

of national life is always the decisive aspect, and that failure to recognize this invariably involves unhappy consequences. . . .

The broad economic programme of the day should be: to breed an upper class of workers qualified to rise to the highest positions in industry; to cultivate their ambition in this direction; to

ensure competent successors for our present industrial pioneers by liberalizing the administrative organization of our great enterprises; and to insist that the ownership of productive wealth carries with it an obligation to the nation — an obligation that extends into the fields of higher politics and statesmanship.

A BOLSHEVIST INDEX EXPURGATORIUS

BY NADEZHDA KRUPSKAIA

[Nadezhda Krupskaya — Madame Lenin — is looming up in Russia as the real successor to her deceased husband. Her strength seems to lie in two facts: first, she knew Lenin's reasoning and views better than anyone else; and second, she is honest and sincere. The present rulers of Russia — Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Trotskii — seem to lack the confidence of the Russian masses. At least their sincerity is questioned. Their strength lies in their organizing, writing, and talking abilities. This article, which created a sensation in certain sections of the European press, is a striking document illustrating important phases of the Bolshevik intellectual programme.]

From *Pravda*, April 9

(MOSCOW COMMUNIST-PARTY OFFICIAL DAILY)

THE Library Section of the Central Office of Political Education — *Glavpolitprosvet* — is doing a great work. But 'only he who does not plough has no crooks in his furrow,' and during the last two years some errors have been made.

One was last spring. I signed a circular excluding unnecessary and harmful books from the people's libraries. We know how the libraries were organized, especially the 'people's' libraries before the revolution. They were filled with moralizing discourses, religious booklets reflecting the viewpoint of the Black Hundred, — such as the anti-Semitic *Visits of Our Lady to the Tortures*, — monarchistic twaddle, and the like. Such literature still remained in the libraries at many

places. Furthermore, on the shelves of provincial libraries there was still much patriotic literature from the time of the war, and other propaganda material written on topics current in 1917, such as the Constituent Assembly and the like. These libraries also contained many books and pamphlets interpreting decrees and laws which have long since been repealed; all of which was calculated to mislead the less-informed reader.

My circular discussed the necessity of excluding such literature from libraries intended for the masses. This was simply to defend their interests. The circular itself was not in error.

To the circular was added an unfortunate index of prohibited books, compiled by the Commission for Book

Revision. This was appended to the circular I signed without my having seen it; but as soon as I did see it the list was repealed.

Why was this index a mistake? First, because it missed the mark. It excluded from the people's libraries the writings of Plato, Kant, Ernst Mach, and idealists generally. These philosopher-idealists are harmful without doubt. But to have their works in the libraries intended for the peasants and workingmen is not harmful—it is immaterial: the masses do not read Kant. The list could not make any actual change in this respect. Much worse was the fact that the list of excluded 'religious' books was very limited.

The prohibition of certain works of Tolstoi and Kropotkin was a mistake. It is true that the world-view of Tolstoi, with his belief in God and Providence, does not belong to a school of thought which should be popularized. Concentrating on one's self, centring all efforts on one's own perfection, nonresistance to evil, appeals not to struggle against evil—all this is contrary to what we Communists are teaching the masses. And these appeals of Leo Tolstoi are especially harmful in view of his exceptional talent. Yet the general reader of the present day is already sufficiently saturated with collectivistic psychology; he is imbued with the fighting spirit. Therefore the sermons of Tolstoi are powerless to convert anyone; they only stimulate thinking. There is also nothing to be afraid of in the anarchistic tendencies of Kropotkin. Life demonstrates at every step that organization is a great power. Our recent experience has made the teachings of Tolstoi and Kropotkin unreal and ineffectual. Therefore the prohibition of their books is needless.

Consequently the odious list over

which so much noise was made by Russian émigrés and their foreign sympathizers was held up and repealed immediately after its publication.

The second error was that the Library Section overlooked a sentence which should have been expurgated from an otherwise very interesting and important article by A. A. Pokrovskii. In the last paragraph of his thesis the statement occurs that 'a religion which is entirely free of superstitions as to the interference of the Highest Powers in the affairs of this world, which does not put up bars against or set traps for science, which accepts in principle the entire real world, recognizable, if not "to the end," then at least "to where infinity begins" — such a religion, if it can be called a religion, is not in reality our enemy, and it is not the business of our libraries to combat it.'

Here Pokrovskii makes a gross error. Such a religion is no less harmful than any other religion. It confuses the minds of the people as much as any other religion; it diverts them from the struggle for a new life, from the establishment of a real brotherhood of man upon earth. The fact that such a new religion hides behind science, acts under cover, smuggles God in, throws dust in the eyes,—the fact that it works with refined instruments,—makes it even more dangerous.

Pokrovskii, as is seen in all his essays, believes the aim of our libraries to be 'the final establishment of positive atheism in the mind of man, and the spreading of propaganda for a comprehensive, logical, materialistic world-view.' He describes how such propaganda should be conducted. His theses contain many highly valuable suggestions, which certainly must be adopted by our popular libraries if they are to proceed correctly. Pokrovskii has had great experience and has great love for his work; he has already

labored long shoulder to shoulder with the Communists. We Communists have learned much from him and value him.

Yet he believes that, thanks to our low level of culture, an enlightened, or purely rationalist, religion cannot hurt us, and in general that 'a wedge can be driven out by another wedge.'

This is his error. To measure the harm of enlightened religion is indeed a hard task, but this does not change the situation. The Glavpolitprosvet should not have permitted this sentence

to pass. Needless to say, that cannot affect our relations with this valued worker. Our duty is to apply in practice the maxim of Vladimir Ilich (Lenin): 'We must know how to build Communism with non-Communist hands.'

To allow the assertion that an enlightened religion is harmless to pass without refutation would signify that this maxim is not understood. On the other hand, to condemn such a worker as Pokrovskii would imply an equal misunderstanding of the maxim.

THE BRITISH EMPIRE AT WEMBLEY

BY LUDOVIC NAUDEAU

[Ludovic Naudeau is one of the 'great reporters' referred to in the article on French newspaper-making which appeared in two recent issues of the Living Age. He is a frequent contributor to L'Illustration.]

From *L'Illustration*, May 17
(PARIS ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY)

TAKING advantage of the hesitating favors of a doubtful sun, I have passed in lengthy review the immensities of the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley, and I still retain the impression made by my first glimpse of it: the British Empire Exhibition is an allegory of power and wealth, a significant summing-up of infinite resources on a world-wide scale, a display that needs only beauty to be perfect. 'But,' you ask me, 'how can anything even pretend to perfection if it lacks beauty?'

In the first place, the Exhibition is not wholly destitute of beauty. It has certain halfway splendors which we French should not despise, and some-

times I ask myself whether the rigors of an abominable spring are not more at fault than the architects who built Wembley. Every moment the dull skies are wrapped in a funereal pall of clouds, or else melted into fogs which dull all the colors and veil all the contours of the Exhibition. How hard it is to imagine a tropical scene in this foggy climate, where everything is wet and rainy!

Let us admit that the location of London teaches Frenchmen a great and lasting lesson in colonization. It makes us understand why men born in such a climate as this are willing to depart into the uttermost ends of the earth in quest of a more agreeable habitat. But