

LNU/8/1915

# PEACE or WAR?

## A National Declaration on the League of Nations and Armaments

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*National Declaration Committee, 15, Grosvenor Crescent, S.W.1*

### NOTES

on the

## Five Questions in the Ballot Paper

#### QUESTION I.

**Should Great Britain remain a Member of the League of Nations ?**

You will agree that all nations need peace, that none needs it more than we do, and that there has never been a time when we and the world needed it more.

So, before you write "yes" or "no" to this question please ask yourself two more. Can you think of a better way of building up a peacefully ordered world than through the League of Nations? Can Peace be got without a Law against War which all nations will accept? The League provides that law.

The League can never reach its full strength without British support.



## QUESTION II.

### **Are you in favour of an all-round reduction of armaments by International agreement ?**

#### **1. Promises.**

All the nations that signed peace after the Great War promised each other to reduce and limit their armaments.

#### **2. Burdens.**

The nation's money should be spent on better things. Expenditure on armaments is enormous now and will quickly become a far more crushing burden unless its growth is checked now.

#### **3. Dangers of Competition.**

We must avoid the dangers of competition in armed strength. Such competition is foolish and dangerous, for when each nation tries to be stronger than the others, all will feel insecure. Until there is agreement, there is always fear of such competition; and fear and competition themselves breed wars.

#### **4. Dangers of Modern Weapons.**

Modern weapons are creating new dangers for us all, especially from the air. Every year it becomes more difficult for any nation, however powerfully armed, to protect itself against sudden smashing attack; for such weapons as military aeroplanes, fire bombs, poison gas and tanks, give a tremendous new advantage to the attacker.

## QUESTION III.

### **Are you in favour of the all-round abolition of national military and naval air-craft by International agreement ?**

Of all the modern weapons, the aeroplane is the most dangerous to civilisation; there is no effective defence against air attack.

#### **Abolition of Military Aircraft.**

We believe abolition of the air weapon to be much the best way of helping to make the world secure against air attack. It is not enough to limit the numbers of military aircraft or to forbid the dropping of bombs or the making of bombing machines.

The total abolition of the national air forces has been advocated, under certain conditions, by the British, French, German, American, Russian and many other governments. By the Treaty of Peace military aircraft was forbidden to Germany.

There must also be an agreement by all nations to control civilian flying.

## QUESTION IV.

### **Should the manufacture and sale of arms for private profit be prohibited by international agreement ?**

In many countries besides our own, people feel more and more that it is not right or safe that weapons of war should be made and sold for private profit. There should be no temptation to anybody to encourage bad feelings between nations or to create conditions in which there is a demand for increased armaments.

It has been proved that some of those who make and sell arms for private profit have used bribery, bought up newspapers, spread war scares, and tried to set one country against another in order to create a demand for their products.

This is one of the Questions where your vote may be of special importance; for the governments of the world must be made to feel the pressure of public opinion behind the demand to do away with the powerful private interests that are concerned in this matter.

Even if such manufacture is prohibited, it will be essential also to control the State manufacture of arms and to bring all manufacture and sale of arms under international control.

## QUESTION V.

### **Do you consider that if a nation insists on attacking another, the other nations should combine to compel it to stop by**

- (a) Economic and Non-Military Measures ?**
- (b) If necessary, Military Measures ?**

If you have already answered "Yes" to Question I and Question II you may have considered whether there is not a further question.

Suppose that one nation breaks its promises and suddenly attacks another.



What ought the other nations to do? Ought they simply to say "This is no business of ours"? Or ought they to say: "We have all agreed to keep the peace and to disarm, and therefore we must all act together to stop the war which the peace-breaker has begun"?

Recent events have shown that such joint action is the only way to uphold world law and get disarmament all round. Readiness for joint action is the price of peace and disarmament.

All the organisations who ask you to fill up this Ballot Paper believe that a boycott on trade and credit would in practice almost always be enough to stop any nation from starting a war.

Some of these organisations think that nothing but such "economic" measures will be needed, and that it would not be right to use armed force.

If you agree with them you should answer "Yes" to (a) and "No" to (b).

Most of these organisations, however, believe that the peace-breaker might reply to economic pressure by using armed force against the boycotting nations and that therefore in the last resort the only way to uphold the new world law and to prevent wars of the old kind is to be ready to use all measures that may be required to bring the attack to an end, with as little lasting injury as possible. They believe that by promising the strength of all nations for the help of each the risks of war can be reduced to a minimum, since any nation, however powerful, would be afraid to make war against all the others. They believe that without the all-round disarmament described above such joint action might not stop war, but they hold that if all armaments are reduced and limited, nations can join together to do for world peace what each nation does at home through its police force to maintain law and order.

If you agree with these organisations you should answer "Yes" to (a) and "Yes" to (b).

#### CONCLUSION.

Without this new peace system nations will only too probably begin to build up their forces against each other as happened before the Great War. This is not only wasteful, it is very dangerous. This danger is increased when some nations ally themselves with those whom they look upon as their friends, against others whom they look upon as their enemies.

**By your votes you can show the world that Great Britain believes in peace, and is working for it through the League of Nations, All-Round Disarmament, and Collective Security.**