fifty girls. The teaching of such a number will not be too burdensome for one teacher.

We have pointed out above that there will be three times as many pupils, and it is not only burdensome, but simply impossible to teach fifty boys and girls together. But that is not the worst of the typographical blunder. Every Russian knows that in Russia there are six months of winter, with frosts and snow-storms, while in summer the peasant children are doing some field labour, and in winter few have enough warm clothing to venture out any distance; they run about the street with their father's short fur coat thrown over their heads, and back again to the hut, and upon the oven. In Russia the great majority of the population is scattered in settlements of from fifty to one hundred souls, at a distance of from two to three versts from each other. How can one in Russia get as many as fifty pupils together in one school? As facts have shown to me, one cannot count on more than ten to fifteen pupils for one school.

If there was no mistake in the calculation, and the Project was really meant to be executed, then, on the basis of the blunder in the calculation concerning the percentage of the school population, the taxes will have to be increased threefold, because there will be three schools instead of one, of fifty pupils in each. On account of the blunder in the calculation, which brings together fifty pupils into one school, the tax will have to be doubled, that is, by supposing as high as twenty-five pupils to each school, and six schools to each one thousand souls, we get six times twenty-seven and one-half kopeks, which, deducting the ten per cent, of the Government fund, makes at least one rouble and a half to each soul, without counting what is necessary for the establishment and for the repairs of the school, and for the support of the teacher in kind. It is an impossible levy. In a note to Art. 23, which is based on an observation deduced from practice, that the expenses of teaching frequently keep the uneducated parents from sending their children to school, it says that the appliances of education and the text-

books are not bought by the parents themselves, but by the person mentioned in the Project as having charge of the expenses for the maintenance of the school.

This observation deduced from practice is not true, for, on the contrary, it has always and at all times been observed that the parents prefer to buy their own books, slates, and pencils for their sons, in order that the things may always remain in the house, rather than give the money for the purchase of these things by the school; besides, these things are safer and more useful at home than at school.

In spite of it being mentioned in Art. 24 that the expenses for the maintenance of the school are allowed by the village elder and audited by the village meeting, I affirm that it does not appear from the Project who is entrusted with the expense for the maintenance of the school. Who is to put up a school building, where, when, what kind of a house? Who buys the school appliances? What books and pencils, and so forth, and how many are to be bought? All this is either passed by in the Project, or it is entrusted to the director of schools. The Communes have only the right to collect the money and give it away, also to rent or build a house, also to cut off half a desyatina of land for the teacher, also to travel to town for the purpose of buying dampers, and also, which is most flattering of all, to audit the accounts over which they have no control. All that is done, as it says in the Project, in order to awaken in the Communes a greater readiness to provide the means for the support of the school.

It is ordered to give the Communes full liberty both in the apportionment and collection of the sum necessary for the maintenance of the school and in the material care of acquiring everything necessary for the schools.

It seems to me that in this matter there is a lack of sincerity in the Project; it would have been simpler to say that the Communes are granted no rights whatever in the matter of the school government, but that, on the contrary, a new burden is imposed upon them, which is to acquire certain necessary things and look after the school accounts.

Art. 25 imposes the obligation of finding proper quarters for the school and for the teacher, and for providing heat for them. The obligation is very dimly defined, very burdensome, and, on account of its indefiniteness, liable to give rise to abuses on the side of the school authorities.

Art. 26 refers to towns.

In Art. 27 it is carefully explained that especial payment may be made by persons who have not contributed at large.

§28. Towns and village parishes, which, on account of their sparse population and poverty of inhabitants, are really unable to support

schools and even to hire a teacher, may receive aid, at the discretion of the Minister of Public Instruction, from the general reserve school fund.

As has been pointed out above, all the Communes without exception will, if they understand the meaning of the Project, be anxious to fall under the provision of Art. 28, and they will quite justly remark that the majority of the inhabitants are poor. (Poverty, especially as regards money, is a well-known common condition of the Russian peasantry.) Who is to define what Commune falls under the provision of Art. 28 ? Which first, and which later ?

On what basis and by whom will similar questions be decided ? The Project tells us nothing concerning it, and yet, it is our opinion, these questions will universally arise.

Art. 29 again repeats that the Commune has the right to cut a door on the right or left side, to make pine or oak seats, and even not to be embarrassed in the manner of their acquisition ; that is, they have the full right to buy them, or to build them from their own timber.

Art. 30 is the only one which, being a promise to find means for cheapening the text-books, meets with our full sympathy.

matter. It is not to be supposed that the interference of an entirely superfluous outsider could be of any use.

Articles 39, 40, 41, and 46 define the relations of the teacher of religion to the school.

Art. 42 says directly, without leaving the slightest doubt about the matter, that the management of the schools in each Government, in spite of the imaginary complete independence of the Communes and in spite of the incomprehensible invention of curators, is left to one person, – the director of schools, since the discharge and the appointment of a teacher form, according to our opinion, the only essential management of a school. We shall have occasion, later on, to speak at greater length of the inconvenience connected with the centralization of such an enormous power in the person of one man.

Art. 43 promises the training of teachers, although, as a promise, this article does not even enter into the composition of the Project; I cannot withhold the remark that the attempts at training any teachers whatever, both in our Pedagogical Institute, as also in the German seminaries and French and English normal schools, have so far led to no results, and have only convinced us of the impossibility of training teachers, especially for the popular schools, just as it is impossible to train artists and poets. Teachers are educated only in proportion to the general demands of education and with the raising of the general level of education.

Articles 44 and 45 explain that the belonging to a certain class is no impediment to a man's carrying on the duties of a teacher, and

that people belonging to the clerical profession and those who are not of the gentry may be teachers ; here it also says that if a clergyman undertakes to be a teacher, he must teach by all means ! That is all very true. In a note to Art. 45 it says that the curator or justice of the peace recommends teachers for vacancies to the director of schools. I surmise that a brother or uncle of the curator or justice of the peace may recommend a teacher to the director.

Chapter V. The Rights of Persons Connected with the Popular Schools.

In Art. 47 it says that curators are not granted the privilege of wearing cockades and short swords. (I do not omit a single article, and the reader who will consult the Project will convince himself that I am quoting it correctly.)

Articles 48, 49, 50, and 51 define the material position of the teacher.

This position is superb, and we must confess that if the Project is to be put in force, we shall, in this respect, at once outdo Europe.

The village teacher is to get 150 roubles in silver a year, lodgings with heating, which, in our locality, means about fifty roubles. In addition to that, he is to receive, in grain or flour (by a provision of the Project the Communes are granted a great freedom in this matter), two puds¹ a month, which, according to our prices, will amount to about twelve roubles a year; he is to get, besides, half a desyatfna² of land fit for a vegetable garden, which means another ten roubles, and thus the whole amounts to 222 roubles. (All this is to come from the Commune which, by the calculation adduced above, is hardly able to get together an average of twenty pupils.) In addition to this, the Commune is to pay the teacher of religion fifty roubles, for school appliances fifty roubles, and twenty-five roubles interest on the Government fund ; it has to build and maintain the school, hire a janitor, which, at the least figure, means eighty roubles more, – and thus the Commune has to pay 427 roubles.

In Art. 50 it says that the Commune has the right to hire also a lady teacher.

1A pud is equal to almost thirty-six pounds.

2 A desyatfna is equal to about three acres.

A teacher who has served twenty years receives two-thirds of his yearly salary, and is, besides, exempt from taxation and military service, which will again be burdened upon the Commune to the extent of ten roubles a year. The position of the teacher is brilliant indeed, but I shall allow myself to question the willingness of the Communes to remunerate them so liberally, if they were to pay the teachers according to their deserts, or if the writers of the Project were compelled to draw the means from other sources. (The

privileges granted the teachers, according to Articles 52, 56, and 57, namely, the right to be counted as being in government service, and the right of earning a medal or an Alexander ribbon, and to be elected as assistant director of schools, are not a burden to the Commune, but these, I venture to say, will not have that allurements for the teachers that the rights have which they are to enjoy at the expense of the Commune.)

The question of the increase of the salary of the popular school-teachers is a question which has for a long time been agitating the European governments, and which finds its solution only step by step; but with us this question is solved at once by a few lines of the Project. This very simplicity and facility of solution seem suspicious to me. The question involuntarily arises why did they fix it at 150 roubles, and not at 178 roubles and sixteen and one-third kopeks, for by paying 178 roubles and sixteen and one-third kopeks we should get better teachers still. Then again, why not put it at 178 roubles, when the source from which we are deriving the money is in our power, absolutely without any control? Why only half a desyatfna of good soil for a vegetable garden, and not eight and two-thirds desyatinas for a field? In a note it says: Clericals who at the same time occupy the positions of teacher of religion and of a regular teacher, are entitled only to a full teacher's salary, and receive only one-half of the amount set aside for the teacher of religion. These figures, no doubt, are all carefully chosen, since twenty-five roubles are so cautiously apportioned to the teacher of religion. These figures must have been arrived at from positive data. These data must be absolutely known, the more so, since it appears from the data which many of us have collected in our personal experience, that the school-tax which, according to that calculation, is imposed upon the Communes, is immeasurably high, exorbitant; that, in our opinion, not one Commune will agree to pay one-fifth of that tax for school, and that in Russia there is not to be found even one hundredth part of teachers deserving such remuneration.

Chapter VI. The Course of Instruction in the Popular Schools.

The first paragraph of Art. 58 defines the programme of the course in religion. Both the instruction and the consideration of this subject are left exclusively in the hands of the clerical profession.

(2) The native tongue; the reading of books in Russian and in Slavic type; explanatory reading of books adapted to primary instruction. (3) Arithmetic: the four operations with integral numbers, abstract and concrete, and an idea of fractions. Note. In addition to these subjects, at the request of Communes, there may be introduced the instruction of church singing, and with the consent of the educational authorities also other subjects.

We have expressed our conviction that the definition of a course of instruction for the popular schools is quite impossible, especially in the sense in which the Project is trying to make it, — in the

sense of setting limits to the subjects of instruction. In this sense was conceived the circular published by the Minister of Public Instruction in reference to Sunday schools; in the same sense was composed the note according to which everything not defined by the programme in the preceding three lines may be taught only with the consent of the educational authorities; in the same providential sense are composed Articles 59, 60, and 61, by which the very method of instruction and the manuals to be used in the instruction of that impossible and narrow programme are to be determined upon by the Ministry of Public Instruction.

I do not mention that this is unjust; that it is injurious to the development of education; that it excludes the possibility of all lively interest of the teacher in his work; that it gives rise to endless abuses (the writer of a programme or of a text-book need only make one mistake, and that mistake becomes obligatory for the whole of Russia). I say only that every programme for the popular school is absolutely impossible, and every such a programme is only words, words, words. I can comprehend a programme which defines the obligation which teachers, or the power establishing the school, take upon themselves; I can understand how one may say to the Commune and to the parents: I am the teacher; I open the school, and I undertake to teach your children this or that, and you have no right to ask of me that which I have not promised you; but to open a school and to promise that one will not teach this or that is both imprudent and absolutely impossible. And it is precisely such a negative programme that the Project proposes for all of Russia and for the popular primary schools. In a higher institution, I presume, it is possible for the instructor, without deviation, to stick to one given course. In lecturing on the Roman civil law, a professor can bind himself not to speak of zoology or chemistry, but in a popular school the historical, natural, and mathematical sciences mingle, and at any minute questions arise in all the branches of these sciences.

The most essential difference between the higher and the lower school lies in the degree of subdivisibility of the subjects of instruction. In the lowest school it does not exist at all. Here all the subjects are united in one, and after this they gradually branch out.

Let us look at Articles 2 and 3 of the programme.

What is meant by native tongue ? Does it include syntax and etymology ? There are some teachers who regard both as the best means for teaching language. What is meant by the reading of books, and by explanatory reading ? He who has learned his ABC book can read, and he who reads and understands the Moscow Gazette also only reads. How are the books to be explained, say the chrestomathy published by the society for the publication of cheap books ? To take through with explanations all the articles of this book, would be tantamount to going through nearly the whole course of human knowledge, — theology, and philosophy, and history, and the natural sciences; and to read through the book by syllables and for the

purpose of explanation to repeat each phrase by other incomprehensible words is also explanatory reading. Writing is entirely omitted in the Programme; but even if it were allowed, and most precisely defined in the programme, one might understand by writing the mere copying of letters, or the knowledge of the art of the language, which may be acquired only by a whole course of subjects and exercises. The programme defines everything and nothing, nor can it define anything.

In mathematics. What is meant by the four operations on abstract and concrete numbers? I, for example, in my teaching, do not use concrete numbers, leaving the so-called concrete numbers for multiplication and division. Arithmetic in general I begin with progression, which every teacher does, for numeration is nothing but decimal progression. It says: an idea of fractions. But why only an idea? In my instruction I begin the decimal fractions at once with numeration. Equations, that is, algebra, I begin with the first operations. Consequently, I transcend the programme. Plane geometry is not in-

dedicated in the programme, and yet problems from plane geometry are the most natural and the most intelligible applications of the first rules. With one teacher geometry and algebra will enter into the teaching of the four operations; with another teacher the four operations will form only a mechanical exercise in writing with chalk on a blackboard, and for either the programme will be only "words, words, words." So much the less is it possible to give the teacher instruction and guidance. For the successful progress of the teaching, the teacher must have the means for his own instruction and full liberty in the choice of his methods. It is convenient for one to teach by the buki-az - ba method, and for another by the be-a, and for a third by the b-a method, each being master of his. For the teacher to assimilate another method, it is not enough to know it and to prescribe it to him, - he must believe that this method is the best, and he must love it.

This refers both to the methods of the instruction itself, as also to the treatment of the pupils.

Circular instructions and prescriptions to the teachers will only embarrass them. More than once have I seen teachers instructing according to the sound method, just as according to the buki-az - ba method, memorizing letters, combinations, and syllables, and calling buki "Ly," and dobro "dy," but this was only done in the presence of the authorities, because such was the order.

As to the aim, which the committee may have had in view in writing out the programme, - the aim of warding off the possibility of any baneful influence of evil-minded teachers, - it must be said that no programme will keep a teacher from exerting a baneful influence upon his pupils. With such a programme the presence of a captain of gendarmes would become necessary in every school, for nobody could rely on the statements of the pupils, neither for nor against the teacher. The fact is that such fears are not in the least allayed by

the programme, and that such fears are quite groundless. No matter how much a Commune is removed from the control over its schools, a father cannot be kept from being interested in that which is being taught to his son; and however compulsory a school may be, a mass of pupils cannot be kept from judging their teacher and giving him just the weight he deserves. I am fairly convinced, both by ratiocination and by experience, that a school is always secure against baneful influences by the control of the parents and by the sentiment of justice in the pupils.

In Art. 62 it says that the Communes may establish libraries; that is, nobody is forbidden to buy books, neither singly, nor in partnership, if they are so minded.

Chapter VII. Of the Students in the Popular Schools, and of the Distribution of the Time of Study.

§63. Children may enter the popular schools with their eighth year. No preliminary knowledge is required of those who enter school.

Why eight years and not six years and three and one-half months ? This question demands just such positive proofs as that other question why teachers are to receive 150 roubles, and not 178 roubles and sixteen and one-third kopeks; and this the more, since I know by personal experience that at least one-fourth of the children going to school are below eight years of age, and that during this age, of from six to eight years, the children learn to read more rapidly, more easily, and better. All the children I know of, who are instructed at home, also begin much earlier than at eight years. That is the freest time for a peasant child, – a period during which he is not yet employed at domestic labour, and unreservedly devotes himself to the school until his eighth year. Why, then, did the writers of the Project take such a dislike to that age ? It is absolutely necessary to know the ground on which children before the age of eight are excluded from the schools.

In the second part of the article there is a statement that no preliminary knowledge is required in those who enter. We cannot comprehend what that is for. Are those who enter obliged to wear canvas blouses in the summer, and the well-known uniform in winter ?

If everything which is not needed is to be defined, this, too, ought to be stated.

In Art. 64 it says: No definite period of instruction in the popular school is established; every pupil is declared to have finished his course of instruction whenever he has sufficiently acquired that which is taught in the school.

We vividly imagine the joy and happiness of some Akhramydy when he is declared to have finished a course.

§65. In the village popular schools instruction shall begin from the time the field labours are ended, and shall last until the beginning

of work in the following year, conforming to the local conditions of peasant life.

Here the authors of the Project, apparently trying wisely to submit to the exigencies of actuality, again are in error, despite the shade of practicalness which this article has. What are the beginning and the end of rural labours ? So long as there is a law upon it, this ought to be defined. The teacher, who in everything will comply with the law, will execute it promptly. And in this case, if the 1st of April is to be the last day, he will not teach a day too much. Let alone that it is difficult to define the period, in many localities a number of pupils will stay through the summer, and there will nearly everywhere be about a third of them. The peasants are everywhere firmly convinced, on account of the method of memorizing in vogue with them, that what has been learned will soon be forgotten; and so only those who are in need of their children unwillingly take them out for the summer, but even then they beg to have their children recite at least once a week. If it comes at all to writing a Project, to conforming to the needs of the people, this ought to be written down too.

Art. 66 directs the attention to the fact that instruction is given during week-days, and not on holidays, with which one cannot help agreeing, as in the case of all such decrees, written down no one knows why, and expressive of absolutely nothing.

But Art. 67 again makes us stagger. There it says that the pupils shall have but one session, and shall study not more than four hours, with a recess.

It would be interesting to see the progress made by at least fifty pupils (and maybe even one hundred, as is intended by the calculation) studying only during the winter, and not more than four hours a day, with a recess ! I have the boldness to consider myself a good teacher, but if I were given seventy pupils under such conditions I should say in advance that half of them would be unable to read in two years. As soon as the Project shall be confirmed, not one teacher, in spite of the half desya-tina of garden land, will add one hour of work contrary to the regulation, lest, by not complying with the philanthropic foresight of the Project, he should exhaust the youthful minds of the peasant children. In a sufficiently large number of schools, which I know, the children study from eight to nine hours a day, and remain overnight at school so as to be able in the evening once more to recite to the teacher, and neither the parents nor the teachers observe any evil consequences from it.

According to Art. 69 there is to be an annual public examination. This is not the place to prove that examinations are injurious, and more than injurious, – that they are impossible. I have mentioned this in the article " The School at Yasnaya Polyana." In reference to Art. 69 I will limit myself to the question: " For what and for whom are these examinations ? "

The bad and baneful side of the examinations in a popular school must be evident to anybody: they lead to official deceit, forgery, useless mustering of children, and the consequent interruption of the customary occupations. The usefulness of these examinations is totally incomprehensible to me. It is injurious by means of examinations to awaken a spirit of rivalry in children eight years old, and it is impossible by means of an examination of two hours' duration to determine the knowledge of eighty-year-old pupils and to judge of the merits of a teacher.

According to Art. 70 the pupils received stamped documents, called diplomas. As to what these documents are to be used for, nothing is said in the Project. No rights and no privileges are connected with them, and so I suppose that the deceptive idea that it is very flattering to have a stamped document will long be current among the people or will serve as an incitement for attending school. Even though at first the masses may be deceived as to the meaning of these papers, they will soon come to see their error.

Art. 71 grants the same right of stamped documents to people who have been instructed outside the school, and who, in my opinion, will still less be flattered by such a privilege.

Art. 72, with a note to it, on the contrary, deserves our full confidence, and, more than all the others, corresponds to the aim and spirit of the Project. It runs as follows: At the end of each scholastic year, the teacher reports to the director of the Government, on the enclosed blank, as to the number of pupils in the popular school, and as to the number of those who have been subjected to examination for the purpose of receiving a diploma.

Note. This information contains statistical data, necessary for the final report to the Ministry of Public Instruction, and therefore its form must always agree with the questions, as defined by that report. The director of schools shall furnish the schools with printed blanks of such information, the expenses for printing to be credited to the sum allowed him for office appliances.

How well everything is thought out! How everything has been provided for, – even the printing of the blanks, even the sum from which the expense is to be met! One simply feels the stern regularity and immutability of form and even of contents of the future reports, such as the government wants to get: not reports of what is to be in reality, not even of what is, – for the chief part of the education in private schools will slip away from these reports, – but of what ought to be according to the impracticable decrees of the government. With this article ends the whole Project of the state schools. Then follows:

Chapter VIII. Private Popular Schools.

Three articles of this chapter grant all persons the right to open private schools, define the conditions under which they may be opened, limit the programmes of such schools to the mere rudiments

in the narrower sense, and establish the control of the clergy over them. One may be sure that in the Nord and in other foreign papers the granting of such a privilege will be received and esteemed as a new step toward progress which we are taking. The critic of the Project, who is unacquainted with Russian life, will take down the law of 1828, according to which the opening of schools and private instruction is prohibited, and, comparing the older restrictive measures with the new Project, in which one is only asked to give information of the opening of a school, will say that in matters of public education the Project gives incomparably greater freedom than was the case before. But for us, who are living a Russian life, the matter appears different.

The law of the year 1828 was only a law, and it never occurred to any one to comply with it; all, both society and the executors of the law, acknowledged its impracticability and the impossibility of carrying it out. There have existed and still exist thousands of schools without permission, and not one superintendent or director of a gymnasium has ever raised his hand to close these schools, because they do not comply with the articles of the law of 1828. By tacit consensus of opinion, society and the executors of the law accepted the law of 1828 as nonexistent, and, in reality, in the teaching and opening of schools men were guided by a complete time-honoured liberty of action. The law passed by entirely unnoticed. I opened a school in 1849, and only in March of 1862 did I learn, upon the occasion of the promulgation of the Project, that I had no right to open such a school. Out of a thousand teachers and founders of schools scarcely one knows of the existence of the law of 1828. It is known only to the officials of the Ministry of Public Instruction.

For this reason it seems to me that Articles 73, 74, and 75 of the Project offer new rights only as regards supposedly existing restrictions, but when compared with the existing order of things, they only impose new restrictive and impracticable conditions. Nobody will be willing to establish schools, if he is not to have the right of appointing and dismissing teachers, himself choosing text-books, and of getting up his own programme. The majority of teachers and founders of schools – soldiers, sextons, canonists ¹ – will be afraid to report the establishment of their schools; many will not know of this requirement, and, if they want to do so, will know how to elude it in legal form. As I have said in the preceding article, it is impossible to define the limits between a home education and the school. The innkeeper has hired a teacher for his two children, and three others come to his house; the landed proprietor teaches four of the children of his manorial servants and two peasant children with his own; labourers come to me on Sundays, and to some of these

¹ Soldiers raised from boyhood in soldier-colonies.

I read, while others study the rudiments, or look at drawings and models. Are these schools, or not? And yet, what a field for abuses! I am a justice of the peace and am convinced that education

is harmful for the masses, and so I fine an old man for having taught his godchild reading, and take away from him the ABC book and the psalter, on the ground that he ought to have informed me of the establishment of the school. There are relations of man to man, which cannot be defined by laws, such as the domestic relations, the relations of him who educates to him who is being educated, and so forth.

Chapter IX. On the Government of Schools.

Here it says that the government of the schools is entrusted to the director of schools, one to each province. In the Project there is frequent mention of the subdivision of the schools as regards their government into an educational part and some other kind of a part. I positively cannot comprehend this division, and I can see no other part in a school than the educational, from which springs the material part, naturally subject to it and in no way to be separated from it. According to the Project, everything is left in charge of the one director. The director, to judge from the indistinct expression of Art. 87 (who has gained experience in matters of education during the period of his service as a teacher), is to be selected from among the teachers of a gymnasium or from the professors. The director must personally supervise the instruction, and must even show how to act and teach, – there being but one director to three hundred or five hundred schools in the Government. In order to have the right to offer any kind of advice to a teacher, one must for at least a week study up the condition of each school, but, as everybody knows, there are only 365 days in the year. These officials will cost the government about two hundred thousand roubles for the whole of Russia.

In Art. 79 it says that the director is to avoid correspondence, but shall superintend in person.

In the following articles the director is given instructions as to what he is to demand of the teachers.

In Art. 86 the director is furnished with travelling expenses. It is the evident desire of the authors of the Project that the supervision of the director should not be formal, but real. But the very position of this official precludes the possibility of actual observation. An alumnus of the university, a former teacher at a gymnasium, or a professor at a university, that is, a man who has never had anything to do with the masses and with the popular schools, is obliged, living in the city and attending to his office duties, to the appointment of teachers, to rewards, reports, and so forth, to guide the schools which he can visit only once a year, if at all as often as that. I know directors of gymnasia, who are almost in the same situation, who with the greatest possible zeal and love busy themselves with the parochial schools, and who at every step, at revisions, at examinations, at appointments and exchanges of teachers, make blunder after blunder only because their circle of activity is a hundred times wider than it should or could be. One man may manage an army corps and, making one inspection, may

know whether the corps is in good or bad order, but to manage a dozen schools is more than one man can do.

Everybody who knows the popular schools must know how difficult and how impossible it is by inspection or by an examination to ascertain the degree of success and the direction of a certain school. How often a conscientious teacher, with a feeling of his dignity and not allowing himself to show off his pupils, will appear in a worse light than a soldier-teacher who has been ruining his pupils for a year and who is working only in view of the final parade ! And how cunning these unprincipled men are, and how frequently they succeed in deceiving good and honest superiors ! There is hardly use in speaking of the terrible injury which such a higher authority does to the pupils. But even if my readers should not agree with me on that score, the creation of the office of the director will be useless and harmful for this reason alone, if for no other, that one director to a Government will appoint and discharge teachers and will offer rewards only by hearsay, by supposition, or arbitrarily, because it is impossible for one man to know what is going on in five hundred schools.

Then follows a sample of a report on the number of pupils, a calculation of the sum necessary for the maintenance of the popular schools, and the personnel of the Governmental Office of Popular Schools. Then there comes an explanatory note.

From the explanatory note it appears that the activity of the committee was divided into two parts: (1) the finding of measures for the development of the popular instruction at the present time until the final adjustment of the rural population; (2) the plan of the Project itself, which we have been discussing. The preliminary measures have been realized, so far as I know, by a circular of the Ministry of Internal Affairs as regards the order of the opening of schools and the obligation of making announcement about them. In reference to the appointment and dismissal of teachers by the director of the Government, to the supervision entrusted to the local clergy, and to the order that the text-books in use should be approved by the Ministry of Public Instruction and by the Holy Synod, I do not know, although I am specially interested in schools, whether that is a request, or a law. It is very likely that* I am committing a crime when I use unapproved books in my school, and that the Communes are also criminal in changing and appointing teachers without the director. If such a law has been in force, or is to be in force, it is not enough to fall back on the first article of the Code of Laws, which declares that the ignorance of the laws does not excuse any one; such new and unexpected laws ought to be read in all the churches and in all the parishes. We are equally ignorant whether the Ministry of Public Instruction has adopted the proposition of the committee of training teachers in the quickest time possible, and where and how many of them are undergoing such training. I have mentioned before that the measure prescribed in the circular of the Ministry of Internal Affairs is not practicable. Let us now turn to some of the thoughts expressed in the explanatory note, which have startled us most.

It would seem that there is no good cause for not being sincere in such a serious matter of state. I have in mind the part, meaning, and influence, which, in matters of education, is given, according to the Project, to our Russian clergy. I vividly present to myself the authors of the Project, who, when writing the note: and entrusting the parochial clergy with the supervision of the education so that it be carried on in the spirit of Orthodox Christian morality, etc., – I vividly present to myself the smile of submission and of the consciousness of their certain superiority and, at the same time, of the falseness of this measure, which must have played on the lips of the authors of the Project as they listened to the reading of this article and ordered it written down in the minutes. Just such a smile is produced by it on all experienced men who claim to know life.

"What is to be done? This is natural," say some. Other, inexperienced, intelligent people interested in the matter are provoked and become enraged at the reading of this article. From whom do they wish to conceal the sad truth? No doubt from the masses. But the masses know it better than we. Is it possible that, having lived so many centuries in the closest relations with the clergy, they have not learned to know and value them properly? The people appreciate the clergy and give them such a part and influence upon their education as the clergy deserve. In the Project there are many such insincere, diplomatic articles. As a matter of fact they will all be eluded, and it would make no difference if they had never been written; but these articles, as, for example, the one we have just mentioned, on account of their falseness and obscurity, open an enormous field for abuses which cannot be foreseen. I know some clergymen who say that to teach reading by the *be* method and not by *buki* is a sin; that to translate the Slavic prayers into Russian and to explain them is a sin; that sacred history should be taught only as set down in the ABC book, and so forth.

II.

I myself feel that my manner of discussing the Project is not sufficiently serious and that it looks as though I were making fun of the Project and as though I had set out to deny everything contained in it. Such a relation to the Project has arisen involuntarily as the result of the oppositeness of my practical view on matters, growing out of my close relations with the people, and from the absolute estrangement from reality, which is evident in the conception and draft of the Project. We occupy such opposite, distantly remote points of view that, in spite of the respect and even terror roused in me by the Project, I somehow cannot bring myself to believe in its reality, and, in spite of the efforts which I am making over myself, I am unable to remain quite serious in respect to it. I can find no retorts in the sphere of ideas in which the committee acted. The essence of my objections is directed, not against the mistakes and omissions of the Project, but against that very sphere of action from which it has emanated, and consists only in the denial of the applicability and possibility of such a

Project.

I shall endeavour to transfer myself to that sphere of ideas and actions, from which the Project has emanated. It is clear to me why in the present period of universal reforms in Russia the question of establishing a system of popular education should naturally rise in governmental circles. The government, which has always taken the initiative in all reforms and innovations, must have naturally arrived at the conviction that precisely at this time it was incumbent upon it to establish a system of popular education. Having arrived at such a conviction, it naturally had to entrust the establishment of this system to certain officials of various ministries. Nothing more fundamental and more liberal could have been invented, or might have been expected, than the idea that representatives of all the ministries should take part in the authorship of this Project. (It may, however, be remarked that it is strange that to this committee, whose labours are a thousand times more important than those of the serf committee, no experts were invited, as had been done in the case of the deliberations of the question of the emancipation of the serfs. But this remark has no force because, in our opinion, the Project would have been little changed from what it is, even if so-called experts had been invited.) It was, of course, out of the question to let the people who are concerned in the Project, themselves, by means of their representatives, create that system.

People, very respectable though they be, who have served as officials, who have never studied the masses, nor the questions of popular education, who are no specialists in the business with which they were occupied, continuing their former occupations, having no time to devote dozens of years to the study of the question in hand, began to assemble on certain days of the week and to discuss the greatest question of creation, – popular education in Russia. It must also be remarked that the most essential question of the subordination of the schools to the Ministry of Public Instruction had been settled in the committee of the ministers, and that, therefore, the members of the committee were confined to the narrowest possible limits.

I take in advance all the members of the committee to have been highly cultured and moral men, pervaded by love for the masses and by a desire to benefit their country, and yet, in spite of it, I cannot assume that anything else could have resulted under the conditions under which they were working. Nothing but the Project which we are discussing could have resulted. In the whole Project we observe not so much a study of the national needs and a study of education itself and the determination of new laws based on such a study, as a struggle with something unknown, baneful, and deadening. The whole Project, as the readers have seen, is filled with articles stating that popular schools are open establishments ; that priests may teach only if they have the time for teaching; that no privileges are granted a curator ; that teachers are not subject to preferments of rank ; that there is no conventional form of school buildings ; that private individuals may teach; that libraries may

be established; that directors of schools shall visit the schools ; that men belonging to any class may become teachers; that salaries are paid but once ; that teachers are not to be prohibited from passing over to other occupations (Art. 22 of the explanatory note); that teachers need not wear any uniform, etc., etc. The reading of this Project makes one living in the country marvel why such articles are written, and the Project is full of such articles, as may be seen from our analysis.

Working under such conditions of ignorance of the matter and of ignorance of the people and their needs, and, above all, under the restrictions which one feels throughout the whole Project, one can only marvel that it has not turned out much worse.

The question was put like this: There are no means and will be none; the popular education is to be subject to the Ministry of Public Instruction; the clergy must have the power of guiding and directing the spirit of the education ; the management of the schools and the schools themselves are to be uniform throughout Russia, – now, make the system the best possible. To invent a Russian system of education, such as would spring from the needs of the people, is a matter of impossibility for a committee or for anybody else in the world, – one has to wait for it to grow out of the people. To divine the measures which may facilitate, and not hamper such a development, takes much time, labour, study, and freedom of view; none of these did the committee possess. To solve the question it was necessary to turn to the European systems. I suppose that officials had been sent to the various countries for the purpose of studying up their systems. (I even saw such investigators aimlessly wandering from place to place and concerned only about the thought of writing up a memoir to be presented to the ministry.)

On the basis of such memoirs, I suppose, all the foreign systems had been discussed in the committee. We cannot be grateful enough to the committee for having selected the least bad of all the inapplicable systems, the American. Having solved the main financial question on the basis of this system, the committee passed over to the administrative questions, being guided only by the predetermination of the committee of the ministers as to subordinating the schools to the Ministry of Public Instruction, and making use, for the information of the facts of the case, of such material as was at hand in St. Petersburg: of the memoir of the Geographical Society for the dissemination of the schools, and of the official reports of the religious department and of the directors for the determination of the number of schools, – and the Project was written up.

From the standpoint of the government, schools will be opened in Russia in proportion to the population, the moment the Project is made effective. In the majority of cases the well-to-do peasants will gladly pay twentyseven and one-half kopeks for each soul, and in the poor settlements the schools will be opened gratis (from the government fund). The peasants, having such excellent schools, will not let their children be instructed by soldiers, but will gladly bring them to the school. For every thousand inhabitants (all this

from the government point of view) there will be a beautiful house, which, although not constructed in a prescribed way, will bear the inscription "School" and will be provided with benches and tables and a reliable teacher appointed by the government.

The children of the whole parish will be gathered here. The parents will be proud of the diplomas which their children will receive; such a diploma will be regarded as the best recommendation for a lad, – and they will be more willing to give him a maiden in marriage and to give him work, if he has a diploma. Three or four years later not only boys, but girls also will attend school. One teacher, by dividing up the hours of the day, will teach one hundred pupils.

The instruction will be successful, in the first place, because by granting a reward the best method will be found, selected, and approved by the Ministry of Public Instruction, and this method will be obligatory for all schools (and after awhile the teachers will all be trained in this one, best method); in the second place, because the text-books will also be the best, being approved by the Ministry, like those of Bertet and Oboddvski. The teacher will be well provided for, and he will be attached to and united with the people, in the midst of whom he will live. The teacher, as in Germany, will with the priest form the aristocracy of the village, and will be the first friend and adviser of the peasants. For every vacancy among the teachers there will be dozens of candidates, from among whom the expert and cultured director will choose the worthiest.

The teacher of religion, for an appropriate remuneration, will confirm the children in the truths of the Orthodox faith. Since nearly all the young generation will be drawn to the school, all possibility of a further spread of the schism will stop.

The means of the school will always be sufficient, not only for the teachers' pay, which is secured by means of a twenty-seven-kopek levy, but also for school appliances and for the buildings, the construction of which is left to the discernment of the Commune, so that the Communes will not stint the means, but, on the contrary, will contend in rivalry with each other. Not only will the Communes not spare the means, but each school will have its curators, and these persons, in sympathy with the popular education, – presumably rich people, – will come to the aid of the school, both by furnishing material means and by governing it. The slightest irregularity of the teacher or misunderstanding on the side of the parents will be removed by the curators or justices of the peace, who will gladly devote part of their leisure to the holy work of popular education, which rouses the sympathy of all the enlightened men of Russia.

The time of instruction will not be a burden to the moral powers of the pupils; the whole summer will be devoted to field labour. The course of instruction will contain the most essential knowledge and will cooperate in strengthening in the masses their religious and

moral concepts. Evil-minded, coarse, uncultured people, being obliged to report the opening of their schools, will by that very act fall under the control of the educational authorities, and thus will be deprived of the possibility of doing any harm. The government schools will naturally be so good that the competition of the private schools will prove as impossible as it has proved in America, the more so since the government schools will be free.

The provincial authority over the schools will be concentrated in one cultivated, expert, independent person, – the director of schools. This person, materially secure and not bound by any bureaucratic exigencies, will all the time be making the round of the schools, examining, and personally watching over the progress of instruction.

It looks all so nice! One seems to see in his mind's eye large school buildings erected all over Russia, with iron roofs, presented by curators or by Communes; one sees, at the hour appointed by the ministry, the pupils gathering from the various villages, carrying knapsacks over their shoulders; one sees a cultured teacher, who has studied the best method, and a lady curator, filled with love for the work and present during classes and watching the instruction; one sees the director arriving in a carriage drawn by fine horses, for a third or fourth time that year, greeting the teacher and the pupils, nearly all of whom he knows, and giving the teacher practical advice; one sees the happiness and contentment of the parents, who are present at the examinations and who in trepidation are waiting for the rewards and the diplomas of their children; and one sees all over Russia the darkness of ignorance quickly dispelled, and the rude, ignorant people becoming all changed, growing in culture and happiness.

But there will be nothing of the kind. Reality has its laws and its demands. In reality, so far as I know the people, the application of the Project will lead to the following results:

It will be announced through the rural police or through the township offices that the peasants are to levy a tax of twenty-seven and one-half kopeks per head against such and such a date. They will be informed that this money is for the purpose of a school. Then there will be announced another levy for the building of the school; if it will be said that the amount of the levy depends upon them, the peasants will set it at three kopeks, so they will be compelled to make a stated levy. The peasants will, naturally, not comprehend this, and will not believe it. The majority will decide that there is an ukase from the Tsar to increase the tax, and that is all. The money will be collected with difficulty, through threats and use of force. The captain of the rural police will determine the place where the school is to be built and will demand that the Communes choose their own supervisors of the building. The peasants will, naturally, see in this a new tax, and will carry out the command only under compulsion. They will not know what to build or how to build it, and will only carry out the command of the authorities.

They will be told that they may elect a curator for their school; they will not comprehend this under any circumstances, not because they are so stupid and ignorant, but because they will fail to understand how it is they are not to have the right of watching in person over the instruction of their children, while they are to elect for that purpose a person that, in reality, does not possess that right either. The tax of twenty-seven and one-half kopeks, the levy for the building, the obligation to have it erected, – all that will breed in the people such a hostility to the idea and to the word " school," with which they naturally will connect the idea of taxation, that they will not wish to elect anybody, fearing lest they should be mulcted for the curator's salary. The captain and the justice will come down upon them, and they will in terror and trepidation choose the first man who happens to call himself a curator. The curator will be the same justice of the peace, or, nearly always, it will be the first landed proprietor of the village, who will be elected, and thus the curatorship will become his amusement and pastime, that is, the most serious business in the world will become his plaything or will serve him as a means for satisfying his vanity. The justice of the peace, as matters now stand, is not physically able to attend even to his direct duties; and it is an exceedingly difficult matter, demanding great knowledge and conscientious labour, to be the representative of a Commune, in relation to the control exercised by this Commune over the school. The majority of the curators will visit the school two or three times a month, will probably make a present of a home-made blackboard, on Sunday will invite the teacher to the house (and that is the best thing of all), and in case of a vacancy will recommend their godchild, the priest's son expelled from the theological school, or their former office lad.

Having built the school and paid the money, the Communes will conclude that they are through with the taxes, – but that is where they will be mistaken. The captain will announce to them that they are to cut off half a desyatina of the hemp-field for the teacher's use. Again there will be meetings, again the words " school" and " forcible alienation " will mingle in one inseparable idea. The peasants will go through their fields, trying to cut off the desired strip, and they will call each other names, and quarrel, and sin, as they call it, and will come together a second and a third time, and somehow, fulfilling the command of the authorities, will manage to deprive themselves of a piece of valuable garden land. But that is not all: there has to be another meeting in order to apportion the teacher's allowance of grain throughout the parish. (The contributions in kind are the most disliked of all by the peasants.) Finally the school is built, and the maintenance of the teacher is assured.

If the landed proprietor or the justice of the peace has not recommended his office lad, or godchild, the director of schools has to appoint his own teacher. The choice will be either very easy or very hard for the director of schools, for thousands of teachers, expelled from the seminaries, or discharged scribes, will every day be standing in his antechamber, treating his secretary to wine, and

in every possible way trying to gain his favour. The director, a former teacher of a gymnasium, will, if he is an absolutely conscientious and cautious man, be guided in his choice of teachers only by the degree of their education, that is, he will prefer one who has finished a course to one who has not, and will thus constantly be making blunders. But the majority of directors, who do not look so severely upon their duties, will be guided by philanthropic recommendations and their good hearts: why not give a piece of bread to a poor man? – and thus they will commit the same blunders as the first. I see no juster means for the director's choice than the casting of lots.

One way or other, the teacher will be appointed. The Communes are informed that they may send their children without any farther expenses to the very school which has come so hard to them. The majority of peasants will everywhere give the same reply to such a proposition: "The devil take that school, – we are sick of it. We have lived so many years without a school, and we shall manage to get along without it; if I want my boy to learn something, I shall send him to the sexton. I know something about that instruction, and God knows what this will be: it may be they will teach my boy something, and then they will take him entirely away from me." Let us suppose that such an opinion will not be universal, that it will disappear in time, and that, seeing the progress of the children who have entered before, others will wish to send theirs; in that case, which I do not at all admit, only those who live in the village where the school building is will send their children there. No gratis instruction will entice the pupils in the winter from villages one verst distant from the school. That would be physically impossible. There will be an average of about fifteen pupils to a school. The remaining children of the parish will study with private people in the villages, or they will not study at all, while they will be counted in as attending school and will be so reported.

The success of the schools will be just the same as, if not worse than, the success obtained with private teachers, sextons, and soldiers. The teachers will be men of the same calibre, seminarists, for there are as yet no others, but with this difference: in the first case they are bound by no repressive conditions and are under the control of the parents who demand results corresponding to the money paid out by them, while in the government school, where they have to submit to methods, manuals, limitations of hours each day, and the interference of curators and directors, the results will certainly be worse.

The director will receive an enormous salary, will be travelling, and now and then bothering good, conscientious teachers, appointing poor teachers, and dismissing good ones, for it is impossible to know the conditions of the schools for a whole Government; as he must supervise them, he will at stated times make reports, which will be as unwittingly false as those are which are made now.

Private schools null exist just as they exist now, without giving information of their existence, and nobody will know anything of

them, although in them will take place the chief movement of the popular education.

All that is not the worst, nor the most baneful thing. In all the branches of the Russian administration we are accustomed to the incompatibility of official legislation with actual conditions. It would seem, then, that there might be here the same incompatibility in matters of the popular education. What is faulty and inapplicable in the Project will be eluded, and much will be carried into effect and will be useful. With the Project a beginning of a system of popular education has at least been made, and whether good or bad, small or large, there will be at least one school to every thousand of the Russian population.

This would be quite true if the establishment of the schools, in the administrative and financial respect, were fully and frankly taken up by the government, and if that institution were just as fully and frankly transferred to the Commune, whereas in the Project before us the Commune is made to pay, and the government takes upon itself the organization of the schools. It is from this that naturally will spring that enormous moral evil, though it may not be apparent to all, which for a long time will undermine the development of education in the Russian people. The need of education is just beginning freely to take germ in the masses. After the manifesto of February 19 th, the people everywhere expressed their conviction that they now need a greater degree of education and that, in order to acquire this education, they are ready to make certain sacrifices. This conviction has found its expression in the fact that everywhere free schools have been arising in enormous numbers. The masses have been advancing on the path on which the government would like to see them go.

Suddenly, by exerting an oppression on the free schools and by imposing an obligatory school tax upon all, the government not only does not acknowledge the previous educational movement, but, as it were, denies it: the government seems to be imposing the obligation of another, unfamiliar education on the masses, removing them from participation in their own affair, and demanding from them not guidance and deliberation, but only submission. Not only has my own experience shown to me in particular cases, but history and common sense indicate to us, the possible results of such interference: the masses will regard themselves as the martyrs of violence. The old sexton's schools will appear to them as sanctuaries, while the new government schools will seem to them to be sinful innovations, and they will in rage turn away from the very business which they had begun themselves in love, simply because the government has been in a hurry and has not given them a chance to think out the matter to its conclusion, has not given them a chance to select their own road, but has forcibly led them along a path which they do not yet regard as the best.

The realization of the Project will, in addition to its essential imperfections, breed one immeasurable evil: a schism of education, a taciturn negative resistance to the school, and a fanaticism of

ignorance or of the old education.