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"We would simply take for the community what belongs to the community—the value that attaches to land by the growth of the community; leave sacredly to the individual all that belongs to the individual."—*Henry George.*

RUSSIA AND FREEDOM.

Since the outbreak of war no event has occurred comparable in importance or so fraught with the highest hopes as the Revolution in Russia. Almost in a night the most absolute of despotisms has been shattered, and in its place we see a political order whose watchword is Freedom. The greatest Tyranny of the world is laid in the dust, and for untold millions life is now worth living as it never was before. And not alone in the empire of the Tzar of all the Russians; for it comes as a warning to the despots of all lands, and whether in Berlin or nearer home, the message of hope and freedom goes out to all peoples.

With the Russian people we rejoice, and our fondest wish is that their high hopes may bear their fruit. Personal and political freedom are noble aims. A self-governed Liberal Europe such as may now arise is worth suffering for, and all honour to the men who have laid down their lives for these things, both in this Revolution and those of the past. These aims, with the spiritual and intellectual advancement which must accompany them, upheavals like this can and have secured, but let us not forget that the power of tyrants lies not in themselves nor in their armies, but in the minds of the common people. In reality, power always and everywhere resides with the people, and if their rulers hold it in appearance, it is only because they act with the people's consent. So when autocrats successfully deny to their subjects liberty of thought, liberty of debate, and liberty of person, it can but be because in the public estimation such things are not prized, and ignorance of their value makes of the people their own tyrants. The people's ignorance of their own rights, their ignorance of the meaning of good government gives to their tyrants

whatever strength they possess. It is recorded that the slaves of Greece and Rome had no desire for liberty. They knew not even the meaning of the word, and this ignorance reached up to the highest intellects of the time; so that when Plato produced his essay on the ideal Republic, even he was incapable of picturing in his mind's eye any State of which chattel slavery did not form the base. Such being the condition of current thought, who can doubt whence this institution derived its strength and permanence. Not from the might of oppressors but by consent of the victims themselves. Then as ever, the people were the authors of their own undoing, and this nothing short of change in mental view can alter. Substitute one state of public thought for another, and the tyrannies of individual rulers will cease: perhaps in a night, amid bloodshed and ruin, mayhap by the slow process of constitutional change. But end it must.

It happens to be our good fortune to live in times when current thought is alive to the value of liberty, both personal and political, so that in Russia, and elsewhere, despots deny them at their peril. But there still remains Economic Liberty. Do the people put equal price on it? Do they demand and treasure it as they do liberty in its other forms? If the answer be in the negative, and if we none the less look to this Revolution to free the people of Russia from the sordid struggle for bare existence, our hopes are destined to destruction. If any such hope is still cherished, we must indeed be blind to the lessons of all history, which teach that every Revolution of the past has failed to give the greater emancipation. They have failed to bring a freedom as vital at least as freedom in any other form. These Revolutions have yielded political reform and they have emancipated the serf, but beyond that they did not and could not go. They have not realised the hope so fervently based on them—the hope that they would usher men into the promised land of lasting peace and general prosperity. They have utterly failed to give men the right to the fruit of their own labour. They have failed to free him from economic dependence; they have failed to rescue them from the soul-destroying struggle for the right to toil. Revolutions have come and Revolutions have gone, but they have left the common man to gain a living as best he may under unjust laws, which artificially restrict his opportunity of doing so. They have left the struggle for a living as cruel as ever, and men know not that this results from laws whose justice they do not question. Work is scarce because natural resources are monopolised, so that what one man gains his neighbour thinks is his own loss.

And so it comes that this prime cause of industrial strife at home between man and man quickly overleaps national boundaries, and becomes a struggle between nation and nation. This artificially limited field of opportunity turns what under free economic conditions would be peaceful international co-operation for mutual benefit into the bitter struggle we everywhere see among nations for such markets as are left. We rejoice that freedom of other kinds has been won, but revolutionists limiting their aims to this and ignoring the larger liberty—the equal right of all men to the bounties of Nature—these things are bound to be.

For what is the truth? If we are to measure successful reform by the opportunity it gives to men to live their own lives in their own way, and so to win their road upwards, free from hindrance towards intellectual and spiritual betterment, and to the even greater freedom which lies beyond, it matters very little what kind of government prevails. Unless the economic problem is faced and subdued, progress will only mock at the hope that merely springs from political adjustments. Changes limited to the mere machinery and forms of government cannot by any possibility give us economic liberty. History teaches it to be a false hope. The deeper cut must be taken.

Of course political and personal freedom are great aids to intellectual and spiritual advancement. We are right to be proud of a widened franchise, representative government, religious liberty, and freedom of the person; but these in themselves can never be the ends. The end is the greater freedom which lies beyond—the equal right of all men to share the birthright the Creator has freely given to all. That being still denied, it comes to pass that the stimulus given to men's physical and mental activities by the revolutionary movements of history has but had the same result as all other forms of increased human activity. It has resulted in the hardening against industry of the value of land. The tribute paid by the dispossessed to those who still retain possession of the earth has but increased, and progress been brought to a stand. Therefore until opinion is enlightened to the point of recognising that this is the primary injustice of all we must resign ourselves to seeing the true fruits of revolutionary movements ever receding from the people's grasp. For the tyranny of landlordism is like all other tyrannies. Given personal and political freedom, the only tyrant we have to face is our own ignorance of what are our rights, and landlordism will go the day that ignorance is dispelled. We can therefore but struggle on in our task of enlightenment in the firmest knowledge that, with its coming, the day of true emancipation will dawn.

W. R. L.

TOLSTOY ON THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

Being extracts from a letter written by Herman Bernstein from St. Petersburg, July 20th, 1908, and published in THE NEW YORK TIMES of August 9th, 1908.

"At about 9.30 o'clock in the morning I found myself at the door of the little white house where lives and works the most remarkable man in the world to-day—Leo Tolstoy. I was met by Nicholas Gusev, Tolstoy's secretary, an amiable young gentleman, who took me into his room.

"Presently he entered. . . .

"He asked me about my impressions of Russia, and particularly about the popularity of Henry George's works in America. 'Nearly 50 years ago,' he went on slowly, 'the great question that occupied all minds in Russia was the emancipation of the serfs. The burning question now is the ownership of land. The peasants never recognised the private ownership of land. They say that the land belongs to God. I am afraid that people will regard what I say as stupid, but I must say it: The leaders of the revolutionary movement, as well as the Government officials, are not doing the only thing that would pacify the people at once. And the only thing that would pacify the people now is the introduction of the system of Henry George.

"As I have pointed out in my introductory note to the Russian version of 'Social Problems,' Henry George's great idea, outlined so clearly and so thoroughly more than 30 years ago, remains to this day entirely unknown to the great majority of the people. This is quite natural. Henry George's idea, which changes the entire system in the life of nations in favour of the oppressed, voiceless majority, and to the detriment of the ruling minority, is so undeniably convincing, and, above all, so simple, that it is impossible not to understand it, and understanding it, it is impossible not to make an effort to introduce it into practice, and therefore the only means against this idea is to pervert it and to pass it in silence. And this has been true of the Henry George theory for more than 30 years. It has been both perverted and passed in silence, so that it has become difficult to induce people to read his work attentively and to think about it. Society does with ideas that disturb its peace—and Henry George is one of these—exactly what the bee does with the worms which it considers dangerous but which it is powerless to destroy. It covers their nests with paste, so that the worms, even though not destroyed, cannot multiply and do more harm. Just so the European nations act with regard to ideas that are dangerous to their order of things, or, rather, to the disorder to which they have grown accustomed. Among these are also the ideas of Henry George. 'But light