

# PAX INTERNATIONAL

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom aims at uniting women in all countries who are opposed to every kind of war, exploitation and oppression, and who work for universal disarmament and for the solution of conflicts by the recognition of human solidarity, by conciliation and arbitration, by world co-operation, and by the establishment of social, political and economic justice for all, without distinction of sex, race, class or creed. — The work of all the National Sections is based upon the statements adopted and the Resolutions passed by the International Congresses of the League.

Published  
by the Women's International League for Peace  
and Freedom



International Headquarters:  
13, rue du Vieux-Collège, Geneva  
Jane Addams, Honorary President

27 AUG 1976

OF POLITICAL  
ECONOMIC S.

## THE FIRST SESSION OF THE DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE

The end of five month's work at the Disarmament Conference has certainly marked very slow progress and deep disappointment is expressed among workers for peace.

But when we remember how bad the outlook was last January, that only a small proportion of the population in most countries had shown itself prepared for any drastic measures and that the influence of financial interests, of nationalist passions and of fear of the risks of change, are extremely strong on Governments we must realise how important it is that at least some progress has been made. It is encouraging too to find how widespread is the dissatisfaction, indeed the indignation, that more has not been done. Before the Conference opened there was general talk that we should only get limitation at the present level from this Conference. The Draft Convention, on which the Conference was to work spoke of "limitation and, as far as possible, reduction of armaments".

The Resolution adopted on July 23rd, when the Conference adjourned says that

it decides "that a substantial reduction of world armaments shall be effected to be applied by a general convention alike to land, naval and air armaments", and in a later paragraph that, a strict limitation and a *real reduction* of effectives shall be brought about".

The public sessions of the first months of the Conference brought out a number of practical proposals more far-reaching than had been exposed. True, the Soviet proposal for disarmament down to a somewhat indefinite limit of "frontier guards" and armed police was rejected, but the Italian, German and Spanish proposals for the abolition of whole classes of armaments, a genuine step towards real disarmament, won a surprising and increasing support.

The British Delegation supported the principle of the abolition of "offensive" weapons, though holding back at first from concrete proposals. The Americans proposed in April as a first instalment the abolition of tanks and heavy land guns. Thus five Great Powers seemed to be ready to move forward and hopes were raised. But not only did Japan hold back. The French had made no suggestion of reductions and their Elections in May made it advisable to postpone the meetings of the General Commission until June.

While waiting, the technical Commissions were asked to define "offensive armaments" and in the course of long discussions, supposed to be technical but really governed by political considerations, much light was thrown on the nature of the opposition to disarmament in certain countries. If with the advent of the new French Government the

political issue had been faced in public sessions, the force of public opinion demanding results from the Conference might have been sufficient to bring the Delegations to agree to more substantial measures.

Unfortunately from June 10th onwards the work has been done in private conversations between Great Britain, France and America with Italy occasionally brought in. Mr. Hoover broke into them with his announcement of a proposal for a comprehensive policy involving reductions of about one-third of armaments and armed Forces. This was cordially welcomed by Italy, Germany and the U. S. S. R. and many of the smaller States, but was coldly received by France and Great Britain, the latter putting forward proposals which did not go so far and could not be said to carry out the principle of the abolition of aggressive armaments supported by Sir John Simon earlier in the Conference.

But then the private conversations were resumed and the resolution which resulted represented, as Mr. Gibson said, "a complicated series of inter-related concessions" so that the responsibility for its weaknesses was concealed.

There is not space to discuss the Resolution fully. Besides the points of advance already mentioned we should note that a small step is agreed on towards the direct limitation of land guns, though the widespread approval of the American proposal to abolish tanks had had to yield to French, Japanese and British objections.

The agreement to prohibit bombing from the air is of very little value as long as military aircraft capable of use

## CONTENTS

- The First Session of the Disarmament Conference, Hilda Clark, E. M. Pye.
- What Must be our Opinion of the Disarmament Conference? Gabrielle Duchêne.
- Geneva, the Vacuum, Dorothy Detzer.
- News of the Sections.
- General News.

as bombers are retained, but it should help to stimulate public opinion to insist on the abolition of these. Naval questions are to be discussed by the Naval Powers.

The provision in the Draft Convention for a Permanent Disarmament Commission and for the abolition of chemical warfare is confirmed and the Budget Experts are to continue their study of the methods of limiting expenditure. A Special Committee is to be set up "to submit proposals to the Conference immediately on the resumption of its work, in regard to the regulations to be applied to the trade in and private and State manufacture of arms and implements of war".

The resolution contains the very important statement that it "in no way prejudices the attitude of the Conference towards any more comprehensive measures of disarmament or towards the political proposals submitted by various delegates".

A renewed and vigorous campaign is necessary in every country to bring the utmost pressure of a demand from all peoples that truly comprehensive measures shall be adopted when the Conference meets again. For this we must insist on public sessions so that the people may know where the responsibility lies if their wishes are not carried out.

Hilda Clark.

In the Article by Hilda Clark, who has been making a close study of all that has been happening at Geneva, we have a clear exposition of the present situation with regard to the first stage of the Disarmament Conference. In it she writes not only of the disappointments and the failures, but of the future hope, and if we are to work intelligently, as we of the W. I. L. P. F. must, it is very necessary to understand this. We must face the truth. The failure did not lie with the representatives gathered together at Geneva, but with the Nations themselves, and the existing public opinion in them. If there had been a firm will of the peoples as a whole to get rid of the means of making war, progress would have been made. If Sir John Simon had felt behind him the overwhelming weight of forty millions instead of only the two million who signed the Declaration, he would have been obliged to take the steps urged upon him by those who hoped for something real as an outcome of six months' work. If Monsieur Herriot had taken up the reins of a team who represented not pacifists only, but a

whole country who believed that security lay in the getting rid of arms, he would have been obliged to join with those who demand security by disarmament.

While no country wants war, there is nowhere as yet a determined will to achieve peace by ruling out the possibility of it.

The Statesmen at Geneva had no vision of that new world order which Woodrow Wilson saw when he drafted the Covenant of the League of Nations; they were all engaged in trying to make it possible for the nations to continue to exist under the old order of things. Until the possibility of a world without war is believed in by the peoples, we shall not get the important step towards it that we all long to see realised. The task of all our Sections must be to keep alive this vision, to take up again the work of convincing people that if they want peace, security and prosperity they will only attain them by getting rid of armaments and the distrust and fear which they maintain. If there were any other way of getting rid of them except by international agreement, some of us might wish to try another door. *But there is no other way.* Fortunately the door at Geneva has been left unlocked and there is still hope of advance, if there is enough pressure brought upon it when the Disarmament Conference reassembles.

The whole weight of every Section of the W. I. L. P. F. and every other peace organisation must be brought to bear in all the countries represented there, if there is to be real hope of a successful issue.

E. M. Pye.

### WHAT MUST BE OUR OPINION OF THE DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE?

The first session of the so-called Disarmament Conference ended on July 23rd, six months after the opening.

If would be useless to try to put into words the legitimate disappointment we feel at the meaningless results of the Conference. The facts speak for themselves:

Those who followed the work of the Conference with interest can be divided into four categories:

(1) Sincere advocates of disarmament, who can be divided into two groups: (a) those who believe that, in order to get even partial satisfaction, we must make maximum demands, and who therefore demand *Total Disarmament*; (b) those who believe it is better tactics to make

smaller demands. Both groups have equal faith in the work of the League of Nations.

(2) Those who, though wanting disarmament as much as the others, have been made sceptical by the attitude of the League of Nations and while they are not systematically against it, doubt its ability to achieve disarmament.

(3) Those who, on principle, are opposed to the League of Nations and who would be distressed if it showed signs of marked power.

(4) Those who do not wish disarmament.

The first two categories are composed of the great masses of the people and the healthy intellectual groups in all countries.

The third group, with the exception of some Left Wing doctrinaires, is made up of reactionaries.

The fourth group is made up of all the munition makers, and almost all politicians. There is only a shade of difference between the two: the latter, having to take into account the opinion of those they lead, must try to blind them by "appearances" which will keep alive the "illusions" created by the fine words of statesmen, from Mussolini to Tardieu-Herriot.

Which one of these categories can find satisfaction in the results of this session?

Stripped of the assurances contained in the preamble, classic assurances in whose sincerity we can no longer believe and which are once again destined to deceive the public, what positive thing does the resolution contain?

Promises! Only promises! Promise to "prohibit", to "abolish", to "limit", to "create" a commission of control, promise to examine various measures.

Not the slightest measure of immediate reduction—except a "recommendation" to renew the Armaments Truce for four months!

Promises. But promises have followed upon promises since the proclamation of President Wilson's 14 points; indeed one could almost say since the first day of the war of 1914-1918 which was announced as the "last war" whose object was to put an end to militarism... beginning with German militarism naturally.

Let us see what has become of two of the principal promises:

Self-determination of the peoples: we need only observe the present attitude of the Great Powers to subject peoples.

Disarmament: where are we after fifteen years of preparatory work?

But let us suppose, for an instant, that the promises in the Benes resolution have been carried out. What value have they? Let us examine them one by one:

*Prohibition of any air attack against the civilian population:*

This comes in the category of measures intended to "humanise" war. However all true pacifists are absolutely opposed to this idea and, as a practical measure, history has proved, that in time of war all such measures are violated.

*Absolute prohibition of chemical, bacteriological and incendiary warfare. Abolition of all bombardment from the air.*

Each time, in the history of mankind, when new arms have been introduced (cross-bow, powder, etc.) protest has been made against them. "Councils" have even solemnly forbidden their use. Experience has shown the value of such prohibitions. To-day competent military men in all countries, who occupy responsible positions, do not conceal their intentions as regards the use of the most "effective" means possible in time of war.

*Quantitative limitation of certain heavy artillery, of the maximum calibre of heavy artillery, of the maximum calibre of tanks.*

What do these poor "limitations" represent in comparison to even the partial measures hoped for by the most modest advocates of real disarmament?

*Institution of a Permanent Commission* to follow the application of the Convention.

Was it really worth while to mention such a commission when it is not to be hoped that the measures will be carried out without strict supervision.

No passage contains reference to the smallest *reduction of armaments*, to the smallest measure against *manufacture and free traffic in war materials*.

Up to now only two countries have made important practical proposals: the U. S. S. R.—proposal for Total Disarmament, and then for Partial Disarmament; the United States—proposals for substantial reductions of armaments.

How were they received?

Insolent irony met the proposal of the U. S. S. R. and they were set aside.

More regard had to be paid to the United States. President Hoover was covered with flowers. At the first discussion thirty nations—most of them small nations—gave their approval. There then followed some of the inauspicious "private conversations" where the worst kind of intrigues are carried on, and the Benes resolution was voted by 41 countries.

Only two countries had the courage to vote against: Germany and the U. S. S. R. Eight were content with abstaining thus washing their hands like Pontius Pilate.

The others, blinded or convinced by "arguments" which we do not know, gave their consent.

Only the small minority of the fourth category—munition makers and the Governments (their conscious or unconscious instrument) can rejoice. Once again this little minority has achieved its ends.

This little minority should not rejoice too much. Up to now the only arguments used have been those of reason and justice. It is dangerous to be deaf to reason and justice.

The people become daily more aroused to a consciousness of the situation and their patience is exhausted.

*They will have Peace.*

The appeal of two French writers, Romain Rolland and Henri Barbusse, brought a response from all parts of the globe, all social groups, all points of the political and philosophical horizon, in spite of the intrigues of party men and the orders of certain leaders, and the masses rose in protest against war to show their will to unite against war.

Must popular fury be let loose in order to get measures which will insure Peace?

If this is the case the responsibility will lie with those who, being to-day in power, abuse it; it will also lie in part with those for whom the ideal remains a "pious wish" and who will not or do not know how to work for the realisation of that ideal.

Gabrielle Duchêne.

## GENEVA THE VAGUUM

Impressions are often relative—and I can not record mine (as I have been requested to by the Editor of *Pax*)—without seeing Geneva against a background of a tormented world.

Of course, I can respond again to the delightful friendliness of the Maison and its riotous little garden. That's real. Or I can see Geneva as a panorama of blue lake and clean buildings and swans and exotic magenta flowers. But this is the gay lip stick of Geneva; under the make up, I find a vacuum.

For how can one remember the faces of men in the Bonus Army in Washington or the unemployed of Chicago stretched on their newspapers in Grant Park, or the appearance of a dead city in the early morning hours of Detroit, and care very much whether the Disarmament Delegations in their comfortable hotels in Geneva are tired and wanted to go home? Or understand how the Americans could give the Hoover proposals the anaemic, half

hearted support they got? Was this then merely a political trick of the President's in an election year—a little nosegay that would fade, tossed to the Pacifists? Or did the American delegation really imagine that Unity with France and Great Britain on nothing was wiser or better than a vote now on Disarmament? The Bergues Hotel, the pretty lake, villas in the country, create a vacuum which evidently has protected the Delegates from the stark reality of what a militarized world is doing!

Then Germany—Germany swinging more inevitably to Hitler. Yet unity on nothing between the U. S., France and England seems wiser than support for the sane, stable element of Germany—which holds the key to Peace in Europe.

I meet friends just out of Poland—with tortured eyes recounting unbelievable tales of repression and violence and Poland prates about "moral disarmament".

Gandhi lies in jail, the British Empire rots from within and Sir John Simon sleek and smiling informs the Conference that the British have never indulged in "inhuman bombing". Shades of Irak and India! And no one challenges him.

And finally the Conference Apologists. They are disappointed; everybody is "disappointed". But that is all you must be.

You must not burn with indignation; you must not consider the Benes Resolution a betrayal to the burdened peoples of the world. You must not be too concerned about public opinion—"just hold it back if it wants too much Disarmament". The millions who petitioned the Conference on February 6th, the ones who have "flooded" Henderson since the Hoover proposals—tell them that after seven years of a preparatory commission and six months of conference we have another "promise" for reduction—and best of all—we have *unity*. You must not discourage "the people".

Geneva needs rebels—rebels who see this sick world as it is—and not the cotton-wool padding of the City on the the Lake—rebels who do not live in a vacuum of political balances, rebels who believe more in Disarmament than Unity on nothing, more in Truth than technicalities and who are in a hurry about Peace!

Dorothy Detzer.

BRING IN NEW MEMBERS  
AND SUBSCRIBERS TO PAX  
AND HELP OUR INTERNATIONAL WORK

## NEWS OF THE SECTIONS

### Austria.

The Commission on Education of the Austrian Section has drawn up a message to educationalists in all those countries which were neutral in the war, begging them to collaborate in arousing and keeping alive in children a world conscience.

### Australia.

The Australian Section organised a great demonstration on May 18th, anniversary of the first Hague Conference.

### Belgium.

We are happy to announce that the first summer school organised by our Belgian Section at Morlanwelz was a great success. We shall report further about this in our next issue.

### United States.

A delegation of the United States Section was received by President Hoover

on July 14th and urged him, in his electoral campaign, to stress the importance of universal disarmament, reduction of tariffs, revision of war debts and renewal of relations with the U. S. S. R.

.....

## LATEST NEWS

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom sent a telegram to the Hungarian Government protesting against the application of martial law in the trial of Fürst and Salai, and a second telegram was sent asking that Karikas be tried in the civil courts.

A caravan of French teachers, on their way back from a study trip in Austria, Hungary and Switzerland, visited League Headquarters in Geneva where a small reception was given them.

## GENERAL NEWS

Portugal is taking an interest in the W.I.L. The Manifesto of the Grenoble Congress was translated into Portuguese and sent to the President of the Government; articles on the League have appeared in various newspapers and periodicals.

## International School of the Balearics

At Palma, Isle of Majorca

Languages  
Academic Preparation  
International Cooperation  
Moral Education

**PAX INTERNATIONAL DID NOT APPEAR IN AUGUST**

# PAX INTERNATIONAL

MONTHLY BULLETIN OF THE WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE  
FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM

published by the Headquarters Office of the  
W. I. L. P. F., 12, rue du Vieux-Collège, Geneva.

The undersigned .....  
wishes to subscribe to *Pax International* for one year beginning .....  
Please send the English, French, German edition (cross out those not wanted).

Signature: .....

Address: (please write legibly) .....

**Subscription price: 2.50 Swiss francs, 50 cents or 2/6 a year.**