

INVISIBLE EMPIRE.

THE SOULLESS MONEY OLIGARCHY THAT RULES THE WORLD.

Insidious Methods It Employs—Not a Country on the Globe Has Escaped It. Babes Mortgaged Before They Are Born. A Voice From Old Boston.

The following is taken from a powerful article written for the June Arena by John Clark Ridpath. The entire article is well worth perusal, but it is too lengthy for reproduction here:

For some time it has been my purpose when opportunity should offer to call the attention of the American people to the fact that they are no longer under the government of the American Republic. They have passed under another scepter. They are the subjects of another power—a power unseen, but felt in hall and hamlet, by every man and woman, by every parent and child, by every nabob and wage serf within the borders of the United States and throughout the world.

Aye, more. I would if I could transmit this message respecting the condition which has come to pass in our own country to every nation in the world and say with equal emphasis that in that country also to which the message is borne neither its government nor any of its visible forms of society are really the controlling forces by which the nation is directed, for that nation, whatever nation it may be, as well as our own, is only a province in the invisible empire.

Not a nation in the world is exempt from the dominion of the universal monarchy. The political autonomy of every one has been surrendered, openly or covertly, to the will of a ruler whom none have seen, but before whom every state and principality, every republic and kingdom and empire of the world bends a supple knee.

No nation on the face of the globe has any longer an independence that is more than nominal. If so, what is that nation? Is it Great Britain? Great Britain owes a war debt of more than \$5,000,000,000. By this she is bound for all time and eternity—unless she breaks the fetter. She can never pay the debt, and she knows it. She never expects to pay it. To pay the interest is as much as she expects to do through the long years of her future. Of this incalculable sum every inhabitant of the United Kingdom owes more than \$81. A family of father and mother and ten children sit down to their breakfast with an everlasting, unpayable debt over the table of nearly \$1,000. The father could not pay \$10 if he were stripped. Every child born under the home flag of the empire is confronted before its mother sees it with a due bill for \$81. Such is Great Britain, and such is her thralldom. From being the most independent sovereignty that ever existed in the world she has become the leading satrapy in the invisible empire. She now inquires humbly at proper intervals of the syndicate of European bankers what she may do and what she may not do. Patient little lamb she has become on the table of her shearers.

In France the exception? The French republic is only an appanage of the unseen power. Not three years had elapsed after the brilliant imperial shell in which Napoleon III had dwelt for 18 years was crushed in the crater of Sedan, until the new third republic, instituted by Thiers and Gambetta, was invaded by the powers of the invisible empire. Seeing the splendid recuperative energy of the French people and the ease with which they had met the exorbitant demands of Germany the silent emissaries of the invisible empire came in and insinuated themselves into the heart of the government. They entered the precincts of the treasury and got possession of the keys. They tampered with the ledger and with the resources of the nation. They got the nation in debt to themselves to the extent of \$6,218,871,328. Knowing that all the products of human labor are balanced against the money unit with which they are measured the silent burglars next attacked the money unit of the French nation and corrupted it, just as they did in the United States. From that day to the present they have dwelt in the vaults of the French bourse. Out of that subterranean abode they have stretched forth their spectral hands, touching the reins and directing the chariot of the republic until its administration, like that of our own, has become neither more nor less than a humble agency of the invisible empire.

Is it Germany? That great power also has fallen before the shadowy throne. On that throne sits a specter who is not the Kaiser Wilhelm, but the head money lord of Amsterdam. The German empire, notwithstanding the bloody victories by which it came into being, notwithstanding its glory through three successive reigns, notwithstanding its array of statesmen and generals and its avalanche of armies, is a weakling, a puling petitioner for the milk of life at the breast of that prodigious hag that suckles every national treasury in the world. The German empire dares not any more than any other nation dares to do any important national or international act—to colonize, to make discoveries, to organize expeditions, to plant states in Africa or Australasia, to declare war, to send ambassadors to a congress, to make peace or to survey a new canal—without first getting down prone, with its knees and elbows in the dust, and its huge war belted abdomen trailing the ground before the lank jawed, cadaverous, ossified sphylocks of the invisible empire.

Is it Russia? The autocrat Nicholas II is one of the mighty, but is he a real autocrat or only a figure and image of an autocrat? Is the autocracy in him or in his supply of gold? Does his supply of gold lie at his disposal, or is it under the control of one of those crafty clerks

who prepare in the night schemes of finance for the undoing of nations?

The war debt of Russia is 2,225,996,596 rubles. It will be greater before it is less. It has been growing ever greater since the Crimean war, and it will grow greater at the last when Russia and England shall once more measure swords in a struggle of life and death over the mighty spoils of the east. The autocrat owes all his accumulated gold and many times as much to the bondholders who are his creditors and who smile upon him with the sardonic smile of the Rialto. In private conferences they tell him and his finance minister what may and what may not be done. Autocrat of all the Russias? Autocrat of nothing—not even autocrat of himself!

Is it the oriental empire? Until recently it might be truly averred that China and Japan and the other great powers of eastern Asia were beyond the dominion of the invisible empire, but it is not so now. Each and all they have fallen or are falling before the conquering power that has laid its hand upon the world and by consuming its substance is reducing mankind to the plane of beggary and servitude. It is one of the marvels of human history that China with her 400,000,000 people—long secluded and defended by barriers which she herself imposed—has at last been broken in by the combined force of pagan assault and Christian intrigue and has been forced to admit the commercial spirit, with all the accompanying blessings of a national debt. The European bankers have sat in conclave and agreed that British capitalists may have without competition the whole batch of Chinese 5 per cents and carry them for 25 years in order to uphold the public credit.

Poor, old, yellow China no doubt imagines that the light is coming in, for now she has credit in Europe. She is at last in the swim. She already has a glimmering perception of what "the preservation of national honor" means, and it will not be long before her bankers' committee will instruct the Peking Gazette to disseminate gently among the people the belief that a national debt is a national blessing.

As to the minor powers that flourish here and there, in places visible and places obscure around the borders of the earth, every one of them has either succumbed to the power of the universal monarchy or else is awaiting its turn to fall, for the process is very easy, and I will try to describe it.

Whenever the invisible empire beholds a state that is still independent or that aspires to independence some intrigue of international character is devised whereby the aspiring state shall be involved with its neighbors in war. The moment that war begins the given state is obliged to provide the means of war, and to this end a system of ways and means must be immediately provided. Whoever under such circumstances has common sense and common patriotism must discover even at a glance the true method of providing a war revenue. In America there is hardly a farmer, a carpenter or a hunter who has not sense enough to make out with a little study a true scheme of ways and means. In the first place, a currency must be devised that shall meet the emergency and fulfill all the conditions of money. Of a certainty it will never come back until the day of piping peace shall return, until the stock exchange is again efflorescent and until the trust has fixed itself like Hugo's penne in the sea bed of the industrial life. So the nation in war has to say fiat lux—that is, fiat pecunia. A new money is created, and if it were not for the invisible empire the new money would remain forever as the medium of exchange in that country.

In the next place, the old patriot who is acting as our chairman of the committee of ways and means would lay his hands on the accumulated wealth of the state. He would make the nabobs dance. He would say to them: "Gentlemen, where did you get this money anyhow? Really you seem to be in a flourishing condition. If I remember rightly, the members of your family have not worked any for several generations. You have incomes that are measured by six or seven figures. I propose to tax them. I propose to give it to you hot. I propose to cut these excessive and intolerable revenues of yours to the quick. I shall have to call upon the poor men of this nation to do the fighting, and I call upon you to pay the bills. Your scheme is to make the poor men fight the battle and then to mortgage them and their families to yourselves to all posterity in order that you, without turning a hand, may multiply your millions into billions. You shall not do it. As long as this war lasts your bloated incomes shall bleed. While the soldiers bleed you shall bleed also."

Of course our patriot financier will be answered with a howl. The millionaires will tell him that property is sacred, that it is monstrous to tax an income. In America they will add that the supreme court has said so. But our patriot chairman of the ways and means committee will go on and tax the incomes just the same, 3 per cent, 4 per cent, 10 per cent, if it shall be necessary, and the nabobs shall dance. Then he will proceed with his taxation. He will tax all intoxicants until the dealers in them and the drinkers of them shall get cool in both their pocketbooks and their stomachs. Then he will fall aful of luxuries—things of which the human race has little need—and he will tax them for the good of the country. By these means he will fill his treasury full to overflowing, and then he will tell his fighters to fight. They will go into the battle with the knowledge that there is no scheme of robbery behind them. The enemy will be beaten, as he is always beaten, by the soldiers of truth and righteousness.

For freedom's battle once begun, Dequainted by bleeding sire to son, Though falseth off, is ever won. All this, remember, is done by one who is by hypothesis the chairman of the ways and means committee in some

state which has been precipitated into war. Actually, however, the business is not managed in this way. The state which has been driven by intrigue into war is at the same time driven into debt. The agents of the invisible empire buy up the debt when it is at its stage of greatest depreciation. Then, since the national honor is to be preserved, they begin to turn the crank and in the course of a few years bring the debt, which they now own, to par; then they carry it to a premium; then they get it refunded into long bonds; then they take possession of the government in order to preserve the public credit—that is, in order to prevent the bonds from being paid. This done, they take the clippings of the bonds semiannually to the treasury, and the everlasting robbery of the nation begins. This is the way the business is accomplished, and this is the way in which the more than \$20,000,000,000 of war debt resting upon the nations of the world has been produced.

Twenty thousand millions of debt! And every dollar of it is owned by the invisible empire. The interest at 4 per cent amounts to \$800,000,000 a year. And it is intended that this principal and this interest account shall run forever. While civilization continues, as long as mankind shall be organized into nations, so long will this intolerable incubus rest day and night on the labor of the world. Under the horrid nightmare every workingman in every country under the sun becomes and remains a slave. It is needless to say that such a debt will absorb the entire property of the world. It will drink the ocean dry. It will suck up at the rate of \$800,000,000 a year the whole wealth of mankind and then demand the resources of another planet to satisfy the vacuum in its infernal maw.

Until the close of the eighteenth century, until the beginning of the nineteenth, there was no invisible empire. Even then it was only a rudimentary power, of the presence of which nations were unconscious. Out of the age of revolution and the all-consuming Napoleonic wars the invisible empire took its rise. It began with the first national debt converted into bonds, and the first bondholder was the first emperor.

If we should be asked to name the most disastrous circumstance with which human history has ever been afflicted, we should without hesitancy name the bonded war debt of a nation. War is itself a great disaster. Pestilence is dreadful, and famine is a horror, but none of these, nor all of them together, are to be dreaded as much as that silent, ever eating cancer which fixes itself on the hearts of nations, devouring them alive. The beak of the raven of bonded debt is sharper and more ravenous than were the beaks of the Promethean vultures that tore and scattered every day the immortal liver of the chained and writhing Titan of the Caucasus. The invisible empire has a hundred such vultures, which it trains, as if they were so many homing pigeons, to fly abroad among the nations and to descend like harpies on the breasts of the strongest and fairest, tearing away and devouring the blood and tissue, until the vultures be gorged, but never satiated.

One of these vultures is now circling around Washington city, where he expects to alight and proceed to havoc as soon as the money power shall succeed in driving congress to the creation of Cuban war bonds. He will probably alight. If he should alight, he will find a haven in the committee room of the invisible empire.

That haven has sheltered all the ill-omened visitants that have come to our shores in the last quarter of a century. In the quietude and silence of that chamber of intrigue was devised the scheme of 1869 for the substitution of coin for legal tender paper in the payment of the five-twenty bonds. There was engendered the infamous act of 1873. There was invented the plan by which the Bland-Allison act of 1878 was to be ultimately brought to naught. There the scheme of 1890 was consummated by which free coinage was beaten with the hypocritical Sherman act. There in an evil day the senate committee on finance was driven to assent to the repeal of the Sherman law without conditions. There it was agreed that the income tax should be annulled by the supreme court. There the prodigious bond swindles of 1893-4, devised by Rothschild and the Morgan syndicate, were solemnly approved. There every important congressional act since 1873 has been reviewed, amended, mitigated, canceled or vetoed according to the whispered behests of the invisible empire, and there if anywhere the scheme will be matured for laying upon the producers of America for another lifetime another debt of \$500,000,000 or \$1,000,000,000 for the prosecution of the Cuban war, every dollar of which can be and should be provided for by revenue, by taxation and by a legal tender currency.

Men of my country! Men of the world! You can accept this situation if you want to accept it. If you have no more love of freedom, no more patriotism, no more sense than to accept it, why, then, accept it and be slaves forever. If nothing will arouse you, why, then, sleep, sleep. But remember that there is no sleep in the invisible empire. It is not to be expected that the outcry of a solitary voice in this old American town, where liberty was once the watchword of men, will arouse the municipal masses who have accepted industrial and financial servitude as the law of their lives and who wear their degradation as a badge on their brows. But it may be hoped that the free men of the great open country, where there are still green fields and running streams and pure air and an overarching sky, will not tamely submit to become dirt diggers and oxen and dogs in the stalls and kennels built for them by the nabobs and beggars of the invisible empire.

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