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A WEEK OF THE WORLD

RUSSIAN CRITICISM OF H. G. WELLS

DEMITRI MERESCHKOVSKI, a Russian writer of some distinction, replies in *La Revue Hebdomadaire* to H. G. Wells's account of his trip to Russia. He apostrophizes Wells as follows: 'You have just seen an infant in the arms of a gorilla, and conclude that the child is worthy of its mother. But observe well, my dear sir, the gorilla may have stolen the human infant. You spent sixteen days in Russia. I have spent fifty years there. Russia to you is a stranger; to me, a mother. Believe me, I can distinguish the face of my mother from the face of a gorilla. If it were true that every nation was invariably worthy of the government it has, we should never have seen a revolution. . . . You call communism stupid. Why, then, do you not wish to see it overthrown?'

Continuing, more particularly with regard to Gorky, he says: 'You know, Mr. Wells, the price Gorky pays to save people? It is at the cost of debasement. I do not mean that those whom he rescues are physically maltreated, but they are spiritually tortured with a refinement which it is impossible to describe.'

Apparently, a literary feud between

the two writers survives from some earlier period, to which Mereschkovski occasionally alludes. He refers to Lenin as the autocrat, and to Gorky as his supreme pontiff. 'The power which Lenin holds over their bodies, Gorky holds over their souls.'

In conclusion, he reminds Mr. Wells of his own romance, *The War of the Worlds*, and asks: 'Do you know what the Bolsheviks are? They are not men or beasts, or even devils, but your Martians. Not only in Russia, but all over the world, we are threatened with what you describe so powerfully in your own book, *The War of the Worlds*. The Bolsheviks have invaded Russia openly, but they are undermining as well every other land. The most dreadful thing about them is not that they have committed atrocities, but that they are beings who belong to another world. Their bodies are not ours, their souls are not ours. They are alien to us children of the earth, in every impulse and fibre of their peculiar nature.'

This author's wife, in a contribution to the *Berliner Tageblatt*, relates the following experience with Gorky: 'Right after the Bolshevik revolution, we begged Gorky to intercede for the imprisoned cabinet ministers. The

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wives of these gentlemen, two of whom were shot, later, by their prison guards, were in the same room. Gorky refused, roughly and bluntly. I remember he was quite offensive about it. I, finally, reproached him: "Your own conscience tells you that you should do this, nevertheless. You know Lenin and the others. Why won't you say a word for them?" Gorky bellowed back at me: "Because . . . I . . . can't talk . . . with those scoundrels!" That was the situation on November 4, 1917. To-day, Gorky converses intimately with Lenin, not only in Moscow but also, when they are apart, by long distance telephone from Petrograd; and calls him familiarly by his intimate name, Ilyitsch.'

RUSSIA'S MILITARY MACHINE

A CORRESPONDENT of the London *Daily Telegraph*, who, apparently, possesses some detailed information regarding the Russian army, says that though the nominal strength is larger, the real strength is about 600,000 infantry and 50,000 cavalry. It disposes of perhaps 10,000 machine guns of various systems — Maxim, Colt, and Lewis. The artillery has a nominal establishment of 4,800 guns both light and heavy. However, the real number, including field artillery, probably does not exceed 3,000. Each of the 60 infantry and 18 cavalry divisions has special signaling, aviation, motor transport, and army service units.

Of these forces, about 120,000 men are on the Black Sea coast in the Caucasus, or in Persia; 100,000 are in Central Asia and Siberia; at least 400,000 are on the Western front, of whom about 10 per cent are cavalry. These forces do not include the army of the interior, about 80,000 strong, which is really a police force, and consists mostly of communists and of Lett, Hungarian, and Chinese mercenaries.

GERMAN LOCOMOTIVES FOR SPAIN

GERMAN manufacturers recently won a competition contract for supplying locomotives to the Spanish railways, which are about to renew their rolling stock on the strength of loans promised by their government. Belgian makers offered locomotives at a lower price, but could not supply the number required at the date specified, or furnish the financial security demanded. The German makers ask 325,000 pesetas per engine (about \$43,000), and undertake to deliver about 210 within ten months. They agree to deposit a 10 per cent guarantee fund, to be forfeited in case of non-fulfilment of the contract, to take payment only when the order is completed, and to accept payment either in pesetas or marks at the option of the purchasers.

German motor-car manufacturers are increasing their capital, and smaller German works show a tendency to amalgamate. The purpose, according to European observers, is 'the concentration of all means for meeting United States competition.'

NAVAL POLICIES IN THE PACIFIC

A CORRESPONDENT addresses three questions to the London *Times* upon the situation in the Pacific. Can Great Britain keep a fleet in the Far East strong enough to protect Australasia from Japan's growing navy? Would a British Labor government employ the navy to protect Australasia in case of Japanese aggression? Would America, always slow to interfere in foreign wars, come to Australia's assistance? This is apropos of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, and the conclusion of the correspondent is: 'Unless Japan can be influenced to suspend her programme, or the Alliance be dropped or modified to include Amer-

ica, this competition in new ships between America and Japan will intensify. And if we cannot insure against sudden attack by one of the competitors, or count on equally sudden help from the other, the building of both only adds to our insecurity.'

PSYCHIC RESEARCH IN GERMANY

RECENTLY, we printed an article describing the revival of interest in occultism in Berlin. *Berliner Tageblatt* devotes an article to this subject, in which a dozen or more new theosophical and psychic research organizations are mentioned as having been founded since the war. The smallest of these societies already has more than one thousand members. Some of these organizations publish periodical reports; one series bears the title, *Archives of Revelations from the Other Side*. Among the more serious of these societies is the Anthroposophische Gesellschaft which has over eight thousand members. It possesses an 'occult temple' upon which 4,000,000 marks have already been expended. This building is used for dramatic representations, occult dances, and university courses. Another of these societies is known as The Coming Day. It is a 'corporation for promoting scientific and spiritual wisdom' and was founded in Stuttgart. Over 15,000,000 marks have already been subscribed to it; 25,000,000 marks of shares have been issued. Other societies have laboratories for studying materialization phenomena, with elaborate photographic apparatus and arrangements by which the medium sits in a balance during her trances, in order that variations in weight may be automatically recorded.

ENGLISH VILLAGE CENTERS

A CONTRIBUTOR to the London *Daily Chronicle* observes that village

halls are revolutionizing country life in England. 'A little while ago, we had three distinct and very rigidly defined classes. They were the country people; the new comers, whose men folk go to London every day to make money; and the villagers, including a few trades people.' Now, the boundaries between these classes are being broken down and, to quote the same informant, 'five and twenty years hence, I shall not be surprised to find the grocer's wife taking tea with the lady of the Elizabethan mansion one day, and with the wife of a London business man the next.' Prior to the coming of the village hall, life in these small country places was extraordinarily dull. Young people had to go to the nearest county town or city to find entertainment. Now, 'the best variety of amusements are to be found at home.' There are a choral society, a dramatic society, a dancing club, and other organizations of the kind, employing and supported by local talent.

POLAND'S FINANCIAL DISTRESS

POLAND seems to be running a neck and neck race with Austria toward the goal of national insolvency. Its total indebtedness, including the note circulation of 50,000,000,000 marks, amounts to no less than 165,000,000,000, requiring an annual interest expenditure of 12,000,000,000 marks. Five per cent of the country's foreign trade consists of exports, and 95 per cent of imports. Under these hopeless conditions, the country is trying to realize upon the state property, available as security for foreign loans. According to the *Weltwirtschafts-Zeitung*, a group of American capitalists has offered the government a credit of one half billion dollars in return for a 30-year lease of the railways. A Dutch concern is taking over the oil wells.

MINOR NOTES

SOME of the radical papers in Germany are printing translations of English classics and current novels as *feuilleton* stories. *Die Rote Fahne*, the organ of the German Communists, is printing Thackeray's *Yellow Plush Papers* as a serial, and *Leipziger Volkszeitung* is printing Upton Sinclair's *Jimmie Higgins*. *Kim* is also appearing as a serial in the *Liberal Independance Belge*.

Boot and shoe manufacturers in Great Britain seem to have prospered during 1920. Although the reports of several of the larger companies show reduced net earnings, their dividends have been maintained at from 12½ to 17½ per cent.

ITALY is showing great enterprise promoting commerce with other countries. Its representatives in Georgia are reported to have secured, recently, important concessions including control of the rich coal fields of Tkvarcheli, within twenty miles of the shores of the Black Sea. A commission consisting of engineers, financiers, and shipping and trading experts has been touring South America. During its investigations in Ecuador, an exposition of the natural products of the country was held in Quito. An Italian Ecuador Company has been formed to develop trade and industry and extend Italian markets in that country.

ACCORDING to a recent computation, Austria devotes only a little over three per cent of the total budget to the support of its military forces. Over 19 per cent of the total public expenditures of France, and 12½ per cent of those of Great Britain are for the army. Czechoslovakia allots nearly 17 per cent of its revenues to the same purpose, and Yugoslavia more than 28 per cent. Hungary, Austria's next door neigh-

bor, has assigned 22½ per cent of its budget for military purposes.

THE Finnish Parliament ratified the Dorpat Treaty with Bolshevik Russia by a majority of 163 to 27. The dissenters based their opposition mainly on moral or sentimental grounds. The treaty recognizes definitely the independence of Finland, requires Finland to neutralize the Finnish Gulf, and to disarm certain fortifications on its coast which threaten the approach to Petrograd, and provides for the cession of all the district of Petchenga to Finland, in fulfilment of a promise made by the Tsar before the revolution.

ARMSTRONG, WHITWORTH & COMPANY, well known as one of the largest engineering firms in the world, has entered into a contract with the Russian government, contingent upon the conclusion of a trade agreement between that government and Great Britain, for the repair of some twenty Russian locomotives a week. Such contracts are, of course, an argument in favor of entering into trade relations with Russia sure to appeal strongly to British manufacturers with idle plants, and to unemployed British working people.

AT a recent meeting of Bolshevik propaganda directors in foreign countries — that is, foreign to Russia — the reports from Great Britain are said to have been very discouraging to the Communists. The propagandists have discovered that the English workman bases his communism, not on Marx, but upon the Bible, and 'this circumstance completely excludes the opportunity of a further revolutionizing of the masses.'

Stead's Magazine (Melbourne) estimates that over ten million Germans

will be obliged to emigrate in order to find fields of employment denied them in the present diminished Germany. Since the United States and the British dominions 'foolishly refuse to allow German immigrants to set foot on their territories,' they must go to South America or to Russia. High steamship fares exclude all but the well-to-do from the journey to the South Atlantic countries. Consequently, a majority will go to Russia, which is likely to be developed by German science and labor, and thus to become under German tutelage 'the dominating country in the old world.'

ACCORDING to German computations, that country has already delivered property to the value of more than twenty-one billion gold marks to the Entente authorities. This consists of some ten billions of shipping, railway rolling stock, coal and coke, dyes, and other deliveries in kind; eight billion marks represented by imperial and state property, the Saar mines, the oversea cables, and the like, and well toward three billion marks credits to Germany for the support of the troops in occupation, the Interallied Commissions, and sums paid for imported food stuffs and raw materials.

PARIS is laughing over the experience of a young diplomat who recently returned from Peking, the happy possessor of a 'remarkably ancient' and imposing *cloisonné* vase which he had purchased from a native antiquarian of that city. As he was boasting to some friends that it antedated even the Ming dynasty, a connoisseur discovered, engraved in microscopic letters, the familiar 'Made in Germany.'

EUROPE'S beet sugar production increased appreciably the past season. Germany will make one eighth more than in 1919. Czecho-Slovakia will have some 10,000,000 hundredweight to export. Poland and Holland also will have a slight surplus to sell abroad. In Austria, Hungary, Scandinavia, Belgium, Italy, and Spain home requirements will be nearly covered, although Austria and Hungary will have to import a small amount. Belgium's crop increased from less than 3,000,000 to 4,500,000 hundredweight. While the crop in France is nearly double that last year, it will supply but a third of the country's consumption.

DISTURBANCES occurred last autumn at Broome in Western Australia originating in disputes between Japanese and Malays. The former are accused in the British reports of being the aggressors and trying to run their Malay competitors out of the pearling industry by force. The result was a general riot in which two Japanese were killed. Apparently, the whites intervened only for the purpose of restoring order.

PARTLY on account of the prevailing scarcity and high cost of coal in Europe, and partly as a result of technical advances in its utilization, peat is being increasingly used for fuel. One railway company in Sweden operating four hundred kilometres of line employs peat exclusively to fire its locomotives. A Norwegian coasting company uses peat fuel on its boats, and maintains a more regular service than when it used bunker coal, which could not always be procured.

[*Le Correspondant* (Liberal Catholic Bi-Monthly), February 10]

SINN FEIN PSYCHOLOGY. I

[This anonymous article, whose author is apparently a Frenchman familiar at first hand with conditions in Ireland, is possibly colored by two opposing currents of feeling — religious sympathy and political disapproval. It appears in a periodical not likely to have much tolerance for Ulster, but perhaps even less tolerance for a movement which either has played into the hands of Germany in the past, or may do so in the future.]

WHAT strikes one most in the Sinn Fein idea is its extremism; I mean its deliberate and definite refusal to recognize whatever does not accord with its conception of right. Nothing could be more in contrast with the eternal spirit of compromise and give-and-take so dear to the English. The latter say: 'What do you want? Economic favors? A better school system? You can always discuss such matters.' Griffith answered in his recent Manchester address: 'Get out of Ireland first. We will talk afterwards.' However, nothing angers a Sinn Feiner more than to be called an extremist. Valera protested against that term not long ago, in America: 'We demand unqualified freedom for all our country. We are an ancient nation, native to the land. You call us extremists; and yet, you Americans, when you made the same demand for yourselves, were only a British colony. Were you likewise extremists?'

But, if you strip the term of the questionable implications it has recently acquired in current speech, and go back to its original meaning, you will find this statement itself extremist. For, if you sound these men to the bottom, what do you find? Absolute faith in the power of ideals, in the inevitable victory of justice. That explains their inflexible attitude in face of invincible odds — odds which

England's victory in the World War make ridiculous. But no! Why should they compromise with their enemy, when it is so certain that abstract justice will eventually triumph? If you go still further, and try to explain the source of this idealism, I think you will find it in the composition of the party, in the fact that Sinn Fein is typically Irish.

The faith of the Sinn Feiner is intuitive and direct. It is a perfectly spontaneous mental attitude, more sentimental than rational, more poetical than logical. At the bottom, it is a form of religious exaltation. Its adherents are not content with ultimate harmony between facts and abstract right. They insist upon the immediate and substantial identification of force with justice.

Robert Brennan, a propagandist of this movement, said to me one day: 'The nations which engaged in the World War fought to destroy militarism and to liberate the small nations; that liberates Ireland.' I objected: 'Your reasoning is perfectly just in the abstract. But the real influence of the war has been to encourage settling questions by force. Nations, whether satiated with victory or exhausted by defeat, are naturally withdrawing within themselves, and are not disposed to exert themselves for Ireland. On the other hand, Ire-