RUSSIA'S DISARMAMENT PROPOSALS

The Soviet declaration, proposals and memorandum, together with Mr. M. Litvinov's speech at the "Disarmament Commission," etc., etc.

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WITH A PREFACE BY
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PREFACE.

The great merit of the proposals for disarmament made by the Soviet delegation at the Disarmament Conference in November last was their simplicity. The League of Nations, in the course of the last nine years, has succeeded in creating a new international language and method which may have their merits, but certainly have grave defects. The involved technique of the language prevents the ordinary mortal from understanding what is meant and the complexities of procedure prevent him from understanding what is being done. Instruments are drawn up, articles are referred to, Commissions and sub-Commissions are appointed and volumes of reports and documents are accumulating out of all proportion to the specific accomplishments of the League. Experts and diplomats are in fact burying the League under a mound of technical verbiage. In the meanwhile people outside are beginning to wonder whether comparatively simple propositions must be approached in this way and are growing suspicious that a screen is being intentionally erected to conceal the absence of any sincerity of purpose on the part of the representatives of the nations. The word "Disarmament" seems to the plain man to mean the abandonment of arms. But anyone reading the report of the earlier proceedings of the Preparatory Commission on Disarmament will at once see that such an interpretation is not entertained by a single nation. That Russia should join in the deliberations and give a bold, blunt, and uncompromising definition of what Disarmament really means was as disconcerting to those present as would be a man who came into a Christian church and told the people they must really give their goods to the poor. The carefully-fostered prejudice against the Bolsheviks was immediately used in this country in order to cast doubt on their sincerity. But in all nations the common people gave a sigh of relief that somebody at last had made a proposal which everyone could easily understand. No more about ratios, standards, limits, parity, no classifications and definitions and categories, but a comprehensive and wholesale scrapping of all armaments.

Of the sincerity of the Soviet proposals there can be no question. Of course they want to spend their money on remunerative reconstruction instead of on futile international strife. The other Governments pretend to be shocked by anything so unpractical. As a matter of fact they are held back partly by their belief in the aggressor-myth and partly by having made the League of Nations into an organisation for the preservation of war in certain circumstances. Although
little or no response can be expected from the Preparatory Commission, there has undoubtedly been a great gain in the eyes of the world opinion by the public declaration of proposals for wholesale disarmament.

If, as is to be feared, nothing comes of this bold move, will some nation take the final step forward, a step which unlike all proposals made hitherto, including the Russian, does not depend on general and universal agreement? Will some nation, without entering into the complexities of what are and what are not armaments, simply declare that it has decided finally and in all circumstances to abandon the war weapon and accordingly proceed to disarm?

Until this happens we must continue as best we can with the discussion of the various proposals. The Soviet declaration is set out here fully and deserves to be carefully studied. There can be no dispute with regard to the arguments used, although it may be objected that the Soviet Government must have known that so drastic a method could not be accepted by the other Powers. But it is all to the good that the proposals have been made even though they only constitute an ideal to be eventually reached. It is all to the good that Russia has joined in the discussions.

In view of the fact that not only Russia but other nations are endeavouring by new suggestions to deal with the problem which transcends all others in importance, people in this country are beginning to ask when a real contribution towards the universally desired end is going to be made by Great Britain. Russia is definite; Great Britain is still taking refuge in subterfuges and evasions.

ARTHUR PONSONBY.

FOREWORD.

On December 7, 1925, the Council of the League of Nations decided to establish a "Preparatory Commission" to make arrangements for the summoning of a Disarmament Conference, to be held on Swiss territory, and the Council decided to invite several non-member States, including the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, to participate in the labours of the "Preparatory Commission."

M. Chicherin (Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs), in the course of a reply to Geneva, published in the Press of February 11, 1926, accepted the invitation of the League Council, but pointed out that Russia could not send delegates to any conference held in Switzerland until the Government of that country had given reasonable satisfaction for the murder of M. Vorovsky, and urged that the Commission should be convened elsewhere.

(M. Vorovsky, Soviet Minister to Rome, was murdered at Lausanne on May 10, 1923, while attending the Turkish Treaty Conference, and his assassin was acquitted by a Swiss court.)

M. Chicherin's request was declined by the League Council. However, it was obvious that a disarmament conference without Russian participation would be foredoomed to failure, and efforts were made, through intermediaries, to settle the Russian-Swiss dispute. These were eventually successful, and on April 17, 1927, the Press announced that an accord had been reached between Moscow and Berne. The path was now cleared for Soviet participation in the labours of the "Preparatory Commission." The League Council decided to summon the Fourth Session to meet on November 30, 1927, and on October 1 of the same year, the Secretary-General of the League received a cable from M. Chicherin agreeing to Russian participation in the work.
Mr. Litvinov's Declarations, Proposals and Speech.

Mr. Maxim Litvinov (Chief Soviet Delegate) at the Fourth Session of the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference on November 30, 1927, read the following declaration on behalf of his Government:—

"The Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, having been unable to participate in the three sessions of the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference, entrusted to its delegation to the fourth session of the Preparatory Commission the task of making a declaration covering all questions connected with the problem of disarmament.

Capitalism Makes for War—Peoples Desire Peace.

"The Soviet Government adheres to the opinion it has always held that under the capitalist system no grounds exist for counting upon the removal of the causes which give rise to armed conflicts. Militarism and big navies are the essentially natural consequences of the capitalist system. By the very fact of their increase they intensify existing differences, giving a vast impetus to all potential quarrels, and inevitably convert these into armed conflicts.

"The peoples of all countries, however, enfeebled and impoverished by the imperialist world war, are imbued with determination to struggle against new imperialist wars, and to guarantee peace between the nations.

"This is precisely what makes it possible for the Soviet to accept the invitation of the League of Nations, the latter having expressed itself in favour of disarmament. In so doing the Soviet Government demonstrates before the whole world its will to peace between the nations, and makes clear to all the real aspirations and true desires of the capitalist States in regard to disarmament.

The League of Nations and Disarmament.

"Despite the fact that the world war was called the 'war to end war,' the whole history of post-war international relations has been one of intermittent, systematic increase of armed forces in the capitalist States and of a vast increase in the general burden of militarism. So far none of the solemn promises of the League of Nations have been even partially fulfilled, while in all its activities in this regard the League has systematically evaded setting the question in a practical light.

"All the work done by the Preparatory Commission in this regard has been of a purely decorative nature. Indeed, the League of Nations only approached the question of general disarmament in 1934. It was decided to call a conference on general disarmament on May 1, 1925, but up to the present not only has the matter of disarmament not advanced a single step, but no date for the conference has been fixed. Likewise the League of Nations has been fruitlessly engaged upon the question of the limitation of war budgets since 1924.

"The reluctance to put into practice the policy of disarmament, both on the part of the League and individual imperialist States, was manifested both in the methods adopted and the alternation of the questions of disarmament and guarantees, while simultaneous attempts are made to sum up in detail all the factors determining the armed power of the various countries concerned. Such a setting of the question, evoking endless fruitless arguments on so-called military potentials, affords an opportunity for indefinite postponement of the fundamental and decisive question of the actual dimensions of disarmament. There can be no doubt that by setting the question thus at the coming Disarmament Conference not only will it be impossible to achieve curtailment of the existing armaments, but the States belonging to the League of Nations may even receive legal sanction for increasing their armaments.

Efforts of Soviet Government to Bring About Real Disarmament.

"The Soviet Government has systematically endeavoured to get the question of disarmament definitely and practically formulated. Its endeavours have, however, always encountered determined resistance from other States. The Soviet Government, the only one to show in deeds its will to peace and disarmament, was not admitted to the Washington Conference of 1921-22, devoted to questions of the curtailment of marine armaments.

"The proposal of general disarmament made by the Soviet delegation to the Genoa Conference was rejected by the Conference. Despite this opposition, the Soviet Government never relaxed its determined endeavours in regard to disarmament.
RUSSIAN DISARMAMENT PROPOSALS

"In December, 1922, a Conference was called in Moscow by the Soviet Government of representatives of the Border States for joint discussion of the problem of the proportional curtailment of armaments. The Soviet Government agreed to a considerable diminution of its armaments, despite the fact that this would not affect many of the Great Powers, always ready, whether under the obligation of treaties or not, to come to the assistance of other countries represented at the Moscow Conference, should these be involved in conflicts with the Soviet Union. A definite and thorough scheme for the diminution of armaments was proposed at that Conference by the Soviet Government. This was, however, rejected.

"Despite the sceptical attitude of the Soviet Government towards the labours of the League, it accepted the invitation of December 12, 1925, to attend the coming Disarmament Conference, and only the Soviet-Swiss conflict, evoked by the assassination by Vorovsky and the subsequent acquittal of the assassin by the Swiss court, has prevented the Soviet Government from attending previous sessions of the Preparatory Commission.

Concrete Soviet Proposals for Universal Disarmament.

"In now sending a delegation to the fourth session of the Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference the Government has authorised it to present a scheme for general and complete disarmament. The Soviet delegation is authorised by its Government to propose the complete abolition of all land, marine, and air forces. The Soviet Government suggests the following measures for the realisation of this proposal:

"(a) The dissolution of all land, sea and air forces, and the non-admittance of their existence in any concealed form whatsoever.

"(b) The destruction of all weapons, military supplies, means of chemical warfare, and all other forms of armament and means of destruction in the possession of troops, or military or general stores.

"(c) The scrapping of all warships and military air vessels.

"(d) The discontinuance of the calling up of citizens for military training, either in armies or public bodies.

"(e) Legislation for the abolition of military service, either compulsory, voluntary, or recruited.

"(f) Legislation prohibiting the calling up of trained reserves.

MR. LITVINOV’S DECLARATIONS AND PROPOSALS

"(g) The destruction of fortresses and naval and air bases.

"(h) The scrapping of military plants, factories, and war industry plants in general industrial works.

"(i) The discontinuance of assigning funds for military purposes both in State budgets and those of public bodies.

"(j) The abolition of military, naval, and air Ministries, the dissolution of general staffs and all kinds of military administrations, departments and institutions.

"(k) Legislative prohibition of military propaganda, military training of the population, and military education both by State and public bodies.

"(l) Legislative prohibition of the patenting of all kinds of armaments and means of destruction, with a view to the removal of the incentive to the invention of same.

"(m) Legislation making the infringement of any of the above stipulations a grave crime against the State.

"(n) The withdrawal or corresponding alteration of all legislative Acts, both of national and international scope, infringing the above stipulations.

Soviet Government Proposes Universal Disarmament Within One Year.

"The Soviet delegation is empowered to propose the fulfilment of the above programme of complete disarmament as soon as the respective Convention comes into force in order that all necessary measures for the destruction of military stores may be completed in a year's time. The Soviet Government considers that the above scheme for the execution of complete disarmament is the simplest and the most conducive to peace.

Willing to Accept Four Years' Period if Necessary.

"In the case of the capitalist States rejecting the immediate abolition of standing armies, the Soviet, in its desire to facilitate the achievement of practical agreement on complete disarmament, is prepared to make a proposal for complete disarmament to be carried out simultaneously by all the contracting States by gradual stages during a period of four years, the first stage to be accomplished in the course of the coming year.
RUSSIAN DISARMAMENT PROPOSALS

Soviet Government Will Participate in Discussion of any Practical Measures for Disarmament.

"Under this proposal, the national funds freed from war budgets are to be employed by each State at its own discretion, but exclusively for productive and cultural purposes. While insisting upon the views just stated, the delegation is nevertheless ready to participate in any and every discussion on the question of the limitation of armaments, whenever practical measures really leading to disarmament are proposed. The delegation declares that the Soviet Government fully subscribes to the Convention on the prohibition of the application to military purposes of chemical and bacteriological substances and processes, and expresses its readiness to sign the Convention immediately. While insisting on an early date being fixed for the ratification by all States, it considers that in order to ensure the practicability of the Convention, it is necessary to raise the question of the establishment of control by the workers in those chemical industries capable of being rapidly converted to war purposes in States which have a highly-developed chemical industry."

Mr. Litvinov's Speech

Speaking in support of the Soviet proposals Mr. Litvinov said:—

"We have laid before you our programme for disarmament. At first sight its radical and exhaustive nature may make it seem to you complex, little possible of realisation, indeed utopian, but such an impression is only due to the freshness of the theme. It must be definitely stated that the question of general disarmament has so far never been seriously dealt with. Up to the present it has been forbidden ground. The realisation of our programme may not, of course, correspond with certain political interests, above all, those of the Great Powers, or with the interests of the heavy industries, and the numerous groups of speculators. We know that very well, but the problem of complete disarmament itself presents no difficulties and can be solved rapidly and completely. This programme at any rate is far more simple and demands far less time for detailed study than do those schemes which have up to the present been the basis of the work of the Preparatory Commission.

Complexity of Schemes of Security.

"I must confess that I have been studying these schemes and have been appalled by their complexity, by the confusion of questions which have been brought forward side by side with the question of disarmament, and indeed the Commission has already devoted several sessions to the discussion of the mere enumeration and headings of the clauses which might form the basis for an international convention on partial disarmament. Unanimity has been reached only on the most insignificant questions. The vast majority of questions or more correctly their mere headings have given rise to a difference of views which no Commission has yet succeeded in reconciling, nor has greater success attended the private negotiations between Governments; but it is only when these disagreements will have been removed (if that ever happens) that the Commission will be faced with the beginning of its fundamental difficulties. The Commission will have to obtain unanimity in order to determine the degree of security of each separate country, to define the extent and importance of each country's international obligation, geographical and other peculiarities; and the Commission will have to be in a position to lay down the maximum number of armed men, armaments, fleets, aeroplanes, that each country may possess, and so on.

Total Disarmament the Only Hope.

"The enumeration of the above points is surely sufficient to show the absolute hopelessness, if indeed not utopia, of such a treatment of the question of disarmament. To treat the question as the Commission has been treating it affords no hope whatever of a solution of the problem in the present international position. Recent events, the treaties concluded a short time ago, lead not to the unity but to the further division of the European and non-European States into political groups, and to the intensification of their mutual antagonisms, but this is not all. Attempts have been made to suspend the work of the Preparatory Commission pending the solution of a whole series of political questions no less confused and intricate than those of which I have just spoken. Should the present basis of the work of the Preparatory Commission not be altered and if in spite of that, the Commission is not overwhelmed by the load of innumerable discussions with which it is afflicted, then it will be doomed to
RUSSIAN DISARMAMENT PROPOSALS

labour for years, for scores of years, without results, or at any rate without any appreciable results. This is absolutely certain.

The Danger of War.

"At the same time, we are living in an epoch when the danger of war is not merely a theoretical possibility, but a very real menace. We are not the only ones who affirm this. These same fears were expressed a short time ago by many responsible statesmen of capitalist countries. The shadow of the threatening inevitable capitalist war is to be seen and felt everywhere. If war is to be averted then it is necessary to act without any further delay. We consider that complete immediate disarmament is the very best guarantee of security for all peoples. This problem must be dealt with immediately and solved in the shortest possible period. States which refuse to face this problem take upon themselves heavy responsibilities. It is for this reason that I beg permission in the name of the Soviet Delegation to read the following resolution:

"Whereas the existence of armaments and their evident tendency to continuous growth by their very nature inevitably lead to armed conflicts between nations, diverting the workers and peasants from peaceful, productive labour and bringing in their train countless disasters, and whereas an armed force is a weapon in the hands of the Great Powers for the oppression of the peoples of small and colonial countries, and whereas the complete abolition of armaments is at present the only real means of guaranteeing security and affording a guarantee against the outbreak of war, this fourth session of the Preparatory Commission for Disarmament resolves:

"1. To proceed immediately to the working out in detail of a draft convention for complete general disarmament on the principles proposed by the Soviet Union Delegation, and

"2. Proposes the convocation not later than March, 1928, of a Disarmament Conference for the discussion and confirmation of the proposals provided in Clause 1.

Soviet Case Unanswerable.

"Since no serious points can be urged against the essence of our programme, we foresee that certain groups of people will endeavour to describe our programme and resolution as mere propaganda. This time we are pre-

pared to accept the accusation and we declare that this is indeed propaganda for peace. We are conducting such propaganda and shall continue to conduct it. If the Preparatory Commission on Disarmament is not the place for conducting this propaganda, then we can only conclude that we are here under a misapprehension. The Soviet Government is pursuing and always has pursued a policy of peace with all possible energy, not only in words but by deeds.

"Only a few days ago when it seemed that the war clouds had become particularly heavy on the horizon of Eastern Europe, the Soviet Government did everything in its power to prevent the catastrophe. It used every argument it possibly could to influence the Lithuanian Government and to convince the latter of the necessity of making a declaration that the state of war between Lithuania and Poland is being terminated. The Soviet Government had also taken the initiative of persuading two other neighbours of Lithuania of the necessity to give similar advice, on their part, to Lithuania. Similar steps for the maintenance of peace were taken by the Soviet Government in Warsaw. This peace policy of the Moscow Government gives us the right to declare unequivocally that we shall miss no opportunity of intensifying our propaganda for disarmament and peace."

RUSSIAN MEMORANDUM

On the following day, the Russian Delegation handed in the following Memorandum:

"As an addition to its declaration, and with the object of stating clearly its general view of the present international situation in relation to possibilities of war, the U.S.S.R. Delegation desires to bring the following facts and ideas to the notice of the fourth session of the Preparatory Commission for the International Disarmament Conference.

"It is needless to go into the question of the responsibility of any particular Government which was concerned in the imperialist war of 1914. Discussions, all more or less barren, are still proceeding on this subject.

"To the Soviet Government which is estranged from the ex-belligerents in that war, the general reasons that led to the cataclysm from which mankind has still by no means recovered are perfectly clear.

Origins of the World War.

"The world war was the utterly inevitable outcome of competition among the great capitalist States driven as
RUSSIAN DISARMAMENT PROPOSALS

"The loss of man-power due to the fall in the birth-rate is 500,000 for Great Britain; 633,000 for France; 2,600,000 for Germany and Austria-Hungary.

Material Losses.

"The following table shows the material losses:

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<th>Country</th>
<th>National wealth in millions of dollars</th>
<th>National income in millions of dollars</th>
<th>Cost of the War in millions of dollars</th>
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<td>France</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
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<td>-</td>
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</table>

"In addition to this direct war expenditure we must count indirect material damage.

"Losses to private owners in Europe, 29,660 million dollars. Losses to tonnage, 15,398,000 tons, or one-third of the pre-war tonnage, representing a money value of 6,800,000,000 dollars.

"The losses due to diminished output amount to 45,000,000,000 dollars, and the expenditure on relief and subsidies to 1,000,000,000 dollars.

Losses to Neutrals.

"The economic loss to neutral Powers of 1,750 million dollars, to which must be added the consequences of the destruction of an enormous working power, amounting to 67 milliard dollars, which represents future losses to production.

War Debts.

"The total debts of European countries rose from 191,835 million gold marks in 1914 to 1,078,800 million gold marks in 1919.

Danger of Future War.

"Is it possible at this stage for anybody still to say 'Notwithstanding the immense burden of the losses caused by the war, we can at least console ourselves with the certainty that there is no further danger of future war, that the imperialist war was the last in the history of mankind, and that we have now entered upon an era of peace'?

RUSSIAN MEMORANDUM

"There is no need to point out that the present situation as expounded by certain far-seeing sociologists, economists and publicists, gives the lie direct to this assertion; nor need we refer to the disturbed state of the Press and the public. One single fact is enough—the frenzied piling-up of armaments.

"When we look at this fact, which proves at the very least the extreme apprehension felt by every Government for the future of its country (even if it is not the intention of some of them to take active steps to bring about a war in order to shatter the earth again in the manner that suits them better), we are strongly reminded, by the method which the League of Nations has so far followed in the matter of disarmament, of war-time pacifism, with its efforts to divert the public conscience from the horrible and inexorable reality by empty promises and chimerical hopes."

"We may here give a few illustrations of the contemporary growth of armaments.

Growth of Armaments.

"In 1913, at the zenith of pre-war militarism, the Great Powers had 5,750,000 men under arms. In 1925 5,232,000 men were under arms, exclusive of the armies of new States, such as Iraq, Syria, Arabia proper, Northern Morocco, etc., and exclusive of 1,000,000 soldiers in arms under the orders of the Tuchuns of various Chinese provinces, who did not recognise the Peking Government.

"If we remember that the figure of 5,750,000 men included 1,129,000 soldiers belonging to the countries which were defeated in the imperialist war (Germany, Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria)—countries which have now 198,000 men under arms or 931,000 fewer than before the war—and if we also remember that instead of the 1,350,000 soldiers of the old Tsarist Russia we have now 562,000 men of the Soviet Union then we shall see that the victorious and neutral countries, having crushed German imperialism, have been induced by the pressure of fresh and constantly-growing competition to increase their armies by 1,183,000 men.

Military Budgets.

"A comparison of the military budgets of the principal countries for the same period reveals the same state of affairs.

"In 1912 the military budgets of the principal countries, including Russia, amounted to 4,744 million roubles. The expenditure of these same States in 1924-25
RUSSIAN DISARMAMENT PROPOSALS

totals 5,300 million roubles, that is to say, an increase of 556 millions.

"Taking into consideration the decrease in the military budgets of Germany and the Soviet Union, it will be seen that the expenditure of other countries has increased by 1,442 millions. These two facts suffice to prove the utter inconsistency of military expenditure in bourgeois countries after the defeat of Germany.

Naval Expenditure.

"Let us consider naval expenditure alone. In 1913 the naval budget of the five principal maritime Powers was £100,500,000. In 1925 it amounted to £230,800,000. The difference is striking. Meanwhile the naval budget of the U.S.S.R. has decreased from the £26,000,000 budget of Tsarist Russia in 1913 to £3,400,000.

"The naval construction programmes of the principal bourgeois countries are quite in keeping with these figures. In spite of the 1922 Washington Convention for the limitation of naval armaments, we see the same, if not greater, frenzy of construction, the only difference being that instead of the forbidden capital ships there is a feverish construction of smaller craft (cruisers, torpedo-boats, submarines, etc., and seaplane flotillas).

"The following information throws some light on the magnitude of armaments: This year the five most important naval Powers (Great Britain, the United States, France, Japan and Italy) are constructing 87 different vessels; they have also decided to construct 181 others, that is to say, 268 vessels in all.

"As for us, we have not up to the present constructed, nor are we engaged in constructing, any new war vessels; we have merely repaired existing vessels.

Air Fleets.

"Air fleet figures tell the same tale. At the present time the following are the figures for the military air forces in the leading countries: France, 6,114 aeroplanes; Great Britain, 3,460; Italy, 1,700; United States, 3,800; Poland, 498; Roumania, 257.

Improved Machines of Human Slaughter.

"It is not superfluous to add a few details regarding the qualitative improvement of the means now being devised by the military powers for a new massacre of humanity which bids fair to eclipse completely the horrors of the last war. Let us quote a few very characteristic figures.

"In France the number of machine-guns to one divi-

RUSSIAN MEMORANDUM

sion of infantry in war-time was 24 at the beginning of the war. At present it is 483. In the United States the number of machine guns to one division of infantry in war-time was 24. At present it is 947. The artillery of the United States—like that of France—has increased in the same proportions simultaneously with an increased length of range.

"It will be sufficient to quote the case of the American 8-inch gun, the range of which has increased from 11.5 km. to 17 km.; or—an even more striking example—the successes of the French artillery whose 240 mm. gun had before the war a range of 16.5 km. whereas it now has a range of 53 km. Or again, the 340 mm. gun, which before the war had a range of 22 km. now 150 km.

Chemical and Bacteriological Warfare.

"The definite antipathy shown—clearly and forcibly shown—by public opinion towards the various forms of chemical and bacteriological warfare is compelling certain Governments to say that these forms of warfare must be renounced or limited. As a matter of fact, unceasing labour in the chemical laboratories on which the principal Powers are spending enormous sums of money has undoubtedly since the war produced 'positive results.'

"As an example we may quote General Frey's statement that an aero-chemical bomb weighing 450 kilos and charged with luisite can render ten districts of New York uninhabitable; 100 tons of luisite launched from 50 aeroplanes could render the whole of New York uninhabitable for at least a week.

"Scorning the hypocrisy of European militarists, the Americans quite frankly defend the use of chemical weapons in the next war. In March, 1927, for instance, an American writer expressed the following views: 'The Senate has wisely reserved our right to use poisons in warfare. I hope that the Senate will maintain this policy and give its support to every new method of warfare. I also hope that the Senate will reserve its right to utilise infectious bacteria in warfare.' A la guerre comme à la guerre 'for war is not a tiresome game played according to rules. . . .

"The American Infantry Journal writes: 'There is no doubt the chemical methods of warfare will be much more frequently employed in the next war than in the last. The advantages of these arms are so great, so enormous that any leader who does not utilise them in future battles will have to bear the consequences. . .
RUSSIAN DISARMAMENT PROPOSALS

"'On every side offensive and defensive chemical warfare is being feverishly prepared and perfected. To refuse to employ gases in warfare would cause appreciable prejudice to our (i.e., the American) combative power and would therefore be an act of incredible folly."

'Chemical warfare makes it possible for highly-developed peoples to employ an excellent arm, makes it possible for them to become a dominating world power.'

—(Le Gaulois, April, 1927).

Qualitative and Quantitative Increases of Armaments.

"We could give numerous examples of the increasing power of engines of destruction in air and naval warfare. We will, however, refrain from quoting any further instances, because no one can dare to deny the increase of armaments, both in quality and quantity.

"We repeat that the enormous increase in armaments should in itself suffice to prove that the world is in imminent danger of becoming once again the victim of imperialist warfare.

Danger Points.

"Let us now consider the sensitive points of international politics which may lead to armed conflict. Let us merely consider Europe. The points are innumerable. Each is acutely sensitive and the cause of nearly all of them lies in the extremely irrational bases of the Treaty of Versailles.

"Even the least important questions are dominated by a mistrust between the victors and the vanquished in the last imperialist war.

"On the admission of such a statesman as Lord Robert Cecil, the results of the last Disarmament Conference between the great naval Powers are fraught with danger.

"This proves that the various countries either cannot or will not solve these most serious problems by negotiation; it also proves that negotiations of this kind often result in strained relations between the participating countries. Under such circumstances the fear that a gigantic war may break out is amply justified. There is no doubt that the next war will be the cause of far greater disasters than any which suffering humanity has ever known.

Conclusion.

"The conclusion to be drawn from these facts is expressed in the declaration which the U.S.S.R. delegation submits for discussion to the Fourth Session of the Preparatory International Conference for Disarmament."

CAPITALIST PRESS DENUNCIATIONS

Capitalist Press Denunciations of Russian Proposals

In the course of his report of the Soviet disarmament proposal, Mr. Wilson Harris, the well-known correspondent of the Daily News, said:—

"He [Litvinov] then entered on his main statement the essence of which was the revolutionary doctrine that the right way to bring about disarmament is to disarm."

But nothing is further from the minds of the vast majority of our capitalist statesmen and the Liberal and Conservative newspaper proprietors and imperialists than real disarmament. It threatens too many profit interests of armaments manufacturers; it threatens to throw out of employment too many highly-paid generals, admirals, and other officials of the Army and Navy and the War Ministry; it threatens the supremacy of the big imperialist Powers over the weaker countries. Hence we get the following gems from the leading articles of the Liberal and Conservative Press:—

"He [Litvinov] babbles for disarmament as babies for the moon."—Morning Post.

"It may be that there are some people who will really be deceived by this clumsy and cynical farce; they cannot be many."—Daily News.

"In the evident hope of putting decent and honest Governments in a false position, he [Litvinov] has put forward a scheme which can only be described as grotesque."—Daily Mail.

"The Russians know just as well as does the rest of the world that apart from such States as are virtually disarmed already, there is not one which is ready even to consider such a proposal."—Manchester Guardian.

"To say that precisely such a scheme might have been formulated by any schoolboy’s debating club would be unfair to a rising generation whose minds are much less immature than those of its forerunners."—Daily Telegraph.

"When the Soviet absurdities had been comfortably relegated to cold storage, the delegates took up the proper business of the meeting—namely, the constitution of the new Commission of Security.—Times.

It will be noticed that the Liberal and Conservative Press alike denounce the Russian proposals, in a word, as “grotesque.”
**Russian Disarmament Proposals**

**Labour Welcomes Russian Proposals**

The *Daily Herald* editorially declared: "The Russian plan cannot be lightly dismissed as Utopian. Nor would it be anything but a grave folly to denounce it as propaganda. It is a plan to which, if it is rejected, some effective alternative must be proposed, or the professions of the Governments, and the pledges of the peace treaties, be dishonoured. Mr. Litvinov, in fact, has done one of those simple things which are startling by their very simplicity. He has invited the Disarmament Commission to discuss—Disarmament! The reply of the other Governments should afford a significant revelation of their real intentions."

On December 8, 1927, the National Joint Council, representing the Trade Union Congress and the Labour Party, adopted the following resolution:—

"The National Joint Council, representing the British Labour Movement, desires to express its sense of the importance of the proposals for general and simultaneous disarmament which were put forward by the U.S.S.R. Delegation at the meeting of the Preparatory Disarmament Commission in Geneva on November 30.

**Eliminate Armed Force.**

"The declared purpose of these proposals is what the Labour Movement has always held should be the purpose of all civilised Governments in the whole of their foreign policy, namely, the elimination of armed force as the decisive factor in the international relations of civilised peoples, and the substitution for armed force of a policy based on reason, justice, and international co-operation.

"For this reason, the National Joint Council cordially welcomes every proposal to this end.

**Arbitration and Security.**

"While adhering to its policy with regard to arbitration and security as an essential accompaniment of the policy of disarmament, it regards these proposals as capable of exercising, by their very simplicity and completeness, a powerful effect on the public opinion of the whole world.

**Complete Disarmament.**

"The National Joint Council therefore calls upon the British Government to express its willingness to take them into serious consideration, with a view to preparing the way for the general acceptance of complete disarmament."

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**Liberal Leader supports Russian Proposals**

Sir D. M. Stevenson, ex-Lord Provost of Glasgow, and Scottish Liberal leader, writing to the *Daily Herald* on December 7, 1927, said:—

"In my opinion, the Russian proposals submitted at Geneva last Wednesday were far and away the best that have ever come before the League of Nations. . .

"If Great Britain had the moral courage to agree with Russia in this matter the four years suggested by the Soviet Government for carrying out in gradual stages complete disarmament would give all the peoples by 1932 some hope of seeing in the near future the time when . . . ‘They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.’"

**National Peace Congress Welcomes Russian Proposals**

The twenty-first National Peace Congress meeting in Manchester on December 4, 1927, passed the following resolution:—

"This National Peace Congress, representing associations and individuals of all classes and parties interested in the prevention of war, expresses its appreciation of the challenging proposals for total disarmament made by the representatives of the Russian Government to the Preparatory Disarmament Commission, recognising that the attainment of the object of these proposals is part of the measures necessary for the establishment of ultimate peace.

"This Congress urges the Government not to take up a negative attitude towards these proposals, but to use the occasion by assuming the leadership as a League member in stating anew a definite programme for general disarmament."

**Discussion of the Russian Proposals**

The "Preparatory Commission," at the conclusion of its session on December 3, 1927, decided to reassemble again on March 15, 1928, at which meeting the Russian Delegation will be able to advance their proposals for detailed discussion.
RUSSIAN DISARMAMENT PROPOSALS

As these proposals, by general consent, are the most comprehensive yet made, and as Russia is second only to the British Empire in area and population, one would have thought that the Prime Minister of a country which prides itself on its democratic institutions, would, at least, have made arrangements to enable the highest tribunal in the land, viz., the House of Commons, to discuss them fully. Yet, when Mr. Tom Johnston, M.P., asked the Prime Minister on December 5, 1927, “whether the Government is considering these proposals; and if, in view of their importance, he can give an assurance that the British delegates at Geneva will not be authorised to negative them without an opportunity having been afforded for their discussion in the House of Commons,” Mr. Baldwin replied, “the Russian proposals do not appear to have been regarded by the Committee as a practical and helpful contribution to the problem and there would accordingly be no advantage in discussing them in this House.”

True, a week later, the Prime Minister promised that the proceedings of the “Preparatory Commission” would be carefully considered by his Government. Asked by Commander Kenworthy on December 12, 1927, “whether he has now received a full account of the disarmament proposals of the Russian Government at Geneva; and what is to be the attitude of His Majesty’s Government towards this proposal at the next meeting of the Conference or Commission,” Mr. Baldwin replied, “Yes, Sir. The proceedings at the recent meeting of the Preparatory Commission will receive careful consideration before the attitude of His Majesty’s Government at the next meeting of the Commission is determined.” However, it is easy to divine, judging from the contemptuous tone of the Conservative Press and Mr. Baldwin’s reply to Mr. Tom Johnston on December 5, 1927, that the British delegation will be instructed to offer uncompromising opposition to the Russian proposals.

It is evident that the measure of support or opposition which these proposals will receive or encounter at Geneva will depend upon the pressure which working-class and genuine pacifist organisations throughout the world can bring to bear upon their respective Governments during the next few months.

Appendix

M. Litvinov’s Report to the XV. Congress of the Russian Communist Party.

In the course of a report made to the Congress of the Russian Communist Party on December 14, 1927, M. Litvinov said:—

“The Soviet Government, in its correspondence with the League of Nations concerning the invitation of the latter to attend the Disarmament Conference, emphasised in due measure the distrust evoked by the League of Nations in this regard. The Soviet Government, notwithstanding this distrust, however, set forth its reasons for accepting the invitation to the Preparatory Commission of the Disarmament Conference. You, comrades, are fully aware of these reasons and so I will not dwell on them here. And, comrades, I must inform you that what we have seen and heard in Geneva has not in the slightest measure shaken our distrust.

“In our declaration to the Preparatory Commission, we enumerated facts and figures illustrating the approach of the League of Nations to the problem of the limitation of armaments, and its tempo. The participation of the Soviet Government in the so-called Preparatory Commission on disarmament commenced only with the 4th session. Previous to our participation, the representatives of the other Powers had met three times in Geneva for preparatory work, selected a sub-committee, considered various drafts, etc.

The “Sane” Proposals of the League of Nations.

“The result of these labours is a document bearing the title ‘Project for an International Convention on Disarmament,’ This document is extremely interesting. The most graphic description would not convey so clear a conception of the methods of work of the League of Nations as does an examination of this document. It contains several sections, with about fifty paragraphs, sub-paragraphs, clauses, notes, etc.; the first introductory paragraph has already been presented in three parallel variations—French, English and German. This is followed by a series of paragraphs enumerating those arms and military institutions which are subject to limitation. But in vain will you seek in this document for a single figure or a scale of proportions for the limitation of armaments. There are no figures whatsoever in this document. It is a mere listing of paragraphs naming the armaments and arms which are subject to limitation, but how this curtailment is to be accomplished, to what extent, and by what standards the limitation is to be measured—all this the commission has not yet discussed. The compilation
RUSSIAN DISARMAMENT PROPOSALS

alone of the headings of these paragraphs has evoked much
dissension and disagreement among the bourgeois countries,
and there is hardly a single important paragraph in this docu-
ment which has not been subject to several proposals and
re-drafting, either by the French, English, Japanese, German,
etc. In view of the fact that the Preparatory Commission failed
to eliminate the manifest dissensions which arose, it was sug-
gested that the commission resort to private, diplomatic
conversations between the interested States and that only after
satisfactory settlement had been reached in these negotiations
should the commission meet again to consider the actual figures
which are to take the place of the xx’s and yy’s scattered
throughout this draft, i.e., to commence on the transformation of
the existing algebraic formulae into a concrete draft. These
quantities were to have signified the maximum of all arms,
personnel, staffs, naval and air ships—and all this, mind you,
for each country separately. No general measure for limitation
or disarmament is given; a special standard of armaments is to
be set in each particular case for each particular state. This
extent of armaments, according to the conjectures of the authors
of the draft, are to be fixed in relation to the degree of security
of each country to its international obligations, to its
geospatial situation, and as stated, to its ‘other peculiarities.’
It would follow that these conditions: the degree of security
and the geographical situation, must in their turn be subject to
discussion as agreement and unity must be achieved in regard
to these between the Powers. England and America, England
and France, America and Japan, France and Italy, Italy and
Jugo-Slavia, Poland and Lithuania, Roumania and Hungary
must come to an agreement among themselves as to what degree
of security each State may consider itself as enjoying, and after
having attained this, they must again come to an agreement as
to the number of troops each is to reserve—and this to be
accomplished in the absence of any general standard whatsoever.
But, comrades, you need not think that should such an agreement
be reached, the proposed convention would then be definite and
concrete or would represent a guarantee against those horrors
of war which we witnessed ten years ago. No, not in the least.
At the end of this project is the following paragraph which I
will read you verbatim:

‘The present convention must not be an obstacle in the
way of increasing the land, sea and air armaments beyond
the limits of the figures set for any great contracting Power,
firstly, in the case of the outbreak of war.’ (In the case of
war this convention is of no significance whatsoever—each
State is then free to increase its armaments to the very

maximum.) ‘Secondly, should the country be threatened
with rebellion’ (they have not overlooked this either), ‘and
thirdly, should this increase be effected with the consent
of the Council of the League of Nations.’

‘Here we reach a deadlock on the question of so-called poten-
tials, i.e., of conceding to each country, in the case of war, the
right to increase its armaments according to its judgment. Thus,
highly industrially developed countries, enabled to quickly
mobilise a war industry, are immediately placed in a highly
advantageous position over those countries of lesser industrial
development, generally speaking, over the small nations.

‘Further on is another, not less interesting paragraph which
reads:

‘If any contracting Power should consider that any change
in circumstances will influence its demand for national
security, it may receive permission to extend the limit of
its armaments set by the present convention.’

‘This is followed by a space for the names of the judges who
are to decide which countries are to be conceded an extension of
armaments despite the convention. This, comrades, is called
a ‘sane, realistic’ approach to the question in contradiction
to the ‘utopian, idealistic’ proposals presented by the Soviet
Delegation.

Security for Armaments Interests.

‘It would seem, comrades, that the projected programme of
the Preparatory Commission and its methods of work should
fully assure an unlimited number of sessions and meetings for
many years to come, and that the opponents of disarmament
need have no fear of the outcome of the work of the League
of Nations and its Preparatory Commission. But even this work
of snail’s pace tempo of the Preparatory Commission is alarming
to some. And so, at the last session of the League of Nations
supplementary measures were taken not only to prevent prema-
ture disarmament, but even the discussion of the problem of
disarmament. For this purpose the so-called security committee
was conceived and created. This new child of the League of
Nations must occupy itself with the consideration of the supple-
mentary guarantees of security for members of the League, in
other words, guarantees of the secure digestion of the fruits of
conquest of the world war and territorial plunders which were
executed outside the Versailles, St. Germain and other treaties.
With this aim in view, this committee must also examine the
respective paragraphs in the statutes of the League of Nations
with a view to strengthening them. Only after this committee

26

APPENDIX

27
RUSSIAN DISARMAMENT PROPOSALS

has satisfactorily concluded its work, may the draft of the convention I have just mentioned come up for consideration.

"This, comrades, was the sum total of work accomplished by the League of Nations when our delegation arrived at Geneva.

A Breach of All Proprieties.

"The 4th Session of the Preparatory Commission, in which we participated, assigned itself a very meagre agenda. It consisted of two points:—Fixing the date for the next session, and the creation of the Security Committee.

"If we exclude the second point, the problem of creating a committee whose connection with the Preparatory Commission for disarmament was disputed not only by us, but by other delegations as well, we find representatives from 26 countries all over the world convened in Geneva for the single purpose of fixing a date for the next meeting. It is therefore not to be wondered at that when the Soviet Delegation dealt directly and in substance with the question of disarmament in the Preparatory Commission, its declaration was received as a sacrilege, as an attack at the very foundations of the Commission of the League of Nations, as a breach of all proprieties.

Soviet Delegation and Disarmament.

"Well, comrades, we have our own conception of political proprieties. We did not hesitate to present the question of disarmament in the light we saw fit. We introduced our project on disarmament. We not only introduced our project, but we also criticised the previous work of the League of Nations and the Preparatory Commission, and chiefly their methods of work. As against the lengthy, involved, thoroughly unsubstantial draft of the convention, useful only for precipitating endless disputes, dissensions and discussions, bearing no promise, at best, of any significant decrease in the burden of militarism, and offering absolutely no guarantee against new wars—as against this project, we offered our clear, concrete scheme for general and full disarmament, easily executed, if so desired, and resulting in no loss to any of the existing States.

"We said that taking into consideration the difficulties in the way of the other members of the Commission towards the immediate acceptance of our project of immediate, complete disarmament, we were prepared to concede that disarmament be effected over a period of four years. We added, that we were ready to consider other proposals along our line, the line of actual disarmament.

APPENDIX

Objections to Soviet Proposals—"Too Simple."

"The leaders of the Commission, however, spared no effort, on various pretences, to side-track our proposals and to pass on to the next point, without taking any decision on our proposal. They found this essential not only because our proposal would have put an end to their established plan for the Commission, which was to restrict itself to fixing the date for the next session, but chiefly because they were unable to advance any arguments against our proposal: this was proved irrefutably by the insignificant discussion which followed the presentation of our programme.

"What were their objections to our programme? It was, you see, too simple. Yes, it is simple, requiring a similarly simple answer, and not permitting those lengthy arguments and discussions and those methods of delaying decisions to which the League of Nations is so accustomed; from this point of view the simplicity of our programme does indeed, present, for some, a certain inconvenience.

"Furthermore, it was stated that our programme is too good not to have been conceived by anyone else previously, and if our predecessors had not done so before, we had no business to do so now. We were also told that the Commission had already drafted a convention on which much labour had been expended, and it being impossible that this labour be wasted it was therefore necessary to continue working on the old draft and not commence on a new one. The members of the Commission frankly admitted that the discussion on the project had led the Commission into a deep forest, with no path in sight, but they had comforted themselves by remembering that some wise philosopher had once said: 'If you have lost yourselves in the woods, continue walking straight ahead, without turning either to the right or to left, and you will eventually find yourself outside the forest.' The Preparatory Commission, although it had lost its way, must continue its dark path paying no heed to any directions towards new and simple exits. It was also pointed out that some countries might, in spite of a convention regarding full disarmament, continue to arm themselves—an objection which may be proffered against any international convention. It seems to me, on the contrary, that it would be far simpler to control States who had once undertaken not to permit the existence of any armies, naval or air fleets, and to detect any attempt on their part, despite their undertaking, to organise new armies and new fleets—this would be far easier than if they had undertaken merely to limit their armaments, and yet had continued secretly to increase them. Such arguments cannot be taken seriously.
RUSSIAN DISARMAMENT PROPOSALS

"Paul Boncour, the Socialist, who took upon himself the ungrateful task, in this case, of speaking in the name of the whole throng of capitalist States opposed to us, endeavoured to raise the discussion to a higher plane. He attempted to prove that the fulfilment of our scheme for full disarmament would deal a heavy blow to the small nations, which, should disarmament take place, would find themselves in an unequal position... in comparison to the economically stronger States. As it is not precisely this inequality which exists at the present time, and as if the unequal division of armaments and military industries provided by any scheme for a mere limitation of armaments would in the slightest measure diminish this inequality! As if the small nations would be less insecure after their powerful neighbours had disarmed, than they are now when, in addition to the economic, financial, territorial and other superiority possessed by the great Powers, the latter also enjoy the immense advantage of greater armaments.

Armaments a Sign of Civilisation.

"Some bourgeois newspapers, even those of liberal tendencies rejected our programme with a philosophic disguise on the bellicose nature of man, his pugnacity and the inevitability of his carrying on a fight in one form or another, and, they pointed out, that as a consequence of disarmament, man would have to resort to fisticuff fights. And this, they think, is a departure from civilisation. The accompaniments of civilisation are gun-powder, lead, tanks, dam-dam bullets, submarines, mines, destruction of cities, poisonous gases and other paraphernalia of contemporary warfare—without these civilisation is impossible. Our proposals provoked quite a good bit of literary activity abroad. Of course, each and every newspaper and journal wrote about them. I followed the Press very closely, and I can testify that no arguments outside of those mentioned above were to be found.

Predicament of Bourgeois Representatives.

"The predicament in which the representatives of capitalist countries found themselves was really tragic. They could not very well say outright that they did not desire full disarmament. Indeed, the whole idea of a disarmament conference and its Preparatory Commission was conceived because capitalist governments, even the most refractory, must pay some heed to public opinion which is demanding guarantees against future wars, demanding the lifting of the burden of militarism. Therefore, they could not state frankly that they did not desire full disarmament, but neither could they disclose the real reasons for their reluctance, reasons of which we are very well aware, and neither could they put forth any substantial arguments against our programme, or prove that it would be ineffectual, were there actually a desire and will for disarmament. It is for this reason that attempts were made first to completely sidetrack the discussion and then to crush it.

APPENDIX

Attempt to Shelve Soviet Proposals.

"One of the members of the Commission, the representative from Greece, M. Politis, attempted to propose that we pass on to the next point on the agenda without taking any decision on the first, graciously permitting our delegation to present our proposal again at the next session of the Preparatory Commission. I was compelled to remind M. Politis that even bourgeois custom does not permit of such unceremonious procedure with resolutions and proposals presented by a member of the meeting, and that I had the right to demand—it being their affair of course to discuss our proposal or not—that they either accept our proposal or reject it, and that if they, for any reason were not in a position to take a decision on it now, without having perhaps the authorisation of their governments—they might postpone it until the next session, but this must be done only by a decision of the Commission. Whereupon the chairman of the Commission stated that our proposals had already been entered into the files of the Commission and would automatically come up for discussion at the next session.

"There is no doubt that at the next session of the Commission efforts will be made to repeat the tactics of side-tracking our proposals, so as not to enter into too serious a discussion, and it will be the duty of our delegation to fight for a serious and fuller discussion of our programme, for the acceptance of this programme, or else that a proper explanation be given for its rejection, and above all to fight against the slow methods of work of the Preparatory Commission.

Date of Next Session.

"We also come into conflict with the other members of the Commission on the question of fixing the date for the next session. The Soviet delegation proposed the very earliest date possible. We pointed out that as far as we were concerned we were ready to continue work without any interval, and were ready to work, even during the holidays, but taking into consideration the contemplated recess for the meeting of the Council of the League of Nations, and also the certain unwillingness.
RUSSIAN DISARMAMENT PROPOSALS

of the other members of the Commission to work during the holidays, the Soviet delegation proposed that the 5th session be called for the 10th of January, the earliest date after the holidays. Well, the Commission, of course, has its own method of work. Still adhering to its project of the convention, for the further consideration of which it is necessary to reach an agreement on the above-mentioned disputed questions, and to its obvious desire to link up the work of the Preparatory Commission with that of the Security Committee, the Commission insisted on fixing a date as remote as possible for the next session.

"We then presented a resolution expressing that once and for all the full independence of the Preparatory Commission from the Security Committee be put on record.

The German Delegation.

"The German Delegation in general supported our resolution, proposing a few insignificant amendments. It also insisted on the earliest possible date for the next session, but was soon shaken, and surrendering its position, agreed on a compromise proposal that the Preparatory Commission meet on the 15th March.

"I must remark here that in this, as well as in other instances, the German Delegation to a certain extent agreed with us; for reasons different from ours the German Delegation was also interested in an early settlement of the question of armaments. Disarmed by the Versailles Treaty, Germany bases its demands for the disarmament of the other countries on one of the paragraphs in the statutes of the League of Nations. In case of the non-execution of this paragraph, Germany may have the right to demand armaments for itself.

"Together with us, the German Delegation endeavoured to hasten the work of the Preparatory Commission and to separate it from the Security Committee, but bound by the decisions of the League of Nations of which it is a member, it could not, of course, insist that its demands be considered with the same persistency as did the Soviet Delegation.

"As a result, it may be said, that on all questions considered by the Commission a clear sharp line was drawn between us and the other delegates. It was a case of we and they. And this is as it should be. We have no complaints to make on this score. And you, comrades, will understand that under such circumstances we were not always in a position to speak whenever we saw fit, and say what we desired.

APPENDIX

The Security Committee.

"Just a word about the Security Committee. We refused to enter this Committee as a member. We announced that we considered the creation of this Committee as an attempt to postpone the work of disarmament, and that we could not take upon ourselves the responsibility for such tactics. Apart from this, inasmuch as we were not members of the League of Nations, and did not recognise its statutes, we naturally could not occupy ourselves with discussions, explanation and clarification of separate paragraphs of the statutes and general decisions previously accepted by the Council of the League of Nations, or by the League of Nations itself. In view of the fact, however, that a technical connection had been established, against our will, between the Preparatory Commission and Security Committee, we agreed to enter the Committee in the capacity of observer, i.e., for the sake of information. I must add here, that the rights of these so-called observers in the League of Nations have not yet been defined, and are determined in each separate case.

"I, as observer, attended the first session of the Security Committee, and should I have desired to speak on any question raised, I would most probably have met with no difficulties. But I rejected this opportunity, especially in view of the fact that the questions under consideration in no way concerned us.

"The Committee occupied itself with evolving a programme of work, and even here two tendencies immediately manifested themselves. On the one hand, efforts were made to revive the so-called Geneva Protocol regarding obligatory arbitration and mutual guarantees, that protocol which was in principle, but not in form, accepted by the MacDonald Government, and then rejected by the present Conservative Government in Great Britain. This attempt, of course, did not escape the British delegate who candidly stated that this protocol should be considered as buried once and for all, and that if the Committee wished to discuss this protocol, that of course, was its own affair, but he must warn the Committee that none of those present would ever survive the end of the discussion.

"The first exchange of opinions in the Security Committee affords a clear conception of the future struggles that will take place within it, and at the same time definitely confirms our contention that the attempt to set up an interdependence between the Preparatory Commission and the Security Committee is the best means of dooming the work of the Preparatory Commission to complete unfruitfulness, or at best, to protraction until infinity.