

Chapter 18

Tolstoy and *perestroika*

A new science of politics is needed for a new world.
Alexis de Tocqueville.

THE international aspect of the world malaise and how it may be cured is illustrated very well by the case history of Iraq; but, when it comes to considering the application of the Tolstoyan philosophy on a national scale – for national events both precede and determine international ones – no study will suffice but that of a ‘super-power’, where economic injustice, irresponsible arbitrary government and geographical extent have reached their furthest yet known limits. In other words, the type of State to be considered is one where Tolstoy’s criticisms are most relevant.

A brief survey of Russian history (Ch.5) has already made it clear enough that there at least the State was both founded on conquest and exploitation, and subsequently shaped for their maintenance. Not only this, but the cold reception accorded to Tolstoy’s apparently modest proposal for land reform, taken in conjunction with the repressive measures he encountered for use in asserting the predominance of the great landowners, and for guarding against revolt (Ch.6), are obvious signs that the nature of the Russian State in his time was the same as ever. It had been established by landowners for landowners; and Tolstoy’s ‘apparently modest proposal’ was in fact a proposal that it should abandon its first and principal function.

The U.S.S.R. (1917-1991), where the old tyranny of landownership was replaced by one of party bosses, qualifies for our purpose on the grounds of both economic injustice and irresponsible and arbitrary government; for the *élite*, as we shall see, prospered greatly, while more than half the population

remained miserably poor. Its size is important also, because, whatever mode of economic exploitation is adopted, be it land monopoly, dictatorship, slavery, tariff barriers to enable home customers to be charged artificially high prices for their goods, or whatever else, the biggest gains are to be expected in the biggest countries. Not only this, but in the biggest countries the machinery of State is most remote, and most likely to be regarded as permanent and untouchable.

The U.S.A. also may be considered to be a suitable candidate on the grounds of size, economic injustice, and government against the common interest, concealed though it may be behind the same 'genial humbug' that prevails in Britain. Now the tentative efforts being made there (Ch.15) on behalf of what has been shown to be the fundamental and essential economic reform are highly laudable in themselves; but it would take a brave man to assert that the idea is going to spread in anything like the way a forest fire spreads, of its own accord. The Federal administration has yet to be convinced of its necessity; but then the Federal administration of the U.S.A., like the old administration of the Russian Empire, exists to further the purposes of the exploiters. Those who think that this is an exaggeration should read A.J. Nock's convenient summary¹ of how exploitative institutions were transferred from Britain to the American colonies, and how the Federal constitution was imposed by fraud on the original States after Independence. They should then consider the reason for the war of 1861-65, which was not the abolition of slavery as is popularly supposed, but the preservation of the Union. So far there have been no more such splits in this monolithic structure, nor are there signs of any impending.

Matters are far otherwise in the former U.S.S.R., where not only have the bonds of union been cut, but also the familiar style of authoritarian rule by Communist Party bosses is at an end. There are even some grounds for hope that the principle of the single tax may eventually come to be understood and implemented, before the idea occurs to enough power-lovers that a return to pre-revolutionary conditions might be in their interest. Of these grounds the principal one is that, for about

seventy years, or nearly three generations, there has been no private ownership of land. How fitting it would be if this vital part of the Tolstoyan philosophy should receive its first full implementation in his own country! Let us then examine our reasons for thinking that this is still possible.

In order to appreciate the scope and significance of the changes in progress, it is necessary first to form a general impression of how exploitation was achieved under one-party government in the unreformed socialist State. Our witnesses are Mikhail Gorbachev, former President of the Soviet Union, and Konstantin Simis, a barrister forced to emigrate from it on account of his too enthusiastic defence of political offenders. Let Gorbachev have the first word:

Many Party organizations in the regions were unable to uphold principles or to attack with determination bad tendencies, slack attitudes, the practice of covering up for one another and lax discipline. More often than not, the principles of equality among Party members were violated. Many Party members in leading posts stood beyond control and criticism, which led to failures in work and to serious malpractices.

At some administrative levels there emerged a disrespect for the law and encouragement of eyewash and bribery, servility and glorification. Working people were justly indignant at the behavior of people who, enjoying trust and responsibility, abused power, suppressed criticism, *made fortunes* and, in some cases, even became accomplices in – if not organizers of – criminal acts.²

Simis' description of the way of life of the ruling *élite* is one of people living in a world apart. Their housing, naturally of superior quality, was, he wrote, isolated from that of the common people. Their salaries could be as much as thirty times the official minimum, which the average for manual and office workers failed even to equal. Their salaries, moreover, were no measure of their actual standard of living; for their needs were catered for in the Kremlin stores, inaccessible to others; and much of their purchasing was done with vouchers, paid for at about one-third of their face value. As if all this were not

enough, they were entitled to fringe benefits on an ascending scale according to rank, culminating, for members of the *Politburo*, in country palaces, lavishly staffed, equipped and provisioned free of charge.

Since an official would lose all this if he were to lose his post, there was a standing temptation to use the post for the acquisition of the private and unassailable fortune hinted at by Gorbachev. Here is an extreme example from Simis:

For several years, agents of Shevarnadze's [sic] Ministry for Internal Affairs shadowed all the leading functionaries in the Party and state *apparat* of Georgia, as well as their families, and much compromising evidence was gathered. For instance, the trade in the highest posts in the Party and state *apparat* had become so blatant that an underground millionaire, Babunashvili, was able to order for himself the post of Minister of Light Industry. Babunashvili headed an illegal company which produced and marketed fabrics, but his ambition was satisfied neither by his multi-million-ruble income nor by his business activities, and he decided that he wanted to cap his career by combining in himself both sides of Soviet organized crime: by being the corrupter (underground business) and the corrupted (government).³

It does not take much imagination to see that there is here alone the potential for considerable resistance to any attempt at reform. But resistance from these quarters would be negligible compared with that to be expected from what has come to be known as the military-industrial complex. Professor B.P. Pockney of the University of Surrey, has given an estimate of its size and power.⁴

The complex comprised over fourteen industrial ministries, which produced consumer goods as well as armaments. For example, the tools that made sprinklers for agricultural machines also made parts for bombers. The military budget for 1991, despite the beginnings of *perestroika* or 'reconstruction', rose to 94 billion roubles; but this did not include some elements of civilian budgets that were going to be devoted to

military uses. For example, part of the budget for the Ministry of Railways was to be spent on transporting troops. As a result, somewhere between 20 and 45 per cent of the national budget was for military purposes. It must also be taken into account that there were between 5 and 5.5 million men in the Red Army and the K.G.B., and that the uniformed forces were supported by somewhere between 20 and 50 million civilian workers. The U.S.S.R.'s total labour force amounted to only 120 million people. The Soviet economy, in other words, was on a permanent war footing, with all that this phrase of poignant memory implied for the living standards of the population at large. Those readers who feel inclined to doubt Professor Pockney's summing-up will find it amply confirmed in a book by Eduard Shevardnadze,⁵ well-known as a former liberal-minded Foreign Minister.

What was it that made possible an effort on this gigantic scale? It was of course the very size of the Soviet Union. If each constituent Republic had been responsible for collecting and spending its own revenue, none of this would have happened. Such a situation may have represented the limit of the Republics' ambitions before the dissolution of the Union; but a single step in this direction would have been enough to sound the alarm bells within the military-industrial complex and the armed forces themselves. Resistance to *perestroika* from these quarters would have been caused, not so much by any change in the economic system, or extension of the political rights of the individual citizen, as by the threat to the Union posed by a new federal treaty that extended the rights of the Republics.

So far we have been dealing with the relative certainties of a static and observable situation; but, when we come to think about *perestroika*, attempts to implement it, and the reactions that it provoked, we are faced with the incoherence that is a characteristic of all revolutions. Even at the best of times, politicians deal in vague generalities, in order that their statements may bear the interpretations that different sets of people may choose to put upon them, or provide an escape route in case of future difficulties. In the midst of the turmoil of revolution, they will go a step further, and perform a balancing

act, saying one thing one day and saying or doing its opposite the next. In this way they hope to confuse the opposition and keep a secure hold on their office.

All this makes difficulties enough where a State with one central administration is concerned; but, in the former Soviet Union, things have been made far more complicated by the competition of the administrations of the fifteen Republics, all with their special axes to grind. Perhaps in fifty years time, when historians have had a chance to get to work on all the records and memoirs, it will be possible for a connected tale to be told. In the meantime, the impression given by events is one of unmitigated chaos, of which one must make the best one can.

What, first of all, was this *perestroika*, about which so much has been said and written? According to Gorbachev himself,⁶ and in very general terms, it involved primarily the improvement of the economic situation by the granting of independence and powers of self-financing to hitherto officially controlled enterprises. This was the beginning of the 'market economy'. Then there was more *glasnost* or 'openness', coupled with greater involvement of the workers themselves in the production process. In the social sphere, it meant more popular participation in government, and increased concern for 'the culture of every individual and society as a whole'.

The switch from single-party dictatorship to freely-elected representative government, commonly known inaccurately as 'democracy', began in June 1988, when Gorbachev, presiding over a conference of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (C.P.S.U.), proposed measures that involved a movement of executive authority away from party officials and towards elected deputies of Soviets (councils) at all levels of society. At the highest level there was to be a Soviet Congress. The conference approved the measures; and, in March 1989, there was a gratifyingly large turn-out for the first genuine parliamentary elections to be held in the Soviet Union since 1917. Gorbachev himself was elected a few weeks later to be executive President of the new Soviet Congress.

Gorbachev's statement of the aims of *perestroika* contains no treatment at length of that controversial subject, the tenure of

land; but, when he comes to the question of agriculture, there is a passing indication of his opinion that rent should go into the public revenue:

Today, we have large collective farms and sovkhozes [state farms] in many agricultural areas. Large work teams, sections and complexes have been organized. They are somewhat divorced from the land, and this affects end results. Today, we must ensure a more solid and direct connection with the interests of the individual through collective, family and *rental contracts* within the framework of these collective and state farms. Then we will combine the advantages of a large collective economy with the individual's interests. This is exactly what we need. If we act in this way we can make impressive strides in solving the problem of foodstuffs within two or three years.⁷

Practice to date does not appear to have come up to his expectations; for there is evidently a widespread belief, encouraged by western politicians, that the private ownership of land is an essential element in the market economy. Private ownership of agricultural land has in fact been allowed in accordance with a law passed in December 1990 by the Congress of Russian People's Deputies; but it is ownership that is subject to restrictions. The buyer may not sell at all within ten years; and, when the ten years are up, he may sell it only to the local Soviet, or council.

This measure, which in no way satisfies Henry George's and Leo Tolstoy's principle that economic rent is the only just source of public revenue, was greeted with enthusiasm by both traditionalists and reformers; and Boris Yeltsin, President of the Russian Republic, described it as 'historic'. Mikhail Gorbachev, on the other hand, as we should have expected from the piece of writing just quoted, had expressed, firmly but unavailingly, his opposition to any form of private land ownership whatsoever. Now his demand for a nationwide referendum on the subject will obviously not be satisfied.

A further threat on similar lines has become apparent in the disorderly fashion in which the transfer of public property to

private ownership has been taking place. Luxurious country homes, for example, have been sold to senior officials at bargain prices, presumably land and all. If the buildings alone were sold, and the land leased out, there would be no cause for alarm; but, otherwise, the first steps towards a return to pre-1917 conditions have been taken. Gorbachev did his best to halt them by means of a presidential decree of the 12th August 1991, setting up a central agency, *Soyuzgosfond*, to regulate the terms of such transfers and negotiate property claims with the Republics. This work, to be effective, needed to be done according to sound Georgist and Tolstoyan principles.

If there is anything that can still be done to stave off the worst effects of the private ownership of land, it will not remain undone for lack of expert outside advice. Around the turn of 1990-1991, an open letter was sent to Gorbachev, signed by thirty-one eminent economists, explaining in detail why and how the land of the U.S.S.R. should be retained in public ownership, and public revenue raised by the charging of rent for the use of it. Three of them – Franco Modigliani, Robert Solow and James Tobin – are Nobel prize-winners.⁸

Later on, in May 1991, an American team of four visited the U.S.S.R. with the same end in view. They were George Collins, Director of the Henry George School of New York; Dr Steven Cord, whose efforts have been mainly responsible for the startling successes of the two-rate local property tax in Pennsylvania (Ch.15); Ted Gwartney, professional valuer in California; and Professor Nicolaus Tideman, who has worked hard to establish contacts with politicians, civil servants and university economists in Eastern Europe. These men made it clear that, apart from the general advantages of the single tax, a special one in the former U.S.S.R., (now to be known as the Commonwealth of Independent States) would be to stop the notorious waste of natural resources engendered by the practice over many years of allowing their use free of charge, and raising public revenue in other ways.

The outcome of the contest determining who would have responsibility, for collecting and distributing revenue could have been seen in fairly simple terms as a personal one between

Gorbachev, who remained in favour of keeping as much as possible of the power centrally, and Yeltsin, who preferred to press on with giving effect to republican autonomy. From one point of view, it was to be hoped that Gorbachev would retain whatever power he had left long enough to give land value taxation a start throughout the Soviet Union. There would then have been an analogy with Tolstoy's wish (Ch.12) that the Tsar would use his despotic authority to introduce it, and then abdicate. On the other hand, Tolstoy would also have been pleased to see the dissolution of the latest version of the Russian Empire. In the event, the second satisfaction would have been gained at the expense of the first. The signs (in 1992) now point to the establishment of republican autonomy within a loose commonwealth, or perhaps in the end two, one Slav and one Muslim.

Gorbachev's situation at the beginning of 1991 being what it was, it is hardly surprising that, when he delivered his televised New Year's address, he should have shown some weariness in making the following admission:

1990 has been a year of difficult and important decisions – about ownership, power and land.¹⁰

Worse was to follow on the afternoon of Sunday the 18th August, when a group of eight emissaries from Moscow called on him at his holiday home in the Crimea to announce that there had been a *coup d'état*, and that he had been deposed and was under house-arrest.

The main instigators of the *coup* were Yazov, representing the army; Kryuchkov of the K.G.B.; Pugo of the Ministry of the Interior; Pavlov, Prime Minister and head of the bureaucracy; Baklanov of the military-industrial complex; Tizyakov of the immense state industries; 'farmer' Starodubtsev; and Gennadi Yanayev, representing no vested interest in particular, but chosen as a figure-head simply because Gorbachev had been ill-advised enough to choose him as his Vice-President. Otherwise, it was a representative collection of men attached to those very organisations that have already been pointed out as under

particular threat from the reformers. They miscalculated in two important respects.

In the first place, they had no attractive alternative to the future towards which the reforms were tending, but only a vague idea of returning to the familiar conditions of the past, which had suited them well enough, but left the majority out in the cold. As Gorbachev himself warned his captors: 'Look ahead', he said, 'look two, three, four steps ahead'. They had done nothing of the kind, and as a consequence had no conception of the popular opposition they were likely to encounter.

The shrewd Boris Yeltsin arrived at a juster estimate of the temper of his countrymen. Learning of the movement of hundreds of tanks in the direction of the massively-constructed White House, headquarters of the new Russian Parliament, he decided on resistance. A crowd of about 200,000 gathered to protect the threatened symbol of the new order, and up went the barricades. Yeltsin himself, with his confident bearing and a voice that needed help from no loud-hailer, called on the military not to fire on their own people. This was where the junta had made their second miscalculation. Did they think they could carry out a repetition of the massacre at the Winter Palace in 1905?

Three young men were killed, more by accident than design, and became in the process Heroes of the Soviet Union; but senior army officers decided to obey Yeltsin rather than the junta, and began to withdraw their troops from the city. It was the beginning of the end. On Wednesday the 21st August, Kryuchkov telephoned one of Yeltsin's aides to tell him that there would be no attack; and a delegation was soon on its way to bring Gorbachev back from the Crimea.

In the long run, this personal triumph on the part of Yeltsin increased the strength of his political position, and enabled him to proceed with an economic revolution running contrary to Gorbachev's known wishes. On the 28th October 1991, in the course of a long speech to the Republic's Congress, in which he outlined a 'a daring reform programme', he made the following pronouncement:

The President will also submit to parliament a package of amendments to the land reform law, to strengthen the legal basis for change in this area, and at last to permit the purchase and sale of land.¹¹

This statement would seem on the face of it to refer to the sale of the freehold of land, as it is understood in non-communist countries; but Russian visitors to England have explained that it is rather the sale of the *leasehold* that was in question. Everything therefore depended on the amount of rent initially collected by the State, and on whether the terms of the leases included one for its regular revision. If they did not, then an ever-increasing proportion of the economic rent (Ch.11) would be lost to the public revenue.

A second visit to Russia by Steven Cord and a party of seven in October 1991 confirmed the statement of the Russians in England, but made it clear that the rent (or, for non-rent-payers, the land value tax) was to be at a very low level, sufficient only to finance improvement to the land, together with associated activities. It is a fair assumption that sale prices will be correspondingly high. It is also clear that the question of revised assessments has not yet been tackled, except in the vaguest possible terms:

Bids for land rent are reviewed according to changes in improvement conditions independent of land users.¹²

The consequence of the unsuccessful *coup* was Gorbachev's resignation as General Secretary of the C.P.S.U., the confiscation of all its property, and the banning of its activities in the armed forces, the K.G.B. and all other law enforcement agencies. Seventy-four years of one-party rule came thereby to a decisive end. Even more significantly, at 5 p.m. on Thursday the 12th December 1991 the Union itself was dissolved, and Gorbachev made effectively redundant. Not surprisingly, before general dissolution had been contemplated, among the first Republics to secede had been the the Baltic countries of Esthonia, Latvia and Lithuania; but none of these has the

economic importance of the seceding Ukraine, the Union's granary. The problem of this and other such specially endowed Republics calls for a solution in the way of a sharing of economic rent between the members of the commonwealth or commonwealths that emerge from the chaos.

Though the dissolution of the Union would certainly have struck Tolstoy as a step in the right direction, it would hardly have gone any way at all to satisfy his ideal of individual self-sufficiency. But then, such an ideal is not to be taken too seriously; for Man is, and always has been a social animal. His social needs probably found adequate expression in the ancient Russian system of peasant local government (Ch.8), which was withdrawn from the jurisdiction of the landowners at the time of the abolition of serfdom (1861). Its components were the *mir* and the *volost*. The first was an assembly of all the householders in a village, and the second an assembly of representatives from a group of villages, or canton. They both had judicial and administrative functions. As has already been suggested, Tolstoy must have been aware of all this; and the indications are that he did not disapprove of it.

The *mir*, like the Anglo-Saxon 'folk-moot', is the democratic ideal whereby all citizens have a voice in making decisions that affect the common interest. Would that the process of fragmenting government could be carried thus far! In any case, revenue-raising needs to be carried out at the lowest possible level, if it is not eventually to be withdrawn from the reach of popular control, and to become an instrument of exploitation. Where it *has* been subject to popular control, as in New Zealand (Ch.15), it will be remembered that practical common sense dictated its derivation from economic rent.

Unfortunately, the Western advisers to Yeltsin's first administration had other ideas.

In the debate about the fate of land – and the liberty of the citizen – it comes as no surprise to learn that the Russians came to realise the significance of Tolstoy's philosophy for their future. Ironically, this new appreciation was first disclosed by Moscow's last hardline Communist Party leader, Ivan Polozkov, in a protest against the Russian parliament's decision to

allow peasants to own land. He cited one of the letters written by Tolstoy to Pyotr Stolypin, the tsar's prime minister who sought to privatise common land – a policy that Tolstoy characterised as a “swinish trick”.¹³

At first, there was strong sympathy for the Tolstoyan strategy from Boris Yeltsin. He wanted to develop a strategy that enabled peasants to possess land, with the State retaining the freehold. This attitude was articulated after the announcement of a compromise embodied in a law in December 1990. Yeltsin was challenged by an American reporter, who asked whether the restrictions on land ownership were in the spirit of freedom. That was when Yeltsin replied:

You don't understand the Russian spirit. People here do not understand the concept of buying and selling land. The land is like a mother. You don't sell your mother.¹⁴

But something significant was to happen, between the expression of this view and the stormy Congress of People's Deputies in April 1992, which was to transform Yeltsin's outlook. A constitutional crisis exploded when the conservatives obstructed Yeltsin's proposal that land, after all, ought to be privatised. On April 17, by a majority of 478 to 380, conservative deputies blocked the discussion of a constitutional amendment which would have permitted the purchase and sale of land. In his closing address, the president admonished the deputies for failing to pass that law.¹⁵

What had happened to change Yeltsin's mind about the ownership of mother earth? Money: the need to accommodate western perceptions of what constituted the elements of the market economy, in return for the aid that Russia needed.¹⁶ Yeltsin was rewarded a few days after his censorious criticism of the deputies, when multi-billion dollar loans were made available to him at the IMF's meeting in Washington, DC, on April 27.

That three Nobel prize-winning economists should join their colleagues to commend what was the Tolstoy/George model of private possession aligned with social ownership of land and

rental revenue, ought, one would have thought, to have at least attracted a reappraisal of orthodox economic attitudes. Instead, some of the experts went so far as to want to disallow a review of their prescriptions. Consider, for example, how the Georgist plan – a general tax on land rents, offset by a reduction in the tax burden on other forms of income – would attract private foreign investment into Russia (which would reduce the dependence on IMF/World Bank loans), and would speed reindustrialisation along market lines.¹⁷ Such a strategy would be viewed with horror by those who wish to intimidate governments into emulating a seriously imperfect system:

The need to attract additional capital from abroad will require that countries in transition build into their tax systems appropriate incentives to speed up this process. It would be harmful and inadmissible, however, to initiate unfair tax competition among the countries in transition, or to transform them into tax havens, or for them to become a bridge for various forms of tax evasion on an international scale.¹⁸

Why? There is nothing in international law which says that every country should suffer from a uniformity of tax-induced misery. There is no reason why Russia should not finally correct the error of Tsar Nicholas (the error which ultimately permitted the Red revolution), and carry out rational reforms that would ensure social justice and economic freedom outside the framework of bureaucratic controls. The objective conditions exist in Russia which make the Georgist/Tolstoyan economic programme realistic. In the West, resistance to a land-tax led strategy of social transformation relies on the argument that land is privately owned, and therefore ought not to be singled out for special taxation. The dubious moral merits of that argument need not detain us, for they do not apply in Russia, where the Federation owns all the land and natural resources. Russia could therefore revert to the time-honoured principles employed by mankind, based on social ownership and individual possession. This sophisticated approach to property rights would enable people to possess as much land as they

could use, in return for the payment of rent to the community for the privilege (that rental income, of course, would be shared equally by everyone through the public purse). This one bold principle would correct the structural flaw in the market model, eliminating the instability and unfairness which has characterised that system for two centuries.

This strategy is even now attainable in Russia, for on December 27, 1991, President Yeltsin signed a decree on taxation which stated, in Article 21 (b), that a land tax should be instituted. Modifications to the philosophy behind this tax are necessary, however, for it is cast as a local revenue-raiser. It ought to be a federally-administered macro-economic tool for efficiency and social justice. Appropriately structured, and linked to a sophisticated philosophy on land tenure, the land-value tax would release Russia once and for all from the constraints on the energies of people who wish for no more than the freedom to work for a decent life for themselves and their families.

We now give a final emphasis to what Tolstoy put first among the elements of his philosophy, namely the moral code enunciated in the 'Sermon on the Mount'. He did so because he felt that the future of the world depended above all on *metanoia*, or change of heart in each individual person. Perhaps in the end he will be proved to have been right; but that is not a good enough reason for an individual's failure, here and now, to make every effort to achieve a good mental grasp of how exploiters, by any means whatsoever, use the State as a tool to further their own ends. Knowledge is as immediately important to the world as a desire for a clear conscience. This Tolstoy provided in good measure.

It is as well to remember, though we have been thinking primarily about Christianity, that there are other religions, and among them those that teach the same morality as Jesus of Nazareth. One has only to think of the following:

Do not approve for another what you do not like for yourself.
Gospel of Zarathustra.

Will ye tell others to be righteous and not practise righteousness yourself? *The Koran*, 2,44.

Return love for hatred. *The Tao Te Ching*.

Hatred is never diminished by hatred. Hatred is diminished by love. This is the eternal law. *The Dhammapada (Buddhist)*.

O God, it is Thy word that mankind is a single nation, so all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights, they are endowed with love and conscience and should act towards one another in the spirit of brotherhood. *The Koran*.

If there be righteousness in the heart,
There will be beauty in the character.

If there is beauty in the character,
There will be harmony in the home.

If there be harmony in the home,
There will be order in the nation.

When there is order in each nation,
There will be peace in the world. *Chinese proverb*.

Is there not here the basis for the teaching of a comparative religion, transcending all divisive dogma and mystery, that will unite all those, of whatever race or culture, who desire the future well-being and tranquillity of mankind? Tolstoy himself evidently thought so; for he went to considerable pains to compile a large collection of such extracts, which he thought of as the Bible of an already existing universal faith. It has been published in Russian under the titles of *A Circle of Reading, For Every Day* and *Sayings of the wise*.

All in all, surely mankind has at last had enough bitter experience of the false pathways that have already been mapped and followed so often? So can we hope that the people themselves, at this crucial time, with the Nation/State showing signs of terminal decline, with socialism in disarray, land-and-capital monopoly heading more rapidly than ever for the rocks, and religious intolerance still poisoning human relationships,

will give serious study to Tolstoy's message – and take pause?
*There is nothing so powerful as a set of ideas whose time has
come.*