

THE HOGARTH ESSAYS

FEAR AND POLITICS

LEONARD WOOLF



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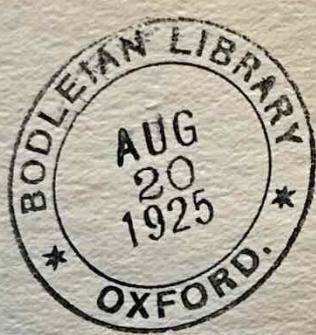
A Debate at the Zoo

LEONARD WOOLF



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A DEBATE AT THE ZOO

IT is a well established fact that to confine living creatures, to put them under lock and key or behind iron bars, is one of the most effective methods of taming and civilizing them. It has been, and is, the universal practice in civilized countries to imprison the criminal, who will not act, and the lunatic, who will not think, like his neighbours. Thus is the criminal tamed, the hooligan civilized, and the lunatic either learns to think like those outside the asylum—in which case he is discharged with a certificate of sanity—or he continues, until removed by the great tamer, death, to think like his immediate neighbours, his fellow lunatics.

Civilization consists in acting and thinking like the ordinary man—the ordinary man being, in this connection, obviously an ordinary man or woman of the upper middle classes. The more people there are who act and think like the ordinary man or woman who is born in Onslow Square or Cadogan Gardens, the more civilization ; and if people persist in behaving as if they had been born in the jungle, in utopia, or in the Kingdom of Heaven, they must be shut up under sentence by a judge or magistrate or under a certificate signed by a doctor and a Justice of the Peace. Our judges, magistrates, prison authorities, and Lunacy Commissioners can give innumerable instances in which a few weeks or months confinement have so changed some fellow who had been behaving like a savage that you could not have known that he had not lived all his life in South Kensington.

The object of putting wild animals in cages and of exhibiting them behind iron bars in Zoological Gardens is not primarily to tame and civilize them. The main laudable object of the Zoological Society is to provide a place where

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civilized children (half price) and civilized adults (one shilling) may spend an afternoon of pleasure combined with instruction and deposit the paper bags in wire receptacles specially constructed for the purpose. But the civilizing power of solitary confinement and imprisonment cannot be confined to the vertebrate bipeds called human beings, and the Zoo has a profound effect upon its permanent inhabitants. Those who have seen the leopard glide swiftly and savagely through the jungle, or an elephant go crashing brutally through the undergrowth, will hardly recognise as the same creatures that great, immobile, meditative cat in the Lion House and that great swaying mass stretching out its trunk through the wooden bars of the Elephant House for a penny bun. Indeed, the observant visitor to the Lion House may notice that it and its inhabitants have acquired something of that sombre melancholy and dingy respectability which is so overpowering in Cromwell Road and Onslow Square, and, without being too fanciful, he may even detect in the eye of the lion staring into space a gleam of the same look which one sometimes sees through a South Kensington window in the eye of an old gentleman pretending to read the Sunday paper behind a white lace curtain.

So civilized have the animals become that, after the Gardens have closed for the night, many of them contrive to meet together in a kind of debating society, the object of which is mutual instruction and improvement. Only those are admitted to membership whose spirits are completely tamed by confinement and civilization: experience has shown the necessity of excluding, for instance, those animals, natives of Asia and Africa, who are not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world and whose personal habits are offensive, and also the lower classes of even European animals whose smell is naturally unpleasant. It has been regretfully decided also to exclude all the larger carnivora, although, as the aristocratic antelope admitted, they are nearly all "gentlemen and white men"; but the sombre, meditative melancholy which affects these animals in captivity is liable occasionally to turn into homicidal irasci-

bility, just as in South Kensington occasionally the old gentlemen "go mad and kill their wives."

The discussions among the animals admitted to membership almost always come back to one subject, Man. The existence, nature, and mysterious ways of Man have always been, and still are, a source of difficulty and dispute among the animals. At first it was universally believed that men were a kind of spirit, or as we might almost say, gods, who were responsible for all the inexplicable events which happened so regularly in the Zoo. Obviously the keepers were the givers and withholders of food and drink, meted out rewards and punishments, and, by opening and shutting the doors, were the creators of day and night. Then one of the zebras suddenly began to believe that the many men were only an illusion, and that really there was only one omnipotent Man, sitting in a large building invisible in the Zoo and appearing to the animals in the form of keepers and visitors. This belief spread like wildfire, and eventually one of the warthogs announced that he had actually discovered the name of this Man, and that he was called Mitchell; that Mitchell was, however, too sacred a name ever to be uttered, and that in conversation or prayer he had to be addressed as "Secretary to the Zoological Society." For a long time after this all the animals believed that there was only one Man, who had created the universe and the Zoo and whose name was "Secretary to the Zoological Society."

The snakes are, however, temperamentally agnostic, and one of the Russell's Vipers (*Daboia elegans*) known familiarly as Bertie, some time ago put forward the theory that there was no one omnipotent Man, but only men, and he supported his opinion in such a brilliant speech and with such coldly conclusive logic that he convinced all the more advanced animals who were members of the debating society. This trend of thought was carried a step further by the orang-outang, a cynical and savage pessimist, who, after hanging upside down on the bars of his cage for the better part of an afternoon and staring fixedly and ferociously at the female visitors, at the next meeting stated his opinion that men and

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women were animals just like themselves, and that, after careful study, he could see little difference, except in hair and clothes, between a female orang-outang and the women who came into the Apes House, and personally he preferred the female to be both hairy and naked.

The orang-outang's theory was the cause of violent controversy, the discussion turning almost exclusively upon the resemblance of women to the females of the various species. The monkeys, deer, bears, and pigs were on the side of the orang-outang, but the male tortoise and male elephant remained for a long time unconvinced, passionately protesting that they could not conceive how a woman, hairy or not hairy, could perform the functions of a female tortoise or a female elephant. The orang-outang sardonically asked the elephant whether he could conceive of a female tortoise performing the functions of a female elephant, and would he therefore deny that tortoises were full members, however curiously formed (he intended no offence), of the great animal community and Zoo Society? The elephant made a dignified and angry reply in which he did not meet the orang-outang's point. Such nervous exaltation and irritability manifested itself among the members that all the females were asked to withdraw, but even this did not produce calm or relaxation of feeling, and the discussion was adjourned *sine die*.

At the next meeting it was unanimously agreed that the subject of sex should in future be absolutely barred from discussion. There followed many debates upon the orang-outang's theory. It rapidly gained ground, and one result of the new doctrine was an intensive study of the history, habits, and customs of human beings. The Secretary Bird and the Long Eared Owl were the first animals who taught themselves to read. Visitors to the Zoo are often careless or absent-minded, and any book or newspaper dropped in one of the houses was eagerly seized upon and added to the public library. The monkeys often succeeded in purloining volumes from the pockets of visitors. Communication was opened with the sparrows who frequent the gardens in great

numbers and yet have free access to the outside world, and an agreement was easily reached by which a news service was organized under the direction of the Secretary Bird, the sparrows collecting current information in Fleet Street, in the West End among the clubs, and in Whitehall, and bringing it to the Zoo in return for a fixed share of the animals' food. A precis of the day's news was made under the direction of the Secretary Bird and read out at the beginning of each meeting.

All the animals were greatly interested in the war; it affected their food supply and so brought home to them its immense importance as a struggle between right and wrong, between the ideals of militarist tyranny and democratic freedom. They studied and discussed its deeper causes and effects, and in the process acquired a considerable amount of historical knowledge. Later Bolshevism took the place of the war as a subject of debate, and the General Election of 1924 caused the keenest discussions. I propose to give here a somewhat curtailed account of the debate which was held immediately after the final results of that election became known.

The Rhinoceros, a slow and deliberate speaker, who is almost invariably supported by the Hippopotamus, opened the discussion :—

"I rejoice," he said, "that this Baldwin and his species have won so overwhelming a victory, and I am sure that things will rapidly go back—the only direction in which rapid progress is either safe or desirable—to the state of things which existed before the war and even earlier. Protection, as I have frequently explained, would be meaningless unless it meant, when combined with a tariff and taxes upon imported food, the protection of food, i.e., a cheaper and more abundant food supply. The logical result of the Conservative victory will be a high tariff all round, and I am sure that you will find in the next year that all tariffs in these Gardens, whether of the restaurants or of our Houses, will share in the increase."

There was a murmur of dissent from the orang-outang and

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several monkeys, whereupon the Hippopotamus opened his eyes and said in a loud voice, "Hear, hear!"

"But," continued the Rhinoceros, who, being extremely short-sighted and even more hard of hearing, was rarely conscious of interruptions or indeed of what was going on about him, "but I do not wish to discuss the subject of protection, about which we are all agreed. What I wish to talk about is these Russians or Bolsheviks. The appearance of this new species of animal in the world, like the appearance of everything new, is terrifying and spells disaster, and all I can say is that I thoroughly agree with the King, the Baldwins, the Northumberlands, the Banburys, the Poincarés, the ever-to-be-lamented Tsars, and all the other Conservative species of human animal which refuse to have anything to do with, or to recognize the existence of, these appalling creatures"

"I do not wish to appear to boast," said the Ostrich in a genteel voice, "but, if you will allow me to say so, does not that show the hereditary wisdom of my race which has taught us that the surest way of conquering fear and destroying evil is to shut our eyes to it?"

The Hippopotamus, who woke up as soon as the Ostrich began to speak, roared her interruption several times into the Rhinoceros's ear and eventually succeeded in making him understand it.

"There is undoubtedly something in what you say," he allowed. "To every species of God's creatures"—there was a loud laugh from the monkeys—"its own peculiar, proper, and hereditary wisdom. It is well-known that my own race is one of the oldest, and has always enjoyed the distinction of being short-sighted and rather deaf. We have learnt by age-long experience—I had an ancestor in the Pliocene Age who was an intimate friend of one of the greatest of the Pteropods—that on the appearance of anything new and terrible, one should stand still for a moment, look fixedly in the direction in which the evil appears to be—or if you are not sure in which direction, then more fixedly in any direction—and finally run away with a blind and magnificent rush. In this

manner you may, quite possibly run over and destroy the evil, while, if it does not happen to get in your way, you will at least get out of its way. Simply to shut one's eyes, or, as I understand it, to bury one's head in sand, is no doubt another method of attaining the same end. It is a very ancient method, and therefore has much to recommend it, but it happens not to have been adopted by the race of rhinoceros. However, I have nothing whatever to say against it.

" But let me return to the Bolsheviks. It is clear, I think, from our study of human beings that their species is suffering from a kind of malignant disease of mutability, which for the last century and more the monarchical, aristocratic, and conservative sub-species have unsuccessfully attempted to hold in check. It all began, I understand from our friend the Long-Eared Owl, in 1789. A new and terrible human species, the French revolutionaries, terrorists, or democrats, then suddenly sprang into existence. Human beings do not appear to possess that instinctive and hereditary wisdom that enables other animals to deal effectively, in one way or another, with things new and terrifying. The blind, magnificent rush is not theirs, nor have any of us observed any man or woman effectively bury its head in the sand. When they are afraid, instead of *doing* something, they all start talking at once, and they quarrel and fight among themselves as to the best way of destroying the new phenomenon. That is precisely what happened, I understand, at the time of the French Revolution : instead of destroying the new species, or running away from it, or at least ignoring it, they tried to do all these things at the same time, and, in addition, to talk and argue and philosophize over the nature of the new phenomenon.

" The consequence was that this abominable revolution and democracy were never extirpated ; the revolutionaries and democrats have continued to propagate their species and to infect every nation of the world. But the root of the evil is this accursed habit of change among human beings. It is about 50 years ago that another new and malignant species

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of human animal, the German, sprang into existence. Everyone, particularly the people of this country and the French, were immediately, and rightly, terrified of him. But the incredible behaviour of man is shown by the fact that, instead of trampling the Germans out of existence at once, they went on arguing for 44 years about the "German menace," living for the better part of half a century in terror of their lives, spending immense sums of money on guns for shooting Germans, disputing whether one ought to shoot Germans or whether they had enough guns for shooting Germans, but never in all those long years shooting a single German. In fact, when the Chinese species, who do seem to have some hereditary wisdom, being terrified by the sudden appearance of two Germans talking about Jesus Christ at the other side of Asia, had the sense promptly to cut their throats, the rest of the world began shooting the Chinese until they compelled the survivors to give the Germans one of the richest provinces of China, pay them a large sum of money, and set up the statue of a German General in one of their chief towns.

"Well, they lived in terror of these accursed Germans for 44 years, doing nothing at all, beyond shooting a few Chinamen and niggers in order to keep their courage up. And they would have continued to do nothing unless a Serbian had shot an Austrian prince—which caused all the guns to go off everywhere. In the panic which followed they began at last to shoot Germans, and, in the process, they seemed to learn some of the hereditary wisdom of my own race, making magnificent blind rushes up and down the face of the earth for the better part of four years. But the mutability and changeability of the human animal are most distressing. After shooting Germans happily and contentedly for four years, they suddenly seem to have grown tired of it and, instead of completing the job satisfactorily when they had the chance, they allowed a large number of Germans to survive in Germany, and even to come to this country. The result is that people, particularly in France, are becoming as frightened of the Germans whom they have not killed as they were pre-

viously frightened of the Germans whom they have killed.

" To crown all, even before they had stopped killing Germans, there sprang into existence, in Russia this time, another new species of human animal, the most terrible and horrible that the world has ever known. The fundamental evil in the world is change. I cannot understand this senseless habit of change among man, of continually breeding new species or sub-species. Why, the Rhinoceros race has come and gone upon the face of the earth for hundreds and thousands of years—I had an ancestor who was famous in the Pliocene age—and who ever heard of a rhinoceros changing its hereditary wisdom or breeding a new kind of rhinoceros? Seven or eight years ago one would have said that in Russia men were as wise as the Rhinoceros; for hundreds of years they had altered nothing, the lower classes obeying and working for the upper classes and worshipping their Little Father, the Tsar. Then unexpectedly there springs up this obscene species of Bolshevik who want to change everything, to make the upper classes work for the lower classes, to take all our possessions away from us, and who have killed the Little Father, the Tsar.

" Obviously the appearance of this new species in Russia is the greatest menace which has threatened the world since the glacial period (which very nearly extinguished the race of rhinoceros, for large numbers of my ancestors were, at that time, caught in the ice and frozen to death in Europe). The terror which they inspire in this country is extremely sagacious, for fear is the beginning and the better part of wisdom. But the problem remains: what should the human animals in this country do? They might make a magnificent rush and trample the Russians out of existence, but I admit there are difficulties in the way of doing this, owing to the sea and other things. Personally I should like to see them shoot the Bolsheviks, and all the workers and strikers here who support and copy them. (One of the few useful things which this human animal has invented is the gun, if he would only use it more often against his own sub-species and not so often against other animals.) The difficulty, however, as I

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understand it, is that the upper classes here are only too ready to shoot the lower classes in Russia who have already shot their own upper classes, while the lower classes here have not yet been sufficiently frightened of the lower classes in Russia to agree to go and shoot them there. Pending the time, then, when the upper classes here shall have instilled into their lower classes that amount of fear of the Bolsheviks which is the beginning of political wisdom, and will induce them to shoot Russians, I do not see that there is a better course to pursue than that adopted by this Baldwin and his Conservative species.

"I hope I may be pardoned a short digression at this point. The sparrows tell us that this Baldwin has a passion for pigs. Now you may have observed that the pig is the only animal native to this country which remotely resembles a rhinoceros. The resemblance is exceedingly remote, but, stretching a point, I would not object if anyone said that the pig does resemble a minute and very inferior rhinoceros, if such a thing could exist. This being the case, it is not improbable that the brain of the English pig, of which we have, unfortunately, no specimen among us, resembles the brain of a minute and very inferior rhinoceros. You will follow my argument when I now suggest that this Baldwin, and through him the Conservatives, have learnt a good deal of their political wisdom from the pigs.

"The policy of Baldwin and his species is a simple one. They are waiting for a time when the newspapers shall have made the lower classes sufficiently afraid and when it will be possible to use them to exterminate the Bolsheviks by shooting. Meanwhile, they keep up their own fear as well as they can; they refuse to have anything to do with the Bolsheviks and, as far as possible, pretend that they do not exist. It is the only thing they can do. For political wisdom may be summed up in the following precepts: 'Fear the new and destroy it; if you cannot destroy it, run away; if you cannot run away, shut your eyes and your ears.' In other words the highest wisdom consists in a judicious mixture of fear, blindness, and deafness—a mixture which, if I may say so, has

distinguished the race of rhinoceros ever since the Pliocene Age."

The Hippopotamus woke up and roared approval. The Tapir, Camel, Giant Sloth, Marmots, and most of the Deer applauded. A large number of Monkeys leapt to their feet gesticulating and all speaking at the same time. When order was restored, it was agreed that the Mandril should speak on behalf of the Monkeys. He then delivered the following oration, during which he continued, slowly and deliberately, to eat shrimps out of a paper bag :—

"I am myself," he said, "a Bolshevik. It is true that I belong to the intelligentsia among the races and tribes of apes and monkeys, but I have deliberately thrown in my lot with the proletariat. The lower classes eat shrimps, and that is why I eat shrimps out of this paper bag, even while I am speaking in public. If the Rhinoceros would forget his ancestors for a moment and eat shrimps, he would acquire a little more political wisdom.

"The only true thing which the Rhinoceros said was that fear is the beginning and end of political wisdom. But if the upper classes are afraid of the lower classes, the lower classes are even more afraid of the upper classes. The more fear, the more wisdom. That is why true political wisdom is found only among the common monkeys or common people. God is fear—and *vox populi, vox Dei*. If only all the workers of the world would unite—under the leadership of the Mandril—what terror they would inspire, what terror they would feel! It would be a universal Reign of Terror, a new Holy Roman Empire, a union of the British Empire and League of Nations, a universal socialized Soviet republic—in a word, the millenium.

"For two thousand years or more the human proletariat has lived in terror of the upper classes, and with good reason. Our friend the Long-Eared Owl has taught us all a little history. Freemen and slaves, feudal lords and serfs, aristocrats and peasants, landowners and agricultural labourers, masters and men, employers and employed—it is all the same old story told and retold over again, 'The good things of the

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earth,' say the first, 'and art and literature and music, by some divine dispensation, are for us, for we are the spirit which makes the wheels of the world go round; and you,' they say to the second, 'are the cogs and wheels; by some divine dispensation, it is your duty under our direction to go round; in the sweat of your brow shall you eat your bread. Did not Almighty God tell you so? Go round, go round, go round! We may regret that the world has been made in this way; but it is God or Nature or the Logic of Facts; it is not our fault. Go round!'

"And they have been going round for two thousand years and more. Do you think they would have done so except through fear? And they have good cause for fear, for truly your Baldwins and conservatives, your Kings, Tsars, and capitalists, your aristocrats and land-owners and feudal lords know that God is fear and the rich man His prophet. We know what Luther and the upper classes of his time did when the proletariat stopped going round. 'Slaughter and stab them,' cried Luther, 'openly or in secret; kill them as you would a mad dog.' And they did; they slaughtered some hundred thousand and only stopped when the survivors began to go round once more. The Russian peasants have just learnt from Kolchak and Denikin that they can expect in the 20th century from the upper classes only what their ancestors got in the 16th.

"And the capitalist? What does the capitalist and behind him the capitalist Government say to the town worker? Work or starve! Work on our terms or starve on your own! There are the machines—our machines and our government and our police and our soldiers and our machine guns. God is fear and we are His prophets. Work—or strike and starve.

"The proletariat learnt its lesson during the war. It learnt that guns can go off in more than one direction. If God is fear, the poor man with a gun in his hand can become a better prophet of God than the rich man without one. That is what has happened in Russia. The cogs and the wheels began to go round, but in the opposite direction; the guns

went off, again in the opposite direction. For the first time in history the upper classes became more afraid of the lower classes than the lower of the upper. ‘Work,’ said the proletariat to the Tsar and his capitalists, ‘work—or strike and starve.’ It is a new and most divine dispensation.

“ This Baldwin and his conservatives and capitalists do well to be afraid. A little wind has begun to blow in Russia which will shake the very bars of our cages before the hurricane is laid. But you cannot trample the wind out of existence, however magnificently blind is your rush, and the storm will not spare your back-side because you have buried the other end of you in the sand. Woe, I say, upon the backsides of the Baldwins and the capitalists and conservatives! They are shutting their eyes not to evil, but to a hurricane of good. The day of the Rhinoceros and Hippopotamus and Kings, Tsars, landowners, and capitalists, is over; the day of the common monkey and common people has dawned. It is true that I am not a common monkey; you have only to observe the colouration of my face and back-side to see this. I belong to the intelligentsia. But I have thrown in my lot with the proletariat and I shall rejoice to be their leader now that their day has dawned.

“ One word more—on the subject of change. I agree that most things which are new are terrifying. But all change is good. The race of monkeys has always been on the side of change. The rhinoceros, no doubt, has not changed since he had a distinguished ancestor in the Pliocene age; but that is not true of my race. We have always been breeding new races of monkeys. Why, you would hardly be able to tell from his appearance that the little brown monkey who resides in the third cage on the right in the monkey-house—I have a bad memory for names—belongs to the same race as myself. If the Pliocene ancestor of the Rhinoceros had but given a little more attention to the great and beneficent principle of change, the foundation of revolutions, his descendant to-day might have had blue wrinkles on his nose and a sky-blue rump. One of the most reliable of the sparrows told me that both Lenin and Trotsky have that distin-

guished scheme of colouration."

When the Mandril had finished, the monkeys screamed approval, waving their arms and all chattering together (they thought they were singing the "Red Flag"). Several animals rose to continue the debate, but the Elephant pointed out that the hour was late and called upon the Long-Eared Owl to make the last speech before he himself summed up the discussion. The Owl then spoke as follows:—

"It is our custom in these discussions, after hearing the partisan opinion of animals who have taken one side or the other in the controversy under consideration, finally to refer the matter to one of the race of birds whose wings have enabled them to acquire the habit of rising 'above the battle' and of obtaining, from a safe distance, an impartial, bird's-eye-view of the situation. I do not pretend myself to understand the extraordinary behaviour of the human race, whether of the Conservatives and capitalists or of the Bolsheviks and proletariat. From the point of view of a bird, man appears to be a most dangerous animal, so clever that he would have destroyed every living thing on the earth, including himself, if he had not been repeatedly saved by long lucid moments of extreme stupidity. For races and species of animals like ourselves, whose minds and habits have a natural stability, fully to understand this savage and unbalanced creature man, is, I believe, impossible; but it is occasionally possible to discover some partial explanation of his conduct if you examine his history.

"In political questions, such as the one which we have been discussing, man appears to be more irrational and unstable than in any others, and to know something of his history is therefore of the greatest importance. By a fortunate accident an absent-minded visitor dropped near my cage the eight volumes of Sorel's *L'Europe et la Révolution Française*, and I have therefore been able to study the history of that revolution which took place in France over 100 years ago, and which throws much light upon the Russian Revolution.

"Now a study of man's history shows, I think, that our friends the Rhinoceros and the Mandril, though right in

some of their judgments, have made not unnatural errors regarding the irrational conduct of the human race. It is true that the human political organization is founded upon fear, and that when men talk about justice and reason and patriotism, they often really mean panic and terror. For instance, it is only when the majority are sufficiently frightened of a minority that they begin to call the latter criminals and to make laws against them, and then it becomes just to imprison or hang them. You can see this in their treatment of two of their sub-species, the bore and the murderer, both of whom they dislike. But they are frightened of the murderer and not of the bore—consequently they apply justice to the murderer by hanging him, while, as they are not afraid of bores, justice is not applicable to them. Again it has been found absolutely impossible to keep any of their nations patriotic unless it is kept terrified of some other nation, and they have invented a special class of men, called statesmen and diplomatists, who are paid very large salaries in each country and whose duty it is to make the rest of the people afraid of some other nation (or preferably nations) and so keep up their patriotism. In fact one of the gravest charges against the Socialists and Bolsheviks has been that they started a doctrine called internationalism, maintaining that it was unnecessary for any nation or race to be afraid of any other. If this monstrous doctrine were accepted, the whole of the political organization of human beings would collapse and the common people would cease to be patriotic. The Conservatives at the last election saw this danger, and it was only in the nick of time that one of their most intelligent diplomatists invented the 'Zinovieff Letter,' as it was called, and succeeded in making the common people once more afraid of the Russians, and so patriotic. France is, in fact, the only country in Europe where the political organization is in an absolutely sound state and patriotism permanent and unsassable. The reason is that every Frenchman is innately and permanently terrified of the Germans, and therefore he has in his own heart a perpetual spring of pure and undefiled patriotism. Some foolish people after the war thought that

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Frenchmen might lose their fear and with it their patriotism, because the Germans had been beaten so soundly that it would be impossible for anyone to be afraid of them. Events proved that dead and unborn Germans can be just as terrifying as live ones. If there has ever been the slightest sign of fear and patriotic fervour flagging in France, it has only been necessary for the statesmen to recall the acts of dead Germans, or to refer to the fact that 50 years hence 500,000 more German babies than French babies will be born every year into the world, and immediately the French people, roused to the highest pitch of terror and enthusiasm, have decided to conscript another 100,000 African negroes into the French Army.

"The Rhinoceros and Mandril are, therefore, correct in giving to fear a great importance in human politics, but they are both wrong, I think, in the view which they take of what is happening with regard to the Bolsheviks. A study of human history reveals the fact that politically man is an animal which never learns from experience. He himself is accustomed to say that there is nothing new under the sun, or that plus ça change plus c'est la même chose, or that history repeats itself. In this, at any rate, man shows some understanding of himself. You know that, with his extraordinary love of malignant cruelty, he has invented a small cage with a wheel in it, and that he is accustomed to confine in it one of the most beautiful and cheerful of all animals, the squirrel, and that, apparently, it gives him pleasure to see the squirrel go round and round without making any progress in any direction. The squirrel in the cage is the epitome of man's history. He is always setting out with drums and trumpets in order to reach the place from which he started, and when he has devastated half the earth in order to get back to his starting point, he complacently remarks that there is no new thing under the sun and that history repeats itself.

"Both the Rhinoceros and Mandril are wrong in believing that the Russians or Bolsheviks are a new species. They have existed for hundreds of years. They existed in France at the time of the French Revolution, and they performed the same antics there, one hundred and thirty years ago, as

they have just been performing in Petrograd and Moscow. The revolutionary wheel goes round, and it makes not a pin's difference whether Mirabeau and Danton and Robespierre are in it or Lenin and Trotsky and some fanatical Russian. And it is precisely the same with the reactionaries and conservatives : the Tsar and Tsarina, the Allies and Denikin and Kolchak, Mr. Baldwin and the Conservatives have copied in every minute particular the antics of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette, of the Allies of 1791 and the Comte de Provence and the *émigrés*, of Mr. Pitt and the Conservatives of 1793.

" In order to prove my point, I should have to read to you the eight volumes of Sorel's History. I can now only give you one or two instances which will show you how the human species is revolving in its wheel. The people who made the French Revolution were pacifists and internationalists just like the Russians who made their revolution. In 1789 there was to be universal brotherhood and perpetual peace and 'no annexations and no indemnities.' At first all the 'Liberals' everywhere welcomed the revolution with tears in their eyes, just as they did in 1917. But then fear began. As soon as the revolutionaries in France touched 'legal rights'—of the King and the aristocracy and the clergy and, above all, of property—people began to grow afraid—'it may be our turn next,' they said. Emigration started at once ; there were French Princes, Dukes, Counts, and gentlemen in every country of Europe, already talking of and plotting 'intervention.' Then it was the turn of the revolutionaries to become afraid ; they struck at the *émigrés* and their property or at all who might be suspected of wanting to emigrate. The King and Queen were afraid, and plotted with Austria and Prussia and Russia and the *émigrés* ; the revolutionaries were afraid of the King and Queen, of Austria and Prussia and Russia and intervention ; they began a 'revolutionary propaganda' outside France. Then the English became afraid of the propaganda ; they demanded that the French Government should cease its propaganda which was directed against the institutions of other countries. Austria, Prussia, France, and England mobilized their armies

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or fleets; the émigrés mobilized their corps of 'volunteers' on the frontiers; and when everyone was sufficiently afraid of everyone else, war. And when the Allies appeared to have been victorious and Fox demanded that peace should be made, 'Pitt declared'—I quote M. Sorel—'that England could never negotiate with France as long as she claimed to impose the so-called principles of the Rights of Man, principles of conquest without and disturbance within. Moreover, negotiate with whom? Factions rise and fall one after the other; every post brings the tale of new crimes. If we were to negotiate with Marat, before the end of the negotiations he would have sunk again into the dregs of the people from which he rose and would have left in his place a more atrocious criminal than himself?'

" You will see that poor Mr. Baldwin, who believes that he believes in the Rights of Man, is as regards the Rights of the Proletariate precisely at the same point in the wheel where Mr. Pitt was revolving in 1793. Now let us turn to Mr. MacDonald"

But the Elephant interrupted:

" I do not wish to cut short this discussion, but the hour is late, the night is short, and history and M. Sorel appear to be long. I propose to wind up and sum up this debate. I am too old to be anything but impartial, so that I think you will find me upon the side neither of the Rhinoceros and Mr. Baldwin nor of the Mandril and the Bolsheviks.

" One indisputable and important fact has been established by our discussion. Human beings live in mortal fear the one of the other. Everyone is terrified that his neighbour will cut his throat or shoot him in the back or blow him up with high explosive shells or drop a bomb on his head or destroy his lungs with poison gas or steal his wife or conquer a bit of his native land or a bit of land that he has conquered, or filch his watch or his money, or get better pay than he does, or climb over his head in society.

" It has been pointed out to-night that among human beings justice and patriotism and wisdom and truth are only other names for fear. I agree, but I do not agree that fear

is the beginning and end of political wisdom. I want to recall certain facts which some of us naturally have forgotten or have ignored.

"Some of us in these gardens have never been free. Two thousand years ago one of these human animals, I understand, wrote a poem which says: 'Of all things not to be born into the world is best, nor to see the beams of the keen sun; but being born, as swiftly as may be to pass the gates of Death, and lie under a great load of earth.' And I say to you: 'Of all things never to have known freedom is best; but being born free, as swiftly as may be to pass the gates of a Zoological Gardens, and to live behind strong bars and mighty locks.'

"Those happy animals among us who have never known what it was to be free, whose tickets upon their cages bear the fortunate inscription BORN IN CAPTIVITY, may not understand what I am going to say. I was born in the jungle. Do you remember the jungle?"

The Elephant trumpeted the words so that they boomed out over the cages and the Mappin Terraces, and a curious hush fell upon the animals. The Elephant trumpeted again: "Do you remember the jungle?" and every animal felt the note of fear in the sound.

"Some of you, I see," he went on, "remember the jungle, but for those of us who do not understand, I will explain. We were free in the jungle, and very pleasant it was on a fresh cool morning to shoulder your way through the undergrowth, the heavy dew dripping from the leaves, and to bring down the saplings with a crash and to feed on the young leaves. I remember the great herds of deer running free on the great plains; I remember how the monkeys laughed and chattered in the flowers, and how the peacocks on the tree-tops screamed their greetings to the rising sun.

"Yes, it was sometimes very pleasant to be free in the jungle. But only for a moment, because the jungle was a place of perpetual fear. We were all, like these human animals, perpetually afraid of one another. It was a continual struggle, a continual killing of one by the other. The

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deer were perpetually fleeing from the leopard and the tiger, and the leopard and the tiger from their own shadows. Fear ruled us and the beginning and the end of jungle wisdom was fear. We Elephants are old and wise and peaceful, but I can remember how some faint whisper or a little creaking or a faint scent coming from the shadows of the trees would strike a sudden fear into me and I would charge, panic stricken, away through the undergrowth in what, I have no doubt, the Rhinoceros would describe as a magnificent blind rush. It may have been wisdom, but it was not pleasure.

"It is clear from our discussion to-night that men are still living in the jungle. They should learn a lesson from us. Here we are in captivity, peaceful, happy, unafraid, civilized. Here each of us, locked up securely in his or her separate cage, neither harms nor is harmed by, neither fears nor is feared by, any other animal. Is it not clear that man will never be happy and civilized and unafraid until he has done for himself precisely what he has done for us? These human beings delude themselves that a League of Nations or Protection or armies and navies are going to give them security and civilization in their jungle. But they are the savagest race of carnivora known in the jungle, and they will never be happy and civilized, and the world will never be safe for democracy or for any other animal, until each human animal is confined in a separate cage."

The Elephant then declared the meeting closed amid applause.