

*External Affairs*

hate war just as we do; and although they have resorted to conscription, it is merely because of their great sense of danger and their great sense of world responsibility. The U.S.S.R. remains to us morally and intellectually an enigma. They use words in what seems to us a topsy-turvy fashion. I remember that friend of everyone who was in the house with him and whom we so sadly lost last autumn, Gordon Graydon, saying two things about the Russians that did more than anything else I have ever heard to make me understand in some vague way not what they were like perhaps but how different they were from us.

He said this to me: "We hardly realize how ingrained in our very fibre is the feeling that whatever the majority wants must happen; whatever kind of a gathering we are at, whatever is the subject of discussion, you get to the stage where this question is asked: What does the majority want?" Then he said to me a thing that I had never thought of before: "That is absolutely foreign to the Russian mind. There is nothing in them which responds to that." Then he added this curious irony. "They say we must proceed by unanimity, by agreement." Well, of course, the kind of agreement is a very strange one to us, but nevertheless, that is what Gordon Graydon said, and I think perhaps more than any of us—I'm sure the minister would not disagree with this—Gordon had the gift of getting on with everyone, even with the Russians.

He said another thing to me which was full of significance, and which gave me a glimpse of their mind. Perhaps more than anything else it gave me a glimpse of their utter incapacity for the great discovery which we have made, the greatest of all I think in our democracy, and that is tolerance. He told me that he had made friends with one of the Russians, and he said to this Russian after he had made a speech: "That was a good speech you made". And the answer was "Gordon—" everyone called him by his first name, and Gordon called everybody else by their first names; I have no doubt that if he had met the king he would have been calling him by his first name soon—"Gordon, you cannot be sincere when you say that was a good speech, because you did not agree with it."

Now, that, Mr. Speaker, seemed to me to give a glimpse, perhaps clearer than I had ever had before, of this strange mentality that cannot believe that you can disagree with a person and still respect him, and, what is more important still, work with him. This chamber in which we sit is an evidence of the greatest of all discoveries, I suppose,

[Mr. Macdonnell.]

made by democracies, and that is that it is possible to be tolerant, it is possible to disagree and yet to work together; it is possible, as Churchill said, to believe that the things which divide us—and sometimes they seem pretty great—are less than the things which unite us.

Now, in this strange situation we find ourselves, with these two great centres of power, we go on with an uneasy *modus vivendi*, and we are looking constantly for some way of living together, if not happily at least peaceably. Sometimes we seem to be making a little progress, and sometimes we are not so sure, and if there were nothing but these two great forces in the world I confess that my hopes would not be very high and the situation would seem to be bleak indeed.

And it is in that atmosphere that we are when we are thinking purely of these two great centres of power. How could it be otherwise? We are always talking about war; we cannot help it. We are driven into it. We are talking about preparation and counter-preparation. Therefore it is hard for us in this atmosphere to look beyond; it is hard to have any other thoughts in our minds, and for that reason it seems to me that we ought to be as thankful as we can be and more thankful than we often are that there is the commonwealth; that there is this third centre of power in the world. It is not negligible, but we are apt sometimes to forget about it or to seem to forget about it.

Let us take a look at it, and at the importance of it. First of all, in the United Kingdom you have a power, not so great as it used to be, but with long experience, great knowledge and immense patience. You have in the dominions new and increasing centres of power, and though we sometimes overlook it, the commonwealth has in the last few years played a very important part. If we go back to the two wars, what was our part in it? Without flattering ourselves we can remember, as somebody put it, that we were 1914 and 1939 men and not 1917 and 1941 men. In other words, we gave the lead to this continent at a time when a lead was very important.

Now, let us take a look at this commonwealth with its world-wide interests—an association of nations belonging to every part of the globe, containing in it hundreds of millions of Asians, who are in it of their own free will, who remained in it when the time came that they were free to go where they wished. They remained inside the commonwealth and they have in this recent struggle played a part. If we are fair-minded