

February 9th 1931

Dear Lord Cecil,

I am sending you a reproduction of a cartoon which I published in the TELEGRAAF (Amsterdam) yesterday, and which will be in the SCIR (Brussels) to morrow, these two papers having in Holland and in Belgium the overwhelmingly biggest circulation.

This cartoon expresses my deepest conviction and I believe ~~that~~ that, considered the circumstances which lead up to it, I never made a cartoon for a higher and nobler and more urgent purpose.

Your articles have been a great comfort to me and I could almost agree entirely with them. In one of the last you put it, that disarmament has to come simultaneously with the recognition by all members of the L.o.N. of the only correct and binding version of the 16th paragraph. As long as England (Official) insists on giving it its own version and a non-compulsory character, ~~so~~ long other nations will do the same, and ~~so~~ long that paragraph will be without the ~~slightest~~ slightest value.

On the contrary when all signatories solemnly adhere to the absolute binding character of their obligation to execute the decision of the L. C. N. against an eventual aggressor, Security will be a fact, and disarmament will follow automatically, because there would not be anymore the slightest advantage for any country to have a bigger armament than ~~that~~ ^{required} which would be necessary to live up to the Covenant obligations.

Of course the United States ~~had~~ ^{would have} to declare that they would never consider any economic or military sanction ordered by the League against an aggressor as a hostile act. Nor would they ever give their Government ^{sub} support or protection to citizens who would try to counteract these sanctions. I am convinced that the majority of the American people would adhere to this, from the moment that national armaments would lose their present character, and become only forces at the disposal of the League.

Now, is there another way, is there the remotest possibility of getting certain nations, (France, Poland, Yougo-Slavia etc.) to disarm, before they know that they can do so without great danger, or without having to count only on the goodwill of others?

No, that other way does not exist. It can't be done. It never will be done. France will certainly never take another risk. In 1935 its manhood will be under the influence of the terrible losses of the last war. Not one government, neither a "Cartel" nor even a Blum-one would be able to get disarmament through before they have safety. They are a peaceloving nation. They hate being soldier, they loath it. They are no fighting race like for instance the British, who are rather fighters, in a sportive sence. The Germans are different, they have a craze for military performances and for war. A poor personality like Hitler, with the poorest arguments is able to sway the public opinion in Germany. If you compare his succes with the results obtained by a "brave général Boulanger" who finished by committing suicide on the grave of his lady-friend in ^{Brunels} Montmartre-cimetary, or with Paul Deroulede who too was only laughed at, till he became a nuisance and was deported; ^{at present} or with the results of Daudet who was put in prison, and managed to escape to Belgium but whome nobody in France takes seriously, then you have the exact measure of the two peoples mentality. But the French as far as I know them will not give in to persuasion or to political blackmail, surrounded as they are by belligirant nations who make no secret of their intentions. They will stick like grim death to their organisation of selfdefence till the day when they get something just as safe.

The British nation too is all for peace, but would there be any Gouvernement, even a Labour one, which would allow the Navy to drop below the powerstandard of any Continental combination?

So there remains only one way//: Safety first, then disarmament will follow nearly simultaneously. Please excuse a modest admirer of you to give frankly his opinion.

Yours very sincerely