

**FYODOR
DOSTOYEVSKY,
A STUDY**

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Fyodor Dostoyevsky, a Study by Aimée Dostoevsky

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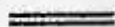
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AIMÉE DOSTOEVSKY

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Lyubov' Theodora Dostoyevsky
By (AIMÉE (DOSTOYEVSKY))

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PREFACE

RUSSIA was preparing to celebrate the centenary of the birth of Fyodor Dostoyevsky on October 30, 1921. Our writers and poets hoped to do honour in prose and verse to the great Russian novelist; the Slav peoples had arranged to send deputations to Petrograd, to pay their homage in Czech, Serbian and Bulgarian to the great Slavophil, who was ever faithful to the idea of our future Slav confederation. The Dostoyevsky family, in its turn, proposed to mark the occasion by publishing the documents preserved in the Historical Museum of Moscow. My mother was to have given the world her memories of her illustrious husband, and I was to have written a new biography of my father, and to have recorded my childish impressions of him.

It is unlikely that any such festival will take place. A terrible storm has passed over Russia, destroying the whole fabric of our European civilisation. The Revolution, long ago predicted by Dostoyevsky, burst upon us after a disastrous war. The gulf which for two centuries had been widening between our peasants and our intellectuals, became an abyss. Our intellectuals, intoxicated by European Utopias, were advancing towards the West, while our people, faithful to the tradition of their ancestors, had set their faces to the East. The Russian Nihilists and Anarchists desired to introduce European atheism into our country, whereas our deeply religious peasantry remained faithful to Christ.

The result of this conflict is now before us. The

intellectuals who hoped to reign in Russia in the place of the Tsar, and to govern it according to their fancy, were swept away by our exasperated people as stupid and maleficent beings. Some of them have found shelter in the palaces of our former Embassies, and pretend to govern Russia from the banks of the Thames or the Seine, trying not to notice the sly smiles of the European ambassadors; others gather round the innumerable Russian newspapers, of which some hundred copies a number are printed, and offered gratis to any one who can be induced to read them. Readers, however, become more and more rare. Europeans begin to understand that our intellectuals are dreamers, and that the socialistic and anarchistic *moujik* of whom they speak in their journals has never existed save in the naïve imaginations of "the grandfathers and grandmothers of the Russian Revolution."

Far from being an anarchist, the Russian *moujik* is on the way to construct a huge Oriental Empire. He is fraternising with the Mongolians, and establishing friendly relations with India, Persia and Turkey. He keeps Bolshevism like a scarecrow for sparrows, in order to keep off old Europe, and prevent her from meddling in Russian affairs, and hampering the construction of the national edifice. On the day when it is completed, the Russian *moujik* will destroy the scarecrow, which will have served its turn, and astonished Europe will see rising before her a new Russian Empire, mightier and more solid than the old. Our *moujiks* are good architects, and like wise men, which they have always been, they have no idea of inviting the intellectuals to be their architects. They have realised that these sick men could destroy the finest civilisation in the world, but that they are quite incapable of constructing anything in its place.

If Dostoyevsky's centenary cannot be celebrated in

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Russia, I should like to see it commemorated in Europe, for he has long been accepted as a universal writer, one of those beacons which illuminate the path of humanity. I have therefore decided to publish in Europe the biography of my father, which I once hoped to publish in Russia; this is the more expedient, since my entire fortune is in the hands of the Bolsheviks, and I must now work for my living. The new details of my father's life which will be found in my book may suggest to his admirers fresh critical studies of his works, and make them more popular among European and American readers. This will surely be the best way in which to celebrate the centenary of the famous writer.

AIMÉE DOSTOYEVSKY.

