

INTRODUCTION

MR. SAMUEL UNTERMYER (The Chairman) :
Ladies and Gentlemen, apropos of the statement of Mr. Javits that this sort of a war is the only kind of war that ought to be waged, I observe that the committee in charge of the arrangements have put the two contending debaters out of range. (Laughter.)

I congratulate you and I congratulate myself upon our good fortune in being permitted to participate in this battle of wits and mentality on a world topic with which we are sadly unfamiliar, between two of the greatest intellectual gladiators that ever faced one another in the arena of public debate. (Applause.)

Both are profound scholars and thinkers. And, above all, both of them have shown their supreme confidence in their capacity and willingness to sacrifice possessions, social position, liberty and life, if need be, in the defence of their convictions. (Applause.) Both of them are men of vision with hearts overflowing with sympathy for their fellowmen. And both of them have been old

and tried men in the battle of reason. They are both renowned writers upon the most abstruse subjects within the radius of human thought, and they both speak in the language of world-statesmanship.

The subject that they are to debate is one worthy of their great talents. Its title is: "Is the form of Soviet Government applicable to Western civilization?"

It is a problem the answer to which is fraught with great importance to all of humanity. Our dense ignorance on the subject in this country is a just reproach and a veritable travesty upon American institutions. A mass of information or scraps of information, I might say, and misinformation have, from time to time, trickled through to us in a way that has simply added to our confusion and bewilderment.

It is therefore with sincere pleasure that we grasp and welcome this opportunity to be informed by educators and logicians of the real facts, by men who are profoundly versed in those facts. I hope that the time has come when all this selfish, partisan propaganda to-day has ended with respect to this great subject, when we shall have reached the stage in which we have open minds, and that this occasion will be the

beginning of an educational campaign that will enable the American people to pass intelligent judgment, so that they may guide the officials in charge of our public affairs and correct any injustice that is born of ignorance or provincialism, or both. (Applause.)

Quite apart from the question to be debated of whether or not the Soviet form of Government is adapted to Western civilization—upon which I express no opinion and upon which it would be highly improper for me to express an opinion, provided I had one—I have never been able to understand the basis on which our Government has persistently refused the recognition of Russia. (Applause.)

That Government has maintained and strengthened itself over almost a decade now against internal and external attacks, misrepresentation of all kinds and discouragements that would have overthrown almost any form of Government. (Applause.)

If it is a stable, organized Government, its form, or the social or economic basis on which it is founded, is none of our business. (Applause.) We have always recognized monarchies and despotisms, however revolting they were to our institutions or to our

conceptions of Government. We are ourselves maintaining subject-countries such as the Philippines and Porto Rico. And this high virtue and the pedestal on which we stand smacks very much of hypocrisy pure and simple. (Applause.)

If our persistent refusal to recognize the present Government of Russia is based upon the fact that it is unwilling to assume the obligations of the Czarist regime, the pretext is equally insincere. If the refusal to entertain or the ignoring or the failure to meet obligations is a form for refusing to recognize a Government, we had better hurry up and withdraw our recognition of a number of European Governments. (Applause.)

There may be some to whom our government of the Philippines and Porto Rico is quite as objectionable as the method of the Government of Russia. However, this whole subject will now be brought into the open. And the sooner it is brought there and the more rapidly it is determined, the better it will be for our self-respect.

We are standing in the rear whilst Government after Government is recognizing the present Government in Russia, and we are offering nothing but flimsy and insincere pretexts for so doing. (Applause.) I hope

that this debate will bring sharply to the attention of the people of this country the question of the proper regulation of our foreign affairs. And, in saying that, I am not intending to reflect upon one administration any more than upon another. This is not a political speech. (Laughter.)

The order of the debate will be (as your programmes have told you) that Mr. Scott Nearing will open the debate on the affirmative of this issue and will speak for thirty minutes. He will be followed by Mr. Russell, who will speak for thirty minutes. Mr. Nearing will then counter for twenty minutes—I mean academically counter—and Mr. Russell will close the debate by speaking for twenty minutes.

I now beg to introduce to you a man who, by his courage and high patriotism, has endeared himself to that part of the thinking people of America who differ from him quite as much as to that which agrees with him. Mr. Scott Nearing. (Applause.)