

"No Annexation Amendment"

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we have to do at the present moment is to get into touch with the Russian. It means this for the Russian: Until the time of the revolution, so far as Russian Czar policy was concerned, it was Imperialist. It was aggrandizement. It was adding territory to territory and State to State with practically no limitation. The Russian Workmen's Council, when it uses the expression "annexation," means annexation in the old Russian Imperialist sense. Do not let us make academic speeches about it. It is an indication on the part of the Petrograd Workmen's Council that, so far as its part in the war is concerned, it wants to make it perfectly clear that it has abandoned the old Russian Imperialist policy of annexation without reference to the peoples concerned. That is all. With reference to Armenia, Kerensky was convinced that Armenia should not go back to Turkey, because the continued dominance of Turkey over Armenia was against every principle that is contained in the manifesto—namely, the principle of free nationality and race—and Kerensky said that if it were necessary to establish the independence of Armenia, Russia might assume some political and diplomatic interest, guaranteeing the country as a self-governing State. The Russian revolution has been the most extraordinary manifestation of a spiritual power and moral force that we have known in our generation. It has come upon our minds in the same way as the day dawns after dark, but we know quite well that in this world, particularly at the present moment, that kind of dawning is subject to the most tremendous changes and risks, and I think it would be well to remember that this revolution might be swamped by forces which itself has created, and by forces, on the other hand, which would never have accepted it, nor ever will.

Our Country's Opportunity.

Therefore this country will honor itself by going out of its way to persuade the Russian people that it is with them heart and soul, at any rate, in these great spiritual and moral ends which they have put before them, and which they have embodied in the manifesto from which these words have been extracted. But we must admit that the revolution has not been understood in this country.

The "Times" Falsehoods.

We must admit that great mischief has been done in this country to the revolution by certain organs of the Press. Much suspicion exists in Petrograd as to the policy of this country, and British opinion has been much misrepresented. This House will probably remember what happened in the case of the representative of the "Times" who was responsible for the earlier accounts of the revolution and who wrote certain statements about men, some of whom were friends of mine, which were most disgraceful and absolutely untrue and unjust in every way, unjust in fact and in spirit. This man has been excommunicated by his Russian colleagues. Newspaper after newspaper has published the same kind of thing. I am sorry to find in the Russian Press a report of a speech made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer here which caused a great deal of concern. The fact of the matter is that everybody who is worth quoting in Germany or in Russia at the present moment is being quoted in the interests of certain sections.

Two Dangers.

The effect of it all is this: If we cannot establish a complete sympathy between ourselves and Russia we are

facing the grave danger of Russia making a separate and an independent peace with Germany.

The other danger is the internal danger. At the present moment there are forces in Russia making for internal disruption, and they are very strong and very powerful and serious, and if the Russian people go back into chaos, particularly armed chaos, Russia is not going to be of much use in establishing a democratic peace at the end of the war.

Therefore, I hope it will be part of our Government's policy to make Russia understand us, and also to help the Russian Revolution to maintain itself against its internal foes.

The Role of Russia.

Russia's own democratic view of her function is that she ought to put herself at the head of European democracy. She does not want a separate peace, but she wants European democracy to understand the issues of the war, and she wants to have a real voice in the settlement after the war. Why not encourage that view? Hon. members who have read the interview which M. Kerensky gave to the British Labor Deputation, which is still in Russia, will have noticed that he said to them:

"Go home and tell your people not to pursue Imperialistic aims."

That is an indication of their policy in this matter. It may be that hon. members resent that, but this is no time for resentments; it is a time for understandings. The fact that M. Kerensky said that shows that he has a suspicion, and in expressing his suspicion the Minister of Justice did not wish to do a thing hostile to this country, but he wished to defend European democracy, and he asks us to make our position perfectly clear so far as Imperialistic aggrandizement is concerned. He has said to the Germans, "We are your enemies, but we want to be your friends on conditions. If you come and threaten our revolution we will meet you with arms, but at the same time do you not think it would be far wiser for you if you copied in Berlin what we have done in Petrograd?"

"Political, Not Military."

Therefore the Russian democrats have adopted the political method, and not the military method, and at the present moment they are putting more emphasis upon the political than upon the military method, in order to straighten out all the difficulties which the War has brought on Europe and which the War will not settle if left to itself.

The third thing they have done is this: They have asked that representatives of all the Socialist bodies in Europe should go and consult with them as to the future.

The Russian Workmen's Council wants that done, and is very anxious not to maintain divisions amongst the democracy. I hope this Government is not going to do what would be a tremendously foolish thing to do, and which would be a tremendously uncivil thing as well, and refuse what the Petrograd Workmen's Council have asked should be done, that is to send over a representative deputation. My hon. friend (Mr. Whyte) dealt with the details of his program and the Russian democracy are doing exactly the same thing. The Belgians are doing the same thing, too, at the present moment.

Concealment No Use.

Negotiations are going on between sections of the working classes and the Socialists of Belgium, and one of their representatives is now in Petrograd, in fact, one of his speeches has appeared

in our papers. What is the meaning of all this? What is the use of keeping this House in darkness about these matters? What is happening is this: the details in which my hon. friend opposite appears to be so much interested are being discussed and talked over, and drafts are being made of possible settlements. Those drafts are being discussed for the purpose of making the real settlement of this war which will give the whole of Europe adequate security in the days to come, so that this abominable crime will not again be forced upon Europe from any quarter. The Petrograd Council have decided to summon an International Socialist Congress. The hon. member for Glasgow (Mr. Mackinder) talked about this being a class war, but he can talk in that academic way as much as he likes, for these are days in which we have to face facts.

The Only International.

It is a fact that these men are Socialists, and it is a fact that at the present moment the only great international political movement that can begin a real peace movement is the International Socialist Party. There it is, and nothing else exists. There is no such international organization of any other great party.

Mr. Whyte: Not of finance?

Mr. Macdonald: I hope that my hon. friend is not going to base his peace on finance. I was dealing with a basis on peace. In every country in the world which has any industrial status you have this phenomena. You have National Socialist organizations linked together into an International, and this organization is being brought into operation by the Petrograd Workmen's Council in order to discuss the terms and conditions of peace. I hope the Government is going to allow this to be done. Surely it is all to the interests of Europe, and more particularly to the interests of our own country and the men who are dying for us, that not a single one of them should be asked to die unless it is absolutely necessary. If this organization, or this conference, that Russia now wants is going to do anything to establish say, in Germany, a democracy, and to clear away misunderstandings, and to get the people to grasp what they are fighting for, and how they can get it, what is there that will justify the Government refusing to allow an opportunity to be given to the power of reason to make peace instead of trusting to the uncertain power of war. I hope, therefore, that the conference will be allowed, and that all facilities will be given by the Government to delegates appointed to it.

The Pro-German Nonsense.

In asking that I do assure the House, as I have said already, that this stupid tittle-tattle, believed in by people whose credulity is out of all proportion to their reasoning, that these are mere German wire-pullings, is absolutely ridiculous. Who was to preside over the Stockholm Conference which has been condemned so much? I venture to say that the noble lord will agree with me when I say that of all leaders of political parties in the neutral States of Europe M. Branting has been the most loyal to the Allied cause. I have conversed with M. Branting, and I knew his opinions. That man was going to preside over this "pro-German" conference, and not only that, but he was going to gather information from the delegates during the days before the conference opens in order to find out the state of mind of the belligerent nations. The whole thing is nonsense, and should receive the strongest condemnation of every right thinking man. I have ventured to say that of the Stockholm Conference, because I do know what is going on, and newspaper writers seem to have distinguished themselves by not knowing anything about it.

Red Tape Obstacle.

I know quite well that the circum-

stances of this debate are very unfortunate, and that it is awkward to move an Amendment like this to the Third Reading of the Consolidated Fund Bill; but members will know that my hon. friends are using the forms of the House in the only way they can be used. I hope hon. members will not examine with microscopic exactness the words of the motion. We want to make it quite clear to the people of Russia that we do share their sentiments on this matter, and sharing their sentiments we can begin to discuss how far they are to be applied and how far the practical problems of the world modify them and twist them into the actual circumstances of the world. This war is to be ended by an abiding peace only if there is a spirit of good will.

The South African Model.

I appeal to this House to recognize the change the Russian revolution has made to Europe. There is now a great opportunity of showing the same spirit, the same good will, and the same determination to settle this war in the way that the South African situation was finally straightened up, and which enabled a very distinguished Boer general to become, in the short space of 15 years, a very honored guest of the British Parliament.

Lord R. Cecil made a subtly clever speech, seeking to draw a sharp distinction between Mr. Snowden and Mr. MacDonald, professing a vague sentimental sympathy with the aspirations of the Amendment, but refusing it any definite support.

Mr. Asquith followed with some real appreciation of the tremendous issues at stake. The statement that "this has been both a useful and an instructive debate" had little in common with a former statement about "peace prattle" and "the twittering of sparrows." But he trenched on very dangerous ground when he intimated almost in Germany's own words the possibility of annexations.

for the purpose of maintaining strategic positions which are shown to be necessary not for aggression but for the purpose of self-protection and defence against future attack. (Continued in next issue.)

DEMOCRATS IN UNIFORM.

The first thing that strikes an American in Russia is the fact that this new twentieth century form of wholesale war is going seriously to interfere with the king business in Europe. Despotism kings are safe enough if they have a professional army behind them, and if the civilian subjects are not allowed to possess arms. But professional armies are killed early in such great wars as this, and it becomes necessary to put workingmen and farmers into uniforms and give them guns and expect them to take the place of the professionals. This expectation went wrong in Russia. The uniform and the gun did not change the workingman into a soldier. They only turned him into a workingman with a gun and uniform, and if there's anything more dangerous for a despotic monarch or for any king who thinks he rules by divine right than a lot of workingmen with guns the worried little man who has been planting potatoes in the garden at Tsarkoe-Selo would like to know about it. The coat may make the man, but the uniform doesn't always make the blindly faithful soldier.

—William G. Shepherd in Weekly People.

An English correspondent writes that "we in Canada have little idea of the hidden power of dividends in English politics." And we have been thinking all the time that the people in Britain have little idea of the hidden power of dividends in Canadian politics. Perhaps the human species varies less than is currently supposed.