Herzen was the last Russian
to act in isolation.
The time has come now for
clear thinking and collective action.

BAKUNIN
The Origins of Collective Action Abroad

The first Russian émigrés were so individualistic that collective action was impossible. Turgenev, Golovin, Sazonov, and Dolgorukov were uninterested in and psychologically incapable of creating organizations dedicated to social and political change in Russia. They saw such behavior as a renunciation of the very liberty for which they had abandoned their homeland and come to Europe. They fought their battles alone, each according to his own idiosyncratic predilections. The same, of course, can be said for Herzen too, although he frequently substituted his collaboration with Ogarev for group activity.

A dramatic shift toward collective endeavors occurred in the 1860s. One of the important reasons for this change was that the “new emigration” of the 1860s came abroad with a background of radical activity in Russia. Many of the individuals who came to Europe at this time had already been involved in revolutionary events in Russia in some capacity, which had not been the case with the first generation of émigrés. The most significant of these events were the student disorders (1861), the activities of the first Zemlia i Volia group (1861–62), and the Kazan conspiracy (1863). In some instances, Russian émigrés of the 1860s had been arrested and had experienced the political trials of this period as well prior to their arrival in Europe. Thus, for this generation—men like N. I. Utin, N. I. Zhukovskii, M. K. Elpidin, and Alexander Serno-Solov’evich—collective radical action and revolutionary commitment had become an accepted part of their careers before they became émigrés. They were not always successful in re-creating this collective experience abroad, but they were prepared to act within an organizational framework in a way the earlier émigrés were not.

Another distinctive characteristic of the new generation of émi-
grés concerns their social origins. Whereas the first generation was largely from an aristocratic social milieu, the new émigrés came predominantly from the ranks of commoners, the raznochintsy. M. Elpidin was the son of a priest, V. Zaitsev's father was an official, N. Utin and M. Sazhin were the children of businessmen, and P. Mart'ianov was of peasant origins. These men came to Europe with an entirely different cast of mind from that of the earlier generation, and this was in part a function of their class background. Their conflicts were not concerned with the necessity of freeing themselves from the ethos of the ruling class, as had been true for the first generation. For them, the aristocracy and its values were inextricably associated with the entire tsarist system. Their commitment to the political opposition necessarily entailed a distanced critique of the aristocracy as well. This dimension of "class struggle" emerged in full force in an émigré variation on the theme of the "schism among the nihilists," the division from within the opposition movement itself during the 1860s, which in this case alienated the younger émigrés from Herzen and the aristocratic first generation.²

Finally, the emigration of the 1860s was distinguished from the earlier generation by its size as well as its ideological scope. As protest against the autocracy on behalf of the narod gained momentum inside the empire, new recruits to the growing opposition came abroad to continue their struggle. The early 1860s, the time when upheaval in Russia over the emancipation was aroused so powerfully, were the years in which the most rapid expansion to date in the size of the Russian emigration took place.³ These were also the years in which the range of émigré political strategies broadened in an unprecedented manner. Thus, not only was émigré individualism replaced by collective action in the 1860s but "émigré liberalism" was succeeded by a new radicalism abroad; both trends were, as we shall show, strongly informed by these factors of political experience and social background.

The Russian Colony in Heidelberg

The closest approximation to an opposition émigré organizational structure at this time was the colony of Russian students in Heidelberg during the early 1860s. The magnetic attraction of the university there for young Russians was first publicly expressed by the nihilist character Evdoksiia Kukshin in Ivan Turgenev's Fathers and Sons. When she told Bazarov she was planning to go to
Heidelberg to study, both Bazarov and Russian educated society suddenly were made aware of this advanced center of learning and its progressive atmosphere for Russian émigrés. As more Russians learned about Heidelberg, the population of the colony grew. The largest stimulus behind the increase of Russian students there was the closing of the universities in St. Petersburg and Moscow after the student disorders in 1861. Many students went abroad in the winter of 1861–62, either to continue their studies or to escape arrest for involvement in the student uprisings. By 1863 the Third Section had sixty Russian students in Heidelberg under surveillance, but the real number was significantly larger, for some Russian students enrolled there were not actively involved in the “cause of the emigration.”

The center of the colony's activities was the reading room (chital'nia), organized in the spring of 1862, which consisted of a large library of both legal and illegal works. The sixteen members who ran the reading room were not in complete agreement on political ideas. Some were sympathetic to Herzen and were in direct communication with him in London. A banquet was arranged to honor the visit of Herzen's son by this group that year, and occasionally, small articles by Heidelberg “Herzenists” appeared in Kolokol. Others in the colony, however, like A. I. Voikov, were critical of Herzen, especially regarding the Polish question, which flared up in 1863. Some of the Russians in Heidelberg affiliated themselves with new émigré journals that sought to counter Herzen's influential press. The most important of these émigré organs were Leonid Bliummer's Svobodnoe slovo and the colony's own publication, Letuchie listki, which reprinted the Velikoruss proclamation, N. A. Serno-Solov'evich's “Otvet Velikoruussu,” and N. V. Shelgunov's “K molodomu pokoleniu.” A. I. Linev and S. T. Konstantinov, two of the Russians in Heidelberg, were planning to establish a permanent émigré journal to be issued by the colony, but disagreements prevented this venture from succeeding.

Among the active members of the Heidelberg colony, the names of two émigrés stand out above the others. The first is Nikolai Nozhin, a charismatic figure who exercised a tremendous influence over his contemporaries, playing a role not unlike that of Nikolai Stankevich during the 1830s in Moscow. Like Stankevich, Nozhin's own productive capacity was comparatively limited due to his premature death in 1866 at the age of twenty-three. Nevertheless, Nozhin was involved in all the colony's activities in 1861 before he
was expelled from Heidelberg for his radicalism. After leaving Heidelberg, he traveled to Italy, where he met Bakunin. In the context of the politics of the Heidelberg colony, Nozhin was on the extreme left. Meeting Bakunin in Florence, however, proved to Nozhin that he was a moderate when confronted with anarchist ideas.9

The other person, Vladimir Bakst, known as “the oracle of the Russian Heidelberg colony,” was, with Nozhin, one of the leaders of the more radical faction within the colony. A participant in the 1861 student disorders in St. Petersburg, Bakst in Heidelberg was in direct contact with Herzen and Ogarev in discussing programs for social change in Russia.10 Although Bakst gave credit to Nozhin for being the unifying force and moral inspiration behind the activities of the colony, Bakst himself clearly occupied a more active leadership role. In addition to creating “a perpetual center for debate” in the colony on the problems of the Emancipation Act of 1861, he also established an émigré printing press in Bern in 1862. Initially, Bakst felt that Herzen’s press was not producing enough critical material for distribution in Russia. The new press in Bern was intended to supplement the output of Herzen’s publications in London. Then, in the winter of 1862–63, an attempt was made to unite the London and Bern printing operations.11 Negotiations were carried on with Herzen by Bakst and by Alexander Serno-Solov’evich, who later was to turn against Herzen publicly, sharply, and irreversibly. Herzen himself appears to have been most responsible for the failure of this publishing merger. He had neither faith nor trust in the abilities of these younger émigrés to carry out serious and enduring opposition ventures. Further, he had strong doubts about merging with a group so far from his direct personal control, and he was not anxious to sacrifice his own political independence. He also knew that there were financial problems associated with the Bern venture, and did not want to end up as the major, if not exclusive, underwriter of the Bern group. With the withdrawal of Herzen’s backing, and in the absence of any other financial support, the Bern press ceased functioning by the summer of 1863.12

One other event of importance that occurred in the Heidelberg colony was the “trial of Fathers and Sons.” When Ivan Turgenev’s novel appeared in Russkii vestnik in 1862, members of the Heidelberg colony were critical of the portrayal of Bazarov and were shocked to read the following description of themselves:
"Kukshin too went abroad. She is in Heidelberg . . . fraternizing with students, especially with the young Russians studying physics and chemistry, with whom Heidelberg is crowded, and who astound the naive German professors at first by the soundness of their views of things [only to] later astound the same professors no less by their complete inactivity and absolute idleness."\(^{13}\) The Heidelbergers' critique of the novel and the expression of their discontent with Turgenev's depiction of the colony were summarized in a letter sent by K. Sluchevskii to the author.\(^{14}\) Turgenev decided to visit the colony to clarify his views in September 1862, but left feeling he had not succeeded. He spoke in later letters of the "wild Russian youths" he had met in Heidelberg and defended his characterizations in *Fathers and Sons* against the charges leveled at him by the Heidelberg émigrés. He felt as if he and his fictional characters had been put on trial by the colony. Indeed, this clash of views anticipated the storm of criticism over the novel that was soon to erupt in Russia, but it also symbolized the emerging conflict between a new generation of activist émigrés and the older generation of opposition critics which Turgenev and Herzen, in differing ways, represented. Heidelberg was, in the words of one historian of this period, "an independent laboratory of free Russian social thought" in which the growing contradictory currents within the opposition first came to the surface.\(^{15}\)

The Russian colony disintegrated rapidly in 1863 under the impact of two external events—the Polish rebellion and the reopening of the university in St. Petersburg. The outbreak of the disorders in Poland split the members of the colony into two irreconcilable camps: the "Peterburgskie" or "Herzenists," who sympathized with the rebellious Poles, and the "Katkovists," who supported the Russian government's claim that it intervened to suppress a seditious rebellion in Poland. There was also a smaller group that was closer to the position of the "Herzenists" on the Polish problem, but that criticized them for not directly involving themselves; some of these Russians actually went to Warsaw to join the Polish rebels in their struggle.\(^{16}\) Once the revolt in Poland was brought under control, the university in St. Petersburg was reopened. This led some members of the colony to return to Russia. Thus, by 1864, the combined forces of division and departure had destroyed the remaining effectiveness of the colony's activities and its center—the reading room in Heidelberg.
The Emigré Congress

During the winter of 1863–64, new recruits to the emigration arrived abroad, most of whom had been involved either in the student upheaval of 1861 or the first Zemlia i Volia organization in St. Petersburg. Nikolai Utin, a former student activist in the Russian capital and a member of Zemlia i Volia's central committee, escaped from arrest and came to London, where he was warmly welcomed by Herzen. Although Herzen invited Utin to join the staff of Kolokol, disagreements arose and Utin left for the Continent. Also at this time, I. I. Kel'ziev and E. K. Gizhitskii escaped from prison and exile respectively and went to Switzerland; both had participated in the Moscow student movement. Historically, this was a moment of disorientation in the emigration given the failures of the Heidelberg colony, the Bern printing press, the Polish rebellion, and the demise of Zemlia i Volia. Herzen, to whom the émigrés looked for guidance and inspiration, ended up provoking further disillusionment.

The crisis between Herzen and the "young émigrés," which would soon approach a climax, was rooted in a polarization of attitudes that had been developing for several years. In 1859 Chernyshevskii and Dobroliubov had begun to challenge Herzen's politics in a way that had far-reaching implications. The debate on the nature of change and the shape of Russia's future which appeared in the pages of Sovremennik in St. Petersburg and Kolokol in London reached a wide audience of readers, many of whom were to join the growing opposition movement before emigrating to continue their work. The editors of Sovremennik expressed their discontent at what they saw as Herzen's moderate positions and pushed for more radical solutions to the pressing issues of how to oppose autocracy and serfdom in Russia. Less well known outside a smaller network of trusted intimates was the "reconciliation meeting" that took place between Herzen and Chernyshevskii in London in June 1859. Although there are no surviving documents from the meeting, it is clear that no rapprochement occurred. Each man came away more convinced of his own political position. In the next few years, Chernyshevskii turned more stridently toward relying on a peasant revolution as all legitimate alternatives appeared exhausted under the existing regime. Herzen responded with fears that such a popular uprising would only lead to reaction and a more powerfully entrenched autocracy. Herzen continued to believe in the possibilities
of a peaceful transformation through legal reforms from above, and he also cautioned against a headlong leap toward accepting unrealistic comprehensive solutions that might themselves, however noble in inspiration and intent, lead to new forms of terror over the masses even if they were successful.\textsuperscript{17}

The collision course between Herzen and the young émigrés was noted by perceptive visitors from Russia at this time. Discussions with Herzen, for those willing to listen, were dominated by his dazzling displays of erudition about the human condition and the situation in Russia, insights he had gleaned from literature, history, and politics. One of his most characteristic strengths was his ability to examine any question from all its sides. In addition, he “demanded the possibility not only to think freely but to express his thoughts freely.” By nature he was continually in search of special conditions to maintain the space for this vital process, and just as continually wary of accepting commitments that might deny him that space.\textsuperscript{18} At the same time, another visitor to London felt that Herzen “was already losing the real ground beneath his feet” because his absence from Russia was making it impossible for him to absorb the tremendous intellectual and social transformation then under way in his homeland.\textsuperscript{19}

The new generation arrived in Europe with firm ideas about change, deeply scarred by the expectations first aroused and then crushed by the 1861 Emancipation Decree, and committed to a wholesale rejection of the world as they knew it, all of which Herzen could not fully comprehend. For Herzen, there was still an abiding connection to that world. Europe in particular possessed an importance for him as a historical factor in the evolution of civilization and as the birthplace of modern protest and revolutions. The post-emancipation émigrés, however, did not come to Europe out of historical curiosity or to participate in its culture or even to learn from its politics. They came because Europe was the only place where they could continue to function as an opposition force.

Nevertheless, Herzen attempted to redefine the direction and tasks of the Russian opposition, both at home and abroad, in a programmatic article in \textit{Kolokol} which was circulated among the émigrés even before it appeared in print. Herzen expressed his conclusion in this way: “It is time to concentrate thought and force, to clarify goals and to calculate means. Propaganda, quite obviously, falls into two categories. On the one hand, the word, advice, analysis, unmasking, theory; on the other hand, the cultivation of
circles, the building of pathways of internal and external relations. Regarding the first, we will dedicate all our activity, all our commitment. As to the second, this cannot [now] be accomplished abroad. Such work can only be anticipated for the very near future."\(^{20}\)

With these carefully chosen sentences, Herzen was denying the last remaining dreams of the young émigrés who still hoped for the possibility of a unified opposition movement. Unwilling to accept the moratorium or restriction on action which Herzen's article seemed to imply, they went forward with a plan for the emigration to establish a new center of revolutionary activity with Herzen's involvement.

In an effort to create "an internationalized publication" of the Russian revolutionary emigration which would transcend the particularities of isolated communities and strategies, Utin, together with Alexander Serno-Solov'evich, Nikolai Zhukovskii, Lev Mechanikov, and other émigrés in Switzerland, decided to hold a congress in Geneva in December 1864 to which Herzen and Ogarev would be invited.\(^{21}\) On the eve of this congress, Utin wrote an impassioned letter to Herzen in which he tried to make the most convincing case possible for the proposed united émigré center and its journal, which he called "a stronghold of force and of faith in force." He explained how he and his generation had come of age inspired by Herzen's and Chernyshevskii's writings. One of the important aspects of the agenda to be negotiated at the forthcoming congress was the opportunity to apply some of the principles that Herzen had always emphasized: propaganda, or the developing of ideas for criticism and change; correspondence, or the organizing of systematic lines of communication for the dissemination of propaganda; ties to people, specifically providing the means for individuals sharing similar concerns for change to join in collective action; and funding these operations.\(^{22}\) In this letter Utin also reiterated the advantages to the general cause if the united émigré center and journal could be agreed upon, with Herzen and Kolokol as the focal points around which the "solidarity of parties or, better still, groups of revolutionaries" could coalesce.\(^{23}\) Utin's use of the term "party" here is one of the first instances of its appearance in the documents of this period and is an accurate reflection of his thinking. He closed his letter by raising the possibility of Herzen's refusing to agree to this strategy, thereby leaving "the tragic alternative" of separate, disunited, and weakened forces.\(^{24}\)

Herzen responded in a brief note as he prepared for his trip to
the Geneva congress. Although he agreed to come to Geneva to hear the émigrés’ proposals, it was clear that he was quite unwilling to venture very far toward accepting Utin’s program. “To work with people who share one’s spiritual and emotional concerns, I truly desire,” he wrote. “But what is this new political business of the Russian emigration? The activity of propaganda within the movement must take place at home, in Russia.”

During the spring of 1864 Herzen went to Geneva to meet the young émigrés and returned to London with essentially positive impressions. Doubts soon emerged, however; Herzen’s letters from this time show that he mistrusted the intentions of the émigrés. Nevertheless, Herzen decided to attend the émigré congress, and arrived in Geneva on 28 December 1864 with his son to meet with Utin, Serno-Solov’evich, Zhukovskii, Mechnikov, and others. This was the first time a congress of Russian émigrés had ever met in Europe. About fifteen people attended the meetings, including moderates like V. F. Luginin, who had been a member of the Heidelberg colony, and F. N. Usov; the latter regarded Kolokol as too socialist, and has been quoted as saying “I do not rejoice at revolution, but rather look upon it as a sad necessity.”

One issue at the congress which reflected the divided mood concerned the use of the Bakhmetev Fund, which had been given to Herzen earlier by a wealthy landowner with utopian interests. Herzen categorically rejected the proposals of the “young émigrés” that the Bakhmetev money be appropriated to found an alternative “general émigré” publication. Herzen’s argument was that he had no right to spend this money in this manner, but Sero, Utin, and their Geneva comrades refused to accept this and accused Herzen of trying to hold on to archaic political views and to a controlling monopoly of the émigré press. Herzen wrote to Ogarev at the end of the conference of his fears that Serno and the young émigrés were seeking “to seize into their own hands Kolokol and the Bakhmetev money.” Of the émigrés themselves, he told Ogarev, “They have no ties, no talent, no education.” He concluded: “Geneva before the break with these gentlemen was an excellent spot; they have sickened it like bitter horseradish. I don’t want to prejudice your personal tastes, but to work with them I feel is impossible.” Herzen also noted that Serno was now his “main opponent.” Along with Alexander Serno-Solov’evich, Utin was the chief spokesman for the proposal of a unified emigration at the congress. Herzen reacted to Utin with undisguised scorn. “Utin,” Herzen wrote to Ogarev on 4 Janu-
ary 1865 during the meetings, “is worse than the others when it comes to limitless egoism.” On another occasion Herzen wrote that Utin is “the most hypocritical of our mortal enemies.”

Herzen left Geneva on 6 January 1865 in a mood of despair. The disappointment felt by the émigrés in the aftermath of this congress turned, in some instances, to overt combat with elements of rage. Alexander Serno-Solov’evich expressed this feeling in stronger terms than did the other émigrés, but he spoke for many of them when he wrote of his reaction to Herzen:

And concerning the emigration, and your relationship to it? . . . When these youths with their wounds, over which you shed tears, merged together as émigrés and, saved in Switzerland from hard labor and the gallows, worn to the bone and hungry, when they turned to you, their leader, a millionaire and an incorrigible socialist, turned to you not with a request for money and bread, which they urgently needed, but with a proposal for working together jointly, you turned away with arrogant contempt and replied, “What emigration? I don’t know of any emigration! There’s no need for an emigration!”

The émigrés were actually attempting to do two contradictory things simultaneously. On the one hand, Utin and his comrades were inviting Herzen to collaborate with them in a united opposition effort with the purpose of moving beyond the failures of the recent past. On the other hand, they were also seeking to oppose Herzen and transcend the parameters of his political universe. The congress, far from resolving difficulties, only widened and exacerbated them. For the émigrés, Herzen was an antiquated figure for whom reverence was no longer necessary; for Herzen, the émigrés were political Frankenstein monsters out of control. Beneath the verbiage at the congress lay the psychological warfare in which each side sought unrealizable and, to a large extent, fundamentally unwanted demands from the other. The result was the recognition on both sides that a permanent schism existed among the émigrés.

I. A. Khudiakov

The émigré community continued to grow during the middle 1860s as new arrivals from Russia turned up in Geneva, but the goal of establishing an organizational center or a common, unifying cause seemed as remote as ever. The antagonism against the autocracy and the opposition to Herzen were shared widely by these émigrés, but an authentic movement required a positive program. One of the
most unusual men of this generation who attempted to cope with this problem was I. A. Khudiakov, the son of a Siberian official, who established a national reputation as a scholar of Russian folklore before becoming involved with the conspiracies of Ishutin and Karakozov. Khudiakov came to Geneva in the summer of 1865, financed by Ishutin, with the intention of creating links with the émigrés. He met Bakunin, Utin, and Herzen and was singularly unimpressed. Herzen knew of Khudiakov’s earlier writings, and was particularly well disposed toward one of his books, *Samouchitel’* (The Self-Teacher, 1865), but Khudiakov was in disagreement with Herzen politically and was appalled by his luxurious aristocratic life-style. He considered Herzen “a liberal of the forties” with archaic political views. Khudiakov, who lived like a religious ascetic, denying himself all but the most basic necessities of life, saw Herzen as a hypocrite who spoke of devotion to uplifting the impoverished narod while dining over an elegant French meal prepared by his servants. Moreover, Khudiakov’s program called for a political revolution organized conspiratorially to precede the more fundamental social revolution affecting the entire society, a program that Herzen found offensive, wrong-headed, and somewhat frightening.

While in Geneva, Khudiakov encouraged M. K. Elpidin, another recent émigré with a history of student radicalism, to establish a new press and an émigré journal. With Khudiakov’s financial support (in part, money entrusted to him by Ishutin and, in part, money from his wife’s dowry which she consented to use for social causes), Elpidin published two issues of *Podpol’noe slovo* in 1866. Although the journal did not succeed, Elpidin became one of the important émigré publishers who managed to remain outside the factional battles that were to divide the émigré community so frequently in the future. Khudiakov returned to St. Petersburg and Moscow, where he was arrested after the Karakozov attentat. He was banished to Siberia in 1864, where, after resuming his interest in Russian folklore through a research study of the traditions of the Yakuts, he went insane and died on 17 September 1876.

The Kel’siev Brothers

Another “man of the sixties” who played a visible role in the emigration was Vasilii Kel’siev. Like most of the émigrés of his generation, Kel’siev, together with his brother, Ivan, was actively involved in the 1861 student uprisings and had been arrested prior to his coming
abroad. At the same time, Vasilii Kel'siev was somewhat unusual among the Russian émigrés for three reasons. First, he was one of the few younger émigrés to have actually collaborated with Herzen on apparently friendly terms (initially at least). Second, Kel'siev's intense religious interests were not generally shared by his comrades abroad. Third, Kel'siev ultimately decided to return to Russia voluntarily and to submit himself to the autocracy as a penitent who had renounced completely his revolutionary ideals. After his return to Russia, Kel'siev composed a long “Confession” in which he attempted to reevaluate his life's activities and commitments. His “Confession” is superficially similar to Bakunin's more well known apologia, but in fact this comparison is not appropriate. Bakunin was in transit from one kind of ideological opposition to another when he wrote his Confession to Nicholas I in 1851. Kel'siev, however, was in the process of turning away from his earlier radicalism. He was, in effect, denouncing his revolutionary past. In this he more closely resembled (and in fact anticipated) the later conversion to autocracy of the revolutionary émigré Lev Tikhomirov. Thus, Kel'siev, not Tikhomirov, was the first “renegade” among the Russian revolutionary émigrés. As we have seen, the desire to return to Russia, to escape from the painful difficulties of émigré isolation and despair, was present among some members of the first generation, particularly in the case of Golovin, but none of them carried this out. No one in the emigration before Kel'siev was as willing, able, or desperate to make the necessary compromises not only of returning—which symbolically implied that the revolutionary struggle was over—but also of writing a confession to the emperor—which was an explicit admission of the need to embrace the object of that struggle.

Kel'siev may have fled the emigration, but he did not escape from Herzen's pen. Herzen tells us that his purpose in devoting a chapter of his memoirs to Kel'siev was not to condemn him. “To cast a stone at Kel'siev is superfluous; a whole roadway has been thrown at him already. I want to tell others and to remind him what he was like when he came to us [in 1859] in London,” Herzen writes. Nevertheless, he engages in yet another patronizing portrait of the émigré community in his treatment of Kel'siev. “At the first glance, one could discern in him much that was inharmonious and unstable... [He] had studied everything in the world and learnt [sic] nothing thoroughly, read everything of every sort, and worried his brains over it all fruitlessly enough. Through continual criticism of
every accepted idea, Kel'siev had shaken all his moral conceptions without acquiring any clue to conduct.  

Kel'siev was, according to Herzen, a religious nihilist—a man who questioned all values in the manner of a spiritual fanatic. Religious mannerisms informed his behavior just as a religious vocabulary informed his discourse. He was skeptical of both Russian and European “methods.” His driving passion was “the recognition of the economic iniquity of the present political order, a hatred of it, and an obscure yearning for the social theories in which he saw a way out.” Kel'siev settled in one of the most depressed working-class sections of London (which Herzen describes in chilling realism) together with his emaciated wife (“thin, lymphatic, with tear-stained eyes”) and infant child, who was dying when Herzen visited them. Herzen tried to dissuade Kel'siev from staying in London. “I told him that he ought first to learn what poverty in a strange land meant, poverty in England, particularly in London; I told him that in Russia now every vigorous man was precious.”

Kel'siev told Herzen he wanted to write about the “Woman Question” and the organization of the family, to which Herzen replied that Kel'siev should first devote himself to the need for a peasant emancipation with land. Instead, Kel'siev became interested in Russian religious schismatics. Like the subjects he studied, “Kel'siev was a vagrant at heart, a vagrant morally and in practice. He was tormented by unstable thoughts, by melancholy.” He moved from task to task, job to job, unable to satisfy “his restless temperament.” Yet Kel’siev did manage to complete a book on the raskolnik (which Herzen published at his Free Press in London, 1860–63) before deciding to return to Russia to work directly with the schismatics. Kel’siev’s decision shocked Herzen: “This journey . . . was incredible, impossible, but it actually took place. The audacity of this trip borders on insanity; its recklessness was almost criminal.” Kel’siev surprised Herzen again by returning to London in 1863 after his Russian journey. Kel’siev believed he had been in touch with the very pulsebeat of holy Russia during his experiences with the raskolnik, but in London he became “bored by work and sank into hypochondria and depression.” He then decided to go to Turkey to preach on behalf of a Free Church and a new form of communal life, a decision Herzen considered to have been motivated by Kel’siev’s grandiose illusions about the significance of his cause. Now Herzen urged Kel’siev to remain in Europe (after earlier advising him to return to Russia), but Kel’siev’s “desire to do great
deeds and to have a grand destiny, which haunted him, were too strong. He went to Turkey to work with a Don Cassock schismatic community that had emigrated from Russia during the time of Peter the Great. However, a series of family tragedies ensued which ended Kel'siev's religious work. In June 1864 his brother, Ivan, who had joined him in Turkey, died of typhus. Cholera claimed his two daughters, and his wife died of consumption. On 11 June 1867 the Moscow News reported that Vasilii Kel'siev had presented himself to the Russian diplomatic authorities in Turkey with the request that he be arrested and sent back to St. Petersburg.

This, then, is the story of Kel'siev's émigré career as Herzen presented it. There is, however, a great deal more to add to this portrait. The materials on Kel'siev's early years reveal a pattern quite different from that of most of his émigré contemporaries. Kel'siev was born in St. Petersburg in 1835 into a gentry family that had lost all connection to its landowning past. For all intents and purposes, Kel'siev was a product of the new middle-class world that dominated his father's life. Kel'siev's father served in the Department of Trade in the imperial bureaucracy and retired with the modest rank of collegiate assessor. Kel'siev's education began at a private boarding school, but in 1845 his father sent him to a commercial school (Kommercheshkoe uchilishche). The death of his father in 1852 created a financial problem for Kel'siev's mother and interrupted Kel'siev's plans for his own future. According to his brother, Kel'siev started to learn Chinese so that he could apply for an Asian post with an American trading company. He also read a great deal of medieval literature at this time, filling himself with visions of heroic knights traveling to uncharted territories to combat lawless brigands. These impressionable images would later re-emerge to influence Kel'siev's career.

In 1855 Kel'siev completed his secondary education and entered the philological faculty of St. Petersburg University as an auditor. To support himself, he obtained a service post with the Russian-American Trading Company. For 25 rubles a month, Kel'siev's duties were to translate commercial correspondence for the company in English and German, languages he learned at the university. Kel'siev considered entering the army amid the patriotic fervor of the Crimean campaign, but decided against this when he learned he would be placed in the reserve force. He had some romantic notions about being an officer at the front, but these were dashed by the reality of this mundane appointment in the reserves.
During the winter of 1856–57, Kel'siev befriended Nikolai Dobroliubov, who was a student of the Main Pedagogical Institute in the capital at his time. Kel'siev made an enduring impression on Dobroliubov, as evidenced by Dobroliubov's perceptive comment in his diary: “He is a man who thinks seriously. He has a powerful spirit, and a thirst for action; very developed through wide reading and deep thought. . . . What I don't like about him is his excessive touchiness in personal life. Of course this may be a result of inner impulses which in the process of seeking a proper channel, burst out on every side.”

Dobroliubov also recorded some of Kel'siev’s plans, hopes, and dreams. Kel'siev was seriously interested in traveling to China—so serious that he mastered Chinese to the degree that he could both read and speak it with some fluency. However, he abruptly shifted his concern first to natural science and then to Slavic philology, which he hoped he might someday teach. Dobroliubov viewed these changes skeptically, doubting that Slavic philology would remain the goal of his restless friend.

Unfortunately, there is no evidence to explain why Kel'siev went abroad when he did. There was, unquestionably, confusion in his life. He had come to the realization that professionally his path toward becoming an Eastern specialist for a commercial company had reached a cul-de-sac. He was unable to create a viable alternative, and after considering a teaching career, he decided to abandon Russia. In this, his situation recalls the dilemma of Ivan Golovin two decades before.

Kel'siev arrived in London in 1859, already radicalized through reading, with the intention of pursuing a literary career on the staff of Kolokol. This dream, however, was soon crushed. Kel'siev submitted several pieces for publication in Kolokol, but Herzen refused to print them because he found the writing and the research unacceptable. For a time, Kel'siev handled editorial tasks correcting and editing correspondence from Russia, though he knew this was a secondary role that would never advance him to a writing position on the journal. At some point during the winter of 1860–61, Kel'siev began to become very involved with the Old Believer sects, which altered his life completely. Ironically, it was Herzen who first introduced him to the Old Believer literature, but Kel'siev himself saw the possibilities inherent in focusing on the religious sectarian community as an object of revolutionary strategy. Kel'siev described this moment of conversion in his “Confession” in a rather dramatic manner:
I didn't sleep all night and carried on reading. I almost went out of my mind. My life literally split in two, and I became a new man. If Herzen had not given me these documents, I would perhaps have remained a revolutionary and a nihilist. They saved me. Reading them, I felt that I was entering an unknown, unexplored world, the world of Hoffman, Edgar Allan Poe or the Thousand and One Nights. Suddenly, in one night, there were revealed to me the emasculates with their mystic rites, their choruses and their harvest songs, full of poetry; the flagellants with their strange beliefs; the dark figures of the "priestless" sects; the intrigues of the leaders of the Old Believers; the existence of Russian villages in Prussia, Austria, Moldavia and Turkey. One sect after another, one rite after another appeared before me, as in a magic lantern show, and I read on and on and on. My head whirled, I stopped breathing. . . . In a flash I saw in front of me the peasants and bearded merchants, so scornfully despised by Europe and our educated classes: ignorant barbarians, sunk in primitive materialism. They were not all that bad, these people who, beneath social oppression and the terrible yoke of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, were able to keep awake, unlike the Western paysan and bauer or the Polish chlop. On the contrary they thought, thought of the most important problems that can concern the human soul—truth and untruth, Christ and anti-Christ, eternity, man salvation. . . . The Raskol reflected honour on the Russian people, showing that it does not sleep, that every peasant wants to keep a lively independent eye on dogmas, wants to think for himself about truth, that the Russian people searches for truth, and then follows what it has found, and does not allow itself to be frightened by floggings or by caves with their entrances blocked up, or by emasculation, or by human sacrifice and cannibalism.48

It was at this point that Kel'siev began his research on the Old Believers in earnest, which resulted in the four small volumes entitled Sbornik pravitel'stvennykh svedenii o Raskol'nikakh (1860-63), published in London by Herzen's press. Also at this time, Kel'siev met two Russian visitors to London who strongly influenced his interest in radical activity among the religious dissenters in Russia. The first was Petr Alekseevich Mart'ianov, an Old Believer of peasant origins who had written a pamphlet in which he argued for the tsar to call a Zemskii Sobor to free the people from the aristocracy.49 The other was Pafnutyi Kolomenskii, Bishop of Kolomna, who lived in Kel'siev's apartment during his stay in London and with whom Kel'siev had many impressionable discussions about the problems of the Old Believers.50 As a result of his talks
with Pafnutyi, Kel'siev decided to travel to Russia clandestinely to agitate among the Old Believers. Pafnutyi arranged contacts with Old Believers for him in Moscow, while Kel'siev made plans for a newspaper devoted to the cause of religious liberty for dissenters in Russia.

Kel'siev was operating entirely on his own during this trip. He told no one but Herzen in the émigré community about his journey to Russia, and Herzen, as we have already seen, strongly opposed the trip as dangerous and futile. Kel'siev, however, was not to be deterred from his overall purpose: "I want to bring the raskolniki over to our side, to arouse in them political opposition to the government, to make use of their religious doctrines [to show them] that the tsar is the anti-Christ, that the ministers and the [bureaucratic] hierarchy are the archangels of Satan, that the [church] officials and the priests are the servants of the devil. I would like to establish for the raskolniki a practical way out of their belief system, and to suggest some ideas to them concerning their goals, aspirations, and needs."  

Arriving in Moscow with a contrived Turkish passport, Kel'siev was greeted by a group of Old Believer merchants, with whom he proceeded to have a number of intensive discussions. When Kel'siev attempted to talk about politics with them, however, he found the Old Believers utterly unresponsive. He does not say they were afraid, but describes them as either not able to comprehend or simply uninterested. "A lot was said, and nothing was done," was his own assessment of the encounters. He could neither find nor create "political activists from the Old Believers." He thus failed to accomplish the basic purpose of his trip, a grand notion that he conceptualized in his "Confession" as "the unification of the religious sects with the Kolokol party."

The other purpose of Kel'siev's journey to Russia was to arrange for the transporting and distribution of various publications issued by Herzen's Free Press in London. At the same time, Herzen and Ogarev had asked Kel'siev to gather information on the possibility of forming a revolutionary secret society in Russia. To this end he went to St. Petersburg and stayed at the apartment of the Serno-Solov'evich brothers for five days.

Kel'siev and the Serno-Solov'eviches held extended and detailed discussions not only on the specific proposals Kel'siev brought with him but also on the general subjects of the future of a revolutionary movement in Russia and the potential for cooperation be-
tween radicals inside Russia and the émigrés. The discussions, as reported in Kel'siev's "Confession," resembled a meeting of diplomats, with Kel'siev acting as the emissary of Herzen and Ogarev and as the representative of the émigré revolutionary movement, and with the Serno-Solov'evich brothers assuming the role of spokesmen for the radical movement on Russian soil.

At one of their meetings, Nikolai Serno-Solov'evich asked Kel'siev what Herzen's true intentions were regarding the organization of antitsarist strategy in Russia. Kel'siev responded by saying that Herzen conceived of his role not in terms of "throwing himself into practical activity but rather in an organizing capacity as a propagandist and as a leader of social opinion." Nikolai Serno-Solov'evich was outraged at this notion and angrily lectured Kel'siev on the need for a much stronger strategy. Noting that segments of Russia's youth were willing to sacrifice themselves in Herzen's name, he called for the creation of a powerful centralized organization with affiliated circles in Moscow, Kiev, and in the provinces across Russia, with a common, unified platform to be established and reaffirmed at periodically convened congresses. "The leader and dictator of this organization must be Herzen," he said.

It should be noted that Serno-Solov'evich was not speaking for all of his comrades. V. I. Kasatkin took an entirely different viewpoint on the question of Herzen's role as "dictator" of the Russian resistance movement. "It is impossible," he told Kel'siev, "to carry on Russian affairs from abroad." He added that "in Russia itself [there are] talented activists who can conduct these matters better than anyone else." Nevertheless, Kel'siev was very interested in Serno-Solov'evich's ideas. Shortly after his return to London he wrote an excited letter to Serno-Solov'evich to report that Herzen and Ogarev were discussing his plan, and he predicted that "they will finally stand at the head of the movement in the fall." Indeed, Kel'siev's role as a mediator between Herzen abroad and Serno-Solov'evich in Russia did ultimately contribute to their involvement in the development of Zemlia i Volia in the summer of 1862, though Herzen never could (and probably never wanted to) assume any dictatorial leadership role in an extensive, nationwide movement.

Kel'siev was also able to establish border points for the transporting of Kolokol and other materials from Herzen's press into Russia. In addition, he engaged a number of people in Russia to act as contributing correspondents for Kolokol. In fact, as he wrote to his brother, "my main job right now consists of correspondence; letters
come in to me from all corners of the Russian borders." However, amid the details of smuggling antitsarist literature into Russia and distributing it throughout the country, Kel'siev became increasingly involved with the religious sects. In letters to his brother and to Serno-Solov'evich, he spoke of the need to extend their opposition activities to the Old Believers and other schismatics and religious dissidents. In particular, he wanted to make *Obshchee veche* (rather than *Kolokol*) more oriented toward this population's needs, and spoke of the need for Zemlia i Volia to develop close contacts with the sects in their provincial centers.

Kel'siev did not remain in London for very long. His concerns for the revolutionary potential of the religious sects grew into an obsession with grandiose fantasies. He grew impatient with his position as a correspondence agent for Herzen's press in London, and left for Constantinople, arriving there in early October 1862. Bakunin, who was aware of Kel'siev's intentions, wrote Herzen and Ogarev in November 1862 of Kel'siev's plans to distribute propaganda to the Cossack troops throughout the Caucasus and the Don region. Kel'siev's dream was to begin preparations for a military-peasant revolution in southern Russia. As he became more absorbed in this vision of insurrection, references to any organizations like Zemlia i Volia disappeared.

Kel'siev's activities in 1863 are not entirely clear. We do know that he wrote several proclamations to prepare the masses for an uprising, that Ogarev printed them in *Obshchee veche*, and that copies were found by the Third Section as far north as Arkhangelsk gubernia. Yet Kel'siev seems to have been acting increasingly on his own at this time. As we have seen, he returned to Russia in 1867 and was granted a full pardon after completing his "Confession." Alexander II recognized his potential "usefulness to the government"—that is, his knowledge of and familiarity with the Old Believer sects and the South Slavs.

Kel'siev's last years were bizarre and sad. He briefly entered the salon world of St. Petersburg, where no émigré revolutionary had ever tread before. There he met and married Z. A. Verderevskaja, a beautiful woman who was professionally involved in the literary world of the capital and was also an accomplished pianist. He had fantastic plans, one of which was to act as a mediator between the Russian government and the revolutionary milieu. He also dreamed of founding and editing a journal "with a purely Russian, patriotic orientation." All these plans went unrealized. There
are entries in Nikitenko's diary about this strange and transformed man who had returned from abroad and from revolution. According to Nikitenko, Kel'siev was upset over the refusal of Otechestvennye zapiski to publish his confession. Nikitenko called Kel'siev "a living Don Quixote," as though a prehistoric dinosaur had somehow survived into the civilized era. He was seeking to save the world, but "no one listened to him except the secret police. . . . He has experienced so much, but for what?" In May 1869, after an evening at Kel'siev's home in which his wife entertained the guests with a performance on the forte-piano, Nikitenko noted that Kel'siev now planned to visit America, where he hoped to earn money by lecturing on Russia. In spite of the comfort and conviviality of the salon setting, Nikitenko was perfectly aware of the desperation and the tragedy of Kel'siev's situation:

His position here, in any case, has become impossible. They permit him to live in Russia, but deprive him of any possibility of work to earn a living for himself. This is utterly absurd. Either it was unnecessary to admit him to Russia, or he ought to be allowed the legitimate means to a livelihood. He wanted to publish a newspaper—they refused to allow it. In this instance, there may have been a sound basis [for the refusal]. But vacancies in civil service exist which he could occupy usefully for himself and to which he could contribute something; yet they reject him for every post.

Kel'siev did manage to publish some articles, but mostly in relatively obscure newspapers and journals. This was obviously difficult for him to bear—a man who had once valued his significance as an agitator on a level with Herzen's role as a publicist. He gradually lost touch with friends and acquaintances and sank into oblivion. As a former revolutionary, he could not be truly trusted or accepted by established society, and the government, as Nikitenko observed, had effectively blocked his access to positions of influence. As a "renegade," he could not be trusted by opposition elements. After the publication of his memoirs in Russkii vestnik in 1868, he was severely attacked and mocked by the influential critic Nikolai Mikhailovskii. As doors continued to close around him, he turned increasingly to drink. His psychological difficulties worsened. In the last year of his life, he fell into complete apathy. He was estranged from everyone he had known, and separated from his wife. Finally and mercifully, according to one of his former friends, relief came in the form of death on 4 October 1872: "It was so difficult, especially in his last years, for him to bear this fruitless, completely unnecessary, shattered, and failed existence."
The significance of Kel'siev's deterioration after his return to Russia cannot easily be extended beyond his own individual case. Although earlier émigrés had sought to return to Russia after years of frustration and disappointment abroad, none had been willing to come back to the homeland on the government's terms. As mentioned earlier, Bakunin had written an apologia before Kel'siev did, but under very different circumstances. Most important, Bakunin did not return voluntarily, and once the opportunity presented itself, he fled Russia to resume his revolutionary career. Kel'siev returned of his own volition, wrote his "Confession," and received his pardon. Yet he had stepped too far beyond the boundaries of the established value system in Russia while abroad. He could not stay abroad indefinitely and continue his revolutionary activities, and thus he returned to Russia after having failed as an émigré radical. Failure at home followed. The two worlds of order and rebellion could not be lived in simultaneously, and the world of order would never forgive the rebel, even after a confession.

In spite of his renunciation of radicalism and the personal tragedy of his last years, Vasilii Kel'siev and his brother, Ivan, with whom he worked during the early 1860s from their exile base in Constantinople, represent the coming of both a new kind of revolutionary activity and a new type of revolutionary activist. After decades of individual endeavors to reshape Russia from abroad, the focus now began to shift toward collective social action in emigration. Indeed, Ivan Kel'siev (1841–64), though he died prematurely, long before he realized his full political potentialities, symbolizes the emergence of this new social group far more accurately than does his brother, Vasilii.

Ivan Kel'siev's brief career presages the constituency of the Russian radical organizations of the 1870s. Within a very short span of time, Ivan Kel'siev made the transition from membership in the antitsarist opposition social movement in Russia, influenced by Herzen, to becoming a severe critic of Herzen and a formulator of an entirely new revolutionary praxis.

After completing a commercial curriculum in St. Petersburg in 1860, Ivan Kel'siev enrolled as an auditor at Moscow University. During his first year at the university, the student uprisings broke out. Kel'siev not only participated in the uprisings but was among the activist leaders. He was arrested in October 1861 while leading a student protest on the square in front of the Moscow military governor general's residence. In 1862 he was exiled to a town in
Perm gubernia, where he composed an article that he intended to send to Kolokol for publication. The police discovered the article before it was sent off, rearrested Kel'siev, and detained him in the Peter and Paul Fortress in St. Petersburg. In May 1863, while Kel'siev was being transferred to another detention center prior to what was to be a second sentence of internal exile, he escaped and made his way out of the country to Constantinople. The article he wrote for Kolokol is an analysis of the liberal and radical currents that surfaced in Moscow during the student uprisings, and testifies to Kel'siev's commitment to an uncompromising opposition to the tsarist autocracy. In the articles, Kel'siev admitted that before the uprising he was uninterested in politics. He was involved instead in the philosophy of Hegel and its “extreme indifference” to social and political questions. He depicted two enemies of the radical opposition—the loyal institution of the autocratic system of government, and the new liberal element that was forming around an acceptance of serf emancipation as the endpoint of social demands. Kel'siev made it clear that he considered himself a socialist and a republican at this time.

Another reason for Kel'siev's second arrest was his involvement in the activities of Zemlia i Volia in 1862. In fact, his escape to Constantinople was arranged and supported by the Central Committee of Zemlia i Volia. Once in Constantinople, Ivan Kel'siev quickly became what one Soviet historian has called “one of Russia's first professional revolutionaries.” From his base of operations in Constantinople and later in Tulcea (where a substantial colony of dissident Russian Old Believers had settled), Kel'siev sent a series of letters to Herzen and Ogarev in London in which he defined his emerging revolutionary worldview and strategy. At least as interesting as the content of this strategy is the fact that Kel'siev seems to have arrived at his formulations without the explicit influence of any theories. He was, of course, working with his brother, Vasiliii, who was in Constantinople with him, but the political differences between them were the dominant theme in their relationship by this point. Vasiliii was beginning to doubt the possibilities of radical activities among the Old Believers, and was starting his ideological reevaluation, which would soon lead him to return to Russia to cooperate with the authorities there. Ivan, meanwhile, was taking off in the opposite direction.

Ivan Kel'siev wrote to Herzen in 1863 of the need to support a single “revolutionary party,” a role he believed Zemlia i Volia should
occupy. All other groups and parties in Russia were, he believed, aspects of Russian liberalism. It was crucial to distinguish between these two political tendencies and not to make the mistake of supporting liberals. "The whole of liberalism," he wrote Herzen, "consisted of various petty improvements in the administration, designed to augment the enrichment of the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie's comforts of life." It would be hopeless and self-defeating to expect "sacrifices from [liberals] in the service of the general cause." One must seek to transcend the intentions of these social classes in the interests of "a democratic, even more, a social [sotsial'naia] revolution."

Kel'siev called for a reorganization of the revolutionary activities of Zemlia i Volia and was, essentially, warning Herzen that this was the wave of the opposition future. There had to be widespread efforts at propaganda and agitation by militants who would not be tempted by the moderate reforms of liberals. He also had in mind a network for the dissemination of Kolokol and other émigré materials, but argued that a new Kolokol was required to reach the masses. The success of an opposition movement without the masses was unthinkable, Kel'siev wrote. Kolokol, in its existing format, was not suitable for this task. "The place of Kolokol," he argued, "was in the seminaries, military corps, institutes, and the university"; there, "in the gentry dining halls," it would have its audience. This, however, was not a revolutionary organ. Kel'siev considered Ogarev's Obshchee veche more appropriate "to carry out the present war," and proposed that it be reoriented toward the schismatic sects. In addition, he suggested that a new journal be created for the masses which showed a profound understanding of the life of ordinary people and which, at the same time, must strive "to correct the existing disorder."

Thus, in the few months before his untimely death, Ivan Kel'siev constructed an elaborate strategy linking the émigré press in London with a distribution center in Constantinople and a network of militant revolutionaries working inside Russia on a full-time basis to disseminate propaganda, enlighten the people, and prepare the soil for the coming revolution. Kel'siev was not entirely pleased with the Central Committee of Zemlia i Volia any more than he was entirely satisfied with Herzen, but he believed it crucial to utilize the existing organizational nexus and strengthen it rather than begin on a completely new foundation. "I am not satisfied with the [central] committee," he wrote Herzen, "but it must be supported to
the end. Things are bad now, but would be even worse without the committee; its demise would only weaken us and give strength to our enemies.”

Kel'siev's last effort was to organize a Russian émigré commune in Tulcea. Although he did not have time to carry out his plan, his intention was to establish a strong revolutionary center in the south of Russia as an alternative to the existing centers in Western Europe. This commune would be able to coordinate the flow of propaganda northward into Russia along routes that Kel'siev believed would prove less vulnerable to police infiltration than those emanating from Europe. In this way, the revolutionary emigration would be more closely linked to the Russian population, the object of its revolutionary aspirations. Kel'siev's ideal, he wrote, was "an aristocratic republic in which everyone is an aristocrat and where no one is a slave." However, Ivan Kel'siev contracted typhus and died on 21 (9) July 1864, long before he could create the revolutionary web of which he had dreamed, stretching from London to Constantinople to Tulcea, a web that he had hoped would ultimately envelop all of Russia in a fiery upheaval and bring down the autocracy.