While Turgenev and Golovin were struggling to shape their roles as émigré opponents of the Russian autocracy, a new figure appeared in Western Europe who would soon develop a political critique of the tsarist system which substantially differed from that of his predecessors. The originality of Nikolai Sazonov’s critique has not been appreciated in the historical literature; neither Soviet nor Western historians have succeeded in moving beyond Annenkov’s and Herzen’s unflattering portraits of Sazonov, which we have examined. E. H. Carr, however, is by far the most elegant of Sazonov’s detractors. “Sazonov,” he writes, “was one of those gifted young men whose brilliant future recedes imperceptibly into the past without ever having been realized in the present.” Admitting that Sazonov was “one of the most brilliant and daring members of Herzen’s group in Moscow,” Carr sees the rest of his career as a “record of continuous decline.” Sazonov’s intelligence was subdue by his more powerful obsession with political illusions, and his financial inheritance as a member of the landowning gentry was squandered by “his disreputable manner of life,” according to Carr.¹

The noted Soviet historian B. P. Koz’min has indicated in an article on Sazonov that “it is time to recall such half-forgotten people,” but he nevertheless repeats Herzen’s original negative evaluation of Sazonov. Talented and intelligent, Sazonov wasted his gifts because, Koz’min writes, he lacked the discipline of work; this deficiency is traceable to his social class background and indulgent upbringing amid the landed aristocracy. Koz’min places him among “the ranks of the numerous Russian talented failures, one of the most colorful figures in the gallery of the Russian ‘superfluous men.’”² Another Soviet historian concludes, after agreeing with Koz’min, that Sazonov represents the ideology of “gentry-landlord
liberalism." It is interesting to note that neither of these Soviet scholars makes any reference to the pioneering study of Sazonov by D. Riazanov, which was published shortly after the 1917 revolution. This neglect is all the more significant since Riazanov portrayed Sazonov not only as an authentic émigré revolutionary but also—and more importantly—as the first Russian Marxist.

Contemporary opinion of Sazonov, apart from Herzen's, is of a different tone and view. Even Bakunin in his confession to the tsar, written while in prison, was more balanced than Herzen in discussing Sazonov. Peter Chaadaev wrote to a friend in 1841 that "there is in Paris a Russian of unusual intelligence by the name of Sazonov." Konstantin Aksakov, who knew Sazonov during their student years in Moscow, noted that Sazonov, despite his egotism, was an exceptionally bright man who finished first in his class. Aksakov also mentioned that Sazonov was very well read, particularly in French literature, which was later to become one of his most absorbing concerns.

Nikolai Ivanovich Sazonov was born in Riazan on 17 (29) June 1815, three years after Herzen's birth. Beyond the fact that his father was a comparatively wealthy landowner, little is known about his earliest years. In 1830 he entered Moscow University, and a year later joined an intellectual circle that included Herzen, Ogarev, N. M. Satin, N. Kh. Ketcher, V. P. Botkin, and K. Aksakov. The members of this group dedicated themselves to the writings of Saint-Simon, Jacob Böhme, and the Russian Decembrists. At the beginning of 1834, Sazonov formulated a project for "a new encyclopedic journal" together with Herzen and Satin. Their intent was to use the journal to chart "the main phases of the development of humanity... and to focus attention on its aspirations." Their tasks were to be divided as follows: philosophy of history was to be handled by Ogarev, Herzen, and Sazonov; the theory of literature was to be guided by Ogarev; and the statistical section—to which the group attached great significance—was to be the responsibility of Herzen and Sazonov. Although police arrests prevented the project from being realized, this serious planning for an activist journal devoted to social and intellectual change reflects the commitment of the circle's members to radical endeavors. More specifically, the project foreshadows Sazonov's involvement with progressive journalism during his émigré years.
In the summer of 1834, Sazonov graduated with a degree from the physical-mathematical faculty of Moscow University. He knew four languages and had already published a scholarly article on historiography. This academic distinction, together with the intervention of his mother in influencing officials, helped Sazonov avoid the fate of his comrades during the arrests of July 1834. Whereas Herzen, Ogarev, and Satin were condemned to administrative exile in Siberia, Sazonov was granted permission to travel abroad. He spent the winter of 1835–36 in Germany, Italy, and Switzerland. He was enthusiastically impressed with Western culture, particularly in Germany, as is evident in a letter to his friend Konstantin Aksakov. Yet, at the same time, his excitement about experiencing Europe should be set against his special appreciation of having avoided arrest and a period of Siberian exile. The sense of exultant liberation he expresses in the letter to Aksakov is in marked contrast to a guilt-laden letter he wrote to Herzen at the same time, where he expressed concern over the fact that he had managed to avoid arrest while Herzen had not. Returning to Moscow, he renewed his friendship with Ketcher, the only other active member of their university circle who had escaped arrest and exile. A surviving letter to Ketcher from this period reflects Sazonov’s continuing involvement with Europe. As a result of his trip abroad, he now sharply dichotomized the cultural ethos of St. Petersburg and Moscow, and in his argument with Ketcher, stood firmly on the side of the capital city as the embodiment of the civilization of the future. He saw St. Petersburg as Russia’s progressive European center, while Moscow clung stubbornly to the traditions of the archaic past. As new trends from abroad were absorbed in St. Petersburg, the dichotomy would become more severe and irreversible. “Whoever wants to know Russia must live here [in St. Petersburg],” he wrote. The debate between Sazonov and Ketcher over this issue is a good example of the division between Slavophiles and Westernizers that was dominating intellectual circles in Russia. More personally, however, the argument signified that Sazonov had come into conflict with his two remaining friends in Russia, Ketcher and Aksakov, both of whom had gravitated toward the Slavophile position. In 1840 Sazonov learned that Ogarev and Satin had been released from Siberian exile and had gone to Europe. He suddenly left for Paris at this time, perhaps encouraged by the example of his former comrades, never to return to Russia again.
Sazonov’s life as an émigré differed substantially from the patterns established by Golovin and Turgenev. Instead of the more isolated, individualistic, and settled existence preferred by his émigré compatriots, Sazonov “threw himself into Parisian revelries.” Although he did have money from his family estate in Russia, he carelessly spent what he had in excess—at one point, according to a contemporary, he was “spending around 100 francs a day.” He was a frequent figure at various restaurants, cafés, and bars. One of the more vivid reminiscences of him at this time recalls him in an inexpensive restaurant habituated by Russians, in the midst of a heated argument with Bakunin over French politics. At one point, in 1846, his financial problems got so out of hand that he was forced to serve a sentence in the Clichy prison in Paris because of his inability to pay his creditors. He was also prevented from returning to Russia with Ogarev and Satin at the end of 1845 because of his debts.

Sazonov was also far more influenced by the advanced political and intellectual currents in Paris during the 1840s than were Turgenev and Golovin. Although his career as a journalist did not coalesce until after the 1848 revolution, there are indications from his correspondence in these years of his involvement with Left Hegelianism, utopian socialism, and Marx’s emerging communist theory. One of his closest friends in the mid-forties was the German poet Georg Herwegh, who later introduced him to Marx. Herwegh, for whom Sazonov had enormous respect and admiration at this time, played an important role in bringing into focus for him many of these new social theories. With the possible exception of Bakunin, Sazonov was the first Russian to become seriously absorbed in these ideas. Paris was, in the 1840s, the only place on the Continent where it was possible for individuals and groups freely to explore what were then called “questions of practical action,” that is, problems directly concerned with the nature and transformation of society. Paris provided the best milieu for the formulation of these problems. The most discussed intellectual issues among the various exiled nationalities in Paris concerned the critique of modern religion along the lines being worked out by David Strauss and Ludwig Feuerbach (Strauss’s Leben Jesu was published in 1836 and Feuerbach’s Das Wesen des Christentums appeared in 1840), and the critique of modern society as theorized by the French utopian socialists and the Left Hegelians. The more radical members of the latter group argued that Hegel’s philosophy should be reoriented to try to resolve concrete problems facing the lower classes of Western
society; Herwegh was an integral part of this intellectual movement, and through him Sazonov became familiar with the issues.

There was, as a result, a curious blend of interest among intellectuals in questions of spiritual faith on the one hand and social transformation on the other. Sazonov's interest in these matters from his perspective as an émigré can be seen most clearly in a letter he wrote to Herwegh in 1844. In this letter, he compared Herwegh's position as a poet and philosopher to the "glorious role of the holy Justinian, the first apologist of Christianity; I, having been born in a barbaric land, have the modest mission of St. Dionysius, the first bishop and first martyr of France." Sazonov explained. He pointed out that Justinian brought a new faith to Rome which challenged all established beliefs and that he was martyred there publicly for his commitment, while Dionysius died in obscurity, having wandered far from his native city with his new faith. Thus, Sazonov strongly identifies himself and Herwegh with the early Christian martyrs; he sees his own and Herwegh's critical theories as occupying a similar relationship to the values and authority of the existing order as did those of the early Christians under Roman rule. He goes beyond this, however, in drawing a link between the Christian martyrs as radical individuals in their time and those groups who fought for the revolution in France in 1789. He describes himself, Herwegh, and all other progressive people as the martyrs of their era in carrying on this revolutionary challenge to existing authority to the point of death.

Sazonov was also close to Ogarev at this time. In a very revealing letter to Ogarev, written around the same time as the letter to Herwegh, Sazonov continued to examine some of these ideas. The letter is essentially an argument by Sazonov against the socialist views advanced at the time by Ogarev. In stating his own position, Sazonov not only discusses most of the leading French socialist thinkers of the 1840s but also makes what in all likelihood is the earliest reference to Marx's ideas in the correspondence of any Russian intellectual. Although it is difficult to reconstruct the background of the letter, Sazonov is obviously conversant with the split between Marx and Ruge over their interpretations of the significance of French utopian socialism. In addition, Sazonov is very familiar with Ogarev's socialist ideas as well as his practical plans to form a communist agricultural colony and factory in the Russian countryside with 2,000 freed serfs from an ancestral family estate.
Herwegh also is mentioned in Sazonov's critique of Ogarev, but this time more negatively than positively. Indeed, the letter is in some ways evidence of a rebellion against Herwegh's enormous influence on Sazonov.

Sazonov tried to address himself to what he saw as the absurdity of Ogarev's emerging populism. He claimed it would be unrealistic and unproductive for Ogarev to "devote himself to the people and live together with them as one of them." The gap between Ogarev and the Russian people in education and styles of life could not be bridged so easily. Sazonov made it clear that he was not opposing the concept of improving the material condition of humanity in general or the Russian people in particular, but rather was criticizing the means by which Ogarev planned to obtain this desired end. He used a familiar religious analogy to make his point here: "I passionately hope that they [i.e., the peasants] will be extricated from this situation, but I see no need to throw myself at the mercy of natural necessity and chance. Christ, in order to expiate mankind, took upon himself the sins of the world, but he did not consider it necessary to sin himself."  

In discussing the theories of "socialism and communism" which had influenced Ogarev, Sazonov stated unambiguously, "I do not recognize communism, nor an equality of compensation either in the moral or the industrial world." He then indicated aspects of the theories of Proudhon, Louis Blanc, and Cabet that he found objectionable. Cabet's book *Voyage en Icarie* he considered "a crazy confusing of Christian morality with the dreams of utopians of all centuries and all peoples." He also pointed out the authoritarian potentialities inherent in forming "various communist sects." Socialists often propound aspirations of harmony and brotherhood that they believe will exist under the new system. "This is the kind of communism my friend Herwegh dreams about," Sazonov writes. Blinded by ideals, they fail to realize the possibilities of despotism when their theories are put into practice. He calls this enforced leveling process "the communism of tailors and shoemakers"; to illustrate his point, he quotes the doomed rebel Jack Cade of Shakespeare's *Henry VI* on egalitarianism: "And when I am king . . . there shall be no money, all shall drink and eat on my score, and I will apparel them in one livery, that they may agree like brothers."

This led Sazonov to return to the experience of emigration itself, which he had also mentioned in his letter to Herwegh in identifying with the exilic wanderings of St. Dionysius. He tried to
explain to Ogarev the destructive aspects of emigration upon the thinking of men like Marx, Ruge, and Herwegh. As they moved from Germany to Switzerland, their previous notions touched on socialism and communism, but they still had not abandoned themselves to these theories. "Here [in Paris], on soil which was for them new and foreign, deprived of the structure of daily activity to which they had been accustomed, isolated and exasperated, they completely surrendered themselves to these extreme theories.... The first result of their enthusiasm was disagreement among them; from then on, they were unable to cooperate on tasks in common—nothing was accomplished; they lost time, opportunities, sympathy, and confidence which, perhaps, they never will retrieve." 25

That is why, Sazonov concluded, he was begging Ogarev not to commit himself to these theories, but instead to stand on firm ground and find the appropriate and realistic means to make a contribution to the problems of oppressed people in Russia and Europe. He was advising his friend that caution and patience were necessary in this search, and that the certainty gained from an impetuous commitment could be far more disastrous than the insecurity of a search without end.

Within the next few years, Sazonov began to reevaluate some of the notions he expressed in his 1844 letter to Ogarev. The revolution of 1848 certainly played an important role in the reshaping of his political ideas, but Sazonov could not possibly have responded as he did to the events of that year unless he had already undergone a prior challenge to his beliefs. Unfortunately, there is no direct primary evidence for the years leading up to 1848. What we do know is that Sazonov actively participated in the 1848 revolution, that his career as a radical journalist took shape in the years immediately following the revolution, and that he developed a relationship with Marx at this time which reflects an acceptance of the very kind of socialist commitment that he had earlier warned Ogarev against.

In the years just preceding 1848, Sazonov had cultivated a wide network of associations with French democrats as well as with foreign exile groups. Together with Bakunin and Golovin, he was an active supporter of the Polish emigration. Through his friendship with Herwegh, he also worked with a number of German exiles in Paris (including Carl Vogt). He was a member of the democratic society, Fraternité des peuples, as was Golovin; Herzen also joined this society after his arrival in Paris in May 1848, probably through his contact with Sazonov. In addition, Sazonov was on the editorial
board of Mickiewicz's *Tribune des peuples* during 1848–49 and wrote several articles for the paper, which was the chief organ of the Polish emigration in Paris during the revolution. Sazonov was also on the editorial boards of Proudhon's *Voix du Peuple* and Lamennais' *Réforme* in 1849, in addition to participating in various demonstrations, banquets, and public meetings on behalf of the revolutionary movement.26

It was against this background of revolutionary involvement and prominence that Sazonov began his correspondence with Marx in 1849. The two men knew of each other as a result of their common friendship with Herwegh, and it is possible that they met as early as 1844.27 Sazonov's first letter to Marx, written on stationery from *Réforme*, is dated 6 December 1849, just prior to Sazonov's expulsion from France. Sazonov said he was writing to Marx at the request of Ferdinand Wolff, one of the editors of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, to help organize a "democratic correspondence for German newspapers." Such a venture is needed at this important moment in history when "citizens propose and the police dispose." In his capacity as foreign editor of *Réforme*, Sazonov was soliciting contributions from knowledgeable democrats. From his vantage point in London, Marx could write about German problems as well as on "the situation of the working class in England. I know how deeply you have studied these questions and I would be happy to familiarize readers of *Réforme* with English social life with the aid of your pen," Sazonov wrote. He made it clear to Marx, however, that should he agree to write for *Réforme*, his articles must be free of both ideology and slander—"doctrine and personalities," in Sazonov's words.28

We do not know Marx's response to this proposal, but the plan was never realized, for Sazonov was expelled from France by order of Louis Napoleon's government. He resettled in Geneva, with the aid of James Fazy, who as head of the Swiss confederation was also responsible for helping Golovin and Herzen after their forced departures from France. Sazonov resumed his correspondence with Marx on 2 May 1850 when he wrote a long and highly revealing letter in which he openly declared himself Marx's disciple. Sazonov explains in the letter that "an attentive study of the latest works of Proudhon and reading his compromising articles in *Voix du Peuple* compelled me to take the final step in your direction." Sazonov continues: "I subscribe to all essential points which you have expressed in the [Communist] *Manifesto*. . . . I have come to the con-
viction that a serious revolutionary can only be a communist, and I
now am a communist.\textsuperscript{29} This decision, he continued, is the result of
a process of "natural development" emerging from his ongoing in-
volvement with contemporary social change. Having analyzed and
rejected other theorists of society such as Saint-Simon and
Proudhon, Sazonov now agrees with Marx that European civiliza-
tion is progressing primarily in the area of industry. While other
economic and social forms are disintegrating, industry increasingly
domines modern society. Yet, he adds, European civilization can-
not, as it presently functions, resolve all the complex problems that
contemporary industrial development places before it. The chief
characteristic of modern society is its individualism; in the economic
sector, it is individual labor, which is the most salient form of devel-
opment. The tendency of the current economic system is to "ex-
change one individual's labor for another's, with the result being
injustice and exploitation."\textsuperscript{30}

Sazonov wants to take action and suggests reviving the idea of
"a democratic journal" to propagate these views as widely as possi-
ble. He suggests several people who might collaborate with them,
including Mazzini, Ledru-Rollin, and Considerant. The failure of
the revolutionary situation in Europe must be reversed, he writes.
New conditions must be created, not only for leaders but also, and
especially, for the masses if future upheavals are to be successful.
For this "a central organ must be established" and located in Paris if
at all possible.\textsuperscript{31} For this new task, new people are needed. It is
necessary that they be young, strong, knowledgeable about, and
deeply committed to, working for "a united Europe in the name of
the great idea of communism." Further clarifying the role of these
"new people," Sazonov writes that they must be "the bearers of
conscious ideas," people who are not afraid to act on their own in
defined groups and who, above all, are "capable of scientifically
establishing the means to realize these ideas." The task of the pro-
posed journal, with the support of these "new people," consists in
"creating a European force for the achievement of communism and
pointing out the practical means for this."\textsuperscript{32} Sazonov envisioned here
a grand scheme for the transformation of the European state system
into a close federation of peoples striving in unison toward progress,
a federation led by France, Germany, and Italy against all existing
regimes. This he called "the collosal, centralized force for the real-
ization of our ideas in the future."\textsuperscript{33} The new journal was to play a
vital part in this process of change, according to Sazonov. He out-
lined the contents of the first issue, which was to include contributions on specific countries not only from convinced communists like Marx but also from sympathetic Proudhonists and nonaffiliated progressives like Herzen. The second issue was to be more theoretically oriented, based on the data supplied in the first issue on individual European nations. It is here that Sazonov believed Marx could make his most significant contribution.\textsuperscript{34}

Once more, however, there was only silence from Marx, as far as the available evidence shows. A year later, Sazonov again wrote to Marx, this time from Paris, where he traveled illegally for a firsthand look at the impact of Louis Napoleon’s consolidation of power. He recorded his observations for Marx, who was then at work on his \textit{Class Struggles in France}. Paris, Sazonov writes, “has never represented such interest as at the present moment. The Old World finds itself on the eve of its own complete disintegration.” Sazonov perceives Paris to be a storm center radiating from all sides “a multitude of various projects, hopes, intrigues, and conspiracies that change and disappear just as suddenly as they arise.” The savage struggle for power among legitimists, Orleanists, Bonapartists, and democrats resembles what Sazonov calls “this most confused and amusing comedy.”\textsuperscript{35} All factions are relying on the support of the army, and Sazonov points out the very real danger of a Bonapartist conspiracy to seize power. At the same time, however, he relates to Marx the more hopeful stirrings, from their standpoint, of the masses, who “more and more are liberating themselves from the prejudices of the moribund world.” Militant workers’ associations continue to attract recruits; indeed, he finds that their activities “are far more progressive than could be presumed on the basis of their statutes.” He mentions the work of Cabet, Lerroux, and Louis Blanc in this regard, and indicates that he is translating Marx’s \textit{Manifesto of the Communist Party} into French for distribution to these workers’ groups. He applauds Marx for using the international exhibition in London, the showpiece of bourgeois achievements, as evidence to point out that middle-class progress leads inevitably to its own decline and to the coming of communism. This theme, he concludes, is an example “of your genius.” He asks Marx, to whom he refers as his “dear Teacher,” to keep in touch with him about these matters.\textsuperscript{36}

Sazonov sent one more letter to Marx some years later, despite the fact that he had assumed a more moderate political orientation. In May 1860 Sazonov wrote to Marx: “You have given to the scien-
tific world the first part of an excellent work, which will recognizably transform economic science and establish it on new, more solid, principles.” He tells Marx not to pay attention to the “fruitless polemics” directed against him and his work; “all serious, all honest people are on your side.” Instead of becoming involved with these petty intrigues, he urges Marx to continue his work on the *Critique of Political Economy*. “You have achieved enormous success among thinking people,” Sazonov writes, including the people of Russia. Sazonov informs Marx that this success in Russia has been aided by the lectures in Moscow by Professor I. K. Babst, who regularly teaches a course on political economy. Sazonov promises to send Marx a newspaper article describing “the respect surrounding your name in our country.”

Was Sazonov “the first Russian Marxist” as Riazanov claims he was? Soviet commentators unhesitatingly conclude he was not. Sazonov’s admission that he was a communist in his 1850 letter to Marx is seen as a passing intellectual fancy, an effort by an unsuccessful opportunist to become associated with a prominent socialist. Koz’mín points out that Sazonov was still too closely tied to a variety of moderate socialists and their positions for him to have made a serious commitment to Marx. More significant for Koz’mín is his charge that Sazonov never truly understood Marx’s ideas. Sazonov speaks of “civilization” instead of “society,” “people” instead of “class,” “evolution” instead of “conflict”; this was clearly not the vocabulary of a Marxist thinker. Koz’mín also believes that there is little in Sazonov’s letters to indicate that he truly comprehended the notions of Marx which he claimed to have accepted. Furthermore, “Sazonov arrived at his ‘communism’ not by the path of the study of the economic development of contemporary society but rather as a result of his disillusionment with the principle of individual freedom. . . . Sazonov searched for the path to the ‘realization of communism’ not in the development of the workers’ movement but in the literary activity of groups of intelligentsia-revolutionaries.” Koz’mín concludes that Marx himself would be the most astonished of all if he knew “that there were historians who, on the basis of Sazonov’s letters, were persuaded that Sazonov had taken a step in the direction of proletarian communism and had transformed himself into a ‘real Marxist.’ ”

There is a certain degree of overstatement in both Riazanov’s assertion that Sazonov was the first Russian Marxist and Koz’mín’s argument that he was not. It would be difficult to define very clearly
what a "Marxist" would have been around 1850 since Marx himself had not yet fully developed his ideas in any comprehensive manner, nor did he head a political party with an ideology and a widespread recruiting process. Thus, it is unreasonable to demand of Sazonov that he comprehend Marx in the manner of Marxists or Leninists a half-century later in order for the label "Marxist" to be applied legitimately to him. What can be safely stated is that Sazonov was genuinely attracted to Marx's critique of society at a time when Marx was formulating and refining many of his fundamental conceptions, and that Sazonov certainly understood Marx better than—and well before—any other Russian intellectual of his time. The motives behind his temporary commitment to Marx's theory are therefore perhaps less important than the more concrete fact that he respected Marx intellectually as a serious thinker and critic of society for the rest of his life, as the final letter to Marx so forcefully indicates.

Sazonov had a far more problematic relationship at this time with his former student comrade, Alexander Herzen, who arrived in Paris in May 1848 amid the revolution to find his old friend deeply immersed in revolutionary activities there. Although there was some mistrust between them from the start, their relations were quite cordial for several years after their remeeting in Paris. They were in contact with each other over a variety of concerns, ranging from cooperating to support Proudhon's paper, *La Voix du Peuple*, to arranging for passports to Switzerland through their common friend James Fazy. Concerning their plans for "democratic" journals, they also worked together with Herwegh, to whom they were both close at this point, and Golovin, with whom they were less enamored. Although Herzen made some of his own contacts in Europe, Sazonov had built up a fairly wide network of socialist antimonarchical comrades as a result of his participation on various newspapers and journals prior to Herzen's arrival in Paris.

In 1852 Herzen's reaction to the discovery of the affair between his wife and his friend Herwegh spilled over into many of his relationships. Sazonov's exact connection to the affair is not known, but Herzen turned against him venomously. He wrote to another friend, "My friendship, my familiarity with [Sazonov] has ended forever." Sazonov was deeply disturbed by Herzen's severing of their relations. He wrote to Herzen to try to calm his passionate outbursts and to urge him not to discontinue their political projects. Sazonov also admitted that he had a heart condition which was worsening, and
that he "might not have long to live." Because of this, he felt it was imperative that they put aside personal suspicions and devote themselves to their political work. He reassured Herzen that "from my side, I know that nothing in our friendship has changed" and he expressed the hope that "from your side, nothing [be allowed to] destroy our long-standing friendship."

Indeed, relations between them did improve for a time as Sazonov contributed to Herzen's newly established Russian Free Press in London. Some of these writings reveal aspects of Sazonov's thinking in the mid-1850s. Sazonov wrote a proclamation for Herzen in October 1854 concerning the outbreak of the Crimean War. He drew a contrast in the proclamation between Russia and France, explaining how the French "liberated the peasantry" during the 1789 revolution and why there was so much sympathy toward the Polish cause in France. The proclamation urges Russians "to overthrow the yoke of the 'German' government" in St. Petersburg and calls for the emancipation of all peasants in Russia, with land. This, together with the realization of Polish independence from the Russian Empire, is listed as the main task confronting the Russian people.

Sazonov wrote a more substantial piece which appeared in the second issue of Herzen's Poliarnaia zvezda in 1856, a wide-ranging article called "O meste Rossii na vsemirnoi vystavke." Here he tried to clarify his views on the relationship between Russia and Europe, a problem which had concerned him for some time. Sazonov characterized Western European "civilization" as having despotic governments coexisting with comparatively independent public opinion. This interplay between government and society is largely the creation of the bourgeois class, which has achieved preeminence in the economic—but not the political—sector of European life. Bourgeois Europe's distinctive trait is reflected in its established forums for discussions of views and trends that are often in conflict with the government. The best examples of these forums, according to Sazonov, can be found in the press and in public meetings. By contrast, Russia differs from Europe in a number of important ways, including the lack of industrial development. The main reason for this, Sazonov argues in very Marxist overtones, is that "industry in Europe is now emerging in the bourgeois epoch, and in Russia there is no bourgeoisie." Probing behind this, Sazonov finds the cause in the system of jurisprudence which has been established over the course of centuries in Russia and the West. In the West, there has
always been a different structure of property and different conceptions of justice from those which developed in Russia. Whereas common (obshchinnoe) property has largely been overcome by individual property in the West, in Russia it remains a central feature of ownership patterns. Without a legal system which responds to, reflects, and consolidates these new developments in social class mobility and economic change, Russia remains mired in the past.

Russian civilization, Sazonov continues, is primarily defined by its own history—by the facts of the Tartar occupation, the power of the Orthodox Church, and the separation from many of the transforming forces of the West. His point, however, is that neither Russia nor Europe is superior—they are different cultures and societies, and as such have to be understood on their own terms. Similarly, he states that his argument does not predispose him to either the “despisers” or the devotees of the West. He admits, on the one hand, that having lived for years in Europe, he has become accustomed to a European way of life—especially in France, “which I consider my second homeland.” On the other hand, he wants to indicate his deep attachment to Russia in spite of his disagreement with messianic notions of Slavic dominion over the West: “A renewed Russia will take its place in a transformed Europe; then the reconciled popular masses will no longer reproach one another as the privileged classes of various nations now do. Western Europeans have ceased to regard liberated Russians as barbarians, and we must cease to dream about the approaching collapse of a decadent West and about the global reign of the Slavic tribes.” He closes his essay with a call for a unified opposition movement for change in Russia: “There is room on this earth for each generation, for all ideas and for all labor. Let us unite our forces so that nowhere will there be dens sheltering slavery, ignorance, and lies.”

Aside from attempting to transcend the categories of the Westernizer versus Slavophile debate within the Russian intelligentsia, Sazonov was also engaging in a lightly veiled polemic with Herzen over the notion of disillusionment with post-1848 Europe. Sazonov did not share Herzen’s loss of faith in the future of European civilization. They also disagreed on the role of communal Russia. Herzen was moving closer to embracing the obshchina as a revolutionary conception, while Sazonov looked in a semi-Marxist manner at the evolution of property and industrialization in the West as keys to radical change. They continued to cooperate and correspond for a time, but soon drifted irreparably apart.
In 1854 Sazonov published a small book, *La Vérité sur l'empereur Nicholas*. The book, which was issued anonymously “par une Russe,” has been considered “the most brilliant and successful,” in literary terms, of Sazonov’s works. Although it contains a number of factual inaccuracies and some questionable interpretive statements, the book was favorably received in France. During the Crimean War, it was widely used by the French press to portray the tsarist regime in an unfavorable light. The book is primarily a broad-scaled attack on the government of Nicholas I, and reveals the author's deep hostility toward the emperor who was responsible for revoking Sazonov’s Russian citizenship. Its popularity for the contemporary French-reading public in Europe lay not so much in its factual particulars as in the general characteristics of Nicholas's personality and the policies of his government as presented by a Russian revolutionary with apparent access to firsthand sources on the emperor and his personal milieu. As the book's subtitle stated, its purpose was to reveal the “intimate history of [Nicholas's] life and reign.”

Sazonov's book must inevitably be compared to Golovin's *Russia under the Autocrat*, which appeared about the same time. If Sazonov's book seems to have been more popular, this may be due to its brevity and readability; Golovin's study of Nicholas and his regime was written in a more demanding manner and filled two large volumes. Sazonov, incidentally, was quite aware of Golovin's book and made reference to it in his discussion of Golovin's conflict with Nicholas. In a chapter comparing the politics of Nicholas with those of Ivan the Terrible, Sazonov drew a parallel between Prince Kurbskii's flight abroad to escape from Ivan's tyranny and Golovin's refusal to return from Paris at Nicholas's command. Both Kurbskii and Golovin brought to the attention of Europe the nature of Russia's autocracy in a manner that would have been impossible within the country, Sazonov observes.

One of the more interesting sections of Sazonov's book concerns the area of Russian literature which was of special significance to him. He indicated to his readers how Nicholas had not only systematically destroyed an authentic literary culture but had also replaced it with his own artificial, official literature. He listed Ryleev, Bestuzhev, Kükhelbecker, Pushkin, Lermontov, and Dostoevsky, among others, as writers who had been executed, exiled, or imprisoned by the emperor. In place of the literary journals to which many of these individuals (and other writers) had contributed their poetry
and prose, Nicholas “created an unbelievable mass of government journals” under various state ministers designed to influence the content and style of Russian culture. One of these new journals was a journal of “public enlightenment,” another was a journal devoted to the nation’s “internal affairs,” another to finance, and still others to technical subjects; the range of coverage and distribution was vast and nationwide, extending from the capital cities to the remote provinces. At the same time, periodicals from abroad were placed under strict controls, Sazonov explains, and Russians were discouraged from subscribing to them in general. Sazonov was in effect portraying a kind of culture of official propaganda, avant le mot; for Sazonov’s European readers, this was the first time such a charge against the tsar had been published by a Russian émigré.

In his conclusion, after an analysis of diplomacy, finance, serfdom, and other aspects of Nicholas’s regime, Sazonov turned again to a work of literature to make his final interpretive statement on the Russian emperor. On the one hand, Nicholas aspired to a grandeur which involved comparisons with historical figures no less than Louis XIV, Frederick the Great, and Napoleon Bonaparte; on the other hand, there was a pathos visible in Nicholas’s pedestrian character, hopelessly in search of that grandeur. This situation of unattainably lofty goals being pursued by a man incapable of achieving them was best epitomized for Sazonov in Gogol’s play, Inspector General. Indeed, Sazonov strongly believed that Gogol intended the caricatured hero of the play to be “Nicholas himself, transformed into a petty official.” As Khlestakov assumed a role beyond the ability of his character in the play, so did Nicholas in reality; as Khlestakov convinced himself that lies were truths, so too did Nicholas.

In 1855 Sazonov became an editor for L’Athenaeum français, one of the superior literary periodicals of the age. He wrote a number of review essays for the journal on a variety of topics from the origins of Muhammed to Western philosophy, but his main field of specialization (and his best articles) concerned Russian and European literature. He also published articles in Russia on literary and political themes in the St. Peterburgskie vedomosti, Nashe vremia, and Otechestvennye zapiski; these articles appear under the noms de plume of Karl Stachel and Feopatel.

In 1859 Sazonov became one of the main editors of the weekly Parisian paper La Gazette du Nord, whose stated goal was to familiarize Europeans with the life of Russia and Scandinavia. He pub-
lished an extraordinary number of articles in this journal during 1859–60—twenty-eight by the count of one historian. His articles concern many subjects, including the emancipation of the Russian peasantry, the condition of Jews in Russia, and recent developments in Russian literature. Soviet historians interpret these articles as evidence of Sazonov’s gravitation in his last years away from radicalism and toward a more moderate political position. It is true that he argued in his Gazette articles that the Russian peasantry was no longer subject to mass rebellions with leaders like Razin and Pugachev, that Russian society should “preserve national traditions,” that he defended constitutionalism, and that he wanted Russia to avoid “the proletariat, that gaping ulcer of contemporary societies” as he now saw it. This, to be sure, is a clear indication of a changed position and, in some instances, a renunciation of his earlier statements to Marx. Nevertheless, a sense of searching for new categories and new interpretations also emerges from Sazonov’s Gazette articles. His discussion of gentry interests with respect to the peasant emancipation may be less a defense of traditional aristocratic rights and privileges than a recognition of the realities of class relationships in Russia. Thus, when he argued that peasant liberation would not be possible without adequate compensation to the landlord class, he was pointing out a path between the two camps of gentry conservatives and “revolutionary democrats.” Similarly, Sazonov changed his views about the rural commune in Russia. Now he defended the notion of collective ownership of agricultural land, but not only because of his fears of an emerging landless proletariat; an appreciation of the importance of communal land among the peasants also led him to argue for a network of independent communes and other producing associations in the Russian countryside.

Sazonov’s ideas, then, certainly were veering away from some of the more radical aspects of his earlier critique of contemporary society, although his general position around 1860 cannot easily be identified with any of the prevailing viewpoints in Russia any more than it can be considered typical of the Russian emigration as a whole. His conceptions were changing according to his own eclectic reasoning, subject of course to the impact of existing European and Russian trends. A good illustration of his independent thought at this time was an evaluation of his own revolutionary commitment which he made in the context of a comparison of tsars: “Yes, I love freedom more than slavery, law more than arbitrariness, a legisla-
tive order more than personal caprice, progress more than stagnation, science more than superstition—in a word, I prefer Alexander II to Ivan the Terrible. It is in this sense that I am a revolutionary.”

Although Sazonov expressed many of his ideas in his articles on political affairs, his most perceptive work was done in his essays on literature—especially those on Russian literature. In an age when literary criticism in Russia was developing into a sophisticated art form as well as a weapon against the autocracy, Sazonov’s articles on Russian writers represent the analogue of this trend abroad. He was fully conscious of the important work done in the field of literary criticism by Belinskii. Like the essays of Belinskii and his successors in Russia—particularly Chernyshevskii and Dobroliubov—Sazonov’s reviews of specific books or authors were occasions for a wide-ranging analysis of the evolution of Russian literature, Russian society, and Russia’s relationship with the West.

Two of his most representative essays on Russian fiction concern the writings of Herzen and Ivan Turgenev. It was not accidental, of course, that he chose two Russian exiles to portray the most creative developments in Russian national literature. He interprets Turgenev’s career as a writer in the context of a “crisis in the international development of Russia,” which began after the defeat of the Napoleonic army in Russia and ended in 1856, when, in the midst of the Crimean defeat, Alexander II revealed his intention to liberate the peasantry. This period of crisis, Sazonov argues, was severe for the country, and Turgenev’s fiction was a new means of expressing the efforts to resolve that national crisis. In Notes of a Sportsman, Nest of the Gentry, and On the Eve, Turgenev attempts to bring to life Russia’s problems as a nation in the characters he creates. Sazonov also sees no contradiction between Turgenev’s living abroad and his devotion to Russia. Perhaps identifying with the problem himself, Sazonov quotes a statement by Turgenev in which he explains why he believes he could best serve Russia by writing beyond its borders.

Sazonov’s essay on Herzen in the Gazette du Nord is actually a review of the French edition of part of the first volume of Herzen’s memoir, My Past and Thoughts. Instead of confining himself to the book, however, Sazonov discusses Herzen’s upbringing and background as a way of understanding more fully the significance of the memoir. He presents Herzen as an advanced intellectual who led a small circle of university friends into an exploration of the leading European ideas of his time. This, then, is shown to be a process
affecting Russia's national evolution. In Sazonov's view, Russia required the stimulation of Hegelian philosophy and French socialism during the 1830s and 1840s in order to escape from the heavy weight of traditional culture and to achieve "originality of thought. To Herzen belongs the high honor of being one of the pioneers who opened up this path." Sazonov then shows how Herzen's memoir itself is the fulfillment of those earlier years of intellectual quest, and how it has become a source of new values. The book's greatest achievement lies in its ability to both affect and reflect the internal development of Russia; it is "an expression of the existing turning point" confronting the Russian nation and "a trailblazer of the new era."  

Sazonov's personal relations with the growing Russian colony abroad were not harmonious while he worked for the Gazette. In December 1859 a literary reading and musical concert benefit performance was arranged, with the proceeds to be donated to needy Russians in Paris. Sazonov was first invited and then, at the last minute, disinvited. The organizers of the benefit were the French journalist Ferri de Pigny and a priest from the Russian embassy in Paris named Vasiliev, who was also an agent of the Third Section. Both were worried about Sazonov's "revolutionary tendencies" and feared he might use the occasion to castigate the Russian government.

At the same time, Sazonov was in verbal combat with Herzen over the latter's publication in Kolokol of part of a book by the moderate Russian émigré P. V. Dolgorukov. Sazonov wrote Herzen that he was shocked that the pages of Kolokol would be open to, and supportive of, Dolgorukov's political ideas: "Just take his book—it isn't a book, but a memoir-notebook about people who played up to him or who despise him. He extols the genius of the charlatan . . . and abuses many honorable people. Everything revolves around personalities. And his ravings about constitutions! God forbid. And this landlord writes the 'truth about Russia.'" To this private statement, Sazonov added a public one when he wrote a highly critical review of Dolgorukov's book in Gazette du Nord. The book, which admittedly was gaining popularity, was for Sazonov a superficial work utterly without serious content. At a time when Russia was experiencing "a profound revolution," it was disturbing to find a new book on Russia which was based merely on anecdotes and proposed utopian projects rather than on a genuine examination of the crucial issues of peasant emancipation. Sazonov
charged Dolgorukov with being motivated primarily by “state interests,” not by real concern for the improvement of the Russian people.\textsuperscript{72}

Sazonov’s last years are confusing, and in the absence of sufficient primary sources from this period of his life, the contradictions cannot be disentangled. One fact is indisputably clear, however, and it is true of all émigrés of this generation—despite all his involvements in European affairs, Sazonov remained deeply attached to Russia. The evidence for this conclusion is very convincing and ranges from family letters to police records. One important part of this evidence is the correspondence Sazonov maintained with his sister, Maria Ivanovna Poludemskaja, who had married into a family of high officials. Sazonov admitted the great intellectual influence his sister had on him in one of his letters to her: “It is to you that I send my first letter from Europe. It is to you that my first impressions belong... because you have had such an impact on the formation of my opinions and my beliefs.”\textsuperscript{73} The correspondence unfortunately does not elaborate on exactly what kind of influence she had, but it does reveal Sazonov’s strong concern for family and for Russia. Most of the letters are about his wife, his children, and their domestic triumphs and travails. Since Sazonov suspected quite correctly that his letters were being read by the police, he could not discuss any ideas or events that were potentially controversial.\textsuperscript{74}

Another problem that Sazonov discussed in this correspondence in passing references beginning around 1859 was his desire to return to Russia. This was also a matter that the Russian police were particularly interested in for obvious reasons. The police had been watching Sazonov closely since the 1840s. Their reports charge him with writing articles in “democratic journals” which are inimical to the Russian government, and with “participating in revolutionary plots.” When the government demanded that he return to St. Petersburg in 1849, he was threatened with loss of estate, civic rights, and other “consequences of disobeying government orders.”\textsuperscript{75} He claimed he needed to remain abroad longer for reasons of health,\textsuperscript{76} which was the excuse most émigrés used in responding to government ultimatums to leave Europe.

The police continued to report on his associations, meetings, and publications through the 1850s even after he was declared an émigré. So matters stood until 1857, when a report mentions that Sazonov submitted a petition to Grand Duke Konstantin during the latter’s visit to Paris that year “in which [Sazonov] recognized his
faults and solicited authorization to return to his fatherland.” Sazonov admits himself to be, the report continues, “the author of writing hostile to our government, but he professes patriotic sentiments.” To resolve the matter, the government turned to their chief police agent in Paris, Iakov Tolstoi, whom they asked to write an evaluative report on Sazonov in 1858. Tolstoi’s opinion was both highly respected and informed since he had been a close and loyal observer of Russian opposition figures in Europe for decades. Tolstoi appropriately reviewed Sazonov’s career in comparison with those of Golovin and Nikolai Turgenev. Sazonov’s writings for French liberal periodicals were at times critical of the Russian government, according to Tolstoi, but he concluded that there was nothing in his writings expressing the “abhorrence of the Sovereign that one finds on every page in the books of Golovin and Turgenev.” Tolstoi therefore recommended permission for Sazonov to return to Russia.78

The government also took note of other reports of police agents, which stressed Sazonov’s commitment to his family and the fact that much of his journalistic writing was done to earn money to support his family. Finally, in the fall of 1858, Sazonov was pardoned and granted permission to return to Russia by a decree of Alexander II.79 Officials in the government also reported that, to their knowledge, Sazonov’s intentions were to leave for St. Petersburg “within two or three months” after closing out his affairs in Paris.80 For reasons not made clear from the evidence, however, Sazonov’s passport was not sent to him until the spring of 1861, two and a half years later.81 The file then reveals nothing for another year, but reports dated 1862 mention that Sazonov has left Paris and is residing in Geneva. The government assumes that he is en route to Russia, and that he has not gone further because he is “devoid of the [financial] means” to continue his journey.82

The evidence does not permit a definitive resolution of Sazonov’s intentions at this point. While in Geneva, he renewed his contacts with Fazy and with Johann-Phillip Becker, whom he knew from his earlier visits to Geneva. Among Becker’s papers an essay written by Sazonov in April 1862 was found which may have been composed for Becker and his German comrades. In this, his last known work, Sazonov chose to explain the significance of the peasant reforms and the role of the intelligentsia in Russia in grandiose terms. He defined the 1861 emancipation decree as “a complete economic transformation of the very foundations of Russian soci-
World history knows of no other example of such a collosal economic revolution. Seventeen eighty-nine remains completely in the shadows [by comparison]." Sazonov foresaw vast changes inevitably taking place in Russia as more land gradually passed into the hands of free peasant proprietors. He suggested that these currents would reach beyond the realm of solely economic forces. In a passage that reflected his earlier concerns in his letters to Marx, Sazonov now wrote, "History teaches us that economic changes necessarily are accompanied by political and social changes." An important example of these intersecting areas of change could be seen, according to Sazonov, in the demands being expressed by gentry officials in the Tver, Moscow, and Petersburg gubernia meetings. Here one finds the shape of the future as these gentry meetings produce proposals seeking "the abolition of all class privileges and the convening of a national government elected by the entire nation." Another crucial development, Sazonov observed, was the formation of a new social group in Russian society as a further by-product of the emancipation of the serfs. This group, he wrote, was distinguished from all existing social classes in that it did not define itself "according to its own interests." Furthermore, this group did not belong to any single existing class. Instead, it consisted of people from various classes and was characterized by the tendency "to represent and defend with passion and enthusiasm the general currents of contemporary civilization." He found a comparison in the eighteenth-century "Enlightenment party" in France, "but today it exists only in Russia."83

Sazonov was optimistic about the possibilities of progressive change in Russia in part, at least, because of the rise of this intelligentsia, which was committed to the success of these new forces unleashed by the emancipation. He nevertheless warned against the possibility that the future realization of freedom for the Russian people might "be compromised, on the one hand, by the ignorance of the popular masses and, on the other, by the irresponsible and utopian tendencies of the gentry."84

Regrettably, Sazonov did not have any further opportunities to expand on these ideas, nor did he develop any further his concept of the "revolutionary" changes affecting Russia as a result of the emancipation. With these unpublished notes—a kind of spiritual testament to his talented and creative mind—his career came to an end. He died on 5 (17) November 1862 in Geneva, probably from the heart condition that had worried him for years. He died in virtual
obscurity, forgotten by most of his former comrades. “No one came to his grave,” wrote Herzen, “no one mourned over his death.” By digging Sazonov’s grave very deep in his memoirs, Herzen tried to ensure that no one would ever want to know who Sazonov was and what he had accomplished. Despite the fact that Sazonov never had the tenacity or the will to create a lasting monument of political or intellectual inspiration, Herzen clearly misjudged Sazonov’s abilities and achievements.