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PEACE or WAR



WORKER'S GUIDE
TO THE
NATIONAL DECLARATION
ON THE
LEAGUE & ARMAMENTS

WAR or PEACE?

THE
WORKERS' GUIDE

*to the
National Declaration
on the
League of Nations and Armaments*

Prepared by
National Declaration Committee
15, Grosvenor Crescent, S.W.1

The Prime Minister :

The people of the world, through the League of Nations, have to realise that same ideal of frank trustfulness and mutual helpfulness, for if they fail in that, their ever increasing capacity for destruction will make the very progress of mankind in knowledge and skill a menacing peril.

Mr. Stanley Baldwin :

I hold that we have in the present state of the world to cling to the ideal of the League and do all in our power to make it an effective reality.

Mr. Arthur Henderson :

The League is the only international political instrument through which Governments can organise peace. . . . The vast upheaval of the world war set in motion forces that will either destroy civilisation or raise mankind to undreamed of heights of human welfare.

Mr. Lloyd George :

It is only the enlightened opinion and the awakened conscience of the people of all lands that will make the League a living power. I appeal to my fellow countrymen to join in this great crusade.

Sir John Simon :

I am a League of Nations man, and hold that the international policy of Britain should be inspired by the League of Nations' ideal, and that the States of the world should work together for the pacific settlement of disputes and the promotion of economic co-operation.

PREFACE.

The Workers' Guide to the National Declaration on the League of Nations and Armaments has been prepared by a small committee on which were represented the three political parties and widely different schools of thought. The authors found their point of contact in the League. On the League, they are all convinced, rests the defence of their country and the peace of the world.

The five questions of the Ballot Paper can be answered separately, some "yes" and some "no." But the policy they outline is a consistent whole. League membership, disarmament, and a joint pledge to resist an aggressor are necessary factors in a system of collective security. The abolition of military and naval aircraft will deprive sudden attack of its most devastating weapon. The prohibition of the manufacture and sale of armaments for private profits will eliminate an influence making for war.

The Guide treats each question in detail. The argument remains a unity and draws towards a single conclusion.

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CHAPTER I.

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

Island Security at an End. I. The security which this country has enjoyed for nearly a thousand years is at an end. We used to be able to depend upon the Navy and our encircling seas to guarantee us against invasion and to safeguard our necessary trade. The coming of the aeroplane and of the submarine has transformed the situation (see comments on Question 3). Our island, which used to be an impregnable fortress, might prove to be a mere trap in case of war.

How can our security be restored ?

If another great war breaks out, we cannot preserve peace by merely standing aloof from the war, however strongly we might desire to do so. We should inevitably be drawn in, as even America was in the last war ; for owing to the world-wide character of the British Empire, we should be involved in any serious dispute in any part of the world.

We *cannot* make ourselves safe by means of armaments, not even if we spend all our substance upon them (see comments on Question 2).

We *cannot* make ourselves safe by alliances. The formation of one alliance always brings another into existence as a counterpoise, and the mutual fears of rival alliances precipitate war.

There is *only one way* to regain our security : through a collective guarantee, by all nations, of the world's peace, substituting law for force in the settlement of international differences, and banishing war between civilised people. This is what the League of Nations stands for : it exists to ensure that, in the relations between nations as in the relations between individuals, force shall only be used for the purpose of upholding law.

There is no other way which promises security. *We* can only have security and peace if everybody has security and peace.

War Must 2. War *must* be abolished,
and can be and it *can* be abolished, among
Abolished. civilised nations.

It *must* be abolished because all the peoples of the world have now become so interdependent that war threatens ruin to all of them, even to those that contrive to remain neutral. It *must* be abolished because it has now become neither more nor less than indiscriminate mass murder, ruinous to victor and vanquished. In the past, some wars may have produced good results. To-day, evil must far outweigh any good that could possibly result from war. Another great war on the scale of the last, waged with improved methods of wholesale scientific slaughter, would probably be the end of our civilisation.

It *can* be abolished ; as the Archbishop of Canterbury has said, " Beyond all doubt, there

is throughout the world a deep and ardent longing for peace. We believe that the overwhelming majority of men and women in every country desire that international disputes should be settled by peaceable means."

This is a new spirit. The old belief that there was something noble and glorious in war has almost disappeared. It was destroyed by the hideous indiscriminate carnage of the last war. It is the duty of statesmen to satisfy this universal desire. The machinery of the League of Nations gives them the means of doing so. Now, for the first time in human history, because the League exists, it is *possible* to settle international differences justly without resort to war.

It is foolish to say that war has always existed, and therefore always will exist. Slavery always existed, until the nineteenth century. Then the conscience of mankind realised its hideousness, as never before, and slavery has almost vanished. The conscience of mankind has been awakened in the same way to the hideousness of war. Here is *the great opportunity* of statesmanship. Ought we to use it ? We can only use it by remaining in and supporting the League of Nations.

Gains of 3. The League of Nations
Fourteen is only fourteen years old.
Years. It has had to overcome many

long established traditions, and to deal with nations that were embittered

and excited by the rancours of war. It cannot be expected to achieve complete success in so short a time. But it has already rendered immense service to the world. It has become an *essential organ* of government.

It was set up, not by sentimentalists, but by practical statesmen who realised that no government could any longer do its work efficiently, if it must depend upon its own resources alone, and that all the peoples of the earth are now so inextricably linked together that there *must* be some central clearing-house for their common affairs. If it were to break down, it would have to be reconstructed, because it has already become indispensable.

Its main task is that of preserving peace, by substituting law and agreement for violence in the settlement of international differences. Already it has helped to solve a number of difficulties which without it might have led to war, and it has brought to a peaceful conclusion disputes that had actually led to the outbreak of war, and might have brought on a general conflict.

Duties of League Members. 4. The obligations which this country (like all other Member-countries) assumed in becoming a Member of the League are as follows :—

(i) We have joined an organisation to safeguard the peace of nations, and have agreed that any threat to the peace of the

world concerns us as well as the countries immediately involved.

(ii) We have pledged ourselves to submit any dispute we may have with another country to judicial settlement by the International Court of Justice, or to arbitration, or to the Council of the League for examination and report. In the last resort, in certain circumstances, three months after the Council has reported we may recover freedom to go to war. But we and practically all other nations have already signed another agreement known as the Briand-Kellogg Pact whereby we have undertaken obligations never to settle our international disputes by other than pacific means. As Lord Grey has pointed out, if this system had existed, and had been observed, in 1914, the Great War would not have taken place.

(iii) We have pledged ourselves to co-operate with other members in restraining any nation which resorts to war in violation of the League system.

(iv) We have undertaken to co-operate through the League in bringing about a peaceable readjustment of treaty settlements that may have proved to be unjust or unsatisfactory, or of international conditions which become dangerous to peace.

(v) We have pledged ourselves to co-operate in bringing about all-round reduction and permanent limitation of armaments. The League Council is to make plans for this and

is to advise on how the evil effects of the private manufacture of arms can be prevented.

(vi) Every Treaty must be registered with the League and published; otherwise it is not binding.

All these are pledges of co-operative action, not of independent or separate action.

Still in its infancy, and having to work in a period of unprecedented difficulty and embittered national feeling, the League has not yet succeeded fully in doing all these things, or satisfied all the hopes which its foundation inspired. In particular, it has not yet succeeded, in spite of great efforts, in bringing about disarmament, or in working out effective means of restraining an aggressive nation.

But *the objects for which it exists are vitally important objects. They cannot be attained by any other means. The fact that they have not yet been fully attained is not a reason for abandoning the League. It is a reason for doing everything in our power to strengthen it, and to show that the British nation whole-heartedly supports this new conception of international relations.*

Organising (vii) In addition, we have
Peace. undertaken to co-operate in many ways for organising peace and reducing causes of war, e.g., to work together to improve conditions of labour, for which the International Labour Organisa-

tion has been set up; to work together for public health, and the prevention of social evils such as traffic in women and traffic in dangerous drugs; to make provision for freedom of communications and for "equitable treatment for the commerce of all members of the League"; to administer certain colonies, taken over after the war, on the principle of trusteeship.

In these and other ways we can through the League, strengthen the ties of peace, reduce sources of friction, and so create a positive security against war.

ANSWERS TO OBJECTIONS.

I. The League has failed. The main answer to this objection has already been given. The League has *not* failed, though it has not yet succeeded as fully as we should desire. It has already rendered incalculable services.

In so far as it has been unsuccessful, this is not an evidence that the League's machinery cannot work. The League is the machinery through which the governments of the world can co-operate for common ends, and especially for the maintenance of peace. If they fail to make proper use of the machinery, that is not the fault of the machinery, but of the governments, and it will be rectified when the peoples make it clear to their governments that they mean this machinery to be used.

The chief failures hitherto have been (1) the failure to check the aggression of Japan, and (2) the failure to bring about disarmament.

It is true that the League failed to prevent or to stop the aggressive action of Japan against China—both countries being members of the League; and thereby made other countries feel that they could not trust to the League for protection, and increased the difficulty of disarmament. The main reason for this failure was that the governments had not worked out beforehand the nature of the common action they would take in such a case (see Comments on Question 5). If they had done so, it is probable not only that the action of Japan would have been checked, but that she would not have ventured upon it. But in any case, the moral judgment of the whole world was clearly expressed; and the fact that this did not suffice, shows that moral judgment alone is not enough for the preservation of peace. At least it may be said that the other members of the League acted together. In any earlier period, the events that took place in China in 1931-32 would probably have led to a general scramble for Chinese territory, and perhaps to a world war.

2. The League is impotent, a mere talking-shop. The League can only have power if the nations that are its members give it power. Where else can the power come

from? The League is not an authority alone, and independent of, the nations. It *consists* of the nations, and depends for its efficiency upon them.

It is true that most of the meetings of the League are devoted to talk, to discussion. That is what the League exists for: to enable the nations to understand one another better by talking round a common table; to settle differences by discussion instead of by force and dictation. Co-operation is impossible without interchange of ideas, and for this purpose talk is indispensable. When misunderstandings arise, there is only one known way of clearing them up—talk. All practical statesmen agree that it is an immense advantage to have a meeting-place at Geneva where they can meet and talk.

3. The League costs too much. Britain's contribution to the League bears the same proportion to the nation's total income that a contribution of 3d. a year would bear to the income of a man with £350 a year. Can a man with £350 a year afford a farthing a month to ensure the safety of his house? The interest on the cost of *one* battleship would pay Britain's contribution to the League *for ever*. "I have no patience," says Mr. Winston Churchill, "with the penny wise economies which grudge the English contribution to the League." It is the old system which is costly, not the new. The suggestion

that the cost of the League is an intolerable burden is either ignorant or dishonest.

4. The League means commitment, entanglement ; we should cut away from the League and the whole of Europe. Of course it means commitment, but nothing like so serious or so dangerous as the old system involved.

Great Britain was supposed to have her hands free in 1914; she had none of the League "commitments" which are supposed to be so entangling. But this did not keep us out of the war. We were drawn in. So was the United States, 3,000 miles away, with a powerful tradition of isolation. Nearly the whole world was drawn in.

There has not been a single century in British history in which Britain has not been drawn into the affairs and wars of the continent. If isolation was impossible for a remote island in ancient times, how can it be possible for a world-wide empire in the days of the aeroplane?

The only choice for us is the choice between being committed to the maintenance of peace, and being committed to the conduct of war.

5. The British Empire is big and strong enough to defend itself and ensure the world's peace. Then why did it not do it in 1914? Britain then needed many allies to defend herself in a war which—in the view of

her Foreign Minister at the time—might never have taken place if a League had existed. The world-wide distribution of the British Empire makes it exceedingly vulnerable, and this very fact makes world-wide arrangements such as the League provides an indispensable part of our system of defence.

We had a very narrow squeak in the matter of our food supplies in the Great War, when only one first-class naval power was against us and all the others were on our side. With several against us, our power could not defend us. Still less could we defend ourselves in the air. Only by co-operation with others to maintain the world's peace can we make ourselves secure.

6. Human nature never changes, so we shall always have war. Whether human nature changes or not, human *behaviour* changes, and so do human ideas about what is tolerable and what is intolerable. Men used to believe that slavery was natural, that it had always existed (and so it had), and even that it was the will of God. Yet slavery has almost vanished from the face of the earth, because men's ideas about it changed, as they are now changing about war.

Man is undoubtedly a pugnacious, quarrelsome and irrational animal. That is why we have law courts and police. That is also why we have to have a League of Nations. Man's pugnacious nature is not an *argument* against

the League, but an argument *for it*. Can't you imagine our primitive ancestors, when law courts were being introduced, nodding their heads sagely and saying that human nature is always the same, these new-fangled ideas will come to nothing, and men will go on bashing their enemies on the head rather than take them to these new courts ?

We are guilty of the same lack of imagination when we say that war is inevitable. Man used to say that pestilence and famine were inevitable ; and so they were, until human intelligence discovered how to deal with them. Wars were inevitable, so long as no method of settling differences by peaceful means had been wrought out. But they ceased to be inevitable from the moment when such machinery was created. We should never have conquered famine if we had folded our hands and said it was inevitable, with oriental fatalism. And we shall never conquer war if we take this fatalist view. Wars, unlike earthquakes, are made by men, and can be controlled by men. It falls to this generation to decide whether it will overcome this ancient curse, as it now has the power to do ; or whether it will say " Kismet ! " and let ruin come.

CHAPTER 2.

Are you in favour of the all-round reduction of armaments by international agreement ?

Why is all-round reduction of armaments of such extreme importance and urgency ?

Promises unfulfilled. 1. One reason is that the nations have not yet fulfilled the promises they made after the War about the reduction and limitation of their armaments.

League Members, in their Covenant, committed themselves to working out a general reduction and permanent limitation ; but although certain restrictions upon naval armaments have been accepted by some Powers, the Covenant's undertakings as a whole are far from having been honoured.

Furthermore, when the victors, after the war, required Germany to accept drastic restrictions upon her armaments, they gave her a written assurance that these restrictions were intended as " first steps towards the general reduction and limitation of armaments which they seek to bring about ; " and Germany accepted the restrictions expressly " in order " (as the Peace Treaty says) " to render possible the initiation of a general limitation of the armaments of all nations." As the Prime Minister has said (June 29th,

1930), "If we were trying to get away from those obligations, we could not do it."

If now, after fifteen years, these undertakings are not quickly honoured, by a substantial *levelling down* of the world's armaments towards the standard imposed on Germany, then the *levelling up* of Germany's armaments will quickly become an even more serious and disturbing issue than it is already. We joined in telling Germany, after the War, that she must have no warships over 10,000 tons or submarines, no air force or poison gas, no big guns or tanks. Germany now says to us "We will forgo such weapons if you will undertake to get rid of them all round within a fixed period; but if you won't undertake that, then we mean to have such weapons as you consider necessary for yourselves." Which is safer for the world's peace—a levelling-up by Germany, or an all-round reduction and limitation of armaments such as we promised?

Expenditure on Armaments. 2. A second reason for reduction is that the nations need to lighten their burdens of expenditure on armaments.

The burden, on its present scale, is a modern one, and is far higher than it was even 30 years ago. All countries taken together are at present spending nearly three million pounds a day, and Great Britain is spending £200 a minute, for national defence. Moreover the burden is growing fast; and unless its growth

is promptly checked, it may become half as big again within five years or so. The great depression of world trade continues; and all the nations need more money for the services of life—such as health, housing, education. If the governments are going to spend a still larger proportion of the taxpayers' money on armaments, these productive services, which ought to be growing, will have to be starved. As Mr. Baldwin has said (October, 1933), "If rearmament began in Europe you may say good-bye to any restoration of cuts, to any reduction of taxation for a generation."

Competition in Armaments. 3. A third reason is that competition in armaments is futile and dangerous; if we don't prevent it, the competing countries will go on getting more and more afraid and suspicious of each other and will tend more and more to form rival groups.

No one has stated more clearly than Lord Grey, who was Foreign Secretary in 1914, the truth about competitive armaments. Discussing the events which led to war in 1914, Lord Grey has said:—

"The moral is obvious; it is that great armaments lead inevitably to war. If there are armaments on one side, there must be armaments on other sides. While one nation arms, other nations cannot tempt it to aggression by remaining defenceless. Armaments must have equipment; armies cannot be of use without strategic railways.

Each measure taken by one nation is noted, and leads to counter-measures by others.

“The increase of armaments that is intended in each nation to produce consciousness of strength, and a sense of security, does not produce these effects. On the contrary, it produces a consciousness of the strength of other nations and a sense of fear. Fear begets suspicion and distrust and evil imaginings of all sorts, till each Government feels it would be criminal and a betrayal of its own country not to take every precaution of every other Government as evidence of hostile intent. . . .

“But, although all this be true, it is not in my opinion the real and final account of the origin of the Great War. The enormous growth of armaments in Europe, the sense of insecurity and fear caused by them—it was these that made war inevitable. This, it seems to me, is the truest reading of history, and the lesson that the present should be learning from the past in the interests of future peace, the warning to be handed on to those who come after us.

The truth is that to-day there are seven Great Powers in the world, and it is certain that the claim of any one of them to make itself supreme and so keep the others in order would be opposed and resented and would result in alliances and increased armaments on the other side.

Lord Grey's account of pre-War Europe could be supplemented by others which would show how the whole history of armaments in modern times proves that increase of arms in one country leads to increase in others. So

if the nations were to go on piling up more and more deadly armaments in competition, each trying to be stronger than the other, they would not achieve security; even if they beggared their neighbours and themselves, they would not be making themselves safe from war, they would be making war more likely.

Modern Weapons. 4. Yet another reason for reducing armaments all round

is that modern weapons are creating new dangers for us all. The air weapon in particular is now immeasurably more powerful than it was even so lately as 1918; and poison gas and incendiary bombs could be used now against great cities with consequences far more awful than those of even the worst air attack in the Great War. We must master man's new power to destroy himself; and we cannot do this unless we agree, amongst other things, to reduce the instruments of destruction.

What are Armaments for ? 5. Since all civilised nations have agreed to the Briand-Kellogg Pact, by which war

is renounced as an instrument of national policy, it is plain that their armaments are maintained exclusively for purposes of *defence*. That is to say, they only desire organised armed force in order to maintain order and keep the peace. It is obvious that

every nation must desire to fulfil these purposes at the least possible cost, i.e., by the maintenance of the least possible armaments by which order and peace throughout the world can be secured. Just as nations will not pay more policemen than are needed to preserve order at home, so for the same reasons they must desire to keep the peace with as little armament as possible.

ANSWERS TO OBJECTIONS.

1. Armaments mean peace. What does such a phrase mean? As it stands, of course, it defies commonsense. It means presumably that we are to reply to the armaments of other nations so that our strength may deter them from any attack upon us. We must be stronger than any nation likely to attack us. Then how is that other to provide for *his* defence? Is he to go without? We are asking him to occupy a position of inferior power, of defencelessness, which we refuse to occupy. Why should we ask others to accept a position we refuse for ourselves? Do we really suppose they will?

Does any ordinarily intelligent man who has sincerely and calmly thought this thing out, really believe in a system of defence which defies arithmetic (since in order to work for all parties "each must be stronger than the other"); which defies justice (since it means putting our might behind the denial to the

other party of rights of judgment we claim for ourselves); which wrecks any general defence (since the defence of one is secured by depriving the other of it)? Does he believe that armaments used by such a method can possibly ensure peace?

These are questions which the enemies of the League and of Disarmament never answer, never face, always disguise and always avoid. They are difficult and awkward questions. But the League method does face them, does offer a way out, with the object, first of all, of making national defence effective instead of self-defeating.

2. Britain's armaments are only for defence. What is "defence"? Is it to be in a position which will enable us to say, in a dispute with another, how that dispute shall be decided? Then we deprive him of the defence we claim, a claim so unjust that it becomes aggression, and is not defence at all.

Every nation says and believes that its arms are for "defence." But we must say plainly to foreigners what we mean by defence.

3. People may object that reduction of armaments cannot prevent war. Of course, it cannot, by itself; yet without such reduction, the prevention of war will sooner or later become impossible. All-round reduction of armaments is only one part of the complex job of preventing war; but it is

now the most important and urgently needed part of that job.

4. People may object that reduction of armaments must be useless (except as an economy) since nations will begin rearming and using all those kinds of weapon which we may decide to get rid of, the moment war begins. That argument is based on a misunderstanding. The object is, not to regulate the conduct of war after it has begun, but to reduce the danger of its beginning. We do reduce that danger if we reduce the vested interests in war and if we can make the peoples more confident that other countries are not preparing to attack or dominate them.

5. People may object that reduction of armaments may be all very well for other countries, but that this country ought not to reduce its present armaments since it would, in that case, have less to contribute to the League's collective action for preventing and stopping war. This argument that the existing or even an increased British armament (or French armament or German armament) would help the League in its task of preventing and stopping war is mistaken. As has been explained above, League Members have undertaken certain obligations to prevent and stop war by restraining the peace-breaker. It is plain that if this obligation is to be a tolerable one to those states which undertake

it, there ought to be an all-round reduction of armaments, and the fact is that an all-round reduction of armaments makes it easier, not more difficult, to provide for collective security against war. And if one country increases its armaments, for whatever reason, other countries will do likewise. *Increase of armaments breeds increase of armaments.*

6. People may object that the reduction of armaments will have the effect of increasing unemployment. That important question cannot be sufficiently dealt with here. But the following points illustrate the general case :

(1) Money spent on armaments is what the economists call "unproductive." If you spend taxation on building a battleship the battleship gets worn out in twenty years or so ; it brings in no rent but costs a lot to keep up ; and at the end of its time it becomes scrap-iron. If on the other hand, the taxpayers' money is spend on houses to let at low rentals, those houses should last for much longer than twenty years, they should return rent during that time, and they should make a rich return to the nation in the shape of a more healthy and happy population.

(2) It is quite true, unfortunately, that if the State, by agreement with other countries, decided to reduce its armaments, some of those who have been employed on making such armaments might find other employment difficult or impossible to get. The whole

country would benefit from the agreement in the long run ; but that run would be too long for the people who might lose their jobs. It is, of course, true that such unemployment would only be a very small part of the total unemployment to which this country has been accustomed since the war. It is also true that disarmament by stabilising peace would increase business "confidence," and so help to restore trade and create alternative employment ; but if it were thought right to do so, the State could pay special pensions to all those who became unemployed owing to disarmament, and could still make a great economy of taxpayers' money by avoiding competitive expenditure on armaments.

(3) It is also worth noting that most of the plant in armament factories can be turned to peaceful uses, as it was in Germany after 1919 ; and that the present very severe slump in unemployment is at least in great part due to the war which broke out in 1914.

SUMMARY.

The above arguments may be summarised in the following statement :

All round reduction of armaments by international agreement is absolutely necessary as a contribution to the prevention of war and to that building up of confidence between the nations which is needed for the peace and prosperity of the world.

CHAPTER 3.

Are you in favour of the all-round abolition of national military and naval aircraft by international agreement ?

The Choice I. In which direction is the art of flying to be developed ?
before us. As a great uniter of mankind, or as the greatest of destroyers ?

That is probably the most urgent of all the new questions which modern science compels us to answer.

At present the nations are developing flying chiefly as an instrument of war. They are spending enormously more money and effort on their rival air forces than on the civil flying which might bring them together. Competition in air armaments is becoming more intense and is still free from any limitation, except for the total prohibition of air armament imposed on Germany and other defeated Powers after the War. As for civil flying, its growth is being cramped or distorted because of military requirements and national jealousies and fears.

Is it wise to go on in this way ?

Or ought we to make a sustained and determined effort, before some irreparable disaster

happens, to *stop* the perfecting of "aviation the destroyer"; to *prevent* as completely as possible, the use of flying for war purposes; and to *expand* and *safeguard* civil flying as a peaceful service, efficient and free from menace to the world?

That is the choice before us. Which choice the world will make depends largely on our country's policy. Hence the great importance of Question 3 in this Ballot.

Our new power to destroy. 2. In considering what ought to be done about air forces, we must take into account the enormous destructive power of the air weapon. This new power to destroy is far greater than we laymen can readily realise; and is immeasurably greater now than it was at the end of the Great War. Recall for instance a few facts about the possibility of air attack on London. About a third of the resources of England are concentrated in the London area. An aeroplane can reach London from the coast in a few minutes, can fly over the city at a height of 20,000 feet, and can be accurately directed even when the pilot cannot see the earth below him. A single aeroplane can carry over 3 tons in weight of incendiary bombs; it can drop a high explosive bomb incomparably more destructive than any shell used in the last war. The aeroplane is also the most effective known distributor of poison gas.

Our new helplessness against attack. 3. Another new fact of extreme importance is that, through the invention of this new weapon, we have become much more helpless against attack than any previous generation. We are now at each other's mercy to an extent we can hardly grasp in imagination. If Britons had the will to commit such an atrocity, they could quickly ravage Paris, and although we live in an island, Frenchmen could likewise ravage London; but neither Britons nor Frenchmen, no matter how powerful their national air armaments and ground defences, could reliably defend their own capitals against air attack in cloudy weather. As Mr. Baldwin has said, "I think it is well also for the man in the street to realise that there is no power on earth that can protect him from being bombed. Whatever people may tell him, the bomber will always get through. The only defence is in offence, which means that you have to kill more women and children more quickly than the enemy, if you wish to save yourself."

No doubt inventors can go on improving means of defence; they can also go on perfecting means of attack; but in the case of the air weapon no nation is now able, or seems likely to be able, in future, reliably to defend its cities or its ports and sea-borne supplies.

Methods of defence. 4. So we are forced to consider what policy offers the best prospect of defending our country and the world from fearful injury through the use of flying for war purposes. The problem is one that concerns all the world. Our countrymen will not be so blind as to suppose that it would matter nothing to them if the nerve centres and treasure houses of civilisation in other countries were burned out; nor will they be so blind as to imagine that by themselves they can make Britain secure against air attack. The nations must act together, to avert a common danger.

What can they do?

Prevent War. 5. The main thing of course is to prevent war; not simply to prevent air warfare but war in whatever form. Hence the need for the League of Nations (and for answering "Yes" to Question 1 in this Ballot).

Three Possible Policies. 6. As regards naval and military aircraft, three policies are possible:

- (1) To allow **unlimited competition** (perhaps with rules for the conduct of air war);
- (2) To allow **competition within limits**, the numbers and weight of aircraft for each country being restricted by agreement. (Here again, some people advocate rules for the polite conduct of air warfare).

(3) **Abolition** of air forces all round.

If the policy of limitations, or of abolition, were adopted, it would be necessary also to *control civil aviation*, so as to prevent, so far as possible, its use for war purposes.

As a further safeguard, some advocate the creation of an international "*air police force*."

Now, which of these three policies should we aim at:—

Competition, Limitations, or Abolition?

Unlimited Competition. 7. The first policy—that of unlimited competition in air armaments—is not openly advocated now by any government in the world; the fallacy of it, and the danger, have been so clearly exposed in the past. (See Chapter 2).

Instead of yielding true security against war, and against air attack, it leads inevitably to rival alliances and to growing fears and suspicions. It is the *certain* way to another, a worse, 1914.

Limited Competition. 8. Limitation of the numbers and weight of the military aircraft which each country might keep in peace-time would be better than no limitation at all; but it would be very inadequate as a safeguard.

One reason for this is that, within the permitted limits, competition in air armaments, and the development of the air weapon into more and more dangerous and uncontrollable

forms, would continue. If the limits on weight stopped the Air Ministries from making, say, heavy bombing planes, their ingenuity would naturally be directed to some other form of aerial killing power, perhaps more dangerous. And the limits on numbers would make each Air Ministry concentrate its effort on having the latest, most perfect, types of aircraft, and the most complete arrangements for rapidly multiplying those perfected types on the word "go." The air weapon cannot be cut in half along some conveniently clear line of division; we cannot say, for instance, "we will get rid of all bombers and keep the others," for the "fighting" and "bombing" planes cannot be thus sharply distinguished.

A still more serious difficulty in the way of this policy of limitation is that agreement on the numbers to be allowed to each country is likely to be specially difficult to reach, in the case of aircraft.

As for the various proposals to limit the practice of air warfare, by means of rules invented in peace-time, there is a widespread belief that it is not worth spending effort on such regulations for the orderly conduct of the great disorder, war. *War cannot be "humanized" in this way.*

Abolition. 9. So we come to the third policy,—all round abolition of national air forces.

Put to yourself these questions. Which

would be the safer policy for France—to have no national air force in Germany and none in France (with international inspection, etc., to see that the prohibition is carried out)? Or to have Germany making an air force, limited or unlimited, just across her frontier?

Again, which would be the safer for us—to have no foreign air force "within striking distance of our shores," and no British air force? Or to have air forces in Germany, France and elsewhere, each able to threaten the most important and exposed target in the world—London, and to have, on the other hand, a British air force which admittedly cannot afford reliable defence for London or for our ports, and has to rely chiefly for its effectiveness on its power to get in a smashing reprisal or a paralysing first blow?

Many powerful countries have advocated abolition, as being by far the best and simplest policy.

(1) **French Policy.** M. Barthou affirmed on June 2nd last the support of the present French Government for the French Memorandum of January 1st, 1934. That plan said "as regards air armaments, from the first years of the Convention, France not only agreed to the abolition of bombing from the air under the conditions laid down by the Conference in its resolution of July 23rd, 1932, but would even consider a proportional reduction of 50 per cent. of the material at present in commission, if such a general

reduction were accepted by the principal Air Forces and accompanied by effective control over civil aviation and aircraft manufacture. France considers moreover that the final aim of these extensive reductions should be the suppression of all national military aviation and its replacement by an international air force."

(2) **German Policy.** Germany has repeatedly offered to forgo all naval and military aviation provided that the other Powers undertake to abolish their Air Forces within a fixed period not too long.

(3) **Russian Policy.** Russia also has repeatedly proposed total abolition.

(4) **American Policy.** President Hoover in April and June, 1932, proposed the abolition of bombers and the prohibition of bombing. President Roosevelt in May, 1933, declared for the abolition of all military and naval aircraft. Mr. Norman Davis, the President's Ambassador-at-Large, on May 22nd, 1933, said: "We feel that the ultimate objective should be to reduce armaments approximately to the level established by the Peace Treaties; that is, to bring armaments as soon as possible through successive stages, down to the basis of a domestic police-force. We are prepared to join other nations in abolishing weapons of an aggressive character." The President's speech of December 28th, 1933, and Mr. Norman Davis' speech of June 1st, 1934, reaffirmed this policy.

(5) **British Policy.** The British Draft Convention of March, 1933, said in Part II, articles 34-41:

There should be complete abolition of bombing from the air (except for police purposes in outlying regions). The Permanent Disarmament Commission should devote itself at once to working out "the best possible scheme providing for—

(a) the complete abolition of military and naval aircraft which must be dependent on the effective supervision of civil aviation to prevent its misuse for military purposes;

(b) alternatively, should it prove impossible to ensure such effective supervision, the determination of a minimum number of machines required by the High Contracting Parties consistent with their national safety and obligations. . . ."

(6) **Small Powers' Policy.** The six powers, Denmark, Spain, Holland, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland, propose unconditional prohibition of bombardment from the air; destruction in the first period of application of the Convention of a number of the aeroplanes which would be prohibited in virtue of the British Draft Convention; destruction during the second period of the remainder of such aeroplanes. Study of the measures to be taken with a view to preventing the use of civil aircraft for military purposes.

ON ANSWERING QUESTION 3.

(1) So you see, there is a very large measure of agreement already that all-round abolition

of air forces would be by far the best policy. It is this policy which was advocated by our Government in its Draft Disarmament Treaty of March, 1933. All that the Ballot Paper asks is, Do you support this policy? Do you want our Government to work actively for its general acceptance, and to go on doing so even if success is not achieved at the first attempt? That is the effect of Question 3.

(2) If this policy is to be adopted, it will be necessary to provide also for the control of civil aircraft, so as to prevent, as completely as possible, their use for military purposes. As already stated, some people think the best way to do this, and to promote the full use of flying for peaceful purposes, would be to internationalise the air transport lines, at least in Europe to begin with. Others prefer control. Some want an international air force as well. There is no need for us, in answering Question 3, to express an opinion on the relative merits of these various methods; but we should realise, if we answer "Yes" on the Ballot Sheet, that that implies support for some scheme for preventing abuse of civil flying.

(3) On the "control" of civil aviation, the Air Commission of the Disarmament Conference in 1933 considered a definite plan. Schemes for internationalisation submitted by the French and Swedish delegations, were discussed, and the declarations of the various governments appeared to indicate a considerable degree of agreement in principle.

In April, 1933, the U.S.A., the Argentine, Canada and Japan submitted a joint declaration stating that they would submit their civil aviation to drastic measures of regulation and international supervision (which they specified), if the European countries decided on internationalisation or comprehensive control among themselves. On May 27th, 1933, the Spanish delegation submitted to the General Commission in more than 20 articles the most detailed and complete of the plans yet put forward by any government for international control of civil aviation and the abolition of naval and military aviation.

Effective international control of civil aviation is not a remote, inaccessible ideal. The means for its enforcement have already been worked out in much detail.

CHAPTER 4.

Should the manufacture and sale of armaments for private profit be prohibited by international agreement?

The Case Is Altered. 1. There is a widespread recognition of the case against allowing armaments to be manufactured for private profit. When war was still accepted as a legitimate activity of civilised nations, this trade in arms was a legitimate business. But in changed world conditions it has lost its former justification.

Fifteen years ago the problem forced itself upon the notice of the framers of the Covenant. Paragraph 5 of Article 8 runs : " The Members of the League agree that the manufacture by private enterprise of munitions and implements of war is open to grave objections. The Council shall advise how the evil effects attendant upon such manufacture can be prevented, due regard being had to the necessities of the Members of the League which are not able to manufacture the munitions and implements of war necessary to their safety." Paragraph D of Article 23 provides for more prompt and definite action in special cases. " Members of the League " it says, " will entrust the League with the general supervision of the trade in arms and ammunition with the countries in which the control of this traffic is necessary in the common interest." An assumption that only backward peoples can make an improper use of arms is not borne out by experience.

An Established Principle. 2. In this way the prohibition now proposed is prepared for in the Covenant. It is, moreover, simply an extension of an established principle. Gun-running in backward parts of the world has long been forbidden by international treaty. For more than half a century it has been among the normal duties of the Royal Navy to patrol the Persian Gulf in order to prevent the transit of rifles and

ammunition to warlike tribes on the North-West Frontier of India and elsewhere. France, Italy and Spain keep similar watch along the Mediterranean and North Atlantic coasts of Africa.

On the motion of the British Government, in the Council of the League, thirty-six States have now agreed to a general embargo upon the supply of arms for the war in the Gran Chaco between Bolivia and Paraguay. This action was prompted by the report of the League Commission to the scene of operations in which it was pointed out : " The armies engaged are using up-to-date material—aeroplanes, armoured cars, flame-projectors, quick-firing guns, machine-guns and automatic rifles ; the automatic weapons are available in great quantities, but the other arms are few. The arms and material of every kind are not manufactured locally, but are supplied to the belligerents by American and European countries."

The case of the Gran Chaco shows that where the scandal is hideous and open, the Governments of the civilised world are shocked into drastic action.

Mischief Making. 3. The unregulated traffic in arms is not only a necessary condition for the continuance of intensive warfare ; it is also an influence making for international suspicion and ill-will. President Roosevelt recently declared, in

regard to the "mad race in armaments," that "this grave menace to the peace of the world is due in no small measure to the uncontrolled activities of the manufacturers and merchants of engines of destruction."

Many evidences of this are available. For instance, it is on official record that an agent of armament firms in America sought in 1927 to wreck agreement on naval disarmament and to poison Anglo-American relations; that armament interests in France exercise a controlling and dangerous influence over important newspapers; and that foreign armament firms recently employed corruption and war scares to obtain orders in Rumania.

Even if no such evidence were available, it would be manifest that private armament manufacturers have an interest in the continuance of troubled conditions, in which the demand for their goods will be keen; but it is to the world's interest that such troubles should stop and that no one should be under temptation to foment them. Of course, it is very widely argued that the War Departments in many countries are likely to favour the existence of a private armament industry in their country since it offers them the advantage of cheap and elastic capacity for expanding their war supplies in time of crisis; but there is a much greater interest than this to be considered—the world's interest in preventing any state from being in a position to menace another by sudden increase of armaments.

An Urgent Problem.

4. The French Government and others, in 1933, proposed suppression of all manufacture of arms for private profit; failing this, France proposed and attached great importance to a scheme of national and international control. The American Government has instituted an official enquiry into the whole subject and meanwhile urges the extension of control.

On June 8th, 1934, when it laid down its programme of work for the near future, the Disarmament Conference recognised the problem as one of peculiar urgency. It requested "its special committee on questions relating to the manufacture of and trade in arms to resume its work forthwith, and, in the light of the statements made by the United States delegate at the meeting of the 29th May, 1934, to report to it as early as possible on the solutions it recommends."

The American statements, which were an expansion of President Roosevelt's declaration already mentioned, contained a passage in which Mr. Norman Davis said: "The American people and Government were convinced that the manufacture of and trade in engines of death must be limited and controlled together with the profits resulting therefrom. Those in all countries who had a financial interest in fomenting international suspicion and discord must be put in a position in which they did not have the power nor the incentive to do so much injury."

Powers Agree 5. By the end of June the special committee had agreed upon draft proposals. The proposals provide that the manufacture of and traffic in arms the use of which is forbidden are to be entirely prohibited, while the manufacture or importation of certain other articles of war is to be allowed only within certain fixed limits. No arms or war materials are to be manufactured except by persons and firms licensed by the Government. The holders of licenses must communicate every order that they receive to their Government, who must report the information to the Permanent Disarmament Commission within fifteen days. The Permanent Disarmament Commission is to publish as soon as possible all the information thus received. No arms are to be imported or exported without the authorisation of the Government in each case. The convention provides for control, including permanent and automatic inspection, to see that its provisions are observed, but the methods of control remain to be defined.

The draft convention is an explicit general admission that an urgent world problem exists and must be solved by international agreement. It is not an adequate solution.

We believe that manufacture of the casualty-producing weapons for private profit should be suppressed and that the traffic in armaments

should be regulated, under international control, so as not to exceed the limits in a general disarmament treaty.

ANSWERS TO OBJECTIONS.

1. Armaments cannot be defined. This is the common difficulty of knowing exactly where to draw the line. It always arises and in practice is always overcome. The casual sale of harmful drugs is forbidden by law, but there is no definition of a harmful drug. A list has been drawn up to meet the needs of the case and, from time to time, additions are made to that list. The chief casualty-producing weapons are unmistakable: war ships, war planes, tanks, torpedoes, bombs, cannon, armour-piercing and high-explosive shells, shrapnel and service rifles are all used only in warfare. A few important cases are doubtful, for example, civil aircraft, which are discussed in Chapter 3.

2. Small nations who have no armament factories will be placed at a fatal disadvantage. The small nations have not objected to the proposal. Under a disarmament treaty and the prohibition of the manufacture and sale of arms for private profit their strength, compared with their more powerful neighbours', will be increased. Their disadvantage is already a fact. Being dependent upon external supplies, they are subject to foreign influence which often means coercion. Most

Governments do, in fact, watch very carefully the sale of arms by their subjects to foreign customers and they utilise their power of persuasion or control to obtain political concessions.

3. Private Manufacture encourages the invention of new and improved weapons. The increased destructiveness of weapons is an evil which provokes competition in armaments and makes nations suspicious and afraid of one another. Once a system of collective security is established, by the nations fulfilling their pledge to co-operate loyally and effectively in support of the Covenant and in the execution of a disarmament treaty, the motive for the development of new and more devastating weapons will tend to disappear.

4. Great Britain with her modest State arsenals will be placed at a disadvantage compared with several European countries. Some existing private factories will have to be taken over by the British Government, unless a drastic measure of disarmament is agreed upon. Under a disarmament agreement the great State arsenals of the Continent will be controlled, and will be partially dismantled. Each country will retain only the establishments which it needs to produce the reduced supply of weapons allowed under the agreement.

CHAPTER 5.

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 ?

Joint I. In Chapter I it was suggested that if we want **Responsibility for Peace.** peace and prosperity, we must help to build up a peacefully ordered world; and that, for that purpose, we must have some permanent organisation in which the nations can work together, and some simple rules of peace-keeping. In other words, we must have a League of Nations, and a Covenant of Peace.

That Covenant, as we saw, includes provisions about the *peaceful settlement* of disputes between nations, and about *peaceful change* of existing treaties. It also includes provisions about *general disarmament*. And it affirms that "any war or threat of war" anywhere is a matter of concern to the whole League, and the League is to take action to "safeguard the peace of nations."

If Peace is Broken. 2. Now, what action ought the League and its Members to take if some state does break its peace-keeping rules and resort to war?

It is no good our saying that such a question ought not to be asked: it *is* asked, by Governments and by peoples in many parts of the world, where mutual confidence is not yet sufficiently strong. And the question is not surprising, since many nations are armed to the teeth and some have grievances or unsatisfied ambitions.

Nor is it any good our thinking that we can shirk the question, as if it did not concern us. We need peace, and our country is therefore a Member of the League: and if the League is to be of any use to us as a guardian of peace, its Members (including our country) cannot remain indifferent or "neutral," if its rules of peace-keeping are violently broken. We cannot simply say "Am I my brother's keeper?" We have definitely taken sides with the society of nations against lawless violence. So the question cannot be shirked; what is the least objectionable course for us and the other Members of a League of peace to take, if their covenanted peace is threatened or broken?

The Covenant says that they must act together to *prevent* war. And if, in spite of that, a state does go to war in breach of the

rules of peace which it has accepted, then the other Members of the League are bound to act together to stop that violent wrong by restraining the peace-breaker and supporting the attacked party. The purpose of such coercion is, not to impose vengeance or punishment; nor to dictate a victor's terms on a defeated enemy: but simply to put a stop to the violence as quickly and with as little lasting injury as possible. Violence is to be permitted to accomplish nothing.

Economic Pressure. 3. If such a covenant-breaking war happens, the other Members of the League are bound to cut off their trade relations with the covenant-breaking state. It may be better that they should do so by stages gradually, or immediate and complete severance of trade may be found best. What matters is that League Members have accepted the principle that they will not go on supplying the breakers of their Covenant with the means of breaking it; they will not make blood-money out of facilitating a war which they should be trying to stop.

Now, do you think that is a sound *principle*? Do you think the authors of the Covenant were right in including that kind of obligation in their Covenant?

We are not asked in the Ballot Paper whether we agree with the exact wording of the Covenant or any other Treaty. We are asked

whether we agree with the broad principle :
“ *If a nation insists on attacking another, the other nations should combine to compel it to stop by (a) Economic and non-military measures.*”

That is the first part of Question 5.

Military Measures. 4. Now what about the second part of the question which concerns the use of military measures if this should prove necessary in the last resort.

Let us assume, at the outset, that all kinds of coercion are an evil, whether economic or military, national or international. And let us recognise that economic pressure, evil though it is, is in general less evil—less likely to inflict lasting, irreparable injury—than military action.

Let us recognise, too, that any pressure, whether economic or military, should be *effective* for its purpose of stopping the peace-breaking. No good planning a ninety foot bridge for a hundred foot gap !

Can we assume that purely economic pressure would in all cases be sufficiently effective *by itself* to stop the peace breakers quickly and with the minimum of irreparable injury ?

The authors of the Covenant thought not. They thought that in this world where many nations are still heavily armed, some armed

force might have to be contributed by someone in some cases, if the economic pressure were to be fully effective for its purpose. They thought, too, that unless this guarantee of *collective* action were given, many States would not be willing to reduce their armaments. So the Covenant provides that the League Council shall have the duty to *recommend* to the several Governments concerned what effective military, naval or air force the Members of the League shall severally contribute to the armed forces to be used to protect the covenants of the League.

Thus, the League Covenant commits us absolutely to economic pressure against a covenant-breaker, but the contribution of armed force can only be *recommended* to us by a Council on which Great Britain is permanently represented.

Loyal and Effective Co-operation. 5. At the time of the Treaty of Locarno, our Government joined in explaining to Germany how we interpreted these obligations (embodied in Article XVI of the Covenant). We declared (in Annexe F of that Treaty) that, as we understood the position, each Member of the League is “ bound to co-operate *loyally and effectively* in support of the Covenant and in resistance to any act of aggression to an extent which is compatible with its *military situation* and takes its *geographical position* into account.”

So it cannot rightly be claimed that the Covenant commits us to sending our armed forces to every part of the globe at the League's bidding, or that we must increase our armaments for the purpose of fulfilling our obligations under the Covenant. What we are bound to do is to accept "*loyally and effectively*" a fair share of this collective responsibility for protecting the League's code of peace against violent wrong.

Some people may speak to you of these provisions as if they were simply obligations incurred by our country for the benefit of others; guarantees which we give, like a kindly policeman, to the other nations solely for their benefit. You might well point out that we too have much to gain from the general guarantee of action to "safeguard the peace of nations." The man who has "great possessions" has specially strong reasons for supporting "the King's Peace."

CONCLUSION.

In answering **Question 5** on the ballot paper, we have not got to trouble about the wording of the Covenant or any other treaty. The principle is what matters here. Will you, in your work for the National Declaration, help to make this question of principle clear? The object of these undertakings about economic and military restraint of a peace-breaker is, not simply to stop a war that has

begun, but to *prevent* its beginning. The League has to make plain *in advance* to any would-be Covenant-breaker these two things:

(1) that he can count on a fair deal if he keeps to the ways of peace;

(2) that he cannot hope to achieve his ends by the ways of violence.

That is part of what the League of Nations has to do. "Security" against war is not simply a negative business, a matter of repressing a peace-breaker; it is positive—a matter of securing peace and justice and mercy, and of putting the world's resources to the best possible use for all.

Our country wants "*security*." That means, not a national guarantee of national victory in a war for national ends, but a guarantee that no such victory and no such war shall ever again be tolerated anywhere. We want "national defence" against war and injustice. In large part this true security rests already upon mutual confidence; in part it must be strengthened by the collective organisation of peace; and in part it involves **the acceptance, loyally and effectively, of collective measures to prevent and stop war.**

