

COME TOGETHER AND ABOLISH TARIFFS

THE GREAT mass of the ordinary people of all nations ardently desire peace.

We not only desire peace but declare that the economic causes which lead to strife between nations and within nations can be removed if a sufficient number of men give their minds to understanding what these causes are.

We, who advocate the removal of taxes on industry, thrift and exchange, are of course in favour of that Free Trade which is the natural right of every man. We believe that Britain's departure from Free Trade has contributed to the tension that now exists between nations.

From Mr Ole Wang, Norway, a Vice-President of the International Union for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade, we have received a powerful letter suggesting that an influential group of members of the House of Commons should come forward with a proposal for a radical betterment of international relations by the application of Free Trade principles.

He writes :

A proposal from such a group requesting His Majesty's Government to invite other countries to an agreement to remove trade barriers in order to thereby ease the international strain could not, in the present situation, be ignored. It would be heard as a clarion-call all over the world, even in the totalitarian States. Nor could real statesmen in other countries be indifferent towards an appeal as suggested even if it be against interests which, as party men, they have been before defending.

The offers should be definite and binding in the main points, thereby removing any doubts as to their being earnestly meant.

The agreement made between Germany and Austria regarding Customs' union (since declared invalid by the International Court at The Hague), the claims for Austria's "Anschluss" and Germany's demarches towards the South-East, were the consequences of strangling tariffs. Developments in this direction have been quicker than was expected, and will no doubt go on unless stopped by war or unless German energy be given outlet in peaceful trade with the world. That the said developments are, in the main, the consequences of economic necessity on the part of Germany does not seem doubtful. Being hindered in her exports Germany cannot get the means by which to pay for her need of raw materials. Recently one of her leading men stated that "Germany must export or die, and we are not willing to die" or something to that effect.

Germany's economic difficulties are, of course, also due to her using so much of her resources for armaments. But are these cause or consequence? The re-arming was no doubt commenced to rid the country of the humiliating Versailles treaty, but are they not now mainly intended as a means to extend the economic field of action? Would there have been any "protectorate" over Czecho-Slovakia if there had been absolute free trade? The latest rumours are to the effect that Germany wants Roumania and Hungary to become purely agrarian countries sending their products to Germany in exchange for the latter's manufactures. The rumours are denied from Germany but the mere fact of their arising indicates wherein the difficulty lies.

It may be true that there are people in Germany wanting to force not only their goods but also their will and political ideas on the rest of the world. Nevertheless the vast majority of the German people want to live at peace with the rest of the world. One always meets in Germany much goodwill and friendly attempt to

please foreign visitors. These sentiments should be helped before they change to rancour. If the common people in Germany, as in other countries, expressed their sentiments there would be a terrible veto against war: "We won't have it! We want to go about our work with goodwill towards all other nations and with malice towards none!"

Could the work for removal of trade barriers now be started, popular sentiment in all countries could be brought to bear on the Governments and thereby stop the drift towards war.

Times are too serious for letting actions be governed by national vanity or by inferiority or superiority complexes. They should be governed by international justice and effective measures should be taken to ensure that this justice is upheld. *Assent to and co-operation in these latter measures would be the proof of goodwill, the quid pro quo, which the dissatisfied countries should give.*

There should, of course, be no cringing to bullying, but an open and candid offer to the peoples to join a family of nations with a new and wider view of international relationship.

Had the work of removing trade barriers been started some years ago it could still have taken the form of a gradual removal, a careful demolishing. It is doubtful whether this can any longer be done if the alternative, a world war, is to be avoided.

The North American Union was formed under an outside pressure; the fear of the great European Powers whose territories surrounded the thirteen States. Does not the impending world war form an equally strong motive for the peoples of the European family of nations? On the whole, I think that the teachings of the history of the United States are too much ignored. What a pity that Woodrow Wilson's programme of "removal of economic barriers and the establishment of an equality of trade conditions" was not made a guiding principle at *Versailles* and in forming the Covenant of the *League of Nations*. If the League had gone in for those things which the fathers of the American constitution considered their first task, such as removal of duties and of navigation acts, assuring a common medium of exchange and providing for impartial judicial settlements of quarrels between the various States and the citizens of different States, then it would now have been a living power of good.

ON THE KINGSTON BY-PASS. What was described as one of the biggest land deals around London in recent years was reported in the *Manchester Guardian* (28th April). It was the purchase by a builder of 208 acres of land extending along both sides of the Kingston by-pass between Surbiton and Hinkley Wood at a cost of nearly £250,000 for the purpose of erecting a garden city. The number of houses proposed is stated to be 1,100, in which case the cost of the land per house would be £227. Another report (*Evening Standard*, 27th April) gives the number of houses to be built as 1,600 which would be £156 per house. The price of the land is over £1,200 an acre. It need hardly be added that, if rated at all, the rateable value has no relation to the price paid. Accommodation for those who wish to live in garden cities within reach of London is confined to those who can pay the landowner's price.

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