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"DEMOCRACY MARCHES"

by

DOROTHY MACARDLE

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"DEMOCRACY MARCHES" By DOROTHY MACARDLE
Wednesday/Thursday - November 12th/13th. 1941
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CENSORED

DATE 17/1/45 SIGNATURE Dorothy Macardle
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The Prospects of International Co-operation

While the sacrifices of the Russian people out-range imagination, and all the resisting nations suffer fiercer punishment, in England the war presses grimly and heavily down. The calling-up of women for war work ~~breaks the bones and to break homes in~~ England is almost - to break hearts.

It is natural that men and women, as they pay the ever-increasing price, long increasingly to believe - to feel sure that they are helping, not only to preserve civilization as they know it, but to build a more glorious future on secure peace.

Are we vain wish-thinkers if we indulge this dream? It is not to be forgotten how all great wars have evoked schemes for lasting peace, and how all - Holy Alliance, quadruple, quintuple, triple alliances; congress, confederation and concert of Europe - have failed. Then, dare we hope? Are there any elements in today's situation which were lacking in the past? I believe, there are.

Peace is indivisible: it can be maintained only through collective defence. Is not this an axiom now?

The tide-marks of civilization are those times which bring the acceptance of ideas. When people cease to oppose an idea, when they adopt it, bequeath it, and forget that it ever was

questioned, a lasting advance is made. Often such tides rise quietly, scarcely perceived, while we are dismayed by the darkness and dim of storm.

To all appearance, the idea of international solidarity has risen to its height and crashed. But perhaps that high achievement was illusory; perhaps an idea less magnificent, less universal, but sounder, is gaining now.

That peak seemed to be reached in Geneva, six years ago - on October the fifth, 1935. I was there, and I thought I was seeing the world be re-born.

The Council of the League of Nations sat round the green-baize table; the members, secretaries and technical advisors on tiers of benches rising behind them - a phalanx of the white peoples' intellect and power. Apart in a corner sat a small dark-skinned man - Tekle Hwariate, the Ethiopian representative. Italians were bombing his countrymen from the air. The Italian delegate sat at the Council table, unmoved. The Council was to determine by vote whether Italy should be declared an aggressor and be opposed with economic sanctions by members of the League.

It would open a new ~~epoch~~ epoch; indeed, I imagined, if, for the sake of a helpless African nation the free white powers constrained one of themselves. When yes and oui followed yes and oui round the table without a dissident, (since the interested

parties did not vote), I experienced an elation of which I was later ashamed.

I did not foresee that the nations would vote for sanctions and that some would retreat ignominiously from the task and risk of putting them into effect. I ought to have foreseen it, because of Monsieur Laval's cigarette.

While the Abyssinian, called to the table, was reading his Emperor's restrained and yet desperate appeal, the suave Italian, ^{Regan} Aloisi, leaned back in his chair, lighted a cigarette, and half-closed his eyes. With a gesture of equal insolence, Laval did the same.

He was already in collusion with Mussolini, of course.

After that insincere vote it was not long before the name of Geneva rang as dead as a false coin tossed on a counter. From the fall of the League to Munich was a facile descent. Followed, "the ^{sa} sauve qui peut, and Hitler take the hindmost." May posterity forgive us all!

What ailed the League? Volumes are being written on that question. I am going to name only one of its many weaknesses. The League lacked the fusing ^{and welding} element of a positive social ideal. The influence of your magnetic democracy was missing; imperialistic policies slowed down the pace of non-violent change and dictator states disrupted it from within. And these things could happen, this last chance of salvation from war could be wasted,

because the peoples were too blind to realize the sheer, desperate necessity of collective defence.

We have learnt a more fearful lesson than any our predecessors were given, and I think we have learnt at last that neither patriotism nor pacifism is enough.

Or at least, we are learning. There are signs of it everywhere. The British Government's last minute offer to France, when France was falling, came too suddenly and too late. Time did not allow proper consideration of all that common citizenships and pooled resources might involve. But the fact, that the offer was made by the government showed a change of heart.

International Co-operation has been given an immense stimulus by your "Lease and Lend" Act and by all the help you are sending and planning to send.

The Atlantic charter marks an advance that will not, I think, prove illusory. It has been sealed by the promptitude of Mr. Churchill's declaration, in face of the Japanese menace, of solidarity with the United States.

It is significant that, here, the question whether international co-operation should be attempted in the future is no longer discussed; interest centres rather in the question how: in what form - federation, alliances or league. Again, there is no effort to deny a share of guilt for the policies which produced war; ^{our's} ~~disputants~~ differ only as to which blunder was the worst.

Another happy augury is the tenacity of the International Labour Office, salvaged from the Geneva land-slide and now at work in New York. Economic democracy has its clearing-house all in order, ready to function effectively again as soon as the war subsides.

Good news from America, ^{and promotion} ~~too~~ is the appointment of Mr. Litvinov - a formidable champion of the cause of the collective defence. And it is obviously of incalculable import for the future, that, here, admiration for the heroism of the Russian people and the sense of our debt to them is melting a chaos of prejudice away.

More important than any pledge or sentiment or manifesto is the fact that, in London, conferences of the allied governments are already taking place. Eight of the invaded nations have their Cabinets here, formally recognized by the governments of Great Britain and the United States of America. Governmental functions are exercised also by the National Committee of the Free French Empire which has just been formed. Here, recently, Premiers and Foreign Ministers of Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Yugoslavia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway and Poland met. Consulting with them and the representative of Free France were the Soviet Ambassador and Mr. Anthony Eden and High Commissioners of the Dominions. They endorsed the Atlantic Charter with amendments and reservations

which all will consider. They formed an organisation, counting on American help, for the reconstruction of their countries after the war. Poland and Czechoslovakia issued a joint statement; Poland and the Soviet Union had already signed a compact.

These statesmen have two things in common which were lacking at Geneva - the immediate struggle against a ruthless enemy, and devotion to the ideal of democracy.

Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary, Rumania, also, have their democratic organisations in England. Everywhere, the cause of freedom is upheld by the Jews.

Invaded Europe today is one vast conspiracy. In all the resistant countries, people are enduring the same anguish, combatting the same enemy by the same means and hoping for the same end.

Persecution, conspiracy, a common enemy and a common aim - all human history proves that indestructable loyalties arise out of these. These are the elements which weld and fuse.

We have united to repudiate Hitler's New Order: but a New Order is in the forging: an international democracy.

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