

# PAX INTERNATIONAL

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## LONDON, March 25-30

The emphasis of the Spring meeting of the International Executive Committee was on the political situation with which we are faced and on the work that we want to undertake. It was a notable meeting and the kindness and hospitality of our English friends did all that was possible to ease the sense of strain under which everyone who is concerned for world peace and freedom to-day labours.

While in session there was an exchange of cable messages with the U. S. Section about an American proposal for an intensive international campaign to demand of Governments that they stop preparing for war and turn their time, energy and funds into a different channel and prepare for peace. Mrs. Duncan-Harris, the new Chairman of the British Section, finely expressed the need for a new mentality. The peoples are in want of a fresh conception of the sort of world they desire and a new and hopeful determination to work to realise it. The Committee adopted the proposal from the U. S. "in principle", as the diplomats say, and correspondence is going on as to how to carry it out.

A breath of new life seemed also to come with Mme. Duchêne's account of the rapid spread of the movement against war and fascism, to which another article in this issue of *Pax* is devoted.

The Resolutions, printed in this issue, show what were some of the main points discussed, what position in regard to them was taken by the Committee and what action has since been carried out. These Resolutions are not meant as mere statements of opinion or desire, they are meant as *suggestions for action*. *National Sections and individual members are begged to study them and to see in what ways it is possible to further them.*

Great concern was expressed over the fact that vital international problems are increasingly dealt with in private conversations between representatives of a few of the great powers (see Resolution 6).

Reports on munitions control were given by Miss Freda White and Dr. Sahlbom. For the vote on this and on the important questions of air warfare and defense from air attack see Resolutions 1, 7 and 8.

An interesting discussion on Minorities was led by Miss Mosa Anderson, Co-Rapporteur with Mrs. Lloyd on this subject. The necessity of protection of those who differ *in opinion* from the majority was specially urged.

From countries bordering on Germany came painful accounts of difficulties and misgivings in the face of Nazi pressure. In view of the recurring cases of political murders by Nazi agents

or sympathisers and especially of the Berthold Jakob incident, a delegation was sent to the German Embassy. An account is given p. 5. (See also Res. 4, page 2).

Extremely interesting reports were also given on India by Miss Agatha Harrison (see Resolution 5) and on Refugees by Miss Pye (for this and Res. 11 see p. 2).

As regards the status of women the Equal Rights Treaty was once more briefly taken up. A vote showed the majority of the Executive Committee in favour of the W. I. L. P. F. cooperating, without taking the lead, in the campaign for it. Dr. Paul was asked to continue as Rapporteur on Nationality of Women and Miss Doty and Miss Pye (with Miss Agatha Harrison as alternate) were appointed to represent the W. I. L. P. F. on the Liaison Committee of Women's International Organizations.

The unsatisfactory situation as regards the effort to control the opium traffic was described by the Rapporteur on this subject. Miss Gertrude Eaton spoke of the campaign to get an international basis for securing proper treatment for prisoners.

The discussion of questions of our own constitution showed that several National Sections are finding a certain degree of difficulty with some of the Zurich decisions, among others with the rewording of the object of our League, but it was realised that in any case no amendments can be made till another Congress. To meet misgivings expressed by some of our members the non-party character of the W. I. L. P. F. was once more formally affirmed in Resolution 9, p. 2.

Mme Duchêne was appointed First Treasurer: I was reappointed Hon. International Secretary until the next meeting, when at latest, it is proposed to appoint a new Administrative Secretary. As to the "Maison Internationale" there is some difference of opinion among our members as to whether it is any longer a desirable place for our offices. In any case, the rental of the Maison, on the old terms, has become too great a financial burden and it was decided not to rent it again as a whole after the lease expires in the autumn. It is however conceivable that the League might continue to hire the use of its present offices as a sub-tenant, if such a possibility offered.

Financially, the League is balancing its budget but it is obvious that the last thing the W. I. L. P. F. wishes to do, in this critical time, is to vegetate. It proposes to be even more active than it has been, and is confident that money can be found to support it in being so.

This mood seems to me the characteristic note of the London Meeting.

E. G. Balch.

## THE REFUGEE PROBLEM

The problem of the refugees is not limited to those coming from Germany, and the number of authorities dealing with different categories only increases the confusion.

I. *The Nansen Office* within the framework of the League of Nations is responsible for over a million refugees, chiefly Russian, of whom it is reported that some 203,900 are known to be unemployed or destitute. This organisation comes to an end in three years' time when the refugee question was supposed to have been "liquidated".

II. *The High Commission for Refugees coming from Germany* although appointed by the League of Nations is not subject to its control. The work of this organisation has been continually stultified by the lack of interest and support from the Governments who appointed representatives on the Governing Body. The funds for its administration come from certain private societies and individuals. Some 7,000 refugees from Germany are considered to be urgently needing help and another 25,000 out of the 80,000 are in a precarious situation, in spite of the extraordinary and generous efforts of the Jewish organisations to place and settle them.

III. *The Refugees from the Saar*, at present being cared for by the French Government, but for whom no permanent plans appear to be made, and whose situation is to be discussed shortly at the meeting of the Council of the League. The number in question is stated to be between 4,000 and 5,000.

IV. In addition there is a special League Committee dealing with Assyrians, and there are said to be refugees from Spain, from Italy and from Central Europe for whom no organisation exists.

The situation of a refugee is now much more serious than it was, owing to the general economic conditions. Frontiers are everywhere closed to them, and a determined effort to drive them out of one country into another is leading to the creation of a generation of wanderers ever more embittered against each country from which they are expelled in turn. They are denied the right to work, and as no subsistence is offered them the

possibility to live is denied also. Hunted, starved and despairing, these refugees, who might be an asset and an enrichment to their country of adoption, are being slowly squeezed out of a world in which they seem to have no place today.

Certain ameliorations could be granted by Governments at once, and the cost of these would be comparatively very small, as for instance the granting of public assistance facilities to refugees who are ill or absolutely destitute. This the U. S. A. has already done.

But it is clear that there must be united action if the situation is to be changed. In the House of Lords on February 6th 1935 Lord Cecil said "It is a great mistake to suppose that this is merely a humanitarian question. It is not so \*\*\* it is an international question of a serious character. \*\*\* I am satisfied that this is a political question of great importance and that it has a bearing upon the peace of the world."

The only hope of its proper treatment is for the League of Nations to assume responsibility, set up an organisation which will deal with all refugees, and obtain the co-operation of all organisations and public and private bodies interested.

Three steps have to be considered by any organisation dealing with refugees:

- 1) Emergency relief to meet the daily needs of people without food or shelter,
- 2) Temporary openings for employment pending a more permanent solution,
- 3) Permanent settlement and absorption.

To arrive at the third which is the only solution, all resources, both governmental and private, must be brought into co-operation. A quota system under which a definite number of refugees would be assigned to each country could be elaborated with the help of the International Labour Office. The creation of a pool into which contributions from Governments and other sources could be concentrated, and from which the settlement and public assistance costs of the refugees might be reclaimed by those Governments who carried out the schemes, might be one way of overcoming difficulties which under the present selfish and haphazard ways of dealing with the problem make it appear insoluble.

Many of the refugees are already an enrichment to the countries which have accepted them, and history has shown that not only may they bring cultural and spiritual riches with them, but from an economic and material standpoint also

the country wise enough to open its doors has received great benefit.

In all countries where there are refugees private organisations are now making heroic efforts to help them, but public opinion must be roused to demand that international action shall be taken to remove a state of things which is at once a disgrace and a menace to civilisation. *E. M. Pye.*

## ON REFUGEES

### Resolution 11

The I. E. C. of the W. I. L. P. F. urges the National Sections to approach their Governments with a view to obtaining their support for action by the League of Nations, which should take responsibility for all refugees who by reason of political or racial persecution have been driven from their country of origin, and should create a central organisation to concern itself with their welfare.

Funds for this might be raised through a slight increase in the amount paid by each country to the League of Nations, and might form a pool from which Governments could be repaid for expenses in connection with refugees in their respective countries.

## POLITICAL CRIMES COMMITTED BY NAZIS IN OTHER COUNTRIES

### Résolution 4

The recent political murders and outrages by representatives of Nazi Germany in other lands: Bell in Austria, Dr. Theodor Lessing and Formis in Czecho-Slovakia, as well as the kidnapping of Berthold Jakob in Switzerland — to mention only the most prominent cases — have caused the utmost indignation and horror in millions of minds. The Executive Committee of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom begs the Governments concerned to send an urgent demand to the Hitler Government, which public opinion holds responsible, that such incidents shall be prevented forthwith. If the Governments concerned fail to obtain satisfaction, the W. I. L. P. F. urges that application should be made in all such cases to an international tribunal.

## NON-PARTY CHARACTER OF THE W. I. L. P. F.

### Resolution 9

This meeting wishes to re-state the fact that the W. I. L. P. F. is a strictly non-party organisation and works with women of all political parties or no political party, who are in accord with the aims and principles of the W. I. L. P. F. to bring about peace and freedom.

## AN AUSTRIAN ADDRESS TO THE CHANCELLOR OPPOSING CONSCRIPTION

*A courageous statement on conscription signed by six peace leaders in Vienna, including three of our W. I. L. representatives, has been sent to the Chancellor of Austria. The following is the text freely translated and a little condensed.*

All friends of peace are dismayed at the announcement of the revival of conscription in Germany. They regret that equality should take the shape of military equality and that this should be realised on a higher instead of a lower level.

The statement of the Austrian Government is moderate and courteous in form but it aims at conscription and regards this as a sort of prize for its peaceful attitude.

Yet Austria, a little country and physically incapable of competing in the unhappy arms race, has no reason to desire conscription.

The essential corollary of this is almost overlooked in the excitement of the times. At present each young man is free to decide for himself whether to serve as a soldier and in spite of economic pressure may listen to his conscience on the fundamental question whether he will take part in killing. It is otherwise under conscription.

Much emphasis is laid on the wish of Austria to become a Christian State. But is this compatible with the introduction of universal conscription when Pope Benedict XV in his peace proposals to the Powers, of August 1917, demanded its abolition in all civilised States in the interest of peace, and Pope Leo XIII in his Encyclical *Praeclara Gratulationis*, of June 20 1894, spoke against it on moral grounds? Cardinal Langenieux, Archbishop of Rheims, in a pastoral letter of 1890 which was adopted by almost all the French bishops, calls conscription "godless in principle and destructive of freedom of conscience". Many leading Catholic theologians oppose conscription in principle.\*\*\* Among them, especially, the Dominican Father Stratmann, the author of a basic work "World Church, World Peace" which enjoys high ecclesiastical approval.

Dr. Ignaz Seipel, the former Austrian Chancellor, also signed an international manifesto against conscription in 1925.

These are highly respected names in Austria, men who give their opinion only after mature reflection and on solid grounds. There are countless unimportant

persons who have no way of making themselves heard but are as much in earnest and equally prepared for sacrifice and who suffer equally in their consciences. The Austrian Government certainly is deeply concerned for the welfare of all the people and cannot be indifferent to the fate of these men.

*Is conscription the only course open to us?*

It is only recently that there has been this talk of conscription as necessary for self-defence and essential to the honour of an independent people. Yet many leading persons in military circles do not regard it as the best policy. The great British Empire has no conscription in peace-time and the victors in the World War did not owe their success to the military education of their people through conscription, since England and America did not have it till after war had begun.

Denmark, with the high cultural level of its peasantry, has a law permitting alternative civilian service to conscientious objectors and so have Sweden and Norway.

Unfortunately it is especially on educational grounds that conscription is urged. We however are convinced that there are better forms of education and discipline than those based on the military conception of purely external control. We regard conscription as a moral menace to the young, agreeing with the passage in the above-quoted Encyclical of Leo XIII which speaks of the young being withdrawn from the counsel of parents and elders and pushed into the dangers of barracks life.

We Austrian friends of peace have for years worked hard, in cooperation with friends in other countries, in the cause of peace and have regarded conscription as a misfortune wherever it existed. We know how many young men languish in prison because their conscience refuses to let them accept training as soldiers in defiance of the commandment Thou Shalt not Kill. We do not doubt that in Austria too there are many who would take the same stand.

Therefore we turn to you, your Excellency, before it is too late. The psychosis of war has not yet seized the population. There is still a breathing space. Austria, a little country in a key position, has a mission to save peace. In the face of a power ten times as great she obviously needs to maintain peace. In spite of being so small our country enjoys much respect and affection but it owes it to its culture, and in this lies its future and its hope of life.

Who knows how much may now depend on us? If, in spite of the danger, we do not arm, if we do not seek salvation through conscription, the wave of war-madness may be broken and a turn toward confidence in peace may find its beginning with us.

We beg your Excellency to give serious attention to these considerations which we present with deep earnestness and which are shared by many men of character. We beg you not to turn to conscription.

## NEUTRALISATION FOR AUSTRIA AS SEEN FROM SWITZERLAND

The question of neutrality for Austria has been the subject of considerable discussion in W. I. L. circles. The subject is brought up again in the following short statement which was sent in to the Geneva office some months ago. Since this was written much has happened which affects the Austrian situation and yet in essence it is now what it was then.

"Austria, on account of its geographical situation is in danger, in case war should break out between the great powers which are its neighbours, of serving as their battlefield.

"Our country occupies a key position in Central Europe and constitutes an important piece in the chess game of the foreign politics of several countries. Germany, unhappily, has long been making efforts to acquire the country. Italy has promised to intervene on behalf of the maintenance of the independence of Austria but in return it exercises great influence—not to say a protectorate—over the country.

"Many circles are hoping for a restoration of the Habsburgs but this would not bring any peaceful solution of the Austrian question since any step of the sort would be regarded as a *casus belli* by Czecho-Slovakia.

"The only thing that would release Austria from the danger of threatening war would be a neutralisation of the country under the guarantee of the League of Nations. Then every army would be forbidden to march through the country and the situation of Austria would prevent a threatening war. It is true that the neutrality of Belgium was violated but this violation had such tragic consequences that every State would now avoid being responsible for a similar offence.

"If we speak of a guarantee of the League of Nations we mean a guarantee through its moral weight and by no

means through military sanctions and we believe that if reliance on the League of Nations is often expressed and if it is frequently turned to with confidence its prestige and power will increase. But whatever is to be done for the neutrality of Austria should be done quickly for the situation is critical and the peace of Europe is in question".

May I, as belonging to a neutralised country, be permitted to throw some light on these views? The neutrality of Switzerland was guaranteed afresh on the occasion of her entry into the League of Nations. Switzerland is not under obligation to supply a contingent of troops for any struggle against a violator of the law. It is left to her to guard her own frontiers. For the rest therefore she can—theoretically—face the outbreak of a European war or a world war tranquilly. The treaties guarantee her that she shall not be drawn into the struggle.

But how is it in reality? Does Switzerland herself believe in these treaties? Neither our Government nor our military officials count on their not being violated. Our military budget rises from year to year. The new military administration lengthens the time of service for the different military categories. The plan of a ring of fortresses to defend the Northern frontier of our country is publicly discussed. The organisation of active and passive protection against air attack is presented to the people as an absolute necessity. Does this sound as though anyone put confidence in the agreements that have been made? No! On the contrary we pacifists and anti-militarists are asked with contemptuous scorn whether we are indeed so childish, so naive, as to suppose that our frontiers would not be crossed. If it comes to a war, then even more than in the past, all treaties, pacts and agreements will be null and void. The League of Nations will not be able to exercise its functions as a guardian of such treaties nor to throw into the scales either military sanctions or moral prestige. Therefore I am convinced that the only thing for us to work for is not the protection in case of war of any special territory, of any special classes of the population, or of any special country but the prevention of war altogether.

Clara Ragaz.

### WOMEN AGAINST WAR AND FASCISM

The World Congress of Women against War and Fascism which met in Paris last August found an echo which proves that women everywhere are awake to

the need both of uniting among themselves and of taking part nationally and universally in the general movement for united action in the fight against war and fascism.

To provide for the continuance of the movement a Permanent Committee of Liaison and Coordination was set up at Cité Paradis, 1, Paris X. In spite of the lack of an adequate financial basis and staff it is surprising to see how the movement grows. In France, seven hundred committees — regional, local and occupational — have been formed, some of them in places where no kind of organisation of the population had been possible previously. Women of different classes and occupation are drawn together and women divided by shades of opinion but with the common aim of abolishing war and fascism not only speak from the same platform but work continuously together in the most fraternal spirit. It is notable that women who have never before taken part in any organisation nor attended any sort of meeting are often the most interested and make the freshest and most vigorous contribution.

The Paris Congress was held during the summer holiday — consequently intellectual workers were not so largely represented as they have been since, and some Paris groups which were continually "demonstrating" gave its meetings a somewhat turbulent character which is not typical of the movement.

In Paris almost everyone of the twenty arrondissements now has a committee. One which is made up of teachers, university professors and other intellectuals and includes Mme Joliot-Curie, the daughter of Mme Curie, and the daughters and daughter-in-law of Prof. Langevin, is giving active help.

In Czecho-Slovakia home-workers, always so difficult to organise, have formed a committee. The Roumanian Committee reported in December that groups had been created in all the important towns and many other localities, specially in Bessarabia, among them a committee of peasants. The Roumanian Committee wrote "We are hungry to learn and to act. There is only one hope — unity of action". The Greek committee has given proof not only of great activity but of great courage. They have had to suffer: one member was deported for three months to one of the smaller islands of the Cyclades, to live under conditions of the greatest misery. In Jugo-Slavia, before the elections, the committee is being very active on behalf of the rights of women. In Spain there has been a great development of the move-

ment and the women's committee is reported to have done even better work than mixed committees. The work was continued even during the disturbances and united women of many parties, including moderate women and even some of Lerroux's party who had been disgusted by the brutality of the repression and had joined in the work. In a week, hospitality in Spanish families was found for 500 children, victims of the repression in Asturia. Reference to countries like Germany and Italy is purposely omitted. In the U. S. S. R. the report of the Paris Congress of last August has been translated into all the languages spoken in the Soviet Republics and innumerable reports of it have been given throughout the country. In the U. S. A. the movement against war and fascism is on a large scale and is carried on by men and women together. The U. S. Section of the W. I. L. P. F. is in close contact with it in many places. In Australia, through the activity of one member after her return from the Paris Congress, numerous successful meetings have been held throughout the country. In China the movement has had important repercussions and it is said that Chinese Christian women are particularly active in it.

One of the most important undertakings of the movement is a monthly illustrated paper published from the Paris headquarters, *Les Femmes dans l'Action Mondiale*, of which 15,000 copies are printed. Eight numbers have appeared. It is written to appeal to working women of all classes, employed or living at home. The education which it gives is especially important now that the question of women's suffrage is again under debate and also in view of the fact that many women's papers which appear politically neutral do in reality carry on a veiled propaganda. Most women are completely ignorant of the menace of fascism and what it means. This paper is supplemented, for other readers, by *Vigilance*, the organ of the Vigilance Committee of Anti-Fascist Intellectuals, men and women.

The Committee of the movement does not ask for a subscription.

The way in which the movement is spreading and penetrating to new regions and circles, where it finds new collaborators, gives hope that soon there will be a final end of doubts, prejudices, fears and hesitations in regard to it, opening the way to an invincible fraternal union of women throughout the world against war and fascism.

Prepared by the Editor from Material furnished by G. Duchêne.

### MINORITIES

The violent death of King Alexander and Foreign Minister Barthou last October ought to shock the world into a consciousness of the danger always lurking in the neglected complaints of minority groups. It has not done so where American newspapers make public opinion, for they have not permitted even assassination to open their pages to the discussion of the real grievances of Jugoslav citizens.

It is we pacifists who must support, if not begin, the campaign for adequate international action. Our League has repeatedly spoken and taken action on behalf of proper treatment of oppressed groups. We touched the subject again at our Zurich Congress and the Executive Committee issued afterwards a statement in favour of some international provision requiring nations to act justly toward their minorities.

As one of our League's Rapporteurs on minorities, I was glad to give some time to the subject in Geneva during the Fifteenth Assembly of the League of Nations. The Polish proposal, spoken of at our Zurich Congress, that the provisions of the special Minorities Treaties should be universalised and made to apply to Minorities in all countries alike was indeed brought forward publicly in the Sixth Commission — with loud reverberations. The Poles threatened to denounce the treaty binding them to submit to League supervision in their dealings with minority populations. Eventually however Poland backed down to the *status quo ante*. Perhaps their protest was valuable in calling attention to the futility of trying to solve the minorities question in any way except through the universal international approach.

Mr. Eckhardt of Hungary made another sensation with his very frank recital of the injustices suffered by Hungarian Minorities in the countries which surround Hungary. For days the Sixth Commission heard from delegates who resented his manner of bringing up forbidden subjects, and advised the reference of such complaints to the League of Nations Commission on Minorities. Parenthetically, we wonder just how a minority question, when the Government concerned desires to suppress it, ever does reach the Commission on Minorities.

In just such cases as Hungary mentioned an ideal League of Nations Commission would have power to hear complaints, and, if necessary, to send and investigate conditions for itself. A resolution in favour of an efficient League of

Nations Commission was one of the results of the two-days Conference on the Problems of Minorities held in Chicago by the United States Section last May, and I regret that we could not discuss it at Zurich and take emergency action on it. As your rapporteur on Minorities, I continue to advocate it, because I consider it the enabling act of the general aim which our Executive Committee worded in Zurich. Until we can agree on it, and campaign for it in Geneva, we go there principally as observers. The full text is as follows:

"We favour the creation of a Permanent Minorities Commission of the League of Nations, members of which should not act as national representatives. This commission should be required to entertain all minority complaints, and should be given authority to visit the countries concerned and to take testimony when necessary for adequate investigation of such complaints".

Mr. Eckhardt talked freely in private, and said that he felt satisfied that his report had done some good by airing the long-suppressed complaints of many miserable people. Refraining from any mention of the complaints of Minorities within Hungary itself, I discussed with him his suggestions for any possible world solution. He thinks that the political complications are so great and the varieties of Minorities so numerous that no just all-inclusive treaty is possible. He would prefer the calling of a conference under League of Nations auspices to establish minimum requirements of civil rights for any citizen in any country, — a "bill of rights", as it were, for the least among us. This procedure would indirectly settle most of the minority questions without offending any particular nation. The best nation would go on treating its minority groups better than the minimum required, and the worst nation could be influenced to reach at least the minimum of justice.

Such a conference on the minimum rights of citizens was endorsed also by Prof. Quincy Wright, our Chicago authority on Minorities, who arrived in Geneva just at the end of the Assembly. Prof. Wright was one of our speakers last May, and helped in our discussion of League of Nations activities. He encouraged me to advocate such a conference in our League, although he was sure it would not be called in the near future. He agreed with us that the only possible answer to minority questions in this period of world development must be broadly international.

Lola Maverick Lloyd.

### DELEGATION TO THE GERMAN EMBASSY IN LONDON

A delegation of representatives from the International Executive Committee of the W. I. L. P. F. was received by Prince Bismarck, first Councillor of the German Embassy.

The object of the delegation was to ask for information as to the abduction of Herr Berthold Jakob from Switzerland, and to represent to the Ambassador the effect of this and similar outrages on public opinion and on work for friendship and understanding between nations.

The representative of Great Britain, stated the object of the delegation saying that they were well aware that the press was not to be relied on and were anxious to know the truth.

The Swiss delegate then spoke of the deep and painful effect of the abduction on public opinion in Switzerland. She understood that Herr Jakob had been deprived of his German nationality some time ago, and this fact added to the seriousness of the situation as reported, namely that he had been carried into Germany which could no longer claim jurisdiction over him.

The delegate from Czecho-Slovakia said that similar and worse incidents had taken place in her country, and she made a moving appeal to the Councillor to ask his Government to put a stop to such action.

The United States representative spoke of the painful impression that this incident and many others within Germany itself made upon public opinion in America where there was real danger of the revival of the war-time psychology in regard to Germany.

The delegate from France said that her Section of the League had always worked for understanding between France and Germany and for revision of the Peace Treaties, but they were finding such work increasingly difficult in the face of the indignation that incidents such as this and many others were arousing.

The delegates from Sweden and Holland concurred in what had been said.

Prince Bismarck said that he was sorry that he could not give them any further information than that contained in the press, but referred them to the press statement containing the German view on the incident.

The British delegate thanked His Excellency for having received them, and the delegation then withdrew.

# RESOLUTIONS

## VOTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

March 25-30, 1935

(For Resolutions 4, 9, 11 see p. 2)

### 1) Control of the manufacture of and traffic in arms

The I. E. C. of the W. I. L. P. F., representing informed opinion in many countries, watches with intense anxiety the efforts now being made in Geneva to get an agreement on the control of the manufacture of and traffic in arms.

It deeply regrets that no Convention to deal with it even more drastically than the American proposals, which form the basis for present discussion, has yet been agreed to. It opposes all proposals such as the rejection of inspection on the spot, which would weaken or cut down this suggested Convention.

*This has been sent to the press and is to be sent Mr. Henderson and to all Governments represented in the Disarmament Conference.*

### 2) Abyssinia

The only great State on the African Continent that is still independent is now menaced. The fascist Government of Italy, without a formal declaration of war, is following the example of Japan. It is probable that certain great imperialist countries are disposed to allow her a free hand in exchange for certain advantages. The situation is complicated by the fact that Japan has interests in Abyssinia and exercises an important influence there and, by its importation at low prices, makes formidable competition against Italian exportation. It is ready to defend its interests and is categorically opposed to all attempts at occupation.

Abyssinia has been a member of the League of Nations since 1923, and in January last appealed to it for arbitration in vain. She has repeated her appeal to-day. The conscience of the world will be outraged if the League of Nations remains deaf to these appeals.

The I. E. C. of the W. I. L. P. F. decides to renew its representations to the Council of the League of Nations and urgently asks its National Sections to make energetic protests through meetings, appeals, petitions and in other ways, to their Governments, to the Italian Government and to the Italian Embassies in their countries.

*This was sent to the Secretary General of the League of Nations before the meeting of the Council on April 15th, following up previous letters sent on December 13th and March 20th. Sent to the press.*

### 3) Plebiscites

Since its foundation the W. I. L. P. F. has regarded the right of peoples to self-determination as one of the most important principles of its political programme.

It is convinced that the method of popular consultation (plebiscites) may be a means for ascertaining the wishes of a majority of a people, or a part of a people, if a free secret vote not subjected to undue influence is guaranteed. These prerequisites, however, do not exist in many lands under present conditions. Economic and political pressure, violence, victimisation and terror, used by the groups who possess the power and money and thereby also all the psychological weapons, make an honest, objective formation of opinion and expression of self-determination impossible from the beginning and can only too easily produce results which risk leading to war.

The W. I. L. P. F., therefore, in view of the recent feverish campaign for the holding of plebiscites, gives emphatic warning against the danger of being deceived by those who distort and exploit the idea of the plebiscite in a propaganda spirit on behalf of their annexationist intentions and, under the mask of a free and democratic principle, inflame afresh the violent revisionist and irredentist desires and aims of discontented elements.

### 5) India

In view of the importance of the maintenance and development of the democratic principle, the W. I. L. P. F. has followed closely the progress of the negotiations for self-government in India. The I. E. C. of the W. I. L. P. F. views with grave concern the fact that the proposals for a new constitution under consideration by the Government of the United Kingdom are unacceptable to the Indian people. It expresses its earnest desire that the situation should immediately be reviewed in consultation with Indian opinion.

This meeting also urges upon organised groups of men and women in British India the need for a clear presentation of their case such as has been given by the Indian Princes in their recent statement issued on March 18th.

*Sent to the British Prime Minister and Secretary of State for India: also to the press, especially the Indian press.*

### 6) Secret Diplomacy

The frequent political conversations between statesmen in different countries, upon which may hang the fate of peoples,

call attention more urgently than ever to the dangers of secret diplomacy, against which our League has always protested since its foundation.

The I. E. C. of the W. I. L. P. F. asks the International Office in Geneva and National Sections to undertake action against this form of diplomacy, and to support all other action in the same sense.

*Submitted personally, or by letter, to all delegates to the April Meeting of the Council of the League of Nations. Sent to the press.*

### 7) Aviation

The W. I. L. P. F. urges its National Sections to work

- 1) for the total abolition of military and naval air forces, which has been declared to be possible by many Governments;
- 2) to expose the fallacy and absurdity of the argument that forces must be increased for collective security;
- 3) to bring home to the ordinary man the horror of his acceptance of the view that the only defence against air warfare lies in retaliation.

*This is to be sent to Mr. Henderson and to all Governments represented in the Disarmament Conference.*

### 8) Passive Defence

The I. E. C. of the W. I. L. P. F. have learned with sorrow that the French Chamber of Deputies has voted a law on "passive defence" against air warfare.

This law, which is to a certain extent a plan for civil mobilisation, obtained a majority that the democratic traditions of France would never have led us to expect. It lays upon the communes, in this way practically mobilising the Mayors and Municipal Councillors, the task of undertaking measures of so-called protection which technical and scientific men of undoubted probity have universally proclaimed as useless.

The W. I. L. P. F. considers that such measures are less intended for the protection of civilians than for their militarisation. It is astonished that this serious violation of the fundamental rights of man could be accepted by a country which has proclaimed these rights.

It warns National Sections against the imitation by their Governments of such an example and urgently asks them to oppose any such project energetically.

*Sent to the French President of the Council and to the press.*