

Rusky Invalid, 10 January 1916

[reverse translation from Russian into English]

Message from Sir Conan Doyle

Dear Russian friends and brothers,

It is regrettable for us to hear that some among you, having come under bad influence, have let persuade themselves that allegedly we here in Great Britain do not strain every effort towards the fastest possible and victorious termination of the present war. The enemy knows the truth better, but it is just the enemy who disseminates this kind of gossip in the hope to cool down the senses of hot trust and friendship which should unite us till the end. Therefore, let me explain to you, sincerely and simply, what we are doing and what we going to do. We highly estimate your great exploits, your patience, courage, cold blood and the invincible valour of your soldiers. But we would like you, too, to understand that we deserve to be your allies.

Great Britain is a sea power. Never before has it tried to step forward as a land power in a great war; and during all its history, Great Britain has not once set more than 50,000 troops on land. Sea, that is its essential item. But in such case, how could it cope with its special task? You are aware that in this domain, it has achieved an ultimate and overwhelming victory: Germany's overseas trade has perished; outside the Baltic Sea, no ship in the entire water area of the globe goes flying the German flag; Germany's warships are embayed in the Baltic Sea or the Kiel Canal; and it is only in Baltic waters, where we cannot reach it, that the German Fleet maintains some strategic significance. What concerns other seas of the world, we can say that in their regard, the German Fleet and the monstrous sums of money spent on its creation, are as if buried on the Atlantic ocean bottom.

As a result of this overwhelming and bloodless victory, we have stopped all foreign trade of Germany which is the source of wealth for it, but we can also, to a degree, govern the trade by means of which it receives supplies. It is at the mercy of ours to cease whatsoever supplies to Germany; however, we are unable to exercise our power in full scope because we are bound with rules of international law: we are no Germans who can regard international treaties like a "piece of paper." Hence many goods are brought to Germany. However, foodstuffs, rubber, metals, leather and all that is required for waging a war can penetrate into it now in small quantities only, and that is why its strength is flagging more and more. Look at the furious articles of its newspapers and you shall understand the loss we have inflicted on it. However, such results cannot be achieved without labor and expenditures. Our brave seamen have to struggle and overcome both storms and the hostile submarines and the enemy's mines. Currently Britain has 4,000 large and small ships flying the war flag and navigated by sailors of our Fleet. Consequently, on the sea, which is our special battle field, we have accomplished all that is humanly possible. Even in the Sea of Marmara and the Baltic Sea which are hostile water basins, we have done all we could do in order to help our allies with our submarines.

Being the mistress of the seas, we have cut Germany off its colonies and annexed them one after another. Firstly, we got hold of Togo, secondarily, of Pacific islands, thirdly – with the help of the

Japanese – of Quingdao, fourthly, of German South-West Africa. Soon the turn will come for Cameroon and German East Africa. Then Germany will lose all its colonies. It shows you as to how seriously we reregard our task.

Our taxes have doubled and tripled and, have so enlarged in respect of taxpayers that both worker and merchant and nobleman – all they make their contributions for achievement of the common goal. Tax burden has become so heavy that many pay a third of all their revenues to the government and we have been advised that it may occur we shall have to pay even half of our revenues to the government. In this way, we give away more than 300 million pounds of our revenues annually. We also have to raise monstrous loans and grant our allies the widest use of both cash lent to them and our own credit. We bear this burden with jolly readiness and are happy to yield benefit to our friends but we are sad to hear that some of you fancy as though we do not do everything depending on us for achievement of the common goal. What has Germany achieved by its paper loans secured by false warranties, what has it achieved which could be compared with that unanimous strain of Britain's efforts?

Let us speak about the land now. I have already said that Britain has never even named itself a military land power. It has never had in its mind sending more than 150,000 troops on land in case of a war. It has indeed sent 100,000 troops which arrived just in time for active service in the very first battle; and timeliness of help from those troops to our brave French friends, the help which allowed them to defend Paris against the enemy invasion, that significance is set in the Tables of history. How great the strain of efforts developed by us since then is – this is evidenced by the fact that we have lost half million people as the dead and the injured, that is, exactly fivefold of our initial army. In spite of all those losses, in reality we are currently holding up in the lines 1,250,700 troops and we are having at least as many well-trained recruits at home. We have a great army in Flanders. We have significant forces in Thessaloniki, in Egypt, in Mesopotamia, on the borders of the British Raj and, eventually – in East Africa. No theatre of war cost us so much as Gallipoli, where we have lost 100,000. However, we shall recognize that those forces have not been spent in vain if Russia understands what we have accomplished, as well as that our efforts there were aimed at facilitation of the offensive on Russia and at opening of the sea route for it. Unless Russia realizes this then our losses were indeed suffered in vain. We are having 3,000,000 soldiers under arms but we hope to raise the number to 4,000,000. Let us not forget that all these soldiers are volunteers who have parted with their families voluntarily and who have surrendered their own free will. How can you really believe that we did not espouse the cause of war seriously?

Now the issue of ammunition remains. When the thing draws to its close, it will turn out that in this area, like in all others, Britain has devoted all its energies to the common cause. It was only as summer 1915 set in that we have made it clear for ourselves what great efforts had been devoted to that problem. It was back then that Great Britain presented to the world the same miracle by means of extension of its industrial workshops as the miracle of enlargement of its army. The quantity and size of the workshops have neither doubled nor tripled; rather, they have grown 50-fold or even 100-fold. Entire Britain is currently a great and noisy factory where shells, bullets, cannons, airplanes and motors, barbed steel wire and all other articles required for modern warfare are manufactured. Germany had outperformed us by far in this domain. However, nowadays, we have caught up with it and even have surpassed it. But we are, month after next, by leaps and bounds, increasing our armed forces still. From now on, neither we nor our allies should never suffer from shortage of whatever things.

I have written all this certainly not out of braggery, because we Britons like you Russians do not like braggarts. But I have set forth before you a series of facts which will provide you with an opportunity to judge what we have done and are doing, to prevent you from thinking that we in our island allegedly avoid any sorts of sacrifices at the altar of war. Nothing impossible for man exists that we are not ready

to do. What concerns the end of the war, you must forever drive any doubts off your soul on the subject: only one sort of termination of the war is possible. We shall never agree to any compromise. We must score a victory, an overwhelming victory, however long we might have to fight for it. No British government will ever agree to anything less; and if such government is found then it will be overthrown immediately and its place will be taken by persons stronger in spirit. We must win whatever the cost. By victory we do not mean destruction of Germany or even fragmentation of it, as its newspapers assert. No one can eliminate existence of a great nation. By victory, we mean forcing Germany to possible atonement of the villainy committed by it and, on the other hand, trustworthy guarantees to be received from it that it will not repeat anything similar in the future. That is our goal; when we achieve it – and we shall surely achieve it owing to our joint efforts – then, I am sure, the total great result of the current war will be preserved: namely, that Russians, the British and the French will forever keep in their memory recollections of their nowadays brotherhood purchased with blood and will not let anyone sow dissention amongst them in the future. All blood and tears shed in this war will pay off if they indeed bring about this result.

6 January 1916

Conan Doyle

Also:

“Nash Vestnik” (Our Messenger), No. 124 (19 January 1916). (a shortened version)

“Izvestia shtaba XII armii” (or “Izvestia shtaba 12-y armii”) (Transactions of the 12th Army Headquarters), No. 162 (25 January 1916) (a shortened version)

По-видимому, это - одно и то же письмо, напечатанное в нескольких газет. Вот попытка восстановления содержания с цитатами из источников:

газета «Армейский вестник», 1916. № 221 (примерно 17-21 января)

Newspaper “Armeysky Vestnik” (Army Messenger), No. 221 (appr. 17-21 January 1916)

"Наш вестник". 1916. №124 (19 января)

“Nash Vestnik” (Our Messenger), No. 124 (19 January 1916).

газета "Известия штаба XI армии". 1915. №84.

Newspaper “Izvestia shtaba XI armii” (or “Izvestia shtaba 11-y armii”) (Transactions of the 11th Army Headquarters), No. 84 (1915)

газета "Известия штаба XII армии", 1916, № 162 (январь).

Newspaper “Izvestia shtaba XII armii” (or “Izvestia shtaba 12-y armii”) (Transactions of the 12th Army Headquarters), No. 162 (January 1916)

Послание сэра Конан Дойла (открытое письмо) ("Открытое письмо сэра Артура Конан Дойла к русскому народу")

письмо сэра Конан-Дойла, начинающееся:

«Дорогие русские друзья и братья! Нам прискорбно слышать, что некоторые среди вас, поддавшись дурному влиянию, дали убедить себя в том, что будто мы, в Великобритании, не напрягаем все силы к скорейшему и победоносному окончанию нынешней войны»."

английский писатель Конан Дойл с призывом воевать до победного конца

Его мнение по поводу роли в современной войне Великобритании как военно-морской державы. Не умалял место России в войне и отмечал, «что мы, а именно – русские, французы и британцы должны победить, во что бы то ни стало».

призывал к англо-русскому сближению и заверял, что на Англию как союзника в борьбе против кайзеровской Германии вполне можно положиться.

Под победой над Германией не подразумевал ее полное уничтожение, а лишь желал «возможного искупления ее совершенных злодейств и получения от нее надежных гарантий, что в будущем она не повторит ничего подобного»

Conan Doyle. A message from Sir Conan Doyle (an open letter) ("Open letter of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle to the Russian People")

A letter of Sir Conan Doyle beginning with:

"Dear Russian friends and brothers! It is regrettably to hear that some among you, having come under bad influence, let persuade themselves that allegedly we here in Great Britain do not strain every sinew towards the fastest possible and victorious termination of the present war".

English writer Conan Doyle launching an appeal to fight till final victory

His opinion regarding the role of Great Britain in the modern war as a naval power. He did not belittle the place of Russia in the war and noted "that we, namely – the Russians, the French and the British – should win at whatever cost".

He called for British-Russian rapprochement and assured that Britain could well be trusted as an ally in the combat against Kaiser Germany.

By a victory over Germany he did not mean its total destruction, but he only wished "possible atonement of the villainy committed by it and, trustworthy guarantees to be received from it that it will not repeat anything similar in the future".