



teozofija v sloveniji



Extracts from

AE MEMORIAL ISSUE OF THE CANADIAN THEOSOPHIST

VOL. XVI., No. 6. HAMILTON, AUGUST 15th, 1935

Prispevki k raziskovanju zgodovine Teozofskega gibanja - v izvorniku

GEORGE WILLIAM RUSSELL - AE (April 10, 1867-July 17, 1935)

Wisdom is justified of her children, and if there be no more than one sole begotten in this war-dreary age of ours, George William Russell has justified the Theosophical Movement, and borne the banner aloft, that Helena Petrovna Blavatsky handed on to him.

Out of the Dublin Group of which he was the chief light, and without disparagement of his friends Charles Johnston or Daniel Nicol Dunlop or others of that little band who contributed out of their own measure to the establishment of new ideals and new principles and new methods of life in our time, it is to his credit that he led the way in many paths of action, and as a literary man, a poet, a journalist, an artist, and finally as an economist and a statesman, he built up the model of a national life in which the national spirit could embody itself without debasement, bringing all its varied resources into play, giving liberty to those who lived under it to evolve their own soul-structure, and attain outwardly the spiritual stature of their own inner Selves; enabling all to live in that concordant harmony which so enriches social life; encouraging those less mature mentally, yet allowing them an independence of development which is the basis of true manhood.

In many respects the Irish people would have more warrant to sing they "never, never shall be slaves," than their compatriots across the Irish Seas. The English have never quite understood this, and continue to pray Britannia to rule the waves, while Irishmen would be content to rule their own land. A certain deference to authority, if not servility, makes government in Britain easy. In Ireland there is much civility, but no servility, and as it has been said only a Kelt can understand a Kelt, so George Russell had an advantage in understanding his own people that made it less difficult for him to approach them as a reformer. His innovations were in the tradition of the ancient life of Ireland under pre-Christian forms, and they appealed as they would appeal anywhere to the natural instincts of the people, yet in no way hindering the highest and noblest emotions of religion, charity, and sacrifice.

It has been a taunt flung against Theosophists (that their views were not practical, meaning that they did not provide for the life that men must live in physical bodies. George Russell removed that taunt

or the occasion for it, and showed that Theosophy when properly understood can be applied to all kinds of life socially and politically, promoting a nobler sense of right living, while recognizing that the life of the flesh is but a transit experience. It has been the deep marasmus that entered Adyar and still obtains there that they chose to follow a Leadbeater rather than Russell, and worshiped mirages which inflated the importance of personality instead of devoting themselves to the common life of humanity for which Madame Blavatsky labored, and to which Russell gave his service.

Nor was his an ordinary service, but one which entailed the cultivation and happy surrender of the highest gifts and talents which a man may command. Russell toiled unremittingly with body, mind and spirit, to carry on his self appointed task and if ever a god labored with men and for their benefit, Russell's body was the cross on which it was lifted up. Yet he was the humblest, the most modest of men. He looked for no leadership, no elevation, no homage. He did his work and has gone to his peace. He has evoked the passionate love of all who knew and understood him. He is a monument to Theosophy, and his name should be honored in the annals of the Movement while it continues to inspire the world.

We have gathered together in such time and space as was available some tributes from those who knew him, men and women who met him intimately, and also from this press, anonymously, from those who only knew him by reading his books, seeing his pictures, hearing his lectures, or even by the report of his doings, that came to them through others. It may be evidence to those who know little of him otherwise, of what influence he possessed, what mountains he moved, what light he spread abroad in a world of darkness. And beyond all, what a power of love of his fellow men flooded his great heart, a heart loyal only to Eternal Law. - A. E. S. S.

“AE”: Theosophist

By P. G. Bowen

“Dr. George W. Russell, the distinguished Irish poet and Economist died at the Bournemouth nursing home where he had been undergoing treatment, at midnight on Wednesday, July 17th.”

George William Russell, whom the world knew better by his pen name “AE” has passed from this objective plane. His friends and more especially for those who knew the real man, and his real work, his going leaves a blank not easy to fill. He had many friends (he had NO enemies) made during the course of his worldly activities, who can speak of him appreciatively as a writer, economist, or statesman; but he had few, and these for the most part inarticulate, who knew the real man, understood his aims, and were recognized by him not as acquaintances of the day, or the single life, but as souls linked with his in the immortal life. Of these few, I who write, am the last who he contacted and recognized in this present life. We met but little over two years ago, and “Ah, a very old friend, I think”, were the words with which he greeted me. That these were no unconsidered words he gave me speedy proof, for he pointed to links existing in what to me had hitherto been the worlds of dream and imagination, but which to him were realms far more real than this world of sense.

Before all else, AE was a Theosophist. With the crystal sincerity, and childlike simplicity which at all times distinguished him, he revealed to me that his aim in life overriding all else was to bring knowledge of the World of Spirit “where all hearts and minds are one” into the clouded sphere of human thought.

He sought to bring it to Ireland, his own country, first and foremost, not because he ever forgot the equal needs of the rest of the world, but because he held, and held rightly, as every true Theosophist will agree, that we should cultivate the field which lies nearest to hand with the tool which stands most convenient. His literary pursuits were not followed as a way leading to gain and fame, things to which he was supremely indifferent, but because they furnished a ready channel created by "the instrument built up by many lives," (his personal selfhood), through which might flow "something of the rhythms of the ONE Life", and with their touch "restore to some sort of tune the jangled strings of human consciousness". It is a dullspirit that can read his poems without feeling that they do just this.

So also with his purely worldly work. To him it was an instrument which he used to demonstrate in practical form that individual gain comes not through each man working for self, but through each working for all. Before I met him the following anecdote concerning his work for the farmers' Cooperative Movement was related to me by a country priest. One of AE's, innumerable addresses on co-operation to the peasant farmers happened to coincide with one of the lesser known Church festivals, and the result was that a large number "missed Mass". When chidden by the Curate for their lack of devotion, one of them replied in all seriousness, "Shure, an' wasn't we doin' just as good as to be at Mass, listenin' as we was, to Jarge's sermon down to Ballymascanlan?"

"And in the name of God, I think they were", my informant commented. In preaching practical co-operation, AE always spoke out of his own certain consciousness of the unity of all things in spirit.

AE belonged to none of the great Theosophical societies. In his early youth he had been a member of the Dublin lodge of H.P.B.'s T.S. At the time of the "Judge split", he and the whole lodge followed Judge, but after the death of the latter he resigned, feeling that under the new *regime* the spiritual light so evident in earlier times in the society had become somewhat clouded. It is not so generally known perhaps, that from 1898 down to 1933 when he left Ireland, AE kept alive in Ireland a nucleus of genuine students under the name of the Hermetic Society. As he himself put it to me, he held it a sacred duty as one who had become conscious of the truth of the Message brought by H.P.B. to keep, as she herself had adjured her followers, "the link unbroken".

The Hermetic Society was founded by Charles Johnston in 1886, and is therefore the oldest Theosophical body in Ireland. AE joined it on resigning from the Point Loma Universal Brotherhood in 1898, and led it from that time until he finally handed over his charge to myself in 1933. The society had no formulated objects, and was in character rather a free and easy club than an organized society. In an early letter to me concerning it AE says: -

"Sometimes it (The Hermetic Society) had a big membership, sometimes a small. It waxed and waned, and waxed again, people coming and going here and there; and I felt inwardly satisfied that they all more or less passed through a bath of Theosophical ideas.

"I had no private doctrine: nothing but H.P.B. eked out for beginners by W.Q.J.; the Bhagavad Gita; Upanishads; Patanjali; and one or two other classics. I did what I could to keep always in line with the Message of H.P.B., and to preserve it from admixture with the ideas of imitators who I found could give me nothing.

"My own writing is trivial, and what ever merit is to be found in it is due to its having been written in a spiritual atmosphere generale by study of H.P.B. and the sacred books of the East. If it has given some temporary light to those that read it, I am happy"

There speaks the real Theosophist which is equivalent to saying the real man. No words which another could speak concerning AE could reveal his quality half so surely as those brief unconsidered remarks of his own. They show like a lightning flash the great, simple, selfless spirit of the man which lives on, though the shape through which it manifested to our dull senses goes back to the dust that it was.

GEORGE WILLIAM RUSSELL, POET OF THE INNER LIFE

By James Morgan Pryse

Announcement of the death of Russell, one of the dearest of my companions in the good old days of the T.S., came to me over the radio. By request of the editor of *The Canadian Theosophist*, I now write of my personal acquaintance with that greatest of modern mystical poets. Saddened by the loss of my friend, I cannot write a glowing eulogy setting forth his genius and his unselfish devotion to the cause of humanity, and so shall only record a few reminiscences.

I first became acquainted with Russell during his frequent visits to the London Headquarters of the T.S. At one time, when on a walking tour in Wales, while examining Druidic ruins on the Isle of Anglesea, I noticed a small steamer, the Shamrock, that was about to cross over to Dublin. I took passage on it and spent the rest of my vacation with Russell and the other members of the Dublin Lodge. In 1895 by advice of Mr. Judge and Dr. Keightley, I shipped the original H.P.B. Press, which belonged, to Dr. Keightley, to Dublin, joined the lodge there, and for over a year helped Russell and the others to get out the *Irish Theosophist*. I would have remained there for a longer period, but Mr. Judge, owing to his illness, insisted that he needed me in New York.

When Russell began the study of Theosophy he wrote several fine little poems; but when I rejoined him in Dublin I found him much depressed because his Muse had apparently deserted him. His every attempt to write verse resulted in failure; sorrowfully he said, "My bogy is dead." Perceiving where his difficulty lay, I explained to him that when new to Theosophy he put into verse his own ideas spontaneously; but that his study of the philosophy had filled his mind with new ideas, which he had not yet assimilated, and could not therefore, express naturally. When he had made these ideas his own, I assured him he would write better than ever, having widened his mental scope. To start him up, I proposed that we write poems, alternately for the magazine, an offer which he eagerly accepted. I had quit writing verse while still in my teens, and my only object in penning poems for the magazine was to get Russell going again. His, "bogy" rose from the death, and thereafter for many years literature was enriched by his many mystical poems. I put forward a favorite theory of mine that great poets, painters, etc., always are found in groups, as were the Greek dramatists, and those of Shakespere's time, as also the great Italian painter's and the Cremona violin-makers; they sustain one another like electric cells "coupled for intensity." Thus, ten cells, each of ten volts, when thus coupled have a current of a hundred volts. So we formed a little group of promising young Irish writers, who met weekly to discuss their work. I had to dropout when Mr. Judge recalled me to New York, but Russell carried on the work for years to a splendid consummation, so that a number of brilliant writers brought about the remarkable Irish literary renaissance.

Russell had the faculty of clearly visualizing things psychically. Often when we were together in the evening (as we were almost every evening) I would say, "George, I saw something while meditating the other day" without giving him any clue to what it was, but visualizing it mentally. Closing his eyes,

he would see exactly what I had seen, and then with colored crayons he would reproduce it on paper. I have had mesmeric subjects do the same; but with Russell, owing to his natural lucidity, mesmerism was never resorted to. Mrs. Lloyd, of the Blavatsky Lodge, had the same faculty to an even more marked degree. Both were artists. As Russell once wrote me: "Painting is the only thing I have any real delight in doing. Nature intended me to be a painter. I was never taught. I went into an office and wrote poetry. Then because I wrote good poetry I was taken from the office and sent out over the country to organize farmers. When I wrote one or two articles about farmers and their lives I was taken from organizing and put to editing an agricultural paper. When I had learned to do this I was dragged into politics, and now I edit a weekly review dealing with politics, literature and economics. This refers to his work with Sir Horace Plunket, and the editing of the *Irish Homestead*, which was later incorporated in the *Irish Statesman*. These activities interfered sadly with his painting and poetry, but were of great benefit to Ireland. A Theosophist to the last, though he quit the T.S. when it became unendurably cantankerous, he held firmly to the Blavatsky tradition.

For years I kept in contact with Russell by correspondence. He sent me autographed a copy of each book he produced, and I sent him mine. Happily we met again when he was on a lecturing tour in the U.S. Certain educators and wealthy citizens who were apprehensive of revolutionary disturbances in this country had him deliver lectures on economics and his experience in organizing the agricultural population of Ireland. In a letter dated February 12, 1925, telling me that James Stephens was then in America, he wrote, "Perhaps sometime I may find my way over the Atlantic, but I see no chance of it now." But on January 27, 1928, he wrote me from New York, "My dear James, I have already come to your country - landed two days ago - and one of the attractions which brought me to America was the hope that I might visit the Pacific Coast and look you in the face again." But it was not until 1930 that we met. On the 1st of November of that year he wrote me from Missoula, Montana: "I expect to be in Los Angeles on the 17th of this month. I have two lectures to deliver, one in the morning, and the other in the afternoon. I shall seek you out that evening about 8 o'clock, and I hope to see you again, dear James, after so many years." He was in Los Angeles three days, and each evening I rejoiced in his company from 8 o'clock till near midnight.

Shortly after his first volume of verse, "Homeward: Songs by the Way," was published Russell told me how he came to take the pen-name AE. I used that information in the dedication to him of my work on *Prometheus Bound*. When I submitted the dedication for his consent and approval before publication, he wrote me: "I am greatly moved, dear James, that you should remember our old friendship and honor me by dedicating to me your translation of Prometheus. I accept it with pleasure." I reproduce the dedication here as a feeble tribute to my dear comrade whom I shall meet no more on earth in this incarnation. After quoting a line from Euripides, "We hold traditions of our forefathers which are as olds as time," it reads:

Recall with me the days, old friend,
When, we in Eire pondered o'er
The old traditions, and you penned

Your earliest poems, but forbore

To write your name, and sought to sign
The name of Man when yet divine.

And from the ether of your heart,
Where yet the fire Prometheus brought
Inspires the ardent poet's art,

In meditation rapt you caught
A murmur, "AEon," naming thus,
Mankind, Gods-born and glorious.

"AE"

Its edges foamed with amethyst and rose,
Withers once morse the old blue flower of day.
There where the ether like a diamonds glows
Its petals fade away.

These four lines, among the most beautiful in English literature, are typical of the serenity with which so much of the work of George Russell, who wrote under the name "AE", was infused. His death removes from that galaxy of great Irish writers the most unusual, if not the most eminent figure.

George Russell was closely identified with the revival of native Irish literature which accompanied the growth of political nationalism and which centred for many years around the Abbey Theatre in Dublin. Yeats, Synge, Lady Gregory, Sean O'Casey; Russell and others worked consciously toward a Gaelic Renaissance. Unlike the brilliant Irish writers of an immediately previous generation, Shaw and Wilde, they looked to the soil of Ireland and within the hearts of their own people for the material of their writings. - *Hamilton Herald, July 18, 1935.*

GEORGE RUSSELL

George William Russell was a typical Hibernian, a man with a mind perfectly attuned to the poetic, the mystical, the beautiful; but a man, too, with an eminently practical side to his nature. Such rare beings make an invaluable contribution to the spiritual and material progress of the race, for while their minds are in the clouds, their feet are planted firmly upon the solid earth. They make a universal appeal in their writings. "Man does not live by bread alone;" though the thoughts of society seem to be almost exclusively preoccupied with the needs of the body, the dreamer and the seer is sure of an audience if he has an authentic message to deliver. And AE had an authentic message. His was the voice of the inspired monitor, warning a world which was wantonly over-emphasizing the pursuit of luxury, and sinking into the idolatry of mammonism.

His love of the countryside, his real sympathy with the husbandman, laboring at his ordained task, the cultivation of the soil, earning his living "by the sweat of his face" - his determination that greater justice should be done to the peasant and that they should not be sacrificed to the insatiable demands

of the cities - in these earnest efforts the Poet became the reformer, which true poets always are. For poetry is not merely a sweet acquiescence in things as they are, but a Prophetic determination to make them better.

“The decay of civilization comes from the neglect of agriculture,” he said; “there is need to create, consciously, a rural civilization.” His was not the ordinary “back-to-the-land” mentality, which condemned civilization and all its works; but he would bring the benefits of urban life to the country; his land workers would be instructed, cultured, people in a completely congenial environment, with no urge to forsake the farm for the city. It is an ideal which is not impossible of fulfilment.

The results of planning and legislating for the development of cities, instead of for the welfare of the farms, are only too painfully manifest in these our modern times. Unless something effective is done to promote the ideals voiced by this great Irish poet, to whom like the poets of classical times, agriculture was of such vital import, it is to be feared that the “decay of civilization,” which he so greatly deplored, will be progressive. - A. J. H., in *Hamilton Spectator*, July 19, 1935

IN MEMORIAM

The following lines appeared in The Toronto Daily Star of July 19 from the pen of Mr. Reade, one of our most distinguished Canadian Rhodes. Scholars: -

Earth's wisdom is diminished,
 Candle's vision is extinguished,
 But oh, I count it gain
 That I once saw AE plain,
 Saw his genial smile, and heard
 The deep music of his word!
 Tumbling, like waters mountain reared,
 From the forest of his beard.
 Lover of beauty, wisdom, truth,
 Sage who was always guide to youth,
 Sweetest of Celtic singers, you
 Lived years that were alas too few,
 But henceforth, in Song's Heaven, your star
 Flames as your country's avatar.

- R. C. Reade.