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The Lesson of Revolution

THE time is approaching when the world must do some constructive thinking. It is quite true that a small, a very small minority is already engaged in this. That has always been so, but the trouble is that a minority cannot really think for a majority, even if the majority elects to be thought for by the minority. As it is, a large percentage of the world is thinking anarchically, on the broad basis that history has shown reformation to be impracticable, unless preceded by a destructive wave sufficiently overwhelming to render fundamental rebuilding a necessity; whilst opposed to this are those who would concentrate the force of nations on the destruction of the destroyers, rather than checkmate them by means of a great reconstruction program.

Now reconstruction on the Phoenix plan has never been successful except in the solitary instance of the Phoenix. That mythological bird has, in other words, failed to acquaint its imitators with the secret of the process. Quite a number of adventurers have discovered this in the past, and the latest of the disillusioned is apparently Nicholas Lenin. The Bolshevik Government in Russia, that is to say, has not merely put on all its brakes, it has reversed its engines. The Red Terror is now excused as a necessity of the hour; a little while ago anyone who denounced it, was denounced, in turn, as a slanderous reactionary. Evidence, however, is not disposed of by the simple process of denial, and so the world is faced by the apologetic gamut of an earlier Jacobinism.

The question, then, which arises, and it has something more than a mere speculative interest attached to it, is, will Lenin be able to maintain himself where Robespierre failed? Certainly he is intellectually far more adaptable, and he is cumbered, in Trotzky, with no academical revolutionary like Saint-Just; indeed, so much greater is his influence, than that of Trotzky, that he may almost be said to be playing a lone hand. Besides, he has one enormous advantage over the men of '93. It is this, that the Bolshevik leaders are practically without competitors in the great process of reconstruction, and they have taken advantage of this

completely to change their policy. Disraeli's famous simile of the Whigs and their clothes might be applied to them with duplicated force and with refined irony. As they walk about Moscow to-day they are arrayed in all the political habiliments of the Mensheviks. They are yearning to strain the once despised peasant to their bosoms, whilst the bourgeois organizer finds the right hand of fellowship extended to him, with a flattering salary grasped in its palm. Strangest of all, here, in the Ultima Thule of Communism, they have revived private industrial enterprise.

Here, then, is an economic Daniel come to judgment, and the shipwrecks of Clydebank and the miners of Pennsylvania, no less than Threadneedle Street and Wall Street, will do well to take notice of the portent. The difference between the French Revolution and the Revolution in Russia is essentially this, that the one began and ended in politics, whilst the other has developed into economics. For Napoleon to establish the First Empire was, for this reason, comparatively easy; in a way, he buttressed the movement for a return to law and order for which the nation was craving, after the horrors of the orgy of the guillotine. But, to-day, to return to the Tsardom would be to take away the land from the peasants, and the factories from the operatives; and a nation of peasants and operatives will never listen to the wiles of a Koltchak, not even though he were a Napoleonic one. That is why the revolution of 1789 could be partially reversed; and that is why the revolution in Russia stands in spite and not by reason of the Red Terror.

This does not justify the Red Terror, it does not palliate one of the crimes of Lenin, but it does explain the failure of Judenitch and of Koltchak, and the growing failure of Denikin.

Now all of this contains a lesson which the Western world would be well advised to learn, and it is this, that the anarchist is only dangerous when you play into his hands. What was wrong with the policy of the Allies in Russia was simply that it was calculated to produce the maximum of irritation with the minimum of effect. They might have intervened in force and suppressed the Bolsheviks, which would have been easy, though troublesome and very expensive, or they might have kept their hands off, and left the anti-Bolshevik elements to work out the problem. As it was, they intervened in insufficient strength to accomplish anything definite, but with a sufficiency of interference to consolidate the Bolshevik resistance.

This would be bad enough if it stopped at the Russian frontier, but indications are not lacking that the same chaotic thinking is being applied to the solution of the economic

problem elsewhere. It would be to be avoided governments must make up their minds to a definite economic policy, and not be content to drift from one panacea to another. There is in this the real danger of revolutionary propaganda. But if the governments, while insisting sternly on obedience to law, will adopt broad measures of reform, the revolutionary will find himself entirely impotent. Lesson of revolution.—Christian Science Monitor.

What He Learned.

Mrs. Styles—Did your husband get any decorations in the war?
Mrs. Myles—No; but he learned how to cook.

NEW MINISTER TO PEKING.

Has Worked Through All the Grades of the Foreign Office.

Mr. Belby Francis Alston, the new British Minister at Peking, certainly deserves the job. He has been in the running for years and is understood to have wanted the post very badly. Criticisms have always varied about him, but the middle view seems to be the correct one, namely, that he will be a good, useful, diplomatic representative, without being in any way brilliant.

His early upbringing was all in his favor, since his father was Sir Francis Alston, one of the lights of the Victorian Foreign Office. His education was mainly abroad, where he was trained for the Foreign Office in which he has worked through all the grades, beginning in 1890. His chief posts have been at Copenhagen, Buenos Ayres and Peking, of which he became the councillor of legation in 1911-12 and charge d'affaires in 1913. Even in those days people talked about him as a certain minister of the future.

Mr. Alston's utility to the Foreign Office has not lain in the permanency of his occupation of diplomatic posts. He is the diplomatic tourist. Whenever there was a mission going or a conference being held Mr. Alston was always approached. He was present at a conference on copyright in Paris (1896), at three sugar conferences at Brussels, and was sent with Prince and Princess Alexander of Teck to the coronation of the King of Siam at Bangkok in December, 1911. Whenever foreign diplomatic representatives came here it was a matter of certainty that Mr. Alston would be attached to them. He specialized in this sort of attachment to distinguished Chinese visitors to Great Britain who came either on a mission or some royal function such as a coronation. This explains why he has been the Grand Cross of the Order of China, and why he is the White Elephant of Siam.

These who say that Mr. Alston is a "set" the Thames are perhaps not, but he will make few or no mistakes. For years when he was at the Foreign Office he was at the head of the Far Eastern section, or attached to it, and used to receive visitors who came to inquire into the affairs of the day affecting the Far East. Mr. Alston used to be a beautiful figure, though perhaps they went away thinking they had not learned much. His critics might say that Mr. Alston had not much to tell them, but anyway, his visitors were pleased, and he had no enemies. Otherwise he is not specially distinguished; he is, in fact, the businesslike type of diplomatist, and the Government at home will be able to rely on him. He will never get the Foreign Office into trouble, and it is something for the Foreign Office to be able to count so confidently on one of the young men whom it has trained. His tendencies are not particularly literary, but he does endeavor to study oriental matters, and it is his knowledge of these that has sent him to the Far East rather than his knowledge of Orientals.

Famous Parasol.

It was not until the 18th century that the parasol became distinctly an article of feminine costume. Large and elaborate parasols have from time immemorial been a mark of honor and official dignity in the Orient. In India, in 1877, when the then Prince of Wales made his famous tour, he was compelled, that he might properly impress the natives, to ride upon an elephant and have over his head a parasol with a frame of gold, and with covering stitched with precious jewels.

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SCIENCE INDEBTED TO ARAB.

Schools of Medicine Established Under Caliphs.

The origin of the Arab race is a matter of conjecture, but the Arabs were a united political body with a king of their own long before the Christian era, wrote Frederick Simpich in the National Geographic Magazine. Just now there are perhaps 10,000,000 Arabs, and for convenience of classification they are usually separated into two divisions—"Al Bedouin," or "The Dwellers in the Open Land" (commonly called Bedouins), and "Al Hadr," or "Dwellers in Fixed Localities."

The Bedouins, roaming with their herds all over Arabia and even up into Mesopotamia and Syria, are better known to American missionaries, officials and travelers than the Hadr class. They are nomads from necessity and not from choice, and as the country comes under better rule, roads, trade, and irrigation will undoubtedly reduce the number of Arabs forced to lead this wandering life.

Although Bedouin and Hadr are almost synonymous terms in some parts of Arabia, this is hardly fair to the Bedouins when we consider the way they have to live. When they hold up a Mecca caravan, for example, and exact a sum in cash for "protection," they look on this merely as their rightful share of taxes, habitually collected and kept by border officials. A reform of these desert manners and methods will most probably ensue as a result of the British mandate over Arabia.

Although, nominally a Mohammedan, the average Bedouin is said to worry but little about the Koran's rules or whether his mode of living would please the prophet. The wilder tribes even worship the sun, trees, rocks, etc., or else have no religion at all, it is said. Marriage is early and easy and divorce simple and frequent.

About 80 per cent. of all Arabs live in towns, villages, or other fixed places of abode and belong to the "Hadr" class. In this group is found the aristocracy of Arabia. Here are old, reputable families, with records of births, deaths and marriages, deeds and honors, running back through generations.

Perhaps the most noted family in modern Arabia is the house of Koraysb, tracing its connections back to the prophet. The men of this family bear the title of Sherief or Seyd; and it was the Sherief of Mecca who led Arabia's break for statehood.

Education, however, as we regard it in America, is almost unknown among Arabians. The few with cultural and scientific attainments, most learning is confined to the classics of religious and secular literature; the Koran is learned by rote. In the smaller towns there are no schools at all.

Yet it was Arab learning and skill, in the long ago, which started the civilized world on the way to its present high efficiency. Under the Caliphs, schools of therapeutics were set up at Bagdad, and botany was studied as a branch of medicine. As one writer says, "the principal medicinal and arsenical preparations of the materia medica, the sulphates of several metals, the properties of acids and alkalis, and the distillation of alcohol were, with their practical application, known to Er-Razi and Geber, professors of Bagdad. In fact, the numerous terms borrowed from the Arabic language—alcohol, alkali, alembic and others—with the signs of drugs and the like still in use among modern apothecaries, show how deeply science is indebted to Arab research."

All of which leads the Christian world to believe that the Arab people, as a nation, can "come back."

The Stronger Sex.

The United States Census Bureau has taken the trouble to enquire into the subject of longevity and has reached the conclusion that the age of 106 is possible for a human being, but that no man or woman has ever seen his or her 107th birthday, all stories to the contrary notwithstanding.

In point of longevity women are far ahead of men, generally speaking. They are more resistant to diseases and they live longer.

Out of 1,000 girls born into the world, 750 live to reach the marriageable age of 18. Out of 1,000 boys, only 700 survive that long—an excess of 50 male deaths. Of the boys, 250 will live to be 69 years old, but 250 of the girls will safely pass their 72nd birthday.

Five boys (nearly) die for every four girls in the first month of life. Out of 1,000 males born during the past year, half will be dead in 1971. Out of 1,000 female babies born in 1918, half will be living in 1976.

And yet women are called the "weaker sex." So they are, muscularly, but it is manifest that they are the stronger sex constitutionally. They possess what biologists term greater "viability"—a superior ability to survive.

Why nature so arranges matters is beyond explaining. Apparently she tries to make up for it to some extent by bringing into the world 1,013 boy babies to every 1,000 girl babies. But it is not enough. So much more hardy are the girl babies that they are actually a majority before the second year of life is reached.



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