

Lizi

Wishing Russell to Survive (1921)¹

Russell got critically ill! If the worst will happen, not only China will lose a fine teacher, but it will be a great loss for all humanity!

Russell's independent spirit is most admirable. No matter what happens, he is never willing to surrender even a tiny bit of his spiritual freedom. In the time of the European war, he boldly defied the opinion of the entire country and advocated "pacifism". In so doing, he sacrificed his teaching position at the university and was sentenced to 60 days in prison, yet still remained dauntless and unyielding. Two years later he was imprisoned again. Not all scholars must have a conscience, but one Russell is enough to wipe away all their disgrace.

What we most feel sorry for about Russell is that: (1) In his first visit to China he was misunderstood by people and that his teachings were misinterpreted. First, he had to endure being the object of ridicule of some "preservation of national essence" (*baocun guicui* 保存國粹), and later his words about developing industrial and commercial enterprise (*shiye* 實業) were borrowed by some people, who took them out of context and used them to oppose socialism. (2) Before Russell fell ill, the authorities

1 Lizi 力子 (1921). "Zhu Luosu buyao si 祝羅素不要死 (Wishing Russell to Survive)." *Minguo ribao* 民國日報, March 29, 2.

in Beijing suddenly contrived the preposterous notion to drive him out of the country.

But all this did no harm to Russell, who took absolutely no offence from these things. Initially, some people believed that Russell was affected by those who encircled him from all sides, and that he consequently gave in and greatly adapted his manner of speaking. But recently I have been reading the third of his lectures on “Science of Social Structure” (*Shehui jiegou xue* 社會結構學), and became aware of his unyielding spirit, which would never, not even to the slightest degree, allow him to reduce his independence. Now I shall give a few excerpts from his lecture:

Everyone should take a note that, today, all Western governments work in the same way; although nominally they are public institutions, in reality this is only a deception, for these governments are all under the exclusive control of a small number of capitalists.

We cannot rely only on law, because the legislation is always in service to the capitalists. I sincerely wish that social progress will eventually [always] be attained by peaceful means, but considering the current situation in the world of commerce, I am afraid that there is not much hope for peace. Although the capitalists constantly claim that they endorse peace by opposing the revolution, their actions make it absolutely clear to all workers that you shall never have progress without an immediate revolution.

This unavoidable conclusion is class warfare (struggle). I am not at all in favour of inciting such a war, but this kind of conflict is a necessary result of industrialism (*shiyeye zhuyi* 實業主義). It is so according to scientific inference. This is the same as to say that it is certain that a person who is going to jump from mid-air will hit the ground and that in so doing he will injure himself to death, while at the same time I do not at all approve of him injuring himself to death.

In brief, the industrial system will be stable only by implementing communism (*gongchan* 共產). There is no other way.

Everyone who reads these words will realize that it is obviously impossible to deceive people by countering socialism using Russell’s words about reviving [Chinese] industry. And that the authorities in Beijing want to expel him is even more so a matter which should be discussed. On the other hand, the only thing we must do is more closely observe Russell’s unyielding and independent spirit.

Even if Russell would unexpectedly die, his spirit will survive. Then, and only by making his spirit our own, we will not fail to justify the desire to pay reverence to him and cherish his views.

(Translated by Jan Vrhovski)