

The purpose of this chapter has been to trace two themes of 1905: first, the unusually oppositionist stance taken by many liberals in Saratov who were so committed to reform that they were willing to cooperate with radicals for the support of the lower classes; and second, the evolution of Stolypin's political education as he lived through a challenging period in a difficult province before arriving at the national level of politics. Neither one of these stories can be told in isolation, for Stolypin and political figures in Saratov had a very strong reciprocal influence.

One may conclude from the above that Saratov politics in 1905 presents both a reflection and an unusual development (or, in the provinces, an extreme case) of the liberal-radical alliance seen throughout Russia in the period. On the one hand, Saratov reformists in both the zemstvo and city duma took a daringly oppositionist stance in 1905. Liberals were willing to lobby with the governor to prevent his use of repression against workers in January, to distribute oppositionist literature in the villages in July, and to join strike committees and appeal for the release of political prisoners in October. By appealing so openly for reform, they demonstrated a confidence in their position in local society, a faith that they could tamper with the status quo and not run the risk of provoking a social conflagration that would destroy themselves as well as the tsarist regime. Their resolve to challenge the government was based in part on a fear of growing peasant unrest, felt increasingly since 1902, which led them to do and say things that may seem naive in hindsight. Nevertheless, zemstvo liberals deserve credit for their vision and willingness to cooperate with the left for the progressive cause. In large measure they owed this unusual attitude to the political circumstances of Saratov, an environment that encouraged this alliance of diverse political groups.

On the other hand, the radical parties of Saratov were also unusual in their relatively open attitude toward politics, as was shown both by the Bolshevik and Menshevik cooperation and SR-SD joint efforts throughout 1905. The liberal-radical alliance was based on reciprocal ties, for the

leftists depended on their "society" friends in the zemstvo and дума for economic protection and moral support in the same way that the liberals needed these democratic employees for their ties to the narod.

The *tenacity* of this spirit of center-left cooperation is a striking feature of the Revolution of 1905 in Saratov. At the beginning of this story, the province was one of the leading provincial areas of the Banquet Campaign, and these liberal-radical ties remained strong throughout 1905. It was characteristic of local affairs that the Kadets and the SRs joined in a coalition for the Дума elections, and even in late 1906 the local Kadets proclaimed their dedication to a working alliance with the radicals as a "bloc of illegal organizations."<sup>82</sup>

In his Saratov years Stolypin refined his ability to challenge his adversaries face-to-face, be they the "popular" rioters of Saratov during the pogrom of October 20, the rioting townspeople in Balashov of July 21, or the zemstvo and дума leaders encountered during the Banquet Campaign. The Saratov years clearly provided a major foundation for Stolypin's distrust of the Kadets. His experiences in 1903-06 taught him the propensity of the liberals to submit to the influence of the radical Third Element. The liberals did not renounce the revolution, he reasoned, and from this weakness of the public arose the anarchy of 1905. Hence, to prevent new attacks on the regime, he sought out public leaders who could be trusted to stand on the side of order. From his 1905 experience he came easily to develop a very different attitude toward the Octobrists than he had toward the Kadets.

Stolypin's feelings toward social unrest operated on two levels. He unflinchingly applied military force to suppress disturbances, and in fact showed that repression could succeed, that it was possible for him to prevail over the revolutionary movement. Yet he was also aware of the underlying issues that gave rise to the revolutionary threat. Generally, the newly emerging Stolypin program could be summarized under three themes: (1) the need to use police power to restore order, with its emphasis directed against radicals; (2) the recognition that mass unrest arose from structural economic and social problems, so that once peace was restored the regime should pursue fundamental reforms; and (3) the understanding that the government was dependent upon the creation of a new political regime through an alliance with the landed gentry and public moderates with whom he could use his "personal contacts and conversations" in order to achieve those reforms.

Stolypin saw himself as a government servitor standing above the special interests of any particular social group. He became especially sensitive to the need for land reform under the unusual pressure of unrest in Saratov in 1905. He perceived the peasant problem from the point of view of the state, and similarly, his attitude toward the landed gentry embodied that same perspective. He was closely allied to other landowners in the province and came to find the conservative gentry as his main social ally in his war against the revolution. Yet his vision emphasized the need to protect the interests of the state as a whole, an approach which would also lead him to contemplate reforms that threatened traditional gentry-dominated institutions. Altogether, the Saratov years helped the governor develop into an unusually dynamic statesman for the tsarist regime prior to its demise.