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REVEALS INNER WORKINGS OF PORTSMOUTH PEACE CONFERENCE

Count Witte's Documents Throw Interesting Light on Meet and Present New Phase of Roosevelt's Activities—Russian Statesman's Remarkable Opinions on Big Subjects and Person

By HERMAN BERNSTEIN, Editor of "The Day." WHEN I visited Count Witte in St. Petersburg in 1908 I discussed with him a large number of important questions. I was particularly eager to know the true story of the Portsmouth Peace Conference...

"I may say that I have done all in my power to save Russia after that most stupid and most terrible blunder of our bureaucracy that expressed itself in the Japanese war. I made peace upon terms that Russia was hardly justified in expecting in view of the defeats of our armies and our situation in the Far East."

"Of course the revolutionists hate me for this. They feel that if it were not for this, if the army could have been kept in Manchuria for a longer time, the discontent and restlessness throughout Russia would have assumed large proportions and a death blow could have been dealt the Russian Government. But I did what I believed to be the best for my country. Besides, the revolutionists were not well organized; they were split up into many small groups, each one with a different programme. Instead of a political revolution they were really planning a social revolution."

"Thus they antagonized many of the elements that were disposed with the Government, but were not ready to support such a radical change in Russia. The leaders of the various movements in Russia lost their heads in those days. They acted like children and stood in their own way and in the way of the movements they were eager to lead."

"Even in the Duma, where we have had some of the best men in Russia, instead of constructive statesmanship we have heard oratory and an endless number of resolutions. Prime Minister Stolypin is quite an orator himself and he likes the idea of delivering speeches in the Duma, realizing at the same time that the moment the Duma decided to do something of real importance it would be dissolved. It will be long before the Duma will be able to do anything of real importance."

"I recall an interesting characterization of one Russian Prime Minister by another. I asked Count Witte for his opinion of Premier Stolypin as a statesman. 'I may say that I discovered him,' was the reply. 'He was a Governor, and he has remained to this day a Governor; nothing more, even though he is Prime Minister. He is accustomed to small things; he cannot do original thinking, and is incapable of constructive work on a large scale.'"

"You see, he is a fine orator," added Count Witte with a smile. "He speaks French beautifully, he can talk German smoothly, he speaks English well, and he makes speeches in the Duma. I, for instance, am not an orator. I can speak French, though my French is not so brilliant; I can speak German but brokenly, and as to English, I can only read it a little; even in Russian I am not an orator. But I have a grandson—he is only 4 years old—and he can speak French and German and English and Russian beautifully."

"The Count laughed. He took up a copy of the Russian Znamya which lay on his writing table and showed me an article that was marked with blue pencil. It was a scurrilous attack on Count Witte, who is a Jew and a brilliant and cultured woman. The attack in the organ of the Black Hundreds was absolutely the most shocking and disgusting article I have ever read. In no country outside of Russia would the postal authorities permit the sending of such articles through the mails."

"I have written to Premier Stolypin calling his attention to this article," said Count Witte. "I told him that I paid no attention to any article, however vile and disgusting, upon myself, but when the honor of my wife is thus besmirched I cannot leave this attack unpunished. I asked him whether he could not find a way of punishing the publishers of the Znamya. Stolypin well so many of the best Russian journals are suppressed and confiscated, when writers and publishers are thrown into prison, Stolypin is telling me that he knows of no way of stopping such an outrage as that in this paper."

"It is time when thousands of soldiers are killed, what does it matter if a General is also wounded? Thousands of people are being hanged in Russia. Every newspaper contains daily a list of executions. Under these circumstances, is it surprising



Count Witte.

that a man like Lopukhin should be sentenced to exile in Siberia? It is not now a question of an individual who is wronged. It is a system that is absolutely wrong and that stops at nothing in its efforts to maintain itself. 'It is a system of spying and provocation. The revolutionists are not the only people in the empire who are watched and whose meetings are broken up by the police. It may perhaps seem strange to you, but it is true, that a meeting of prominent agrarian reformers was broken up by order of the police department in my own house.'"

"The agrarian question is perhaps the most acute problem before the Russian people. I have devoted much thought to the agrarian question. I believe that the happiness of the Russian people as a nation depends to a very great extent upon the solution of this question. I have worked out plans, have prepared materials concerning this problem, and I invited a number of distinguished gentlemen interested in the welfare of Russia and expert in the agrarian question to meet in my house and discuss ways and means of introducing a plan for reforms."

"Suddenly secret police agents broke into my house as if it were the meeting place of the most dangerous revolutionists, dispersed the people and removed from my study a number of documents and books dealing with the agrarian question."

"The Prime Minister of Russia paced up and down his spacious study as he spoke excitedly of this incident. 'I asked him about the Portsmouth Peace Treaty. I referred to an article by Prof. Maxim Kovalevsky about the Portsmouth conference, which had just been published. That article contained a reference to President Roosevelt's cablegrams to the Czar which had not yet been made public. Count Witte said: 'The time has not yet arrived for the publication of all the documents in connection with the Portsmouth Treaty. The future historian will find in these documents highly interesting material of which the world at large knows nothing as yet. I must say, however, that, aside from my success at Portsmouth, I feel happy that I have visited America.'"

"America has made a profound impression upon me and has in many respects changed my views with regard to our form of Government. I have what I call an American wall in my house. It is covered with pictures and photographs of people and scenes I have met in America and always recall these with the keenest pleasure. I have seen in America how the immigrants, our own Russian Jews, have achieved success in every walk of life, and I believe that the achievements of the Russian Jews in America should serve as the best answer to those of our statesmen who are continually contriving new ways of persecuting them. 'The Jews are part of the Russian population, and as we have to live together we must equalize them with the rest of the population. We must

also equalize the peasant with the rest of the population, for in my opinion the condition of the Russian peasant is almost as hopeless and as tragic as that of the Jews. Those who are in power in Russia today should realize this, but meanwhile I see no sign that would indicate that they are even beginning to do so.'"

"The Premier took a portfolio from his desk and handed me a number of documents which were fastened together and which were marked 'Portsmouth.' 'I have an important engagement which will occupy about half an hour,' he said. 'If you wish to examine these documents in my library you may, I cannot give any of these documents for publication at this time, but if you desire to take any notes concerning these documents during this half hour you may do so.'"

"I was so intensely interested in the documents dealing with the Portsmouth Peace Treaty that I wasted no time in looking over the library of the Russian Premier on that occasion. Among the documents I noticed the cablegrams sent by President Roosevelt to the Czar. These cablegrams, in my opinion, threw a most interesting light on the inner workings of the conference and presented a new phase of President Roosevelt's activities as a peacemaker. I therefore made copies of these cablegrams."

"When Count Witte returned I told him that I wished to publish the cablegrams of Roosevelt to the Czar. He said: 'These cablegrams are particularly interesting because President Roosevelt sent them direct to the Czar, fearing apparently that if he asked me to transmit them I would not have transmitted them without my own comment. So he sent these two cables through the American Ambassador in St. Petersburg. But Mr. Roosevelt must have been surprised when the Czar answered him briefly that his plenipotentiary at Portsmouth had full authority and enjoyed his full confidence, and concluded by advising Mr. Roosevelt to take the questions up with him.'"

"The Roosevelt cablegrams are reproduced herewith: 'President Roosevelt's First Cablegram to Ambassador Meyer, August 9, 1905. 'Please see his Majesty personally immediately and deliver the following message from me: 'I earnestly ask your Majesty to believe that in what I am about to say and to advise I speak as the earnest friend of Russia, and give you the advice I should give if I were a Russian patriot and statesman. The Japanese have, as I understand it, abandoned their demands for the return of the islands and the limitation of the Russian naval power in the Pacific, which conditions I felt were improper for Russia to yield to. Moreover, I find out to my surprise and pleasure that the Japanese are willing to restore the north half of Saghalien to Russia, Russia of course in such case

to pay a substantial sum for this surrender of territory by the Japanese and for the return of Russian prisoners. 'It seems to me that if peace can be obtained substantially on these terms it will be both just and honorable, and that it would be a dreadful calamity to have the war continued upon peace can thus be obtained. The plenipotentiaries have been discussing, on eight days, the possibility of a substantial agreement. Two, which were offensive to Russia, the Japanese will, as I understand it, withdraw. The remaining two can be met by agreement in principle that the Japanese shall restore or retrocede to Russia the north half of Saghalien, while Russia, of course, pays an adequate sum for this retrocession and for Russian prisoners. If this agreement can be made the question as to the exact amount can be a subject of negotiation.'"

"Let me repeat how earnestly I feel that it is for Russia's interests to conclude peace on substantially these terms. No one can foretell the continuance of the war, and I have no doubt that it is to Japan's advantage to conclude peace. But in my judgment it is infinitely more to the advantage of Russia. If peace is not made now and war is continued it may well be that, though the financial strain upon Japan would be severe, yet in the end Russia would be shorn of those East Siberian provinces which have been won for her by the heroism of her sons during the last three centuries. The proposed peace leaves the present boundaries absolutely intact. The only change in territory will be that Japan will recover that part of Saghalien which was hers up to thirty years ago. As Saghalien is an island, it is, humanly speaking, impossible that the Russians should reconquer it, in view of the disaster to their navy, and to keep the north half of it as a guarantee for the security of Vladivostok and Eastern Siberia for Russia.'"

"It seems to me that every consideration of national self-interest, of military expediency and of broad humanity makes it eminently wise and just for Russia to conclude peace substantially along these lines, and it is my hope and prayer that your Majesty may take this into consideration.'"

"The second cable was forwarded after the arrival of your first. Japan has now on deposit in the United States about \$30,000,000 of the last war loan. Please tell his Majesty that I decline his Majesty's advice on him again, but for fear of misapprehension I venture again to have these statements made to him. 'Of course would not have him act against his conscience, but I earnestly hope his conscience will guide him so as to prevent the continuance of the war when this continuance may involve Russia in a greater calamity than has ever befallen it since it first

rose to power in both Europe and Asia. 'I see it publicly announced to-day by the Minister for Foreign Affairs that Russia will neither pay money nor surrender territory to your Majesty to consider that such an announcement means absolutely nothing when Saghalien is already in the hands of the Japanese. If on such theory the war is persevered in no one can foretell the result, but the moral representative of the Powers most friendly to Russia assure me that the continuance of the war will probably mean the loss not merely of Saghalien but of Eastern Siberia, and if after a year of struggle this proves true, then any peace which came could only come on terms which would indicate a real calamity. 'Most certainly I think it will be a bad thing for Japan to go on with the war, but I think it will be a far worse thing for Russia. There is now a fair chance of getting peace on terms which it seems to me that it will be a dreadful thing for Russia and the civilized world if the chance is thrown away. My advice are that the plenipotentiaries at Portsmouth have come to a substantial agreement on every point except the amount of money and the question of Saghalien. 'Let it now be announced that as regards these two points peace shall be made on the basis of the retrocession of the north half of Saghalien to Russia on payment of a sum of redemption money by Japan, the amount of this redemption money and the amount to be paid for the Russian prisoners to be settled by further negotiations. This does not commit the Russian Government as to what sum shall be paid, leaving it open to further negotiation. 'It is impossible for Russia and Japan to come to an agreement on this sum they might possibly call in the advice of, say, some high French or German official appointed by or with the consent of Russia and some English official appointed by or with the consent of Japan, and have these latter then report to the negotiators. This, it seems to me, would be an entirely honorable way of settling the difficulty. I cannot, of course, guarantee that Japan will agree to this proposal, but I feel that the chance now may present itself to get the Japanese Government to do likewise. 'I earnestly hope that this cable of mine can receive his Majesty's attention before the envoys meet tomorrow, and I cannot too strongly say that I feel that the chance now may present itself to get the Japanese Government to do likewise. Let me repeat that in this proposal I suggest that neither Russia nor Japan do anything but face accomplished facts, and that I do not specify or attempt to specify the amount to be paid for the redemption money for the north half of Saghalien to be settled by further negotiation. I fear that if these terms are rejected it may not be possible that Japan will give up the idea of making peace or of ever getting money, and she will decide to stay in Russia from day to day, and the whole Siberian Manchurian Railway, and this, of course, would mean that she would take Eastern Siberia. 'Such a loss to Russia would, in my judgment, be a disaster of portentous size, and I earnestly desire to save Russia from such a risk. If peace is made on the terms I have mentioned Russia is left at the end of this war substantially unharmed, the national honor and interest saved, and the result of what Russians have done in Asia from the days of Ivan the Terrible unimpaired. 'But if peace is now rejected and if Japan decides that it is better she will give up the idea of obtaining any redemption money or any other sum, no matter how small, the military situation is such that there is at least a good chance, and on estimate of the standpoint of the whole world and from the standpoint of both countries, yet that far above all, it is chiefly to Russia's interest and perhaps to her vital interest that it should come in this way and at this time. 'Theodore Roosevelt.'"

"I visited Count Witte again in St. Petersburg. In the course of one of my conversations with him he expressed his ideas about the arbitration treaties suggested then by President Taft, and spoke without restraint about universal peace and disarmament. His illuminative views on this subject are perhaps now of greater significance than even at that time. 'The proposed arbitration treaty is in principle not a new idea,' he said. 'The ideal of peace is as old as Christianity, if not older. It is older than nineteen centuries, and yet that little progress has been made. The real essence of Christianity is based on peace, on the prohibition of murder. I am with all my heart in favor of arbitration as an ideal, but it is difficult to believe that it can now be applied in our life, that it is not merely a vague theory, but a real dream. 'As I study, however, the cost and the tremendous burden of armed peace, for which all nations are striving even more now than arbitration and peace are talked about, as I scrutinize the meaning of armed peace, of standing armies and navies, I am wondering whether armed peace is not much worse than war. This may sound strange, but it is true if we look into the matter more deeply than the people who talk of peace are usually in the habit of doing. 'Let us examine the budget of the different nations. I believe that from 40 per cent. to 50 per cent. of all expenditures of governments are absorbed by the standing armies and navies, by armed peace. I often ask myself whether armed peace is not really worse than war, with all its

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FREDERICK LOESER & CO. BROOKLYN ADVERTISEMENTS. FREDERICK LOESER & CO. Fulton Street Bond Street Livingston St. Elm Place BROOKLYN - NEW YORK

\$2.50 to \$3 "Fleur de Jeunesse," \$1.28 Greatest Silk Value in a Great Silk Season A WONDERFUL SILK, a rich, beautiful fabric, radiant in luster and wonderfully serviceable in wear. This is a superb, durable chiffon Taffeta, all pure silk, 40 inches wide, only equalled in quality, appearance and luster by the famous "Pussy Willow" Taffeta, now fashion's favorite everywhere, and justly. "Fleur de Jeunesse"—flower of youth—indeed, in the charm of their weave and the beauty of their patterning. These silks have coin spots, pollen dots on plain grounds, such as sand, putty, navy, white, black, etc., and a few plain grounds, with pretty borders of the latest creation. Why do we sacrifice these rich, up-to-date silks at half price and less? Because slight errors occurred in the printing, errors so slight that often they can only be detected by an expert. Nothing to worry the printer had to pay for the slight mistakes, and our patrons will have the full benefit. I pure silk—Fleur de Jeunesse, 40 inches wide, and only \$1.28 a yard, instead of the usual \$2.50 to \$3, the present price elsewhere. None C. O. D. No mail orders. None credited or exchanged. Silk Store, Main Floor, Bond Street

Special Purchase of 1,000 Untrimmed Hats Unmatched Values at 69c., 75c. and 98c AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE HOME MILLINER that we believe has never been equaled in the week when the Easter Hat is most important. These Hats are made of fine hennips and fancy braids, in all the fashionable colors and black. Included are all the smart and desirable shapes, small, large and medium. Sometimes only a few of a shape, but desirable always. Many of the Hats will need very little trimming. Any of them may be easily decorated by the woman who has the knack of placing trimming at a becoming angle. The prices, 69c., 75c. and 98c., represent values much greater. Second Floor, Elm Place

Half Silk Crepe de Chine, 19c A Wonderful New Spring Fabric THIS SEASON is the first that these plain color, lustrous silky Crepes de Chine (half-silk) have been obtainable at the low price of 19c. a yard. Tomorrow we have another special offering of 4,800 yards, in a complete assortment of shades for dresses, negligees, lingerie, blouses, etc. The fabric is woven of very fine cotton and silk of inches wide. Included are such colors as flesh, low-pink, maize, rite, rose, sky, Copenhagen, Linoges, Belgique, old rose, sand, putty, heliotrope, cream, black, etc. On special tables at 19c. a yard. Second Floor, Elm Place

3700 Yds. of Beautiful Princess Laces For 29c. to \$1.49, Worth 69c. to \$8 and More IN THE VERY MIDST OF EASTER buying it will certainly bring a big response to-morrow. The Laces are all perfect, and they are some of the most beautiful Princess Laces that we have ever seen. It was the importer's anxiety to clean up his stocks which prompted such a price sacrifice. Among the assortment are: Edgings, Demi-Flouncings, and Wide Skirt Flouncings, and Insertions Double Edged Insertions. These are the patterns—and near half price. Laces such as will make the prettiest of collars, cuffs, waist-fronts, trimmings in general, as well as the most elaborate edgings. Widths range from 4 to 40 inches wide, and the Laces are now purchasable at a fraction of their intended selling prices. at 29c. to \$1.49 a yard. Main Floor, Non-Sm. C. O. D.

Summer Curtains, 85c. a Pair THERE ARE SEVERAL HUNDRED PAIRS of these pretty Curtains at 85c. a pair—all remarkable values. Dutch scrim Curtains in three-piece valance style, some with edge and others with insertions. Also dotted and figured hemstitched muslin Curtains and Curtains of white or cream Scotch madras. Scrim Curtains at \$1.25 a Pair Plain or With Valance Nottingham Lace Curtains. Several dainty styles, made with lace insertions or edge. Also some Dutch styles with valance, edge and hemstitch finish in blue, white and some with wide insertions. Imported and American Cretonnes, 9c. and 19c. a Yard Floral and conventional styles and many beautiful colorings. Beautiful English Cretonnes, Special at 25c. and 29c. Probably the handsomest cretonnes that were ever available for such small prices. These were secured under unusual conditions and make an opportunity for summer furnishings—for draperies, slip covers, chair cushions, etc.—that has rarely, if ever, been equaled. Third Floor, Fulton Street.

Tremendous Sale of Easter Suits, Skirts, Coats For Women & Misses : NEW Fashions : Great Values Extraordinary Values in New Tailored Suits Spring Suits, Special, \$9.50. A BOLT MORE OF THOSE FINE SUITS that have created such interest. They are made of shepherd check men's suitings, of fine serges and poplins, mostly in navy, a few black and other colors. They all have the flare skirts, the fashionable short jackets, and are variously trimmed with berrons, braid, etc. Sizes for women and misses. Values to \$15. Wonderful Suits, \$15 They are made of gabardine, poplin, men's wear serges, checks and other fashionable spring weight materials, extra quality, well tailored, trimmed with berrons, braid, over-collars of silk, some with belts, some with semi-circular or plaited skirts. All sizes for women and misses. Loeser-Paris Suits, Special, \$25 They include fancy and shepherd checks, wool failles, poplins, crepe poplins, obnoxious cloths, finest French serges, gabardines, coverts, tweeds, smart dress styles of the demi-tailored order, as well as the mannish tailored and club models. An unusual range of colors, every good shade of blue, green, brown, sand, putty, etc., as well as black. Sizes for women and misses. Paris-Loeser Suits, \$35 Suits that are most remarkable at their small price. Excellent copies of high class models that have their origin in the workrooms of the great Paris couturiers.

Special Sale of Dress and Walking Skirts Samples, makers' clearances, and some discontinued but smart styles from our own stocks. Probably thirty different styles. Cloth Skirts, \$3.95 Values to \$10.75 Silk Skirts, \$4.95 Values to \$9.75 Silk Skirts, \$5.95 Values to \$20. These are cloth Walking Skirts, checks, poplins, Bedford cord, crests, whorls, etc. A series, in wide, extra wide, and narrow widths, made of good quality materials, and present many exclusive styles, while the variety affords opportunity for practical exclusiveness in any style chosen. This is the third purchase, probably the last, of these fashionable skirts, and includes 140 Skirts. Second Floor, Fulton Street.

New Patterns—Loeser Tailored Men's Spring Suits Special, \$17.50 PATTERNS which INCLUDE brown and blue mixtures of 1915 vintage, the very well-liked overplaids in gray shades, an excellent assortment of hairline stripes and some checked velours and cassimeres. Tailoring which maintains the high standard set in former years for Loeser Suits at \$17.50. That these Equal Most Suits Priced at \$20 and \$25 is a very conservative statement. The fabrics are fully up to such a standard and the tailoring (specified by us) is certainly much better than most. Models for men of ripened years and also extreme styles for the young fellows. Main Floor, Elm Place.