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A History of the National Declaration on the League of Nations and Armaments in Great Britain between May 24, 1934 and June 27, 1935

David J. Olson
University of Nebraska at Omaha

A HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL DECLARATION ON THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS AND ARMAMENTS IN GREAT BRITAIN BETWEEN MAY 24, 1934 AND JUNE 27, 1935

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David J. Olson

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789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The early 1930's were not a heroic time for Great Britain, anymore than for most of the rest of the world. It was a period marked by the need for burgeoning welfare payments and great social unrest at home, and by the reemergence of Germany under Adolf Hitler on the continent. The prevalent emotion of the time was that of gloom, which put the thirties into sharp contrast to the 1920's, a time of generally high hopes.[1] It is representative of the emotions felt during the time to note that Walter Greenwood's play, Love on a Dole, was one of the period's most popular dramas.[2]

Economic depression was a worldwide phenomenon during the early 1930's. In England the depths of this depression were reached in 1933 after which economic indicators, such as real income, began to show slow rise.[3] A. J. P. Taylor is speaking of this when he says,

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[1]Charles Loch Mowat, Britain Between the Wars: 1918-1940 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), p. 480.

[2]Robert Graves and Alan Hodge, The Long Weekend: A Social History of Great Britain, 1918-1939 (New York: Norton & Co., 1963), p. 347. In this portrayal of the plight of the unemployed the heroine is able to keep her family together only by becoming a bookmaker's mistress.

[3]Mowat, p. 490. Also see Alfred Havighurst, Twentieth Century Britain (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), pp. 234-236.

> In 1934 Chamberlain announced that the country had finished the story of Bleak House and could sit down to enjoy the first chapters of Great Expectations.[4]

The National Government in power during the early thirties was an anachronism singularly fitting the strange times in which it existed. It had been formed during the worst of the depression to preserve a facade of national unity in the face of economic chaos, when in August of 1931, the Labour Government of Prime Minister Ramsey MacDonald had broken up over matters of finance. At the behest of King George V, MacDonald stayed on as Prime Minister in coalition with the Conservative and Unionist Party under Stanley Baldwin, who as Lord President of the Council, was second in power.[5] Baldwin however, while not the Prime Minister, held the balance of power since the Conservatives outnumbered the National Labour members in the Cabinet.[6] In addition, the fact that MacDonald's health was failing tended to make Baldwin the real leader of the government. This relationship between Baldwin and MacDonald lasted until the summer of 1935 when MacDonald finally resigned, citing his failing health as the reason.[7]

The nature of Baldwin's leadership in many ways typified the age in which he lived. Robert Blake pointed this out when he stated:

> his character, . . . fitted with singular appropriateness that curious interlude in our recent history. He was

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[4]A. J. P. Taylor, English History 1914-1945 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 368. Hereafter cited as Taylor, 1914-1945.

[5]John Raymond (ed.), The Baldwin Age (London: Eyre and Spottiswood, 1960), p. 53. Also see G. M. Young, Stanley Baldwin (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1952), pp. 165-167.

[6]Ibid.

[7]William McElwee, Britain's Locust Years; 1918-1940 (London: Faber and Faber, 1962), p. 198.

> peace-loving at a time when Britain hated the memory and dreaded the prospect of war. He was insular in an era of isolationism, conciliatory in an age of compromise. He was easy-going during years when high endeavour was not the outstanding quality of his fellow-countrymen. If he misconstrued the European situation, so did almost everyone else.[8]

Baldwin always seemed more adept at domestic affairs than in the realm of diplomacy. Although he could well understand the irrationalities of the British, "The unreasonableness of foreigners was a sealed book to him . . . ."[9] In addition, his work pace was inconsistent, marked by long periods of apparent languor, interrupted occasionally by bursts of activity. This, along with MacDonald's failing health, caused the increasingly over-worked Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Austen Chamberlain, to remark, "The P. M. is ill and tired, S. B. is tired and won't apply his mind to problems."[10] As a result these were not years of great political activism in Great Britain.

Although most national attention was preoccupied with domestic affairs during the early 1930's the spectre of international crisis remained at the edge of popular concern. In 1932 international affairs again received attention with the Manchurian Crisis. The Japanese invasion of Manchuria posed a threat not only to British Diplomacy but also for the League of Nations System. It is not surprising, given the domestic situation in 1932 that as A. J. P. Taylor pointed out, British

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[8]Quoted in Raymond, p. 25.

[9]McElwee, p. 232.

[10]Kieth Fieling, The Life of Neville Chamberlain (London: MacMillan & Co., 1947), p. 242.

Government attached more importance to the restoration of peace than to a display of moral rectitude."[11]

The policy adopted by the British to deal with the Manchurian question was to work through the League as an instrument of conciliation, rather than as the organization that would implement collective security with its eventual resort to military sanctions. The Lytton Commission was established through British leadership in the League to investigate Japan's fait accompli. The Commission looked into the situation carefully and returned a well-documented report giving Japanese as well as Manchurian grievances. The Japanese were censured for resorting to force, but no specific sanctions were imposed against them by the League.[12]

The fact that no real punitive measures were taken against Japan caused the League of Nations to become the center of a great deal of discussion.[13] Proponents of the League such as Lord Robert Cecil, Viscount Cecil of Chelwood, argued that the League, in failing to invoke economic sanctions toward Japan, had missed a golden opportunity of showing the practicality of the collective security system.[14] With the resurgence of Germany it was felt by League partisans that some means would have to be found to make the British Government hold a more resolute League policy than it had shown in the Manchurian dispute.[15]

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[11]A. J. P. Taylor, The Origins of the Second World War (London: Atheneum, 1961), p. 63. Hereafter cited as Taylor, Origins.

[12]Ibid.

[13]Ibid.

[14]Viscount Cecil, A Great Experiment: An Autobiography (New York: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 226.

[15]Ibid.

The League of Nations Union was the only British organization which had as its central purpose the support of the world organization. The leader of this bipartisan movement was Lord Cecil. Since the days of the Versailles Conference he had been the leading spokesman for the League in Great Britain.[16] It was Cecil who had, in fact, been a co-author of the League Covenant as finally accepted.[17]

Lord Cecil as the moral leader of the League movement was more successful than as a practical politician. His aristocratic background seemed to inhibit him from becoming involved in the realities of political life. As Ewan Butler indicated, Lord Cecil possessed,

> a quality of aristocratic diffidence which inhibited him from giving the lead which the country needed. It was said of him that he appeared upon a political platform as a gentleman making an appearance in a drawing room.[18]

Along with this reputation for an aristocratic bearing Lord Cecil was felt to be a man of impractical temperament by many of his contemporaries. This assessment became widespread in 1919 when he resigned from the Government over the question of the disestablishment of the

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[16]R. B. McCallum, Public Opinion and the Last Peace (London: Oxford University Press, 1944), pp. 8-9. Born in 1864 Lord Cecil was the son of the great Lord Salisbury. He was educated in the traditional upper-class manner; Eton and then Oxford. He soon was admitted to the bar and by 1915 was Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs under Bonar Law. During the First World War he was the "Minister for the Blockade" of Germany. After the war he participated as a member of the British delegation to the Versailles Peace Conference; where, along with General Smutts he joined in the negotiations dealing with the formation of the League of Nations. He was an ambassador to the League several times after its formation, and he received the Nobel Peace Prize late in the 1930's. Lord Cecil lived into splendid old age until 1958. Cecil, Autobiography, pp. 1ff.

[17]Cecil, p. 61.

[18]Ewan Butler, The Cecils (London: Frederick Muller Ltd., 1964), p. 269.

Welsh Church, a question which for all practical purposes had been settled five years before.[19] However, in spite of his failings, Lord Cecil remained the leading voice of the League cause in Britain.

Another eminent proponent of the League was Professor Gilbert Murray of Oxford University. He had long been an advocate of internationalist causes and had run for Parliament several times with the League as his basic platform. Such a philosophy and his professorial demeanor often caused him to be compared to Woodrow Wilson.[20]

By 1934 it was becoming obvious to men such as Cecil and Murray that a firmer League policy by the Government was needed in order to avoid another fiasco similar to Manchuria. As the situation in Europe began to deteriorate with the rise of Hitler, the League of Nations Union began to feel some dramatic turn of events was needed in order to change government policy. The logic behind the National Declaration on the League of Nations and Armaments was to furnish such a dramatic event.[21] It will be the purpose of this study to examine the manner in which such an endeavor was organized and carried out.

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[19]McCallum, p. 9. The law providing for disestablishment had been passed five years before, but did not go into effect until 1919.

[20]Ibid.

[21]Cecil, p. 260.

CHAPTER II

THE BACKGROUND TO THE DECLARATION

While it was the declared policy of both major political parties in Great Britain to support the League of Nations, many basic differences of opinion existed within them and among their members.[1] Within each party very different views about the League were held; therefore, much debate and discussion existed.

The Conservative Party was not enthusiastic about the League of Nations, although several prominent members were staunch League supporters. Nevertheless, it can be stated that the majority of the party was indifferent to the League. Historians have differed over the extent of such indifference but have not really questioned the fact that it was prevalent. A. J. P. Taylor has indicated that to Conservatives of the 1930's "the League /was/ . . . a hangover of wartime idealism to which they had paid grudging lip-service."[2] A more extreme view is that of R. B. McCallum who asserted that Conservatives felt only "distrust and contempt" for the League which they believed was only "a thing of straw."[3] G. M. Young, a biographer of Stanley Baldwin, pointed out that

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[1]Taylor, 1914-1945, p. 368.

[2]Ibid.

[3]McCallum, p. 138. McCallum felt that part of the reason for Conservative negativism toward the League was ignorance of the exact content of the League Covenant. He gave as an example a prominent Conservative who admitted in 1936 that he had only recently read Article Sixteen of the League Covenant and was shocked at its contents.

Baldwin "never wholeheartedly believed in the League of Nations" but was an admirer of the Assembly solely as a forum for the airing of grievances.[4] Some historians have advanced the view that the main reason that the Conservatives never publicly rejected the League was a fear that to do so would cost them too dearly at the polls.[5] Others have been less cynical and of the opinion that the Conservative Party looked upon the League as a valuable forum in which useful discussion of world problems might be held.[6]

The Parliamentary Labour Party, while more sympathetic to the League, was fragmented on the issue. Throughout the 1930's a long, and at times, bitter debate existed in the ranks of its membership over the questions of peace, war, and the League of Nations. The left-wing of the party tended to be Marxist and held, generally, pacifist views. Until September of 1934 the Trade Union Congress, a controlling group within the Labour Party, supported the view that wars were capitalistic conspiracies which should be met by the device of a general strike.[7] In spite of this, Labour remained a supporter of the League and the idea of collective security.[8] Yet, a significant section of the party regarded the League as part of the capitalistic system, and consequently a threat.[9]

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[4]G. M. Young, Stanley Baldwin (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1952), p. 173.

[5]McCallum, p. 140. Also see Young, p. 173.

[6]Taylor, 1914-1945, p. 368.

[7]Manchester Guardian, September 5, 1934, p. 3.

[8]McCallum, p. 139.

[9]Taylor, 1914-1945, p. 368.

Another group within Labour held that the League was not intrinsically evil, but the resort to force provided in Article Sixteen of the Covenant of the League could never be observed. These thorough-going pacifists held that economic sanctions were the only justifiable weapon for use against an aggressor nation.[10] However, most members of the Labour Party were firm supporters of the League who felt that the Covenant should be taken seriously, including the controversial Article Sixteen. This majority faction felt that world order was superior to national sovereignty and force should be employed, if necessary, by the League to stop aggression. It was felt by this group that the League of Nations and the Locarno Treaty should be the real basis of British foreign policy.[11]

On some questions Labour was united since it was felt by all elements that international and League affairs could not be turned over to the Conservatives.[12] It was also generally agreed by Labourites that there was a need for disarmament. By the early 1930's both the Liberal and Labour Parties were proclaiming disarmament as the basic tenet of their foreign policy.[13] In February of 1932 the long-awaited

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[10]McCallum, p. 139. A. J. P. Taylor points out that such emphasis upon economic sanctions was, in part, due to an exaggerated view of the effectiveness of the allied blockade of Germany in World War I. Taylor, 1914-1945, p. 369.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Ibid. McCallum goes on to postulate that the Conservatives consistently failed to perceive the political significance of the profound split on the left. He implies that had they seen and exploited the difference between the sanctionists and pacifists that they could have attained great advantage.

[13]Taylor, 1914-1945, p. 362. The Liberal Party continued to function at this time and to support the League but by the 1930's their

Geneva Disarmament Conference began.[14] By the end of that year it was evident that the deliberations were at a stalemate.[15] In 1933 it became clear that the conference was for all practical purposes terminated when, on October 14, the Germans withdrew from the talks. Attempts at breaking this impasse dragged on until April of 1934 when the conference was officially ended. As news of these events reached Britain a growing sense of frustration was felt by the proponents of disarmament.[16]

Many interpretations have been given for the failure of the disarmament conference. Such newspapers as the Manchester Guardian put a large share of the blame on the British Government.[17] This point of view has been borne out to some degree by historians who have said that Britain's failure to give real leadership at Geneva because of a cool attitude from the Foreign Office was a factor in the breakdown of the conference.[18] However, they have also indicated that a more basic reason for the failure of the conference was the conflict between a resurgent Germany and the consequent fearfulness of France.[19] This analysis had not become clear to the people of Britain in 1934, and it was felt by a large number of them that the British could have revived the talks. The general impression existed in early 1934 that a few

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"cause was lost" and they constituted only a "pathetic minority" of the vote. Graves and Hodge, p. 76.

[14] Ibid.

[15] McElwee, p. 207.

[16] Taylor, 1914-1945, pp. 365-366.

[17] Manchester Guardian, July 25, 1934, p. 10.

[18] McElwee, p. 207. Also see Taylor, 1914-1945, p. 365.

[19] Ibid.

changes in the National Government's position could lead the way to a meaningful disarmament conference. Especially in the ranks of internationalists were these hopes retained until long after any real chance for success had ebbed.[20]

By 1934, the Conservatives felt that the disarmament conference was at an end and rearmament should begin. To say so openly was a different matter as the high hopes of the populace for the Geneva meeting had not evaporated. This question posed a delicate problem for them, because as part of the National Government Conservatives such as Baldwin were forced to pay lip-service to the conference since support for it remained a part of the Government's policy. Throughout the year, Baldwin made statements that contained a brief opening remark which vaguely praised the theory of disarmament, but were followed by texts which pointed to a dismal picture for the Geneva Conference. He indicated that the situation in Europe was worsening and that a long time would be required before any concrete disarmament proposal could be implemented. It was, therefore, implied that the government would be justified in preparing for rearmament.[21]

Conservatives who were not so directly involved in the National Government were able to state their position much more directly. Winston Churchill forthrightly said he was "very glad . . . that the

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[20]Cecil, p. 257.

[21]Manchester Guardian, July 20, 1934, p. 6. It was becoming obvious at this time that the Government was preparing to institute some sort of rearmament program. The full extent of these plans were not known until the spring of 1935 when the White Paper on Defense was issued. A clue of things to come was the announcement by Baldwin in the summer of 1934 of increases in the air force. The uproar which greeted this partial plan was indicative of the difficult position in which the Government found itself.

disarmament conference is passing out of life and into history."[22] He stated that nothing else could be expected when Germany was "arming night and day," and that the air force should be doubled as soon as possible.[23]

Conservative members of the cabinet urged a change in policy regarding the disarmament conference. Sir John Simon, the Foreign Secretary, said he was "perfectly unrepenitent" that the conference had ended and preparations for defense might soon be necessary. He then added, "Does anyone here dispute the fact that an adequate British navy is the best guaranty of world peace?"[24] Such statements revealed a growing assessment by the Conservatives that it was time to begin an arms program. Duff Cooper, Secretary to the War Office, summed up these attitudes when he said that it didn't matter that the conference had ended since arms in themselves were not the cause of war. He went on to suggest that Britain was in an "exposed position" and that an increase in arms spending was needed.[25]

Internationalists were more optimistic about the disarmament conference but were sobered by the realization that there was little hope for meaningful advancement in the cause of disarmament until Germany returned to the conference table and the League. It was hoped that a British position of leadership on disarmament would encourage Germany to return to Geneva. Lord Cecil remarked that what Britain

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[22] Ibid., July 14, 1934, p. 14.

[23] Ibid., July 9, 1934, p. 12.

[24] Ibid., July 14, 1934, p. 14.

[25] The Times (London), May 15, 1934, p. 13.

really needed was a "hard-hitting" policy on disarmament and the League and that the impression had been given to the rest of the world that Britain was "not really very keen on disarmament." He went on to reveal his feeling that the Government was flying in the face of public opinion in the matter as the people would be willing to make great sacrifice to achieve disarmament. According to Lord Cecil the Government was failing to push with proper vigor on the issue which was of uppermost significance to the populace.[26]

Later in the month Cecil sounded the same note to the Federation of League of Nations' Societies. He stated that a "vast mass" of public opinion was in favor of disarmament and that the people of the world demanded policies of international co-operation and peace.[27] This was not a new theme from Lord Cecil. As early as the first years of the 1920's he had stated that the forces of public opinion were the major motivation towards world peace and that on such opinion the future of the League would depend.[28]

By the late Spring of 1934 The Times had concluded that only some sort of "miracle" could save the disarmament conference.[29] Cecil felt the situation was "bad" but not hopeless.[30] To prod the Government toward a stronger league policy it was felt by Cecil and the League of Nations Union that immediate action was needed. It seemed to them

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[26]Ibid., May 8, 1934, p. 17.

[27]Ibid., May 21, 1934, p. 12.

[28]Cecil, p. 62.

[29]The Times (London), June 1, 1934, p. 16.

[30]Ibid., June 22, 1934, p. 8.

that a clear demonstration of the British public's loyalty to the League and disarmament would be most helpful.[31] Lord Cecil explained that:

> . . . we felt, in the League of Nations Union, that the disarmament conference evidently moribund and the power of the League diminishing, we ought to exert ourselves to convince the Government that if they would pursue a really vigorous League policy they would be supported by British opinion.[32]

This was the motivation for the National Declaration on the League of Nations and Armaments of 1934 and 1935. By mid-summer Lord Cecil was confidently predicting that any government which would ignore such opinion would "assuredly and deservedly be hurled from power."[33]

Specific organization of the declaration had begun early in 1934 and the actual idea and format of the ballot were established by an experiment in the small town of Ilford near London. Mr. C. J. A. Boorman, the editor of Ilford Recorder, had in January of 1934 sent out a questionnaire on the League and disarmament.[34] The response to this

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[31]Dame Adelaide Livingstone, The Peace Ballot: The Official History (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1935), p. 6. Dame Livingstone gave other goals which were held for the Ballot. In addition to establishing the existence of general support for the League and disarmament, it was hoped that the plebiscite would be observed by people in other countries and emulated. It was also felt that such a declaration would offer an opportunity for useful discussion and debate on foreign affairs, and therefore, serve as a useful means of education.

[32]Cecil, p. 257.

[33]Manchester Guardian, July 7, 1934, p. 14.

[34]Livingstone, p. 7. The people of Ilford over sixteen years of age were asked four questions which are given along with the resulting vote.

Question:	yes:	no:
1. Should Great Britain remain in the League of Nations?	21,532	3,954
2. Should the disarmament conference continue?	20,472	4,960
3. Do you agree with that part of the Locarno Treaty which binds Great Britain to go to the		

questionnaire was a large return of over 25,000 votes with all the questions except one showing a large sentiment for the League system.[35] Lord Cecil was quite impressed with the Ilford ballot and felt that, "If we could organize a nationwide vote of the same kind the result might be a great spur to what we regarded as a lethargic foreign policy."[36] He then began to prepare for such a venture.

On the first of March, 1934, Lord Cecil proposed a nationwide effort, similar to the Ilford ballot, to the Executive Committee of the League of Nations Union. The main idea was adopted by the Committee, but with the understanding that a separate committee be formed to manage the affair which would be distinct from the Union. This position was taken because it was felt that the venture was too big for the League of Nations Union alone due to the vast numbers of people that would be needed and the considerable amount of money that would be required.[37] A special meeting of the Executive Committee was held a week later. By this time a number of other national organizations had been contacted

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	help of France or Germany if the one is attacked by the other?	5,898	18,498
4.	Should the manufacture of armaments by private enterprise be prohibited?	20,415	4,818

[35]Both Dame Livingstone and Lord Cecil record that when the questions for the national ballot were put together, question three from the Ilford ballot was discarded because it failed to achieve enough 'yes' votes. This is of importance in the later disputes over the ballot because the forces in favor of the declaration asserted that no regard had been paid to how the vote would go, but instead their goal was getting an honest ballot. The fact that this question was so significantly changed shows that at least some concern was given by the authors of the ballot from toward the soliciting of an affirmative vote. Livingstone, p. 7; and Cecil, p. 257.

[36]Cecil, p. 257.

[37]Livingstone, p. 8.

and had expressed an interest in co-operating in the scheme.[38] On March 27 the organizations involved met to discuss the proposal. A general plan was decided upon and an executive committee chosen with the title, "National Declaration Committee."[39] Lord Cecil was chosen to be the chairman of the committee, and a title for the venture was considered which resulted in the "National Declaration on the League of Nations and Armaments" being chosen.[40]

All of the organizations which attended this meeting ratified the proposal with the exception of the Conservative Party which left such a decision to its individual branches.[41] The first official meeting of the National Declaration Committee occurred on April 11, 1934.[42] Some discussion took place at this meeting as to the exact nature of the coming declaration. A view was put forward that a mediocre response to the ballot would be disastrous to Britain's League policy, and that the ballot should be held only in a few "typical districts." This plan was not adopted as the body agreed that only a "ballot on a national scale" would produce any appreciable response from the National Government. It was hoped at this point that a vote of four

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[38] Ibid. In addition to the League of Nations Union thirty organizations were represented. These included delegations from the Liberal Party, the Labour Party, the Church of England, most of the major protestant denominations, the Catholic Church, the Jewish Synagogues, several service organizations such as the Rotary Club, and individual trade unions.

[39] Ibid., pp. 8-9.

[40] Ibid., p. 5.

[41] Ibid., p. 9.

[42] Ibid. Lord Cecil in his Autobiography incorrectly asserted that these organizational meetings were held in the fall of 1934, when in fact they were held in the spring of that year. Cecil, p. 257.

or five million could be obtained. In the course of these discussions the wording of the ballot questions was decided.[43]

By May the initial arrangements had been completed in time for a meeting of the International Federation of League of Nations' Societies. Lord Cecil took this opportunity to publicly announce the plans for the fall plebiscite. This announcement stirred little initial interest in the press. For example, The Times published the announcement near the bottom of a relatively insignificant page.[44] Preparations continued for the referendum through most of the summer of 1934, and little mention of any importance was given to the declaration.

The ballot proposition was then formally proposed to the Conference of the League of Nations Union at Bournemouth in late June. Lord Cecil outlined the general plans for the ballot. After reiterating their goals and hopes for the referendum he discussed specific plans for implementing the proposal. He announced that the machinery of organization had been established and that as far as possible the basic unit for the counting of votes would correspond with Parliamentary divisions. He also claimed that the ballot would cost far less than many had suggested; probably not more than five thousand pounds. It was announced that periodic reports of the voting would be made public, and Lord Cecil then appealed for volunteer help and money. The convention reacted to Lord Cecil's speech by endorsing the plan nearly unanimously.[45]

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[43] Ibid.

[44] The Times (London), May 25, 1934, p. 7.

[45] Ibid., June 9, 1934, p. 11.

In the latter part of July the first political dispute errupted over the coming declaration. The Conservative Central Office announced that they would take no part in the ballot and asked their constituents to do the same. The basic reason given for this decision was given by Colonel George Herbert, the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Conservative Central Office. He said that "difficulties inherent in some questions . . . render them insusceptible of a simple answer 'yes or no'."[46]

Reaction to this position was immediate as the editors of the Manchester Guardian accused the Conservatives of quibbling and asserted that the Central Office feared a real test of public opinion.[47] Lord Cecil quickly objected to Colonel Herbert's position in almost every particular and proclaimed his wonder that "any inhabitant of this island" would object to the questions.[48] The political correspondent of the Manchester Guardian asked why Colonel Herbert, instead of openly rejecting the ballot, did not attempt to offer amendments to the questions. The column added that "it was a wild hope that the Conservative Party could ever be enlisted in a work of this kind."[49] Whatever the intent of this statement by the Conservative Office, its result was that the approaching declaration received much needed publicity, and during the rest of 1934 the "Peace Ballot" as it was soon called became headline material.

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[46]Manchester Guardian, July 25, 1934, p. 14.

[47]Ibid., p. 10.

[48]Ibid., July 25, 1934, p. 14.

[49]Ibid.

CHAPTER III

THE QUESTIONS ON THE "PEACE BALLOT"

The wording of the five questions which made up the "Peace Ballot" might be considered an important factor in determining the outcome of the vote and, without doubt, the way the questions were asked was to lead to many disputes about the validity of the result. Since the Conservative Central Office had refused to participate in the venture because of the wording of the questions, it is necessary to examine the queries in depth in order to understand the political significance of the questions which were raised about the ballot.

The general format of the questions followed that employed in the earlier Ilford Ballot.[1] Dame Adelaide Livingstone, the Secretary of the National Declaration Committee, asserted that "there was little controversy over the actual form and substance of the questions" in the ranks of their authors.[2] Such, however, was not to be the case with the public. The writing of the questions which made up the ballot had been completed in time for the meeting of the League of Nations Union in June of 1934.[3] They were as follows:

1. Should Great Britain remain a member of the League of Nations?

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[1]Livingstone, p. 10.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid., p. 11.

2. Are you in favour of an all-round reduction of armaments by international agreement?
3. Are you in favour of the all-round abolition of national military and naval aircraft by international agreement?
4. Should the manufacture and sale of armaments for private profit be prohibited by international agreement?
5. Do you consider that, if a nation insists on attacking another, the other nations, should combine to compel it to stop by
   (a) economic and non-military measures?
   (b) if necessary, military measures?[4]

Lord Cecil indicated that all of the questions, except number four, were "paraphrases" of the League Covenant which, as it had been accepted by Great Britain, was an official statement of government policy.[5] If so, why should there have been so much controversy over the ballot? A partial reason was that the questions had oversimplified complex questions; a fact noted in the press. The Manchester Guardian argued that this was necessary in order to make the ballot practicable and said that the questions "had to be made as brief and simply phrased as possible."[6] The Times argued that British obligations to the League could not be as clearly and simply delineated as the questions implied.[7] That there was much latitude for debate on the issues raised in the "Peace Ballot" resulted from the fact that no exactly and clearly defined

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[4]Ibid., pp. 9-10.

[5]Cecil, p. 259.

[6]Manchester Guardian, October 9, 1934, p. 10. Mowat took a more cynical view of the questions and tersely branded them "tendentious." Mowat, p. 541.

[7]The Times (London), October 29, 1934, p. 15. The Times pointed out that the country had never honestly obligated itself to take part in every border dispute in which the League involved itself. It said that public opinion would protest involvement in any affair in which Britain's interests were not directly threatened.

course of action for the British Government had been determined to meet the wide range of possible situations.[8] The brevity of the questions, therefore, created problems due to over-simplification of controversial issues.

Question number one of the ballot was the least contentious. As has been noted, all the political parties favored British membership in the League of Nations, but that was not the problem since the point of dispute was that of the nature of the League to which Britain should belong. Should it be a debating society or an effective world federation? Lord Cecil stated that the purpose of question number one was to ascertain the extent to which British subjects would support the League as "the corner stone of our foreign policy."[9] If that was the objective, it would probably have been more clear if the question had been restated in a way that asked if support of the League should be the basic consideration in British foreign policy. Because of this, a writer to The Times aptly remarked that the question reminded him of the "old example of an unfair question--'have you left off beating your wife'?"[10]

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[8]A. J. P. Taylor sums this up when he stated that all of the discussions over "putting teeth into the Covenant" were academic because to this point there was "no one . . . whom it was necessary to bite." 1914-1945, p. 368.

[9]Manchester Guardian, October 9, 1934, p. 11.

[10]The Times (London), November 15, 1935, p. 10. This was seen by E. Shackleton Baily, Conservative Member of Parliament from Groton, who in a letter to the Manchester Guardian declared that "no one can object to this country's membership in the League. The real problem is to what extent are we to commit ourselves to accepting League policy on every question." Manchester Guardian, October 29, 1934, p. 19.

Questions two and three were concerned with disarmament. The basic issues surrounding the disarmament conference have already been discussed. It was the feeling of most disarmament enthusiasts that their cause was overwhelmingly endorsed by public opinion. Arthur Henderson, the president of the disarmament conference, summarized these sentiments when he stated:

> Today there is a greater volume of opinion in this country in favor of disarmament than I have ever known and I believe than has ever existed in the history of our country.[11]

It was the purpose of questions two and three to establish the truth of such assertions.[12] Question three raised the issue of the elimination of military aircraft. Colonel Herbert of the Conservative Office questioned how military aircraft could be defined when he pointed out with a certain amount of logic that commercial airplanes might readily be converted to military purposes and it would be impractical to distinguish between the two.[13]

The control of air forces was a very important issue in the 1930's, because it was felt by many individuals that the bombing airplane would mean the end of civilization. R. B. McCallum, writing during the war and looking back on the 1930's remarked, "Great as has been the havoc caused by bombs in this war, it has perhaps been not

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[11]Manchester Guardian, July 2, 1934, p. 11.

[12]George Bernard Shaw asserted that whatever the public said on these questions, the government would fail to respond and therefore questions two and three were "platonic." Manchester Guardian, December 18, 1934, p. 3.

[13]Ibid., July 25, 1934, p. 14.

more but less than anticipated."[14] Such sentiments were expressed by Lord Cecil when he stated that "particularly are we in England exposed to an aerial knock-out blow with the vast concentration of our national life in the cities."[15] The Conservative Conference in the fall of 1934 pointed with alarm to the state of the nation's defenses, but were most agitated over the state of the country's air force.[16]

The private manufacture of armaments, the issue raised in question four of the declaration, was a matter of considerable importance in the 1930's.[17] The issue of trade in armaments had been brought forward by the Nye Commission in the United States which had discovered evidence of corruption in the arms industry. These disclosures caused agitation for such an investigation in Great Britain.[18] Discussion and debate over the trade in armaments became an emotional topic as several trade unions and peace societies passed resolutions condemning the arms industry. The Metal Workers Union branded the traffic in arms a "curse."[19] The Manchester Guardian proclaimed it "immoral and corrupt."[20] Lord Cecil asserted that it was "as horrible an international crime as

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[14]McCallum, p. 2.

[15]Manchester Guardian, October 9, 1934, p. 11.

[16]Ibid., October 4, 1934, p. 13.

[17]The manner in which this question was stated prompted G. B. Shaw to ask, "Why wait for international agreement?" Manchester Guardian, December 18, 1934, p. 13. But Dame Livingstone indicated that such wording made clear that the question of unilateral disarmament was not involved. Livingstone, p. 11.

[18]Mowat, p. 536.

[19]Manchester Guardian, August 28, 1934, p. 6.

[20]Ibid., September 28, 1934, p. 10.

the slave trade."[21] The Government was soon besieged with requests that a full scale investigation into the arms trade take place, and by the fall of 1934 Prime Minister MacDonald had announced that one would be planned as soon as Parliament reconvened.[22]

By including the issue of private profit, question four of the ballot tacitly implied nationalization of the arms industry, and Conservatives such as John Simon were puzzled as to the advantage of public manufacture of armaments. He directly put the question to Clement Atlee in the House of Commons when he asked, "Let me ask the honorable gentleman; is it his view that state brothels are right but private brothels wrong?"[23] Parliament's consideration of the issues raised in question four led to a very heated debate over the "Peace Ballot."

The commission on the arms industry met in the spring of 1935. After testimony by several witnesses, including Lord Cecil and other representatives of the League of Nations Union, it submitted its report.[24] The commission decided that "the setting up of a universal system of state monopoly seems impracticable and would be unlikely to reduce the supply of arms or to improve the prospects for peace."[25]

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[21] Ibid., October 9, 1934, p. 11.

[22] Ibid., October 2, 1934, p. 8.

[23] Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Debates (House of Commons), 5th ser., Vol. 293 (30 Oct.--16th Nov., 1934), p. 306.

[24] Manchester Guardian, May 2, 1935, p. 4.

[25] P. and G. Ford, A Breviate of Parliamentary Papers: 1917-1939 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1951), pp. 167-168. The report went on to say that "in view of the public feeling that war and preparation for war ought not to be an occasion for private gain, profit of arms firms should

Question five of the declaration has always been considered the most important of the questions. Dame Livingstone in her The Peace Ballot: The Official History declared that it "has throughout been the most controversial of all the questions."[26] Historians have always given prime consideration to this question and have felt that it raised the most significant issues in the "Peace Ballot."[27]

The main objection to question five came from the radical elements in the Labour Party; it did not come from the Conservatives. Such an eminent Conservative as Winston Churchill lauded the sentiments expressed in question five of the ballot. He said that "Clause five affirmed a positive and courageous policy which could, at this time, have been followed with an overwhelming measure of national support."[28]

The objections to question five were usually directed against part "b" which provided for military action against an aggressor. Lord Cecil rationalized this with the oft used analogy of treating the aggressor as a criminal, ". . . we must make it clear that we are ready

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be restricted to a reasonable remuneration." This had reference to the sentiments expressed in the "Peace Ballot."

[26]Livingstone, p. 11.

[27]Havighurst, p. 244. Also see G. M. Gathorne-Hardy, A Short History of International Affairs: 1920-1939 (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), pp. 407-410; Kieth Fieling, The Life of Neville Chamberlin (London: MacMillan and Company, 1947), pp. 262-263; Taylor, 1914-1945, p. 378; Young, p. 210; McElwee, p. 230; Mowat, p. 541; and McCallum, pp. 139-140.

[28]Winston S. Churchill, The Gathering Storm (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1948), p. 170. Also see Cecil, Autobiography, p. 276. Harold Nicolson incorrectly asserted that Churchill had endeavored to refute the sanctionist sentiments in question five when in fact, he made it clear on several occasions that he supported such views. Harold Nicolson, King George the Fifth: His Life and Reign (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, 1953), p. 519.

to treat nations who resort to war . . . as guilty of an international crime."[29] Such analogy fell on deaf ears in the ranks of pacifists. The "Saturday Reviewer" pointed out that "Question V is actually an attempt to recommend a sort of war to the British householder under the guise of peace."[30] Pacifists saw this and soon were vehemently objecting to this question. As the taking of the ballot began in the fall of 1934 the letter's column of the Manchester Guardian was filled with rebukes of question five by pacifists. Some complained that they would be forced to vote "no" and would be answering in the same manner as isolationists.[31] The most persistent remark was that no opportunity was given for them to record their objections to war in general. One letter remarked,

> It is greatly to be regretted /that/ the League of Nations Union did not make provision in its plebiscite for the registering of a straight vote on the issue of renouncing all war and refusing all war service.[32]

An attempt was made by the ballot supporters to explain that question five had been written in order to afford those opposed to war the opportunity of voting "no" on "5b", but this did not assuage the pacifists.[33]

At the same time, Cannon H. R. L. Sheppard, the dean of Canterbury, announced a plan by which those against all warfare would send him a post card indicating their position. By the end of 1935,

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[29]Manchester Guardian, October 9, 1934, p. 11.

[30]"Ballot to End War," The Saturday Review (London), CLVIII (November, 1934), 392.

[31]Manchester Guardian, October 26, 1934, p. 34.

[32]Ibid., October 30, 1934, p. 20.

[33]Ibid., October 22, 1934, p. 8.

100,000 such cards had been received.[34] A lively discussion soon took place in the Manchester Guardian over the relative merits of Cannon Sheppard's appeal and the "Peace Ballot." Those in favor of the National Declaration complained that Dr. Sheppard's scheme would tend to confuse, weaken, and divide the forces of peace.[35] It was also asserted that the Sheppard appeal would founder due to the lack of organizational backing.[36]

Dr. Sheppard himself said that "I think the 'Peace Ballot' is magnificent . . . but I cannot assent to the fifth question . . . because my attitude is that of a Quaker."[37] A compromise was made by the National Declaration Committee to assuage pacifists on question five. At the behest of the Quakers the committee agreed to tabulate separately all ballot forms on which were written, beside question five, "I accept the Christian pacifist position."[38] In this way pacifists could record their vote on the first four questions and avoid answering in favor of military sanctions on number five.

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[34]Havighurst, p. 244. The post cards were to read, "I renounce war and never again directly or indirectly, will I support or sanction another." Manchester Guardian, November 27, 1934, p. 20.

[35]Manchester Guardian, October 24, 1934, p. 18.

[36]Ibid., October 30, 1934, p. 20.

[37]Ibid., December 21, 1934, p. 6. The Sheppard appeal later became more organized through the formation of the Peace Pledge Union which was a center of pacifist thought until the war. Mowat, p. 538.

[38]Manchester Guardian, November 8, 1934, p. 20. Also see Livingstone, p. 11.

CHAPTER IV

THE DECLARATION BEGUN

While the National Declaration on the League of Nations and Armaments offered a real opportunity for League enthusiasts to demonstrate public support for their cause, it was also a challenge for them of immense proportions. A successful ballot result would require an efficient organization, a vast number of workers, and a considerable amount of financial support. The manner in which this challenge was met is an achievement which has long been overlooked by historians who have tended to focus their attention on the effect of the "Peace Ballot" on British diplomacy during the Italo-Ethiopian dispute of 1935.[1] The result of the ballot was, however, an accomplishment worthy of consideration in itself.

As the voting on the "Peace Ballot" began the Manchester Guardian, which had always been friendly to the ballot, cautioned that the venture would be "an exceedingly difficult task" as it had to be carried out entirely with volunteer help. In addition, the vast number of homes which must be contacted individually caused the editors to conclude that an organization as large as that required "for a general election" would be needed.[2] Dame Livingstone concluded in The Peace

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[1]Taylor, pp. 378-380. Also see McElwee, pp. 230-231; Gathorne-Hardy, pp. 407-410; and Mowat, p. 536.

[2]Manchester Guardian, October 22, 1934, p. 8.

Ballot: The Official History, written in 1935, that it had been "remarkable" that "most parts of the country had been organized and polled."[3] How then was this National Declaration on the League of Nations and Armaments organized and carried out?

A factor in the success of the "Peace Ballot" was the overall timing which its sponsors devised. Lord Cecil was responsible for the scheduling which divided the effort into two parts. The first period began in the early fall of 1934 and ended at the Christmas holidays; while the second continued from the beginning of 1935 until the end of polling in May. The first period phase was utilized for the organizational work which was required prior to actual balloting. In general, the procedure was to move slowly and establish proper lines of administration. Rural constituencies were the only areas in which actual balloting occurred during this phase, but, in the spring, when the organizational work had been completed, the major cities were polled.[4] Dame Livingstone summarized the result by stating:

> The rate of progress in these early weeks was steady but slow. This initial slowness was the result of a deliberate policy. Nothing was to be gained by hurrying the preliminaries by skimping the groundwork . . .[5]

The timing, however, was effective as it eliminated miscalculations and provided a means by which the enthusiasm of the workers could be maintained until the most important work at the end.

Organizational support for the ballot came, not surprisingly, from the League of Nations Union. An administrator from the Union was

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[3]Livingstone, p. 27.

[4]Manchester Guardian, November 13, 1934, p. 10.

[5]Livingstone, p. 16.

loaned to the National Declaration Committee to set up a central office for the conduct of the ballot.[6] Rented office space was obtained and the required areas soon spread from one room through the remainder of an old house, which had been located for the purpose, until even the pantries were converted to clerical use.[7] The paramount purposes of this central office were to oversee the organization of the balloting, tabulate the votes, and to act as liaison with the press. In order to assure proper press coverage a release was given to the newspapers each day and an analysis of the voting was released at the end of each week.[8]

Specific organization to support the ballot and funding of the expenses was to take place at the local level. Where, however, apathy or hostility were encountered, the burden of both organization and support fell back on the central office. In order to expedite such duties Great Britain was divided into three areas and a "traveling secretary" was appointed to oversee operations in each area.[9] These organizers set up local conferences which in turn broke down into individual committees to oversee the ballot in each constituency. It was at this grass roots level that most of the real organizing, training of canvassers, and collecting of funds took place.[10] Such a conference was held in Manchester to organize the ballot for the Manchester-Salford

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[6] Ibid., p. 26.

[7] Ibid., p. 27-28.

[8] Ibid., p. 25.

[9] Ibid., p. 27.

[10] Ibid. The nucleus for these local conferences usually came from the individual chapters of the League of Nations Union.

area. The organizations which attended this conference were generally the same as those represented in the National Declaration Committee. It was necessary to organize committees in each of the thirty-eight Parliamentary constituencies in the area for the purpose of conducting the ballot.[11] During this time the estimate was made that two hundred forty-three thousand family dwellings existed in the Manchester area.[12] These statistics indicate the immensity of the task in Manchester; this was only a small portion of the national challenge.

Four departments were created in the national office to direct the balloting. It was vital that appropriate printed material be prepared for the organization and training of the canvassers. In addition, millions of ballot papers were printed along with explanatory leaflets. To provide for such needs a literature department was created which printed an estimated 130 tons of material. A press department was established to handle the news releases. In order "to check, tabulate, enter, and analyze the votes" a statistical department was brought into existence. Finally, a department which was made up of two "appeal secretaries" was created to handle the request for funds.[13]

Procedures were established for the handling of the ballots. Tabulation of the answers to the five questions were compiled under the headings "yes, no, doubtful, and no answer."[14] Counting took place at the local level and totals were sent to the national headquarters. The

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[11] Manchester Guardian, September 19, 1934, p. 6.

[12] Ibid., October 17, 1934, p. 4.

[13] Livingstone, p. 28.

[14] Ibid., pp. 29-30.

only exceptions to this were the ballots classified as "doubtful" which were immediately sent to headquarters where a special committee scrutinized them for classification. The rest of the ballot forms were sent at a later date to the central office to form a permanent record of the referendum.[15]

Generalizations on the methods used in local areas to complete the declaration are illusory as there was much divergence in the approach because of varying local conditions. In Manchester for instance, the voting was so complicated that a paid organizer had to be employed, yet in small rural villages one or two volunteers usually sufficed to complete the entire operation.[16]

In mid-November the Manchester Guardian assessed the progress being made on the ballot and concluded there was a "diversity of method from place to place, but a uniformity of enthusiasm."[17] It found that in some communities the Conservative Party was aiding, and in others it was not. The paper revealed such diverse methods as in the city of Southport where Boy Scouts were doing the canvassing. Other towns like Blackburn had many workers taking the ballot in the late fall while some other towns would not begin until after the holiday.[18] In London a very difficult task awaited the ballot organizers and it was soon announced

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[15] Ibid., pp. 30-31. Space was provided on the ballot form for comments. This was widely used by participants in the declaration, however, to preserve a secret ballot such comments were never published.

[16] Manchester Guardian, December 8, 1934. A campaign office was rented in Manchester to coordinate the activities of the workers and to serve as a center for the dissemination of information.

[17] Ibid., November 19, 1934, p. 14.

[18] Ibid.

that, because of the one hundred constituencies to be canvassed, no announcement of results could be expected until the spring of 1935.[19] Nearly every city and village developed its own methods to cope with varying circumstances.

Active support by the churches was a factor in the success of the National Declaration. Lord Cecil in his Autobiography noted that the churches were the most significant factor of support which enabled prompters of the "Peace Ballot" to achieve success.[20] The extent of this religious backing was illustrated by the fact that the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, plus more than 30 bishops of the Church of England, publicly endorsed the venture. In addition, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Liverpool, the Moderator of the Church of Scotland and the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in England, the President of the National Council of Evangelical Free Churches, The General Secretary of the Baptist Union, and the Chief Rabbi of the Jewish Synagogues all gave their public support to the "Peace Ballot."[21] This impressive array of religious leadership was utilized by the National Declaration Committee in an effective manner. Church membership rolls furnished a great number of the volunteers needed for the conduct of the ballot and the effective utilization of such volunteers was largely responsible for the success of the declaration.

The National Declaration Committee was able to achieve maximum effect from its religious support by publicizing it to the fullest

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[19] Ibid., November 13, 1934, p. 10.

[20] Cecil, p. 258.

[21] Livingstone, p. 13.

extent. For example, just prior to the organization of the ballot in Manchester, the Manchester Guardian noted in a prominent article that the Archbishop of York welcomed the venture "whole-heartedly."[22] By the time that actual preparations for the ballot were under way in Manchester, twenty-five individual churches were actively involved in its successful completion.[23] Publicity was given to each new statement about the ballot by a religious council or leader. An example was the statement of Manchester-Salford District Council of Christian Congregations which urged its members "to do all that /they could/ . . . to insure the success of the 'Peace Ballot.' Those who can, it is suggested, should volunteer to help . . . ."[24] The appeal for workers in this endorsement is typical of those used by many religious organizations to secure workers for the National Declaration.

Only one discordant note on the National Declaration came from the clergy. The Dean of the Manchester Cathedral, Dr. Garfield Williams, stated that he found it "morally indefensible and utterly wicked to divide people into sheep and goats on the basis of their answers . . . ," to the "Peace Ballot" questions.[25] He pointed out that many who felt the deepest about peace would be forced to answer in the negative on the questions, especially on number five. This statement was received with

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[22]Manchester Guardian, October 12, 1934, p. 4. The Archbishop went on to say, "I trust that all those who believe in the promotion of peace through the League will give the affirmative answer to the five questions that are asked."

[23]Ibid., December 3, 1934, p. 15.

[24]Ibid., February 8, 1935, p. 20.

[25]Ibid., November 12, 1934, p. 11.

severe and caustic reaction by those who upheld the "Peace Ballot." It was asserted that in criticizing the ballot Dean Williams had attacked "the whole meaning of democratic government."[26] The fact that only one noted clergyman spoke out against the declaration would indicate in itself the extent of support which the ballot had with the clergy. That this one clergyman was loudly and roundly criticized for such a stand indicated further the degree of this assistance which was a great aid to the National Declaration Committee in the important task of enlisting a sufficient number of canvassers.

The recruiting and training of the necessary number of volunteer workers was, obviously, the most important organizational matter confronting the ballot sponsors. The ultimate success or failure of the "Peace Ballot" depended directly upon the number and quality of the people who obtained the votes. The number of workers enlisted was given as proof of the ballot's success almost as often as the number of votes that were obtained. At the time of the venture Lord Cecil stated that the "army of workers" who carried out the ballot was "far stronger evidence of the depth of feeling for peace in this country even than the number of votes."[27] Although the central significance of the National Declaration has usually been found elsewhere by historians it was,

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[26]Ibid., November 13, 1934, p. 5. The reasoning behind such a charge was that because the ballot was an appeal to the public will any criticism of it would imply a rejection of the people's feelings. This assumption was best epitomized when it was stated that the ballot was "the very vindication of democracy."

[27]Quoted in Livingstone, p. 27.

indeed, a matter of importance that over one half million workers were recruited, trained, and utilized.[28]

A related aspect in the successful recruitment of volunteers was that the League of Nations Union, the parent organization of the ballot, was experiencing a phenomenal growth in popular membership and support. At no other time were so many people allying themselves with the cause of the League of Nations as was shown by the fact that, in June of 1934, over seven thousand people had joined the Union.[29] The fact that the organization which had organized the declaration was itself experiencing growing membership was helpful in the enlisting of a sufficient number of workers. In addition to the other organizations which cooperated in the declaration the Labour and Liberal parties also supplied a source of manpower. Members of these parties were urged to volunteer for work at the local level.[30] Usually the combination of churches, political parties, and League of Nations Union forces were enough to supply an adequate force of volunteers. In addition, newspapers such as the Manchester Guardian made appeals for workers in their editorials.[31]

Procedure for the training of those recruited for canvassing was established by the central office of the National Declaration Committee. Meetings were to be held in each district for the training

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[28]Ibid., p. 28. Of this number of workers 35,000 were required for London, 7,000 for Glascow, 6,500 for Birmingham, 3,000 for Edinburgh, 3,500 for Bristol, and 3,000 in Manchester.

[29]Manchester Guardian, July 19, 1934, p. 5.

[30]Ibid.

[31]Ibid., October 22, 1934, p. 8.

of the workers, at which time their duties were explained to them. The workers were split into neighborhood groups with a leader at the head of each. To these leaders the voting lists which had been taken from the Parliamentary register or local directory of the constituency were given. It was the responsibility of each group leader to see that the volunteers understood their functions and that they reached all houses to which they were assigned.[32]

Each worker was instructed that it was proper for him to explain the meanings of the various questions, but persuasion for the purpose of obtaining a "yes" answer was not proper.[33] The number of houses to which each worker was assigned was usually between thirty and forty, but in several instances it was necessary to increase the amount.[34] Badges and cards of identification were supplied by the headquarters office and each volunteer was asked to carry them while canvassing.[35] It was repeatedly emphasized to the workers that careful organization and preparation best insured a successful ballot.[36]

The completing of a canvass required a real investment of time by the individual worker. Although in theory only forty houses were to be covered it was necessary to visit each home at least twice. During

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[32]Livingstone, p. 28.

[33]Ibid.

[34]Ibid., p. 20. It was calculated that in order to successfully complete a Parliamentary division an average of 470 workers would be required if the 40 house limit was to be observed. Manchester Guardian, November 26, 1934, p. 13.

[35]Manchester Guardian, November 23, 1934, p. 11.

[36]Ibid.

the first visit the ballot forms were distributed, and then a return visit to pick them up was required. It was usually necessary to return additional times to complete the canvass for those who were not home during the earlier visits.[37] It is not surprising that many variations existed with regard to the success of individual canvassers. In many instances a person working on one side of the street would obtain a full vote, while the canvasser on the other side of the street would get only a few completed ballots.[38] Cooperation by the electorate also varied widely. In some cases, it was necessary to return four or five times in order to receive the completed ballot forms, and in other isolated instances the canvassers were met by outright hostility, but these were the exception rather than the rule.[39]

The experiences recorded by a writer for the Woman's section of the Manchester Guardian, while canvassing for the ballot, offer an insight into how the venture was carried out in the individual homes which were canvassed. The author recorded that "daytime was the best time to call, although in a lot of houses my knock was taken for that of a hawker."[40] The writer went on to point out that direct refusal to cooperate in the ballot was rare and that there was generally great interest in the questions of peace, war, and the League.[41]

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[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid., January 14, 1935, p. 6. This article also pointed out that the age of the canvassers ranged from 21 to 80 and that there were as many men as women volunteers.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid., November 30, 1934, p. 8.

[41] Ibid.

The leadership of the National Declaration Committee had a tendency to compare the financial resources necessary for the ballot with those required for a general election. Both Lord Cecil and Dame Livingstone pointed out that the cost of maintaining the National Declaration Headquarters was a relatively moderate 12,000 pounds while the cost of a general election was at that time about 500,000.[42] The money needed for the ballot was raised through contributions which were obtained through the efforts of the two appeal secretaries at the headquarters office and two public appeals by Lord Cecil.[43] In one of these Cecil pointed out that the money was needed for such expenses as printing, postage, and salaries for those workers who were paid for their endeavors.[44]

Contributions for the support of the ballot at both the national and local levels varied from very large gifts from important persons to small contributions. For instance, Sir Norman Angell, a longtime League advocate, gave a large share of the money from his Nobel Peace Prize to the National Declaration Committee.[45] Most of the needed money, however, came from the rank and file of the populace whose gifts, according to Lord Cecil, were "not made without self-sacrifice."[46] At

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[42] Ibid., March 4, 1935, p. 16. Also see Livingstone, pp. 31-32. Such a comparison was a bit misleading as the burden for the financing of the "Peace Ballot" remained at the local level, and the total local figures were never published.

[43] Livingstone, pp. 31-32.

[44] Manchester Guardian, March 4, 1935, p. 16.

[45] Ibid., December 18, 1934, p. 3.

[46] Ibid., October 23, 1934, p. 20.

the local level various methods were used to obtain needed money for the ballot. In Woodford, Lancashire a torchlight parade was held.[47] Usually the amount required was not large, as the ballot was carried out with the aid of volunteers, and all necessary literature was supplied by the central office.[48] In the town of Dudley where over fifteen thousand ballots were received, the cost to the local committee was only 21 pounds.[49] In many localities, therefore, the ballot necessitated only moderate expenditure of money.

No sooner had balloting begun in late 1934 when the most important and vociferous dispute erupted over the National Declaration in the House of Commons. The central office of the "Peace Ballot" had sent out explanatory leaflets along with the ballot forms. These forms, which were of various colors, purported to explain the issues on each side of the ballot questions.[50] However, when the House of Commons began discussion of the armaments trade, which was the issue raised in question four of the ballot, the entire National Declaration came under attack.

The debate began with Sir John Simon, the Foreign Secretary, criticizing question four of the ballot. He stated,

> It is not a question on which, without reasonable information of the arguments on either side, the verdict of the un-instructed person should be invited.[51]

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[47] Ibid., December 24, 1934, p. 12.

[48] Livingstone, p. 31.

[49] Manchester Guardian, December 24, 1934, p. 12.

[50] Ibid., November 10, 1934, p. 8. For content of these leaflets see the Appendix.

[51] Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Debates (House of Commons), 5th ser., Vol. 293 (30 Oct.--Nov., 1934), p. 1315.

He then asserted that the explanatory literature, which was circulated with the ballot by the National Declaration Committee, failed to give both sides of the issue and oversimplified the complexities of the question.[52] Simon then turned his attention to an article in Headway, the official organ of the League of Nations Union. He asserted that the magazine gave undue credit to Labour by stating that the party had taken the lead in sponsoring international cooperation.[53] It was Simon's conclusion that the League of Nations Union had involved itself uncessarily in party politics and that the statements given in the explanatory leaflets being issued by the National Declaration Committee and in Headway would only weaken its stand as a nonpartisan spokesman for international cooperation.[54]

These statements were immediately rejoined by Major Sir Archibald St. Clair, a ballot supporter, who accused Simon of "ransacking obscure pamphlets, creating every prejudice against those who are working honestly, even though they may not agree with him, for the cause of peace."[55] Sir Archibald then pointed out that Simon had misinterpreted the passage from Headway because it was part of a symposium which gave space to all three political parties, rather than a pro-Labour polemic.[56]

Sir Austin Chamberlain, who although a staunch Conservative, was a member of the Executive Committee of the League of Nations Union, rose to disclaim any part in the Union's actions. He stated that he had been preoccupied with the affairs of the India Committee and had tried to resign from the Union's Executive Committee, but had been kept on despite

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[52] Ibid., p. 1316. [53] Ibid., p. 1318. [54] Ibid.

[55] Ibid., p. 1325. [56] Ibid.

his will. He then labeled the pamphlets sent out by the Declaration Committee pure "propaganda."[57] Chamberlain went on to say he felt "indignation" with regard to the matter and that the material sent out by the Declaration Committee

> shows in what spirit and by what methods a verdict is attempted to be snatched from the country on these complicated issues, and how carefully those who have the chief responsibility are refraining themselves from putting both sides of the case and doing their best to prevent others from doing so.[58]

Mr. Geoffry la Mander, also a member of the League Union's Executive and a strong supporter of the ballot then bitterly rebutted the accusations made by Simon and Chamberlain. He disclosed that, in addition to the pamphlets of which Simon and Chamberlain had been critical and which were of a green and blue color, there was a pink pamphlet which gave "a neutral sort of statement" and merely instructed the people how to properly fill in their ballot forms.[59] Mander refuted Simon's accusation that question four was too complicated for the uninformed and asserted that the question was clearly and simply stated and could be understood by all.[60] A dim view of things to come was then taken by Mander when he stated:

> The Foreign Secretary /Simon7, in speaking this afternoon, for the first time took off the mask--and I presume on behalf of the Government--declared war on the whole of the peace movement in this country. There is no doubt that is what he did. That is how it will be interpreted /Ministerial cries: 'Nonsense!'7 The speeches made today will do immense harm to the National Government, who will rue the day when such a provocation and offensive speech to those working for peace in this country was made.[61]

Mander concluded by accusing Simon of being "unscrupulous" with regard

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[57] Ibid., p. 1346. [58] Ibid., p. 1347. [59] Ibid., p. 1368.

[60] Ibid. [61] Ibid., p. 1369.

to the article in Headway. This was because the article had been accompanied by opinions of the other political parties; all had been given equal representation.[62] Mander concluded the debate by listing the several church officials who had publicly endorsed the declaration. This ended the debate for that evening. However, it was only the beginning of the public dispute over the matter.[63]

Reaction to this debate in the press was immediate and emotional. At no other time did the "Peace Ballot" receive so much coverage in the news media. The debate itself did not conclude with the discussions in the Commons, but moved into the "letters" columns of both The Times and the Manchester Guardian. Editorial writers also became involved in the dispute. Within a few days nearly every news publication had taken a position on the debate in Commons and the "Peace Ballot." The editors of The Economist philosophized that the debate was "a regrettable and foolish wrangle" but "typically British," and then criticized Sir John Simon's position. His speech was, according to The Economist;

> . . . not merely legalistic, but was marred by certain blatantly unfair attacks on the methods of the League of Nations Union and by a specific charge of political partisanship. The Union has been scrupulously careful to avoid any grounds for such an accusation. This speech has alienated large sections of opinion in this country. . . it is very much to be regretted that at a moment when public attention should be concentrated on essentials, this element of bathos should have been introduced.[64]

Simon's statement that question number four was above the minds of the

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[62]Ibid. The articles were by Cecil, Lord Lytton, Noel Baker, and Gilbert Murray.

[63]Ibid.

[64]The Economist, November 17, 1934, pp. 9-10.

"uninformed" populous was branded "rank heresy" by The Economist.[65]

The Saturday Review took a less sympathetic view of the declaration. A highly critical article on the ballot was published which portrayed a satirical comparison between the declaration and the views of a fictional suburban vicar of the Church of England to whom the League of Nations had become "an easy substitute for the Christian religion."[66] It pictured the leaflets, which were being sent out to explain the ballot, as having the same "bright and chatty" style as the vicar's sermons, but they also lacked any real understanding of the issues.[67] The article delivered particular criticism to question number five of the declaration for use of euphemism in referring to League action as "sanctions" because it concluded the real result of such a policy would be "war."[68]

The Spectator published a conciliatory though pro-ballot article by the Earl of Lytton who was a friend of the declaration. Lytton foresaw that one of the results of the debate would be to give the ballot a much needed advertisement. He felt it was a great help to the venture in most respects. Lord Lytton saw as "the tragedy" of the debate that it had dragged the questions into partisan politics, an occurrence which he found most regretable.[69] Lord Lytton continued

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[65] Ibid.

[66] "Ballot to End War," The Saturday Review (London), CLVIII (November, 1934), 391.

[67] Ibid.

[68] Ibid., p. 392.

[69] Earl of Lytton, "The National Declaration Controversy," The Spectator, CVIII (November, 1934), 747. Lord Lytton was the chairman of the famous Lytton Commission which made recommendations during the Manchurian Crisis of 1931.

that:

> The League of Nations Union is bound to be irritating at times to party politicians, because it is a non-party organization which puts defence of the League of Nations before any other political issue, whereas party politicians only regard support of the League as one of their many loyalties.[70]

It was concluded that criticism of the League of Nations Union would only serve a negative purpose as it was the only organization in Britain whose sole objective was support for the League of Nations.[71]

The Times remained curiously silent in reporting that section of the Commons debate which dealt with the "Peace Ballot." Although it published a brief paraphrase of the debate, it was not given a headline or separate news story as were the other portions of the debate.[72] The editorial in The Times on the day after the debate in Commons gave laudatory praise to Simon's speech, insofar as the arms question was concerned, but conspicuously failed to mention the argument which ensued on the "Peace Ballot."[73] The reply that Lord Cecil made to the criticism in Commons was printed without comment on a back page of the paper.[74]

The "letters" column of The Times soon became the arena for the continuing debate over the National Declaration. Sir Austin Chamberlain began this discussion by reiterating the stand he had taken earlier in the debate in the House of Commons. He added that the "Peace Ballot" was all the more devious because one of the explanatory leaflets, the

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[70] Ibid.

[71] Ibid.

[72] The Times (London), November 9, 1934, p. 8.

[73] Ibid., p. 15.

[74] Ibid., November 10, 1934, p. 14.

yellow one, was entitled "Peace or War" which implied that a "no" vote on any of the questions was a vote for war.[75] Lord Cecil replied that a "no" vote, while not directly a vote for war, would support a policy which was creating a general drift towards war. He concluded that a firmly implemented policy of collective security, as outlined in the questions on the ballot, was the only system which could avert another holocaust.[76]

Chamberlain was given support by Lord Rennel, a prominent Conservative. He asserted that the real purpose of the declaration was to "render impotent" Britain in an hour of crisis. Rennel felt that it was the objective of the ballot to disarm England at a time when arms were most needed and that polite language would not suffice as to his opinion of such an endeavor.[77] Lord Lytton answered Lord Rennel's allegations. He pointed out that there was no reason for Lord Rennel to fear for the politeness of his language as there was nothing in the ballot questions or its accompanying literature which suggested unilateral disarmament.[78]

A refutation of Lord Cecil's letter by Arthur Steel-Maitland was printed which accused the National Declaration of dividing and weakening the peace forces in Britain. This was because the questions implied certain policies but did not deal specifically with the overriding issue of collective security.[79] Further criticism of the ballot came from Lord Shuttleworth who wondered if it was proper for the League

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[75] Ibid., November 12, 1934, p. 15.

[76] Ibid., November 13, 1934, p. 15. [77] Ibid.

[78] Ibid., November 14, 1934, p. 10. [79] Ibid.

of Nations Union to consult the populous on a matter which should have been the concern of Parliament. He added that the Union was "trespassing outside the province of its hitherto useful functions."[80] Such pretentiousness was answered by the poet A. A. Milne who styled himself a "common man" and praised the ballot because he felt for the first time the "ordinary man can give an indication of his views."[81]

The charge that the ballot was being used by the Labour Party as a political tool against the Conservatives was made in a letter which claimed that at local Labour meetings individual members were urged to support the ballot because it was a means of attacking "tory militarism."[82] The discussion of the ballot in The Times "letters" column ended with a letter from Gilbert Murray, the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the League of Nations Union. He made clear the organizational distinction between the League Union and National Declaration Committee. Although he lauded the goals of the ballot he disclaimed any direct responsibility of the League Union for the activities of the National Declaration Committee.[83]

The Manchester Guardian, which had always been one of the ballot's strongest advocates, reacted to criticism of the declaration with strongly worded denunciations of the ballot critics.[84] Sir John Simon's remark that views of the "uninstructed" should not be invited

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[80]Ibid., November 15, 1934, p. 10.

[81]Ibid., November 16, 1934, p. 10.

[82]Ibid., November 27, 1934, p. 10.

[83]Ibid., November 28, 1934, p. 10.

[84]Manchester Guardian, November 6, 1934, p. 15.

on the question of nationalization of the arms trade came under particularly severe attack. The editors of the Manchester Guardian commented:

> we suspect that this bland assumption that the mysteries of foreign policy are not for such as . . . /the uninstructed/ may have done well enough in the eighteenth century or even in the time of Palmerston but that it will not serve today.[85]

The editors criticized Simon for misquoting question number four of the ballot. It was asserted that Simon had quoted the question as stating "can the manufacture and sale of private arms be prohibited by national agreement?"; while the actual wording was "should the manufacture and sale of private armaments be prohibited by international agreement."[86] The editors inferred a great deal from Simon's supposed misquote. However, the record of Parliament shows that Simon had stated the question correctly.[87] Therefore, it would seem that it was Simon who was misquoted. Probably, the Parliamentary correspondent of the Manchester Guardian was the most correct when he observed that the entire discussion had become "obscure."[88]

The content of the disputed leaflets was printed by the Manchester Guardian.[89] In addition, a reply to Simon and Chamberlain by Lord Cecil was printed which stated that whatever the content of the

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[85]Ibid., November 13, 1934, p. 10.

[86]Ibid., November 9, 1934, pp. 4 and 10.

[87]Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Debates (House of Commons), 5th ser., Vol. 293 (30 Oct.--Nov., 1934), p. 1315.

[88]Manchester Guardian, November 9, 1934, p. 11.

[89]Ibid.

explanatory leaflets the issues remained the same. He felt that the questions were of such immediate and imperative concern that time should not have been wasted discussing "whether this leaflet was properly issued or that leading article was properly worded."[90] By the end of November the Guardian's Parliamentary correspondent had concluded that the issues raised in the Parliamentary debate over the ballot had prompted such an outpouring of public reaction that the Government was "afraid of the mounting peace sentiment in this country."[91] Although this was perhaps an overstatement, there can be little doubt that the brief but fierce debate in the House of Commons gave the declaration the notoriety it needed to achieve success. Dame Livingstone took note of this in The Peace Ballot: the Official History when she stated that the controversy "had the advantage of placing the ballot before the public in the widest sense."[92] By the winter of 1934 and 1935 the words "Peace Ballot" had become household terms in many British homes.

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[90] Ibid., November 10, 1934, p. 13.

[91] Ibid., November 27, 1934, p. 10.

[92] Livingstone, p. 12. Dame Livingstone stated that criticism of the yellow leaflet's title was valid and the words "peace or war" were eliminated.

CHAPTER V

THE DECLARATION COMPLETED

As tempers gradually cooled after the bitter discussions over the explanatory leaflets, the first returns of ballot results were being tabulated. On November 22, 1934, the small Northamptonshire village of Scaldwell submitted the first vote totals to the central office. As there was a large affirmative majority on each of the questions, the administrators of the ballot were encouraged.[1] The very next day the town of Rugby, the first sizeable place to report, filed a vote tabulation of over 21,000 with large majorities voting affirmatively on all the questions.[2] Such early returns prompted Lord Cecil to remark that "the ballot has begun very well."[3]

At the end of November Stanley Baldwin spoke out on the ballot for the first time. While paying homage to the sincerity of the declaration's sponsors, he argued that the venture "gave opportunities to the unscrupulous political propagandist." He reiterated the argument that Conservatives had long used against the ballot; an answer of "no" to any of the questions created the false impression that it was a vote for war. Baldwin also contended that the issue raised by the

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[1]Livingstone, p. 14.

[2]Manchester Guardian, November 23, 1934, p. 9. 98.7 percent were affirmative on question number 1. 18,109 and 14,459 voted "yes" on question "5a" and "b" respectively.

[3]Ibid., p. 11.

questions were too complex to be answered in simple "yes and no" terms. He went on to express doubt that the League of Nations Union could continue as an effective organization if it were dragged into party politics and cautioned that it should listen to "wiser counsels" in the future. Baldwin concluded with a direct attack on the League of Nations Union concept of collective security and branded such a system "perfectly impracticable." Baldwin went on to say that he would not think of invoking military sanctions, such as a blockade, "until I know what the United States of America is going to do."[4] The Manchester Guardian quickly reacted to these remarks in a leading editorial which branded them "simply puerile."[5]

By the end of November, 1934, the balloting was in full swing throughout Great Britain and several constituencies had reported results.[6] By the end of November, 60,000 votes had been tabulated with over ninety percent of the answers on the first four questions in the affirmation, and 81.1 percent of the votes recorded an affirmative on question five.[7] In December the anticipated holiday slowdown took place and comparatively little ballot activity occurred, especially during the latter part of the month. Nevertheless, by mid-December over 250,000 votes had been tabulated and, with few exceptions, all the constituencies reported had voted

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[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid., November 26, 1934, p. 16. Cecil said these charges were unfair to the ballot.

[6]Ibid., December 6, 1934, p. 14.

[7]Livingstone, p. 15.

overwhelmingly in the affirmative on all the questions.[8]

The organizers of the declaration were further encouraged by reports that in spite of the Conservative Central Office's coolness toward the ballot, several local Conservative groups and individuals were volunteering to work for the declaration.[9] It was also announced at this time that a "Peace Ballot" would be organized in France along the same lines as that being conducted in Great Britain.[10] As news of these events was publicized, Sir John Simon, the Foreign Secretary, who had lead the attack in Parliament on the declaration, disclaimed much of his role as a critic of the ballot. He stated that "I have never expressed myself as opposed to the ballot," and went on to say that his only objection was to the wording of question number four.[11] By the time the Christmas holidays brought about a consequent cessation of

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[8]Manchester Guardian, December 14, 1934, p. 12.

	Yes	No	% Yes
1.	246,805	7,816	97.0
2.	235,019	17,176	93.2
3.	218,674	31,361	87.5
4.	233,189	15,113	93.9
5.	a) 222,510	12,568	94.6
	b) 138,209	51,448	72.9

Apparently all areas gave affirmative votes except the village of Sheldon near Blackwell where all questions were answered "no" by the majority. This was attributed to the fact that the village had "lost an unusually large proportion of men in the war." This presumably made the populace cast their vote for a policy of isolation. Manchester Guardian, December 5, 1934, p. 6.

[9]Ibid., December 6, 1934, pp. 4 and 14. Even Sir Thomas Inskip, the Attorney General, and a leading Conservative, declared himself in favor of the ballot.

[10]Ibid., December 15, 1934, p. 6.

[11]Ibid., December 17, 1934, p. 6.

activity, over 360,000 people had voted in the ballot, and its advocates were looking forward to even greater success in 1935.[12]

New Year's Sunday opened 1935 auspiciously for the sponsors of the ballot in Scotland. The day was observed as "Peace and League of Nations Sunday" with many ministers of the Church of Scotland urging their parishioners to spend the day canvassing in support of the ballot.[14] Meanwhile, in England, Lord Cecil opened the new year by issuing a statement in which he announced that over 500,000 votes had been counted. He stated that the predictions of the ballot's closest friends were being exceeded and that all arrangements were ready for the second phase of canvassing activity in which the larger cities were to be covered. The Manchester Guardian printed this statement in its entirety in a prominent place, while The Times gave it only brief attention on a back page.[15] Such differences in coverage reflected the diverse positions which the two newspapers had taken toward the ballot.

In accordance with the long range planning of the organizers, canvassing began in earnest in the major cities during January. In greater London, where a huge electorate awaited canvassing, the volunteer's work was proceeding steadily by the middle of the month. There was, however, a shortage of workers, especially in those parts of the

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[12]Ibid., December 22, 1934, p. 11.

[13]Ibid., January 2, 1935, p. 5.

[14]Livingstone, p. 16.

[15]Ibid., January 7, 1935, p. 5. Also see The Times, January 7, 1935, p. 14. This was the last article in which The Times made any comment of note on the ballot until the announcement of the final vote in June.

metropolitan area where the population concentration was the greatest.[16] In Manchester arrangements were completed in January for the actual canvassing which was scheduled to begin on February 11.[17] By the end of January over a million votes had been cast, with the affirmative response continuing as the rule.[18] Meanwhile, the first results from London began coming in.[19]

January, however, concluded with the issue of the "Peace Ballot" raised in a widely publicized legal action. Sir John Simon had sued a Methodist minister for slander because he alledgedly intimated that Simon's position on the arms trade resulted from his ownership of a large number of shares of stock in armament firms. In his court testimony Simon reiterated his objections to question four of the ballot, but testified that this was the only question which was objectionable to him.[20] The result was that, once again, the ballot became the subject of attention in the press and secured much "excellent advertisement."[21]

The month of February, 1935, saw increased activity in canvassing for the ballot. In Manchester the voting was given a send-off statement by Lord Cecil who pointed out that a good result in Manchester would be of value to the entire venture because "the country is in the habit of looking to . . . Manchester-Salford for a lead."[22] One minor

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[16]Ibid., January 12, 1935, p. 12.

[17]Ibid., January 19, 1935, p. 15.

[18]Livingstone, p. 16.

[19]Manchester Guardian, January 21, 1935, p. 13.

[20]Ibid., January 26, 1935, p. 8.

[21]Cecil, p. 259.

[22]Manchester Guardian, February 8, 1935, p. 20.

incident, however, marred the beginning of the balloting in the area. It had been decided, because of the controversy over the explanatory leaflets, that they would not be distributed with the ballot forms. It was soon reported, however, that in several areas of Manchester, pamphlets signed by the "United Front Committee of the St. Paul's ward I. L. P. and Communist Party" were being distributed with the ballots. The circulars were immediately the subject of disclaimer statements by the local declaration committee and no further incidents of improper distribution of leaflets were reported.[23]

During February another million votes were tabulated so that by the end of the month the two million mark had been reached.[24] It was becoming obvious to even the most bitter critic of the ballot by mid-winter of early 1935 that the National Declaration was going to be a considerable success, and since the proportion of "yes" votes remained relatively steady throughout the balloting the result became a foregone conclusion. As the vote expanded in volume, those who commented on the declaration came to regard its success as inevitable.[25] Patterns in the voting were soon apparent as it was obvious from the beginning that the south of England was not returning as large a proportion of ballots as

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[23] Ibid., p. 11.

[24] Ibid., February 22, 1935, p. 11.

	Yes	No	% Yes	Total vote
1.	1,964,578	58,872	97.1	
2.	1,858,849	141,855	92.9	
3.	1,701,661	277,609	86.0	
4.	1,850,776	124,214	93.7	
5.	a) 1,740,322	105,295	94.3	
	b) 1,117,858	435,259	32.1	2,025,450

[25] Ibid., January 7, 1935, p. 5. Also see Manchester Guardian, March 6, 1935, p. 16.

the north. The only southern city which reported a large vote was Bournemouth with a 53 percent poll.[26]

March began with yet another major controversy in which the National Declaration became involved. On the fourth of that month the Government issued a white paper entitled The Statement Relating to Defense. This document marked a clear change in British policy as it was the first official pronouncement which intimated a lack of faith in the concept of collective security. It also signaled the beginning of a serious rearmament program by providing for significant increases in the armed services in both equipment and personnel.[27]

Reaction from the supporters of the League was intense. The editors of the Manchester Guardian criticized the White Paper as being neither forthrightly militaristic nor "effectively basing itself on peaceful agencies for security." The editorial asserted that the military forces provided for by the White Paper were "just large enough" to signal the beginning of rearmament and thereby give other nations the pretext to follow suit. Therefore, it was reasoned that a new arms race was about to begin.[28] Lord Cecil concurred in this assessment and saw only ominous implications if a new arms race were to start.[29] The "letters" column in the Manchester Guardian contained many comments from League and ballot advocates who condemned the Government White Paper as

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[26]Livingstone, p. 17.

[27]Taylor, 1914-1945, pp. 375-376.

[28]Manchester Guardian, March 6, 1935, p. 8.

[29]Ibid., p. 13.

an effort to fly in the face of the opinion being demonstrated in the National Declaration. The most caustic of these letters came from an Anglican clergyman who accused the Government of outright conspiracy against public opinion. The letter further asserted that it was "silly" and "wicked" to view Germany as a threat to world peace because of "Herr Hitler's repeated declarations that he desires peace." The letter concluded that the authors of the White Paper should be "shut up in a lunatic asylum."[30] This type of position represented the emotional reaction which the White Paper had set loose. The high point of this reaction came in the middle of March. During this time a single issue of the Manchester Guardian contained condemnations of the planned arms program by the Presbyterians, Unitarians, Society of Friends, and the "letters" column was literally filled with denunciations of the program from private individuals.[31]

Apparently the White Paper spurred the ballot workers on to greater efforts as from the time of its issuance the number of votes tabulated increased sharply.[32] By mid-March the number of votes in the National Declaration had jumped to over three million.[33] At meetings

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[30]Ibid., p. 18. [31]Ibid., March 16, 1935, p. 12.

[32]Ibid., p. 16. This was also due to the fact that the major cities were canvassed last.

[33]Ibid., p. 13.

	Yes	No	% Yes
1.	2,959,437	85,900	92.2
2.	2,796,408	218,127	92.8
3.	2,550,143	432,797	85.8
4.	2,778,384	198,128	93.3
5.	a) 2,634,292	164,348	94.1
	b) 1,727,754	640,390	72.9

which were assembled to protest the situation it was suggested that the best way of mobilizing opinion against the White Paper was through support of the "Peace Ballot."[34]

Later in the month of March more immediacy was given the peace question in the press when Hitler announced publicly the renunciation of part of the Versailles Treaty and reinstituted conscription.[35] At the end of March, Baldwin was attempting to ameliorate the fears of the electorate by giving reassurances that the League was still the basis of British policy. He defended the White Paper by saying the increases in the armed services were instituted only to make up for past "deficiencies."[36] These statements could not hide the fact that a basic change in British policy had, in fact, occurred.[37]

At the beginning of April it was announced by the central office of the declaration that May 1 would be the final day of canvassing and all soliciting of votes would end at that time.[38] This last month of voting was marked by a final crescendo of activity by the workers on the ballot. Early results from Manchester indicated that a poll of over 50 percent would be possible.[39] On April 10 it was announced that over

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[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid., March 21, 1935, p. 12.

[36] Ibid., March 25, 1935, p. 12.

[37] Taylor, 1914-1945, p. 376.

[38] Manchester Guardian, April 12, p. 3.

[39] Ibid., April 3, p. 10.

five million votes had been received and tabulated by the central office.[40]

During the month of April, world attention became focused upon the conference which was being held at Stresa. Lord Cecil issued a statement in which he expressed the hope that the diplomats would be guided by the sentiments of the "Peace Ballot."[41] Although later research has shown that such hopes never found fruition at Stresa, there was considerable hope at the time that the conference would construct a meaningful peace-keeping system.[42] The official communique issued at the end of the deliberations gave hope to the populace that the principles of collective security had been reaffirmed at Stresa.[43] The publicized result of the Stresa Conference, therefore, gave the people of Britain additional hope in the League system. Since the ballot was an affirmation of that system, its position was enhanced by the events of the first weeks after the conference. This was evidenced by the fact that over 6,000,000 votes had been tabulated by April 20,[44] and only nine days later another million votes had been submitted to bring the total to 7,000,000.[45]

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[40] Ibid., April 10, p. 18.

	Yes	No	% Yes
1.	4,904,567	141,816	97.2
2.	4,608,150	366,331	92.6
3.	4,193,671	743,634	85.0
4.	4,600,393	543,741	93.0
5.	a) 4,374,705	276,917	94.0
	b) 2,929,773	1,030,978	74.0

[41] Ibid., April 11, 1935, p. 12.

[42] Taylor, Origins, pp. 91-92.

[43] Manchester Guardian, April 15, 1935, p. 19.

[44] Ibid., April 20, 1935, p. 15. [45] Ibid., April 29, 1935, p. 14.

By the May 1 deadline canvassing had, in most instances, ceased. In various isolated areas such as rural Scotland it was found necessary to continue voting beyond this date.[46] Throughout the month of May the newspapers were concerned almost entirely with news of the Silver Jubilee celebration for George the fifth.[47] For almost two weeks news of such things as the "Peace Ballot" was replaced by reports of a celebration which had few precedents in British history.[48]

It was made known that the final totals for the declaration would be announced the twenty-seventh of June at a meeting at the Albert Hall in London.[49] By the twelfth of May the voting totals had reached the 8,000,000 mark and the advocates of the declaration were very encouraged except for the fact that it had become obvious that the vote in London would fall far short of what had been expected.[50] The polling resulted in one and a half million votes which was only 30 percent of those eligible. Lord Cecil tried to rationalize this showing by pointing out the many difficulties which faced the volunteer workers in London. He said, "it was a great achievement" that so many votes were attained considering the large number of difficulties which the canvassers faced. Such attempts at rationalization could not veil the fact that a certain disappointment was felt at such a low vote from England's most populace city.[51]

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[46] Ibid., May 1, 1935, p. 14. [47] Ibid., May 4, 1935, p. 11.

[48] Taylor, 1914-1945, pp. 377-378.

[49] Manchester Guardian, May 11, 1935, p. 7.

[50] Livingstone, p. 18.

[51] Manchester Guardian, May 31, 1935, p. 6.

At the end of May it was announced that over 9,000,000 votes had been received at the central office. This total represented tabulation of one half million votes every week for the preceeding eleven weeks. It was also announced that no further totals would be announced until the June 27 final meeting.[52] In spite of this, one last vote total was given when it was announced on June 4 that the total had gone beyond the 10,000,000 mark. Public notice was given that final plans for the Albert Hall meeting were completed and the official history of the ballot would be published under the authorship of Dame Livingstone in time for the June 27 meeting.[53]

Due to the obvious success of the National Declaration it was decided that an additional organization would be needed in order to assure that the ballot's result would accomplish the maximum affect in the Government. To this end the New Commonwealth Society was created in May of 1935 to "organize that vast body of opinion in such a way that the principles for which they stand may receive adequate representation."[54]

In early June of 1935 Ramsay MacDonald yielded to failing health and resigned the Prime Ministership, and Stanley Baldwin assumed

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[52] Ibid., May 25, 1935, p. 11. Also see Livingstone, p. 18.

[53] Ibid., June 4, 1935, p. 9.

	Yes	No
1.	9,711,100	308,550
2.	9,173,674	739,779
3.	8,349,939	1,470,364
4.	9,114,708	676,326
5.	a) 8,766,655	558,147
	b) 5,920,570	2,053,024

[54] Ibid., May 2, 1935, p. 18.

the post.[55] In the resulting cabinet shifts the young and attractive Anthony Eden was given the new post of "Minister for the League without Portfolio."[56] This new position was considered a concession to the growing League sentiment which was made evident by the "Peace Ballot."[57]

The meeting at Albert Hall on June 27, 1935, was the climactic event of the National Declaration on the League of Nations and Armaments. All tickets for the event had been sold days in advance of the meeting and an expectant crowd of ballot workers and supporters assembled to hear the final results.[58] Lord Cecil was given the honor of presenting the final figures. Cheers greeted him as he announced the vote which was:

	Yes	No	Doubtful	Abstentions
1.	11,090,387	355,883	10,470	102,425
2.	10,470,489	882,775	12,062	213,839
3.	9,533,558	1,689,786	16,976	318,845
4.	10,417,329	775,415	15,076	351,345
5.	a) 10,027,608	635,074	27,255	855,107
	b) 6,784,368	2,351,981	40,893	2,384,441 [59]

After presenting the figures Lord Cecil pointed out that at the outset of voting a poll of five million had been considered the criterion of a successful venture. He attributed the additional votes to the publicity received through the various attacks on the ballot by its critics.[60]

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[55] Ibid., June 8, 1935, p. 11.

[56] Ibid., June 10, 1935, p. 12.

[57] Taylor, 1914-1945, pp. 378-380.

[58] Manchester Guardian, June 28, 1935, p. 11.

[59] Ibid. In addition, results were given for those who answered question 5 according to the Christian pacifist position. They were: "5a" 14,121; and "b" 17,482.

[60] Ibid., June 28, 1935, p. 19.

Lord Cecil felt basic reasons for the ballot's success were the understanding of the people and their giving of an informed vote. The hope was expressed by Lord Cecil that the ballot would not be an end in itself, but rather would mark the beginning of a British foreign policy in which the League of Nations would truly be the cornerstone.[61]

The Archbishop of Canterbury termed the ballot a most "remarkable effort at free opinion." He castigated those who succumbed to the prevalent feeling of cynicism toward the League, but he also cautioned against over-optimism toward the League which he felt was equally dangerous. He concluded by extending the hope that the great volume of opinion expressed in the declaration would help the League through the difficult times which were at hand.[62]

A speech by Walter Citrine, an important trade union leader, was marked by some heckling. After Citrine had asked if such a "Peace Ballot" would have been possible in Germany, a heckler countered by asking if it could have taken place in Russia. A brief interchange occurred in which the differences between the Marxists in attendance and others became apparent.[63] The evening closed on a more harmonious note with a resolution being passed by acclamation which called upon the Government to begin at once a more "constructive" League of Nations policy.[64]

The results of the declaration, having been publicly announced, were then officially communicated to the Government and all the members

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[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Ibid.

of Parliament.[65] In this manner the National Declaration came to an official end and the National Declaration Committee was disbanded.[66] These events did not, however, mark an end to speculation on the meaning of the ballot. Contemporary observers, members of the Government, and later historians all have attempted to analyse the significance of the "Peace Ballot." In this phenomena the final meaning of the venture was played out.

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[65]Cecil, p. 260. See also Manchester Guardian, June 28, 1935, p. 19.

[66]Manchester Guardian, June 29, 1935, p. 16.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Reaction in the press to the results on the balloting, when announced at Albert Hall was immediate, and generally in keeping with editorial policies that had been declared earlier. The Spectator indicated approval over the large affirmative vote, and noted that the degree of organization necessary for such a success indicated a bright future for the League of Nations cause in Britain. The editors of The Spectator then hopefully noted "no government will dare to flout public opinion by slighting the League, or by refraining from efforts to secure agreed disarmament and collective sanctions against peacebreakers."[1] They did, however, sound a note of caution by pointing out that the declarations in the "Peace Ballot" were meaningless without international agreement. The editors concluded that the increasingly difficult situation in Ethiopia would be ameliorated by the clear-cut show of opinion demonstrated in the ballot.[2]

This pro-declaration view was questioned in the next edition of The Spectator, in a letter from F. Yeats Brown, who pointed out that on the crucial question of implementation of the League system, the issue raised in question "5b," that a full 41.4 percent of those questioned either answered "no" or abstained from voting. Brown indicated that in

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[1]"The Peace Ballot," The Spectator, CLV (June, 1935), 1692.

[2]Ibid.

reality this failed to constitute a mandate and that the organizers of the ballot were distorting their own figures when they claimed an overwhelming vote of confidence in the collective security system.[3] This argument, though it raised a basic issue, was neither effectively answered by ballot partisans nor utilized by its critics during the 1930's.

The Times played down the results of the ballot when it printed the vote count on a back page.[4] It did, however, run an editorial on the subject, in which the editors indicated that posing questions such as those in the ballot was similar to asking "are you in favour of a higher standard of living?"[5] The point was that an affirmative response was easy to obtain on sweeping questions having to do with the national welfare. Thus, the editors of The Times concluded, the results of the ballot were "superfluous."[6]

The Manchester Guardian quickly attacked The Times for the suggestion that the "Peace Ballot" questions were like questions on the standard of living, and acidly concluded that "some of those who had shilly-shallied in their support of the League seem to be getting badly rattled."[7] Such enthusiasm for the ballot in the pages of the Manchester Guardian was not surprising as the editors had earlier concluded that no

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[3]Ibid., July 5, 1935, p. 17.

[4]The Times (London), June 28, 1935, p. 18.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Manchester Guardian, June 29, 1935, p. 12.

parallel to the ballot existed in British history, except for the "Chartist agitation" of the nineteenth century.[8]

A different direction in the discussion of the ballot was taken by the editors of the New York Times when, during the Ethiopian Crisis, they noted the paradox between the widespread popular impression that the ballot had been a vote for peace, while in fact it had endorsed a firm policy which might involve a resort to war through the provisions of question "5b."[9] It is on this point that some later historians have erred in their interpretations of the "Peace Ballot." Historians like Charles Mowat have incorrectly termed the "Peace Ballot," "the highwater mark of post war pacifism."[10] Alfred Havighurst described the "Peace Ballot" as "the most remarkable expression of pacifism" of the period.[11] Such assertions were based on the popular impression given by the ballot, rather than an understanding of the real implications of the answers to the questions in the declaration, especially number "5b."

This misunderstanding and incorrect interpretation has been discussed by other historians. Fieling implied that the Declaration Committee intended for there to be such confusion. He, therefore, called

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[8]Ibid., June 28, 1935, p. 10.

[9]New York Times, September 20, 1935, p. 20. Reaction in the American Press had been generally favorable to the ballot. The New York Times noted the ballot's result and made special mention of the Archbishop of Canterbury's remarks that the vote would heighten sentiment toward the League in other countries such as the United States. New York Times, June 28, 1935, p. 11. Even such a normally isolationist newspaper as the Omaha World-Herald viewed the "Peace Ballot" as a positive accomplishment. Omaha World-Herald, December 9, 1935, p. 6.

[10]Mowat, p. 541.

[11]Havighurst, p. 244.

the entire venture "irresponsible and evasive."[12] McElwee pointed out that the ballot's result, and especially the reaction to question "5b," "revealed the muddle into which the country had been thrown."[13] Nicolson felt that the ballot presented an unworkable solution and regretted that the British public "shared these illusions." The National Declaration was to Nicolson nothing more than another in a series of "pious orgies recommended and arranged by the League of Nations Union."[14]

Other historians have been more sympathetic toward the ballot. G. M. Young stated that the vote was a clear endorsement of collective security and that it had an "extraordinary" impact in the reshaping of British public opinion toward foreign relations.[15] Ramsey Muir held that the result of the balloting had been nothing short of "remarkable." In spite of the odds against its success, Muir stated, the ballot succeeded both in showing the clear position of British opinion and in sparking the changes in the Government in June of 1935, like the removal of Sir John Simon as Foreign Secretary.[16] To this writer, however, it seems unclear whether the ballot was a factor in the reshuffling of the Government as Muir believed.

It can not be said that the declaration was a clear-cut and blanket endorsement of a policy of collective security. As F. Yeats

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[12]Fieling, p. 262.

[13]McElwee, p. 230-233. Such muddle was prevalent, according to McElwee, because of the large number of votes for questions one through four, and the smaller percentage for number five.

[14]Nicolson, p. 519.

[15]Young, p. 210.

[16]Muir, pp. 186-188.

Brown in The Spectator, and McElwee indicated the public's response to the all-important question 5 was considerably less affirmative in nature than their reaction to the other questions.[17] Had the affirmative vote on question 5 been in the same percentage as the other questions the meaning of the ballot would have been more clear.

Apparently the ballot had some affect, at least for a time, upon British diplomacy during the Italo-Ethiopian Crisis. On September 11, 1935, Sir Samuel Hoare, the Foreign Secretary, enunciated, at Geneva, a firm policy toward Italy. He said this was because of "the attitude of the British nation in the last few weeks," which presumably was a reference to the results of the "Peace Ballot".[18] However, such resolve did not last long and the Italians were allowed to complete their conquest unhindered by either the League of Nations or Great Britain.[19]

Whatever may be said about the National Declaration on the League of Nations and Armaments must be tempered by recognition of the fact that its precepts were frustrated in the Italo-Ethiopian Crisis. Any attempt to imagine what might have happened if the Government had followed the declaration's policy would be pure conjecture. The real meaning of the declaration perhaps is to be found at a different level. That such a venture could be carried out at all was in effect the greatest significance of the ballot. The fact that the National Declaration operation was successfully completed by a vast number of

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[17] The Spectator, CLVI (July, 1935), 17. Also see McElwee, pp. 230-233.

[18] Gathorne-Hardy, pp. 407-410.

[19] Ibid.

optimistic volunteers demonstrated more than anything else the degree of enthusiasm for the League of Nations and the idealism of the population of Great Britain during the mid-1930's. The completion of the National Declaration on the League of Nations and Armaments, inspite of the sparse monetary support, and the frequent-attacks in much of the national press, plus the criticism against it leveled in Parliament, gives to the "Peace Ballot" an aura of success, even though its aims were frustrated during the period after 1938.

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The editors of The Spectator tended to favor the ballot, but many of the comments in the letters column were highly critical of the venture.

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Except for the time immediately following the debates in Parliament the editors of The Times followed a policy of largely ignoring the "Peace Ballot." However, during the controversy in Parliament The Times' letters column became the arena for much of the discussion over the ballot. For the most part, any news which The Times printed on the declaration was put on a back page. By the time of the final announcement of the vote The Times was openly hostile to the venture in its editorials.

APPENDIX I

THE GREEN PAPER*

Notes on the Five Questions in the Ballot Paper

Question I

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

You will agree that all nations need peace, that none needs it more than we do, and that there has never been a time when we and the world need it more.

So before you write "yes" or "no" to this question please ask yourself two more. Can you think of a better way of building up a peacefully ordered world than through the League of Nations? Can peace be got without a law against war which all nations will accept? The League provides that law.

The League can never reach its full strength without British support.

Question II

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

1. Promises.
   All the nations that signed the peace after the Great War promised each other to reduce and limit their armaments.

2. Burdens.
   The nation's money should be spent on better things. Expenditure on armaments is enormous now and will quickly become a far more crushing burden unless its growth is checked now.

3. Dangers of Competition.
   We must avoid the dangers of competition in armed strength. Such competition is foolish and dangerous, for when each nation tries to be stronger than the others all will feel insecure. Until there is agreement there is always fear of such competitions; and fear and competition themselves breed wars.

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*Manchester Guardian, November 10, 1934, p. 8.

4. Dangers of Modern Weapons.

Modern weapons are creating new dangers for us all, especially from the air. Every year it becomes more difficult for any nations, however powerfully armed, to protect itself against sudden smashing attack; for such weapons as military aeroplanes, fire bombs, poison gas, and tanks give a tremendous new advantage to the attacker.

Questions III

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

Of all the modern weapons the aeroplane is the most dangerous to civilization; there is no effective defense against air attack.

ABOLITION OF MILITARY AIRCRAFT.

We believe abolition of the air weapon to be much the best way of helping to make the world secure against air attack. It is not enough to limit the numbers of military aircraft or to forbid the dropping of bombs or the making of bombing machines.

The total abolition of the national air force has been advocated, under certain conditions, by the British, French, German, American, Russian, and many other Governments. By the Treaty of Peace military aircraft were forbidden to Germany.

There must also be an agreement by nations to control civilian flying.

Question IV

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

In many countries besides our own, people feel more and more that it is not right or safe that weapons of war should be made and sold for private profit. There should be no temptation to anybody to encourage bad feelings between nations or to create conditions in which there is a demand for increased armaments.

It has been proved that some of those who make and sell arms for private profit have used bribery, bought up newspapers, spread war scares, and tried to set one country against another in order to create a demand for their products.

This is one of the questions where your vote may be of special importance for the Governments of the world must be made to feel the pressure of public opinion behind the demand to do away with the powerful private interest that are concerned in this matter.

Even if such manufacture is prohibited, it will be essential also to control the State manufacture of arms and to bring all manufacture and sale of arms under international control.

Question V

Do you consider that if a nation insists on attacking another the other nations should combine to compel it to stop by
(a) Economic and non-military measures?
(b) If necessary, military measures?

If you have already answered "yes" to Questions I and Question II you may have considered whether there is not a further question.

Suppose that one nation breaks its promises and suddenly attacks another.

What ought the other nations to do? Ought they simply to say, "This is no business of ours?" Or ought they to say: "We have all agreed to keep the peace and to disarm, and therefore we must all act together to stop the war which the peace-breaker has begun?"

Recent events have shown that such joint action is the only way to uphold world law and get disarmament all round. Readiness for joint action is the price of peace and disarmament.

All the organizations who ask you to fill up this ballot paper believe that a boycott on trade and credit would in practice almost always be enough to stop any nation from starting a war.

Some of these organizations think that nothing but such "economic" measures will be needed, and that it would not be right to use armed force.

If you agree with them you should answer "Yes" to (a) and "No" to (b).

Most of these organizations, however, believe that the peace-breaker might reply to economic pressure by using armed force against the boycotting nations and that therefore in the last resort the only way to uphold the world law and to prevent wars of the old kind is to be ready to use all measures that may be required to bring the attack to an end, with as little lasting injury as possible. They believe that by promising the strength of all nations for the help of each the risks of war can be reduced to a minimum, since any nation, however powerful, would be afraid to make war against all the others. They believe that without the all-round disarmament described above such joint action might not stop war, but they hold that if all armaments are reduced and limited, nations can join together to do for world peace what each nation does at home through its police force to maintain law and order.

If you agree with these organizations you should answer "Yes" to (a) and "Yes" to (b).

CONCLUSION

Without this new peace system nations will only too probably begin to build up their forces against each other as happened before the Great War. This is not only wasteful, it is very dangerous. This danger is increased when some nations ally themselves with those whom they look upon as their friends against others whom they look upon as their enemies.

By your votes you can show the world that Great Britain believes in peace, and is working for it through the League of Nations, All-Round Disarmament, and Collective Security.

APPENDIX II

THE BLUE PAPER*

Peace or War: A National Declaration on the League of Nations and Armaments.

PREAMBLE

Certain members of the Executive Committee of the League of Nations Union are anxious that the following observations should be circulated with the ballot paper and the notes on the five questions. The Declaration Committee have agreed to circulate them but they do not adhere in all respects to what is said in the notes. The committee desire to point out that those who agree with the contentions in the Blue Paper should answer "Yes" to questions 1 and 2, and that with regard to questions 3 and 5 the differences of opinion are mainly questions of emphasis. As the Green Paper has already stated, abolition of national military and naval aircraft should be accompanied by an agreement by all nations to control civil flying. It is agreed that this is a necessary condition for the abolition of military aircraft. As to 5, the argument stated in the Blue Paper is partially stated in the Green Paper. As to question 4, the objections urged are undoubtedly substantial, but the Declaration Committee believe that they will not prove insurmountable in practice.

OBSERVATIONS

If the declaration is to be of real value, it is important that the votes should be an informed one--that is to say, that the voter should bear in mind all consideration for and against the proposals, and reach a balanced judgement of them. It seems therefore desirable to put forward for consideration some aspects of the problems which have not been included in the "Green" Notes on the Five Questions.

Question I

Nothing need be said with regard to this question, which is perfectly simple and straightforward one, and with regard to which the arguments are well known to everybody in this country.

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*Ibid.

Question II

This question also has been so freely ventilated during the last two years that there can be no one who is not in a position to record his vote without further information.

Question III

No thoughtful person would answer this question without a clear explanation of what is proposed in regard to the control of civil aviation. Abolition of military air forces and control of civil aviation are not separate problems, but one and the same. It would be impossible to abolish air forces without a strict international control of civil aircraft, for without this additional measure the nation with the largest civil force would dominate the air.

Question IV

This is an exceptionally complex subject, the difficulties of which are obscured in the question. No explanation is offered of how the object is to be obtained. The alternative of control of the international trade in arms is not even mentioned. The question is framed to secure a particular answer, not to invite a reasoned verdict.

In our opinion that is emphatically a question which ought not to have been put without mentioning the various issues which arise out of it. We mention only one or two of these considerations.

(a) The absence from this question of any definition of the armaments concerned.
(b) The immense extension of national arsenals which would at once become necessary, and the increase in taxation this would involve.
(c) The impossible position in which small nations without armament factories would be placed, and their consequent dependence on the foreign Governments upon which they would have to rely for their means of defense.

Question V

This again, is a question which cannot be answered simply yes or no. Much must depend on the circumstances of the particular cases, on the provocation given, on the universality or event of the support available, and likelihood of the economic boycott proving effective. The difficulties of an economic blockade are immense, and its consequences, not easy to foresee, but one thing is certain no one ought to vote for economic and non-military measures unless he is prepared to support them if necessary by military measures. Such a blockade might be treated as an act of war by the country against which it was directed. No one should incur this risk unless he is prepared to face the possible consequences.

To answer (a) with a yes and (b) with a no would be to adopt a policy of bluff while openly proclaiming that it was bluff and no more.

These are, in our opinion, some of the main considerations which must be borne in mind by those who are taking part in this declaration, and unless they are given their full weight we believe that the vote would be valueless.

APPENDIX III

THE YELLOW PAPER*

What the Ballot means.

The National Declaration on the League of Nations and Armaments is a scheme to find out from all persons in this country over the age of eighteen what they think about the prevention of war and the League of Nations.

The reduction and limitation of armaments, though it may involve difficulties, is also of very great importance.

Nearly everyone in the world wants peace; but we are not all agreed as to whether we are to pledge ourselves to cooperate with others in order to be sure of getting it. If the people of this country show that they are ready to pay the necessary price for peace it will encourage all those in other countries who desire peace, and show that we are on their side.

In a general election you are asked to vote for this party or that candidate and in so doing you decide on a lot of different questions, such as unemployment policy, pensions, tariffs, and so forth. In this ballot you are asked to vote only on peace or war whether you approve of the League of Nations or not, whether you are in favour of international disarmament, or not. And by voting for the League of Nations you are helping not only our country, but the other countries of the world to maintain peace and abolish war with all its horrors.

THEREFORE VOTE

If you want more information about any of the questions, the people who bring this paper to your door will give it to you. They will explain any difficulties and then you must make up your own mind.

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*Ibid.