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THE PRESENT POLITICAL SITUATION

A W. I. L. P. F. SYMPOSIUM

Editor's note: An article on this subject by the editor of Pax was sent on Dec. 20th to all Sections with a request for contributions continuing the discussion. This article, and the others received in response to it, follow. It is to be noted that all except the postscript to E. G. B.'s article were written before the Saar Plebiscite. The editor apologizes for the delay in issuing this number of Pax, caused by an epidemic of grippe.

The world scene presents the following figures.

Three Powers profess a nationalist-militarist point of view: Italy, Germany, Japan. All three are fascist and are under suspicion of aggressive intentions.

Four Powers may be counted as in a general way seeking stabilisation of the *status quo*, or "security". Of these England, France and the United States are parliamentary countries, Russia a dictatorship of the proletariat. The means used by all of them are armaments and "understandings", if not actual alliances. This is especially true of France and Russia who are the most uneasy about possible attack.

Of the lesser European Powers some desire "revision", some are afraid of it. The desire to enlist their backing leads to endless intrigue among the great Powers. Many of them are also powder-mines for the world through their own feuds, internal and external. These different kinds of tension every now and then coincide in such a way as to create a special danger — as at Serajevo and Marseilles.

There are also the democratic neutral countries, of which only the Scandinavian countries, Holland and Switzerland are in a position to influence the situation perceptibly.

Centred at Geneva there is the international peace organisation. The effectiveness of the League of Nations, in this role, has suffered from the fact that it is neither a military or economic supernational force, nor (what we desire to see it) a universal disinterested moral force.

Since Great Britain and the United States propose not to be involved in European struggles this leaves the direction of policies, in face of the three imperialist Powers, mainly in the hands of France and Russia and the leadership is with France.

What then is the situation and what are the policies of our National Sections?

Within Germany, an active organisation is not possible at present, any more than in Italy or Russia. Of the politically powerful countries in which we are represented there remain France, England and the United States. I take these in reverse order.

The United States, under President Roosevelt, is in a phase of hurried and confused evolution the full meaning of which cannot yet be understood. The W. I. L. seeks to enlist political support, both among the voters and among office-holders, for policies opposed to war, to preparation for war and to the munitions interests, opposed also to imperialism and actively in favour of disinterested international solutions. For American pacifists the position in regard to Japan is complicated by their fear that she will seek to conquer and exploit China and to consolidate a supreme imperialism in the Far East if she is not held in check, and at the same time by the difficulty of effectively curbing these ambitions if they become aggressive, without the counter-armament to which pacifists are opposed on principle. To consider here the possibility of other cooperative and creative solutions of the problem of the Pacific would take us too far afield.

The members of the English W. I. L. are a great educational force and within certain limits an effective political force. They have a Government susceptible to pressure by voters and they have the vote. They have the English tradition of good sense, persistence and democratic activity. They prefer a half loaf to none. They are throwing their force into getting as much as may be possible in the way of a disarmament convention and into preventing the growth of fascism and of instruments of suppression like the Sedition law, recently brought into force. Quite particularly in the effort to build up a collective peace system they are laying the greatest stress on support for and development of democratic methods. This means of course that they oppose every kind of dictatorship whatever its ultimate aims.

In France under the superficial control of capitalists, nationalists and army-men the number of those who are fundamentally opposed to militarism and to capitalism is greater than is shown on the surface. Official France has so far sought the solution in power—in fortifications, conscription, air and land forces and alliances. So far this power has been used in an attempt to hold Germany down while at the same time the Government has not dared to carry its policy to the point of using military means to prevent German rearmament.

This policy has favoured the growth of the psychological and political bases of Hitlerism and has at the same time completely failed to control it or to bring it into line with French wishes.

The situation for "the other France" is peculiarly difficult. Fascism and especially Hitler, it abhors and fears. War also it abhors and fears.

In face of all this, the French Section of the W. I. L. considers efforts towards social transformation as the first necessity and regards as its most important service the building up of a great popular movement against war and fascism in common with all elements which are opposing these—a piece of work in which it is being astonishingly successful.

In a situation so complex it would be a miracle if all those who seek the same goal agreed as to the best way to reach it. I want to express my personal view for what it is worth. Please note that I am not speaking of the long-term policies which are the most fundamentally significant but of the immediate political conjuncture. The reason that this seems to me so important is that unless Europe is freed from the incubus of war-fear for a breathing space neither social change nor even moral or cultural recuperation from the present growing barbarism can go forward.

Unless there is a timely change of regime in one or all of the three great fascist countries, the only means of averting the threat of a war breaking out in Europe seems to me to be a decision to take the bull by the horns and make every effort to bring Germany into the European order and also to get Japan and the United States to work as members of the League of Nations (as Russia, happily, is now doing).

I wish however to speak especially of the problem presented by Germany. For me it is not a question whether Hitler's Germany can be trusted. It is evident to me that it cannot be. It is not a question of whether that regime is decent or tolerable, even in face of the very low standard reached by most Governments and the terrible abuses committed by too many of them, particularly by those which hold arbitrary power. For me it is not even a question whether such a policy will temporarily strengthen the power of the "Führer" or of some successor of the same stamp. This has all to be taken in the bitter cup that all of us, and especially all Europeans, have to drink. I believe, only, that it is on the whole better than any other alternative that is politically possible for the immediate future. It would involve allowing Germany the right, in fact as well as in an unreal diplomatic declaration, to equal status in all matters. To my intense regret this obviously means recognising and allowing, at first, some part of the illegal and secret rearmament already in process. The question is whether Germany is more dangerous arming illegally and clandestinely just as she chooses, or arming in public, within agreed limits and under supervision.

It is only after this policy has been entered on that constructive efforts seem to me to have any promise of success. I have in mind such steps as the following

- 1) genuine disarmament all round;
- 2) measures to end the insane plan of "autarky" or economic self-sufficiency;
- 3) minor revisions of unreasonable boundaries, notably in the case of Hungary and the Tyrol;
- 4) cultural tolerance and cooperation within and across frontiers and respect, in principle and in practice, for human rights and liberties regardless of opinion, race or sex;
- 5) most basic of all, and proceeding alongside of such measures as the above, a transformation of the framework of society based on profits into something—I should like to say more Christian, but in any case nobler, more human, and more reasonable.

If it is said, in opposition, that this policy would strengthen Hitler—I doubt if it would do so in the long run. His power, in many of the worst uses that he makes of it, would on the contrary be undermined. He could no longer represent Germany as encircled, victimised and in danger of attack. He could not argue that it is forced, in self-defense, to militarise its youth, sacrifice all normal liberties and amenities of life, and pay out of its poverty for a feverish spurt of armament.

If political Europe were not to-day on such a base level ethically, if it had a moral genius to lead it as Gandhi has led India, such a change from its post-war policies could be made in a glow of contagious good-will and with a recognition in each group of its own mistakes.

To even imagine such a simple and natural state of mind appears fantastic to-day.

But on the level of Governments such as are in power at present the policy here advocated, if undertaken, would be carried out not nobly and for noble motives but largely for ignoble motives and ignobly.

It is my conviction that even granting this it is a less disastrous policy than the only alternative that seems possible for the immediate present—that is, less disastrous than the attempt to get "security" on a basis of competitive armament and competitive under-hand alliances, a policy based on at least equally ignoble motives and leading straight to a world convulsion. *E. G. B.*

P. S. In view of developments since this article was written I beg leave to add a statement of my belief that the advantages offered to Germany should be conditional on her giving explicit and binding guarantees against troubling the peace. Other countries should consider it not only a right but a duty to give frank expression, both privately and officially, to their attitude toward terror as a political instrument, the use of torture (especially deliberate torture of helpless prisoners), racial persecution, abandonment of all safeguards of justice in the accepted legal sense and contempt for the whole conception of human rights.

E. G. B.

HITLER IS THE RULE OF HEAVY INDUSTRY AND THE JUNKERS

HEAVY INDUSTRY AND THE JUNKERS MEAN WAR

An objective exchange of ideas is always fruitful when it serves the truth. May we therefore give the view of a large number of our members who do not agree with E. G. B.'s analysis?

It surely is not necessary to state that we feel entirely at one with her in the earnest effort to achieve an honourable peace, in horror of war and preparation for war, whatever form war may take.

Is it necessary to express agreement with her that certain clauses of the Versailles Treaty have favoured the advent and increased the power of Hitler? But the Versailles Treaty is only *one* of the causes of the decline of Germany and the rise of National-Socialist party rule. *Only one.* Is it necessary to repeat here—what has often been pointed out—that the victorious States, too, and those States also which are not labelled "guilty" by the Treaties, are going through severe economic crises, that Italy which sits in the League of Nations among her peers on a basis of perfect equality and which was the first to establish fascism cherishes an unbridled imperialism which is a constant war-danger to Europe and the colonial world? And Japan?

Unlike E. G. B. we are convinced that the causes of the present situation are not to be conjured out of existence merely with a mea culpa and self-humiliation. They have deeper roots.

We also believe that the roles of France, England and the U. S. S. R. are not realistically understood by E. G. B. For even if in certain debates in the House of Commons the wish is expressed that Great Britain should not mix in European conflicts is not the contrary oftener true? Does not England again and again undertake the role of conciliator and intermediary in continental conflicts? (Whether always to the advantage of the Continent is not here the question). And is it not the London "City" which constantly is taking new steps toward the stabilisation, in the heart of Europe, of a regime which means war? It is also worthy of remark that people constantly need to be reminded that the *only* State which laid concrete proposals for total disarmament before the Geneva forum was the Soviet Union and that the project was never discussed in its original form since everything brought forward by a non-capitalist State is, in the eyes of

the honourable "normal" countries, hypocrisy. Hitlerite peace speeches, on the contrary, are only too willingly taken at their face value.

E. G. B. sees the only solution of the international chaos in taking the bull by the horns and attempting everything possible to bring Germany back into the European order. This presupposes that one regards a regime of terrorists as one which is admissible as a partner to treaties and alliances. In Geneva they are preparing a "Convention against Terror and Terrorists" and at the same time they close their ears and eyes to the governmental terror which in the heart of Europe has been systematically carried on now for two years and which is heaping up unimaginable quantities of explosive matter. Instead of outlawing and excommunicating such a government they treat it like a State based on law and right and declare it to be acceptable as a party to the negotiation of treaties; they react to its inflammatory and provocative speeches and writings within the country only by obstinate deafness and blindness and do every thing to facilitate its return to the Geneva League memberships in which it denounced with an hysterical display of noise and bluffing and, last not least, they grant it credits in money and goods which stabilise the regime of terror. (Perhaps before these lines go to press the much spoken of credit of four hundred million gulden to Hitler from the Dutch Oil and Shell Co. will be a reality?)

We know that other States which are not fully fascist are not of angelic purity. If world politics had a moral code, if there were an international system of right and law, it would ill become dignity, moral decency and humanity to welcome a bull—to use E. G. B.'s figure—into the Society of States. But the representatives of the League of Nations do not exist in a vacuum. Like every other institution today they act not according to ethical but according to economic considerations. *Fascism is the last, the international, bulwark of capitalism.* To strengthen this bulwark is to wish for fascism, is to assure and stabilise the system of internal and external terrorism. *The fight against Bolshevism* is the pass-word of every Government today. This is the trump card that Hitler holds in his hand and the whole world joins the dance around it as around the golden calf. True, Bolshevism, in the person of the representative of the Soviet Union, sits in the League of Nations and the Third Reich will soon be sitting by his side. But the nursery tale of the Bolshevik bogey is still at large and the capitalists

of all countries are crossing themselves. Fascist fighters of the front line, and the "Fronts", and pacifist hikers are made use of on missions of reconciliation, the Franco-German heavy industry brings in its harvest on their backs and in loyal service to this the international police holds its watch on the Saar.

The European order of which E. G. B. speaks is an amalgamation of the most highly capitalist States without any common political or ethical purpose to hold it together, without direction or aim, without leadership. The leadership is *outside* the League. Its name is Adolf Hitler. Whether this is unconscious, half-conscious or consciously recognised—what is the difference? The last possible moment for giving an international aim or direction to world affairs was allowed to pass without action—if this was ever intended. This opportunity offered itself when the Third Reich left the League of Nations. If there had been independent statesmen, fitted and desiring to lead an international community and shape an international situation, they would have made use of that opportunity

- (1) to elaborate a collective system of sanctions against disturbers of the peace, to formulate them and to work them into the existing treaties;
- (2) to define aggression and work this in also:

(This definition would not have been limited to the *outbreak* of hostilities but would have included the creation of a psychological and moral *preparation* for it. For while it is constantly reiterated that economic and military preparation for war may have a defensive character there are plenty of proofs of the presence of the *spirit* of aggression: in school books, in the books used in army training, in the song-books of military and semi-military bodies, in the books which have been written or are being written by political "Führers" and which are regarded as Bibles, in their own speeches and those of their representatives and also in university lectures).

- (3) to call upon all States members of the League of Nations to prepare, on the basis of providing such relative security, for gradual complete disarmament in all countries;
- (4) to call upon the Governments to adjust their national constitutions and legislation to the international treaties.

To these elementary conditions of an international order an obstinate Government would have had to give its assent in the face of all the world if it wished to return to Geneva. Such an international procedure would have done justice to those who, quite properly, were seeking security and also to those who consider the clauses of the Versailles Treaty to be the root of all evil. But unhappily the last moment when peace, an unarmed peace, might have been established was by that time gone for a long time to come and now the situation is just the opposite. Today Fascism is recognised as the guarantee of international profit-economy and as such petted and indulged. The Third Reich now prescribes the rules for their action to Geneva and the Governments represented there. This is the fruit of the policy of being ready blindly to accept every concession to Hitler's fascism instead of paralysing, through the building up of a collective guarantee of peace, the loudly proclaimed aggressive purposes of Hitler. During the two years of National-Socialist control we have been giving warning. We have advocated a policy of political and

OUR POSITION TOWARD HITLER GERMANY

I should like to single out one point from the article of E. G. B. : our attitude toward Hitler Germany.

From the standpoint of the W. I. L. it is desirable "to make every effort to bring Germany back into the European order?" Should we approve and even advocate Germany's being unconditionally received back into the L. o. N. and should we go still further and agree to an acceptance of equality of armament for Germany?

As to this I would first raise one question : who shut Germany out of the European community, or rather out of the international community of peoples as is represented in the L. o. N.? It was Germany herself who left this community; she isolated herself and then got further and further into isolation.

In the first place the proclamation of the principle "if a thing is good for Germany, Germany has a right to it" (was Deutschland nützt ist auch sein Recht) automatically shut her out of every community of peoples. A community can be based only on equality of rights and is built up on laws and treaties agreed on in common but is at once broken up by a claim of special rights.

Secondly the unexampled suppression within the country, the privileges given

economic isolation of the Third Reich with the object of giving the European States time and opportunity to strengthen a peace system which is only theoretically indicated in the Covenant of the League of Nations and the later treaties but lacks the substratum of practical concrete provisions and therefore cannot maintain itself in times of political testing.

The pacifists of the world bear a heavy weight of responsibility for the rearming of Germany. Instead of giving their support to those Germans who tried to make a virtue of necessity under the Versailles Treaty and to prepare a new generation for freedom and peace they gave their support, in all good faith and without any knowledge of the facts, to the madmen who under pretext of equality were busy in preparing the intensive rearmament of Germany in all fields. We are now going through the same experience all over again : woe to the pacifists who lend aid to the catastrophic capitalistic policy of Hitler and his friends throughout the world. A Europe which yields to Hitler declares upon itself the craziest of all wars. Woe to those who come after us. G.

to one race at the expense of another, the persecution of the Jews, the political and economic measures taken against political opponents and, last not least, the apparent absence of opposition in great classes of the population in the face of all these fearful abuses create an instinctive drawing back from Germany among all those who are still lovers of liberty.

In the third place the complete unreliability of Germany in regard to the fulfilment of her economic obligations has substantially contributed to the alienation of other countries. It is not only the material losses which create dissatisfaction but, almost more, the coolness with which these losses to others are taken as a matter of course.

The same thing is to be said, fourthly, in regard to the rearmament of Germany which, first carried on secretly, is now quite openly continued. This has created uneasiness, fear and, among those who still want to believe in the binding force of treaties and agreements, bitterness against this sovereign disregard of accepted obligations.

These are all factors which we cannot alter from outside and which we do not alter by abandoning right and law in order that there may not be further opportunity to violate them. As pacifists we have every ground to welcome a return of Germany into the community

of peoples but it would be disastrous to assume that the present Germany of terrorism and the rule of violence would mean an enrichment of the international life of the peoples. It is our task to strengthen "the other Germany" and we do not do this by supporting the present Germany and aiding it to attain without repentance or expiation what it set out to attain.

This does not mean that I make a sharp line of demarcation between the Germany of the spirit of violence, terrorism and faithlessness and the other countries and states full of noble justice, gentleness and trustworthiness. I am quite ready for the frankest acknowledgement of the joint responsibility and also I am convinced that we must carry on our struggle against the spirit of war and violence first of all in our own country since, at least at present, we have not much other possibility and since it is always a right principle to sweep first before one's own door.

This national struggle however can only be carried on rightly when we take our position on grounds of principle in regard to happenings and situations outside our own country and there also condemn and fight against what we regard as reprehensible and inadmissible. It therefore appears to me the clear duty of all pacifists not to speak in favour of a permitted rearmament of Germany but to work for disarmament in other countries. Neither must we, with the excuse "we are all sinners together", permit injustice and abuse of force to get control. But we must condemn these inside and outside our own country and struggle against them. It is not easy to-day to believe in the victory of right and justice, but have not the others such an easy game just because we—from misunderstood loyalty and weakheartedness—let ourselves constantly be driven from our proper path? The greatest evil of our time is not that too few people recognise the truth but that too few dare to speak it out and act accordingly. C. R.

W. I. L. P. F. ATTITUDE TO THE PRESENT POLITICAL SITUATION

The position of the W. I. L. P. F. in regard to the present situation in general and in Europe in particular seems to me much simpler than E. G. B. states it. That is of course on the condition that we judge it from our point of view as women and do not forget that we joined together in 1915 as international individuals in order to fight war and make it

impossible. We pledged ourselves to take up the struggle against all political, economic and social measures which cause war. And it was expressly emphasized that humanizing war is a compromise to sanction it and must be squarely refused.

Fascism means the same thing as war, as will be made clear further on. At the present moment it is no good to humanize fascism nor to compromise with it, no good to hunt for little plasters, which apparently promise to secure a few years' pause for taking breath to the States of absolutely masculine mentality of our time, which are throughout corrupt, convulsed and infected.

But women, to-day as in 1915, must stand by their principles then set up without any regard to criticism and outgrown conceptions, firmly anchored in their mind and looking far ahead, since the realization of these principles — to-day as then — is the only curative measure to secure a better community for the peoples of the world.

Our pass-word was not only "War to War!", but struggle against all the conditions and preparations that lead to war.

Fascism is preparation for war in utmost potency. Fascist Governments always know how to find an occasion to contrive a war, or to provoke artfully such occasion. Under fascist dictatorship people are militarized body and soul, trained for violence and war from the cradle to the grave. A people whose women and men are thus infected with militarism for one or more generations, must by logical necessity and in order to activate their regime betake itself to warfare.

For me, from these premises clearly follows the position which the W. I. L. P. F. has to take. Whoever to-day endeavours to attain a *modus vivendi* with States under a fascist regime, entering into pacts and compromises with them on the basis of their asseveration of peacefulness — which never is given except when foreign loans are needed because the government's purse is empty — such a one-trusting in the melodious tune or not — diverges far from our principles set up in 1915.

People who survey conditions beyond their time may sometimes be liable to a disappointment, as though their theory were condemned to failure. But just such a crisis bids them to stand by their ideal undauntedly, to struggle for it with redoubled energy until its vigour is evident and efficacious.

The time for our principle must come and will come so much the sooner as firmer

and stronger women stand together against any war and struggle in firm unity against all political, economic and social measures, that cause warlike conflicts.

Since fascism — as has been stated already — sooner or later unavoidably brings forth war, in my opinion the position of the W. I. L. P. F. is clearly fixed :

either loyal maintenance of our fundamental principle to fight war and trace out and fight any cause that leads to incubation of political conflicts

or denial of the League's essential nature and abandonment of its entity.

A. S.

FROM FRANCE

As E. G. B. has said, as a result of the abstention of England and the U. S. and of the fascist character of Germany and Italy, it is France which, reenforced by the Petite Entente and the U. S. S. R., finds herself in a dominant position or rather finds herself obliged to undertake heavy responsibilities. Now when I think of what responsibilities France has assumed in the past — the Peace Treaties, the Ruhr — and of the fact that in 1927, when Foch was of the opinion that Germany was disarmed, France made no attempts toward disarmament, my desire is to see our country follow a genuine peace policy.

For this it is not enough for those who are opposed to war and fascism to declare themselves partisans of disarmament and to oppose dictatorships. It is necessary to seek how to orient oneself in a grave and complicated situation. It is necessary that a mass of public opinion, considerable in numbers and strength, should exert pressure upon those in power.

How? Not by accusing such or such a country alone, not by permitting the formation of a "Union Sacrée" to carry on war against a fascist country but, according to the views expressed in a carefully worded Resolution of the Comité de Vigilance, "by taking the position that anti-fascism must not furnish any pretext or justification for a war and by working for the establishment of a real peace. This is a difficult task, painful and dangerous because it implies at least a minimum of negotiation with Governments which are detested and men who are despised, because the fascists will not fail to make capital out of these negotiations and because we must be careful that the agreements resulting from them become neither a manoeuvre in the field of internal politics consolidat-

ing the fascist regime, nor a manoeuvre of external politics resulting in aggression by a fascist State against a third State and in particular against the Soviet Union."

"Peace will not be a genuine peace till it rests on a sincere will to peace of all the peoples and an organisation of international relations. This latter implies absolute equality of rights among all peoples — strong or weak, victorious or vanquished — all-around disarmament, limitation of national sovereignty, the depriving those economic forces which push the most directly toward war of their power to do harm, and last but not least putting an end to economic conflicts."

"To serve peace we ought not to permit our Governments to repulse any offer of peace whatever it may be nor wherever it may come from. When the fascist Governments repeat words and gestures of peace we ought to take them at their word, in the face of their peoples. We ought not to forget that fascism does not cease to exploit these refusals, to the injury of France and of peace."

"To every conciliatory word, without inquiring whether it is sincere or not, France ought to reply with a concrete and public proposal for general and supervised disarmament and a corresponding recognition of equality of rights."

"To conclude this analysis of what the anti-fascism of France should be, it ought to be hostile to all war, favourable to all negotiations and to all pacts of non-aggression. Peace should remain the dearest possession of anti-fascism, the struggle to organise peace its first duty."

C. D.

The quotations are from the thirteenth issue of *Vigilance*, the organ of the Comité de Vigilance des Intellectuels Antifascistes.

FROM AUSTRIA

I

The opinion of E. G. B. is the typical Anglo-Saxon point of view, which I have heard from many English and American pacifists. But may I say at once that I cannot agree with it, much as I should like to. I think it fails to see what National-Socialism means to the countries subject to it and how fundamentally different it is from other forms of tyranny. Anglo-Saxons do not seem quite to grasp what a regime of this kind entails and how all individualism, all freedom and human rights which make life worth living, are swept away along with culture and human dignity. Perhaps you will say that it was the people's own fault for letting this party get into

power but I am under the impression that they hardly knew what they were doing and were deceived and betrayed on many points. Now, when many are disillusioned the circumstances make it very hard indeed almost impossible to effect changes.

In our League we are chiefly concerned with the war danger which Hitlerism means for the world. On this point there are three distinct opinions. Many people, some former pacifists among them, think that the only possibility is a war against the system, (a war against war), because nothing but violence appeals to the present German Government. We may dismiss this point of view at once, not only because anybody who endorses it cannot any more call himself a pacifist and does not concern us, but also from the matter of fact point of view that we have seen one failure of the plan to fight against militarism in the world war and that we could never agree to the suffering which war means for the innocent.

Another plan is to exclude war but to exert the necessary political and economic pressure on the German Government to force it to give way and behave like a civilized State, perhaps also formally to renounce Hitler's plans of conquest of all Germans outside the German frontiers. The third plan is the Anglo-Saxon idea of persuasion, reconciliation and the offer of equality.

This third plan for which many religious people, Friends, Socialists and others stand, imagines that if the victor nations who have so long wronged Germany should confess their fault and offer it equality then all would go smoothly again. It is based on analogy with the pedagogic principle of treating a child well and justly so that it will learn to behave equally well. But the German statesmen at the head of affairs are no children and do not want to be educated. They have shown ample proof of lack of moral sense and symptoms of abnormality, not to use a worse expression. It is a hopeless task to improve them and meanwhile they are destroying an old and valuable culture and threatening the world with war. *There is far too much at stake* to think of patient educational work; the only thing to hope for is *pressure*. Of course a world boycott would mean suffering but not by a long way as much as a war. And political pressure would cause bad feeling, but also not by a long way as bad feeling as war. I see our task only and solely in the prevention of war. We cannot remove all suffering and wrong, and if pressure of any kind can prevent a war, let us by all means resort to it.

Of course there would remain the question whether pressure of any kind would lead to success or whether the consequent suffering would drive the people to such despair that they would resort to arms after all. But the question of success comes second. Morally I think pressure justified and the best methods of exerting pressure should be thought out.

In thinking about these problems we should always consider what is most important. Here is dictatorship gaining ground everywhere, the human rights of freedom for which generations have fought and for which many people in all ages have suffered and died, being trodden under foot and destroyed. A great nation which has given to the world immortal treasures of science and art is developing a mentality of contempt for all mental and spiritual activity and persecuting the best of its members. It attacks Christianity, and openly confesses to hardness of heart, disregard of personal suffering and untruthfulness.

Evidently this means that a large stream of mental development is going in a wrong direction and destroying what was built through ages of human endeavour. This development must be stopped at all costs, and economic and political pressure is mild in comparison with the great danger threatening the world from this quarter. There is no reason to hope that persuasion might win over people who have neither the will nor the capacity to be persuaded to change their attitude in regard to morals and culture.

This is how I feel on the subject and I am sure very many people agree with me in this country. I think that a boycott of large dimensions has been prevented only by the very regrettable influence of business interests. *O. M.*

II

The present situation is clearly pictured in the article of E. G. B. We can only agree with her as far as the next steps are concerned. But according to my opinion the idea of revision ought to be more strongly emphasised. Certainly our first efforts must be directed against the munitions industries. Since they exploit everything that increases distrust and hatred between peoples it is essential to deprive them of all possibility of doing so in any country. To do this the fourteen points of Wilson must at last be taken seriously (either by fulfilling them or at least by really working to prepare to do so) and there must be an end of saying that a demand of revision is a *casus belli*, as was recently done by certain delegates in the League of Nations.

It should be the task of our Sections, especially in the smaller countries, to prepare the ground for recognition of the demands of justice. They should make every effort to convince their fellow-countrymen that a free-will acceptance of what is fair is far more fruitful and more advantageous than a determination to hold fast, if necessary even by war, to what one has. *M. Z.*

III

We agree that *si vis pacem para bellum* is a wrong saying for violence always leads to violence. But it seems to us that the democratic States are not behind the fascist States in arming. France for instance, instead of spending her gold to give new life to the economic situation and lessen unemployment spent it on huge armaments and fortresses which first made possible the rearmament of Germany and Hitler's victory. Nationalisation of the munitions industry and gradual disarmament of course must be our greatly desired goal. We must wish equally that the idea of Pan Europe should no longer be a Utopia but a beautiful reality.

Then all this national "Autarky" and national intolerance would come to end of themselves and God's sun would shine in a happy Europe. *J. J.*

FROM HUNGARY

We here in Hungary, probably owing to the prevailing spirit of depression, consider possibilities and outlook with a trifle more scepticism: for example we cannot believe in an effective supervision of armaments, even in case of public and legal armament. The secrets of the army have always been very anxiously safeguarded, so long as militarism exists there is no way of control. Therefore we have no illusions as to any favourable results of a recognition of Germany's right to rearm. We shall be glad to be found mistaken in this respect but are afraid that unless there is all-round and total disarmament, with a *general prohibition* of manufacture of arms, the threat of war will remain permanent. Therefore we accept wholeheartedly E. G. B.'s constructive points as a basis to start on.

We would suggest changing the order of the points and putting the fourth as third. It seems to us that the "spiritualising of boundaries"—to take a fashionable slogan—ought to start immediately, even before a new peace can be dealt with and will make revision easier and even less urgent.

There are rapid breath-taking changes. This last year has kept us in constant

excitement but the forces of evil seem to strive less victoriously than they threatened to. Let us hope that the "security bogey" will become obsolete through the growing enlightenment of the people and that a federated world-state based on an absolute negation of war will emerge from the present chaos.

E. M.-M. and M. V.

FROM CZECHO-SLOVAKIA

I

The internal political situation in Czecho-Slovakia has grown much tenser since the crime at Marseilles. Fear of war, which was already very great after the upset in Germany, has enormously increased and enabled militarist-fascist circles to develop a systematic campaign against leading democrats who are considered by many to be very little concerned for national defense. Following the example of the German-National "Heimat-Front", formed a year ago, a Czech-National Front has now been created which to be sure includes only quite small and unimportant parties and in parliament has only 18 seats against 170 Czech seats but is very definitely counting on strengthening its ranks in the next elections, which were to take place early in 1935. Owing to the unsatisfactory and confused world situation and the severe crisis within the country the elections have however been postponed till autumn when it is to be hoped that, thanks to a more tranquil world situation, the international situation may also have cleared up somewhat.

The democratic political parties which till now have underestimated the danger threatened by the growing fascism in the country have been awakened and are trying to build up a united democratic front also. General Medek, the leader of the Czech-National Front, recently threatened with concentration camps the democratic writers who opposed the recent unsuccessful fascist demonstrations and this has made clear what the National Front is counting on. The liquidation of the Marseilles crime, peaceful negotiations between France and Germany, Laval's journey to Rome, hopes that the Saar Plebiscite will go off peacefully—all this has had a tranquillising effect in Czecho-Slovakia and been something of a check to fascist tendencies. But the next elections whenever they occur will strengthen the fascist front, on both sides.

It is an interesting fact that the Czecho-Slovak National Front is mainly made up of big capitalists from both nationalities who have no difficulty in getting

together regardless of nationality questions when it is a matter of their profit. It also includes great numbers of the discontented impoverished official class, of elements which the different political parties wanted to get rid of and of the Slovak Catholic "Volkspartei" of Hlinka which not long ago was fighting against everything Czech, even outside the country. Each of these parties has a different programme and different interests but they are united when it is a question of hatred of democracy. The population which is systematically propagandised by the fascist press (which being in the hands of big capital is very powerful and therefore very wide-spread) is to-day questioning whether the democracy now in power really does what it should for the National defence and is coming to regard Hitler's Germany with lessening prejudice. The Government is therefore obliged to make certain decrees to which the democratic part of the administration agrees very unwillingly. As an example, not long ago parliament voted for two-years military service for men and a special tax for military defense to be paid by men not in military service and women in employment. In the latter case, through the intervention of the women's organisations, women with two minor children were exempted. *L. H. and E. K.*

II

The effect of the uncertainty and tension created by the European situation has been shown in Czecho-Slovakia by the support given to increase of armaments. To pay for this cuts are being made in salaries, especially in salaries of all State employees and still larger ones in those of couples both of whom are working. This is creating discontent and pushes many people toward fascism but on the whole is being accepted more calmly than could be expected. Further when a military tax on women was proposed there was no strong opposition because the position of working women (who would have to pay this tax) is so insecure that they did not dare to raise their voices.

Benes's part in the dealing with the Marseilles murder before the League of Nations has gained him the sympathy of many, including people from the right who did not sympathise with him before. This brings me to some points mentioned in the letter of E. G. B. about international politics.

The dealings of the little Entente with France this year aimed at strengthening the bonds between them and at assuring military and moral help to

each other. It would be naive to think that diplomats are pacifists who are seeking only moral help. Their chess-board still counts with soldiers and horses but I see a definite effort to evade a war conflict.

The question of a revision of peace treaties is a difficult one and will be a source of strain as long as those who are pushing it fail to understand that a revision would not solve anything. It is of no use to change frontiers where the population is so mixed as in the regions taken away from Hungary. I think we should consider in this not the opinion of Hungary but that of the inhabitants of the region concerned. It is more possible to speak about this question with Czechs than with Slovaks who are quite opposed. But this subject is too complicated for a short article. *A. Sch.*

FROM POLAND

In the political and moral chaos of today when political events succeed one another in a way impossible for even statesmen to foresee, the only role remaining for women is that of contributing calmness, of using their influence to report injustices, reasonably and sanely, and of endeavouring at each step to strengthen collaboration between peoples.

The nightmare of war is to-day very great but it is greater than is justified by the psychological basis of war or the economic possibilities of waging it. We are confident that there are few individuals in any country who desire war, but because of the universal sense of distrust, those who oppose defense and preparation for defense are also few.

To-day the idea of disarmament seems to have lost its psychological support. This is why the majority of men believe it unrealistic and why all who make propaganda for this idea are disregarded. The idea of disarmament is like a magnificent palace which is greatly desired, but the light which it sheds frightens the short-sighted and dazzles those who have their eyes fixed upon it. It can be reached only by accustoming men's eyes to this unknown light, diminishing distrust and preparing the psychological conditions of a durable peace.

First of all individuals who profit by war, that is to say the manufacturers and traffickers in arms and their political supporters, must be rendered impotent. Furthermore the League of Nations, if it is to become really such, should invite and admit to its midst all countries without taking into account governments, which are only temporary and changing representatives of their peoples, and whose crimes, resulting

from the struggle for power, cannot disqualify the whole nation.

Where women have influence they ought to use it to secure that those chosen as delegates of the League should be men enjoying the highest public regard, who have a broad and impartial outlook and base relations between peoples on equal rights and equal duties in matters of defense, minorities and economic and cultural development.

Finally we urge that economic and cultural relations should be made closer than they are to-day, that the press should be under control, that an honest and liberal education should be provided for the new generation and that public works on a large scale should be undertaken to bring the masses nearer together.

What we regard as the essential steps to lessen the universal distrust and prepare a real peace are (a) cutting down existing armaments, (b) putting an end to all new armaments and, (c) achieving total and universal disarmament.

W. K. Warsaw.

FROM THE UNITED STATES

American peace advocates mourn the fact that our isolation obstructed world progress through Britain's fear in 1924 that forward action would complicate her relations with us, and has made us the chief obstacle to world stability now that Russia has joined the League and is working for consultation of nations through a Permanent Peace Conference. We rejoice that President Roosevelt is favorable to peace action and to munitions investigations despite the permission given our ambitious naval men to make a great and ill-advised display in the Pacific next spring. The public is profoundly impressed with the necessity of curbing the ambition of the armament interests everywhere and is gradually learning the way in which military and naval forces have aided these interests.

*Extract from a letter from
Lucia Ames Mead.*

THE AIR PROBLEM - SOME DISCUSSIONS IN ENGLISH

Frankenstein and his Monster (Aviation for World Service) by Mrs. H. M. Swanwick. W. I. L. 4 d.

World Airways - Why Not? by Jonathan Griffin. Gollancz. 1/-.

Behind the Smoke Screen by Brig. General Groves. A study of air development leading up to a plea for stronger Air Forces.

AIR ARMAMENT AND AIR WARFARE

Mrs. Innes, who was asked at Zürich to act as "rapporteur" on this subject, writes as follows.

I want to call the attention of our Sections to the fact that the British Government urged at the Disarmament Conference, in March 1933 and again in March 1934, that schemes should be worked out for the total abolition of military and naval air forces coupled with the effective supervision of civil aviation to prevent its misuse for military purposes.

Subsequently a proposal was made by the U. S. A., the U. S. S. R., Japan and France that a conference to discuss total abolition should be called to meet at the same time as the Naval Conference of 1936.

The Air Commission has not met, however, since 1933, and the whole matter seems simply to have been quietly dropped in spite of the fact that a large number of Governments have consistently given support in the Disarmament Conference to proposals for total abolition.

In England a certain amount of interest in this position has been shown and there is now a group in the Society of Friends considering propaganda on this issue, but on the whole it has not been given the attention its importance calls for. While Governments have so frequently declared abolition possible the Peace Societies have failed to push the issue.

Now would seem the moment to do so. While the Disarmament Conference has appointed three subcommittees to prepare special conventions none was appointed to deal with military and naval aircraft in spite of the previous agreement and the Air Commission has not even met nor proposed to meet.

National Sections are urged to take the matter up to learn what, if anything, is proposed by their own Government and how these are at present disposed on this issue.

We do not believe in mobilising the population to practice so called air defense.

Let us then see what can be done to mobilise them to disarm the air.

The Air Menace and the Answer by Elvira-K. Fradkin. Macmillan 12/6d.

A detailed study of new agencies for war available through air development leading to the conclusion that the one way out is the abolition of all war.

Mrs. Fradkin has agreed to be the American member of Dr. Sahlbom's Committee on Modern Warfare. E. G. B.

THE SPRING MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

On the kind invitation of the British Section the Meeting will be held in London, from 10 a. m. March 25 through March 30.

Among the subjects that it is planned to discuss are reports of Rapporteurs on Modern Warfare, on Status of Women, on Minorities and on Aviation in relation War; report of W. I. L. Committee on Refugees; the present political situation in general and, in especial, lessons of the Saar Plebiscite, the struggle against fascism and for democracy, munitions problems, questions arising under the new Constitution, arrangements as to office and staff, finances, proposed resolutions on prisoners, slavery and opium.

NOBEL PRIZE SOUGHT FOR CARL VON OSSIETZKY

Miss Addams (as well as some other persons having the right to present candidates for the next award of the Nobel Peace Prize) has proposed the name of Carl von Ossietzky, and our members are urged to do anything in their power to support this candidature.

Carl von Ossietzky has been ever since the Reichstag fire in prisons or concentration camps where he has suffered terribly. He was an outstanding fighter for the cause of peace as editor, as writer and as member of peace organisations.

The International Headquarters of the W. I. L. P. F. will be glad to supply more detailed information.

MUNITIONS INQUIRIES

In the United States the Nye Commission Inquiry continues but its revelations do not seem to have appreciably weakened the appeal for enormous expenditure on army and navy, any more than they have put a stop to the endless raising of obstacles to real disarmament in the committees of the Disarmament Conference.

Mrs. Engkvist writes calling attention to the fact that the Swedish Government supports the U. S. proposal as to munitions and stands for an international control commission and, as it also believes that countries should legislate for themselves without waiting for an international convention, it brought forward a bill on Febr. 16 for national regulation of munitions, both manufacture and trade.

On February 19 Great Britain announced the members of a Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Private Manufacture of and Trading in Arms. Dame Rachel Crowdy is a member.