

# The Stockholm Conference

THE Neutral Conference for Continuous Mediation is not what the eager spirits who conceived it desired—a governmental body. Yet though wholly unofficial, it is in some real degree representative.

Delegates from the six chief neutral countries have been sitting around the big green table in a room of the Grand Hotel in the Swedish capital, just across the river from palace and parliament house. In Switzerland and Holland, in Sweden and Norway and Denmark national committees served at once as the constituencies and the agents of this central committee. Only the United States delegates have had, as it happens, no such support. Consequently the character and work of the Conference have quite naturally been much less understood in America than in Europe. Efforts to get Spanish representation have so far failed, owing to war-time difficulties of travel and communication.

Here in the United States the ridicule which was heaped upon that picturesque and much misrepresented demonstration of American knight-errantry, the Ford peace ship, still clings. It was a widespread misrepresentation to state that this undertaking had no plan. On the contrary it had a well defined plan, and executed it. This was to bring into being an unofficial conference for mediation.

While the other delegates were chosen, as has been stated, by national committees, the American delegates were chosen by the peace ship group, but not merely from their own number. Of those chosen outside its membership Miss Jane Addams was not well enough to go although she greatly desired to, Mr. Bryan was busy with political affairs at home, Dean Kirchwey has been held month after month by his duties at Sing Sing. Out of this list I proved to be the only one able to lay aside regular duties for the emergency call. Mr. Louis P. Lochner, well known to American students, and especially to those of Wisconsin as the organizer of "Cosmopolitan Clubs," was made the General Secretary.

The Neutral Conference has had three phases. At first a body of thirty members, five delegates from each of the six countries represented, it was later reduced to twelve, or two delegates from each country; and now, according to a Stockholm dispatch of August 16th, it has again altered its form and is to consist of three bureaus, one at Stockholm, one at Berne, and one, with Mr. Lochner as Secretary, at The Hague. Each change, however

conducive to effective work, has been widely heralded by those not in sympathy with the Conference as marking its dissolution.

The first phase of the Conference, in which the national delegations were set at five each, lasted from the middle of February to the middle of April and was mainly occupied with formulating two appeals, one to neutrals asking for the calling of an official conference, the other to the belligerents proposing specific peace terms for a just and reasonable settlement. This "Appeal to Governments, Parliaments and Peoples of the Belligerent Nations" was at once published, and also personally submitted to the Stockholm representatives of the belligerent governments. Not only did the neutral press print this in full—and paper is dear now in Europe—but Austria, Germany, Great Britain, Italy and Russia permitted its appearance, and the French-Swiss press gave it at least some access to France.

As neutral colored dust shows up white on a black surface and black on a white surface, so these terms proved their impartiality by contrasting with the extremest views of both sides. Yet in general the divergence was less than might have been expected. It was an English statesman who said that the Conference proposals gave the Allies more than they could expect to claim on the basis of military advantage. This, naturally, is consistent with the object of the proposals, to indicate a solution based not on conquest or near-conquest, but on the permanent advantage of the peoples of Europe.

Menshikov commenting on these proposals in the conservative *Novoe Vremye* said: "Thanks to its lofty tone, its humanity and its appeal to the religious consciousness of the peoples, this Stockholm document must be received with the greatest respect. It is more than probable that none of the belligerent great Powers will pay any attention to the wishes of private dreamers, however respectable they may be. The war will continue in the old way. But after the war it seems to me as if one would be obliged—quite unintentionally perhaps—to fall back upon the Stockholm principles, as it will be very difficult to imagine any others."

With this essentially deliberative work accomplished, the Conference reorganized itself as was stated and a central committee of twelve replaced the former thirty. This smaller and less unwieldy group of two delegates instead of five from each country proved far better fitted for executive tasks. Even the full number of twelve has not

always been present, and much of the most active work has been done in smaller sub-committees.

The membership of the central committee was an interesting one made up of striking personalities, each for the most part with some special contribution to make. Although its composition shifts somewhat, alternates sometimes replacing the delegates proper, among the most active members have been two professors of international law, Gjlsvik and Lie, both from the University of Christiania. The Swedes have been represented by Lindhagen, a leading radical member of the parliament, "burgermaster" of Stockholm, a middle-of-the-road idealist who is very useful as a leaven and a stimulus, and also by Dr. Wigforss, a young university man, a student of international relations, full of initiative and fire. Burgermaster Lindhagen's understudy is the only business man with a vote in the Conference, Hansson, a publisher, interested in various social questions and especially in colonial problems. The Danish contingent supplies "an old parliamentary hand" in Klausen, a solid genial Socialist, as much respected outside his own party as in it. Switzerland sent Dr. Scherrer-Fuellemann, National-Rath from St. Gallen and president of the Swiss group of the Interparliamentary Union. Perhaps the outstanding figure, however, has been Dr. de Jong van Beek en Donk of Holland, the Conference chairman for July. He is probably the only one of the European group known in America except to specialists. The moving spirit of the Dutch "Anti Orlog Raad" and of the international "Central Organization for a Durable Peace," he has thrown himself heart and soul into the work of the Conference, which he has helped to bring into active coöperation with the chief European peace forces. He has rejoiced, as he says, to be working for the first time with those who can give all their time and not merely spare hours, to peace work.

As soon as the basis of the work had been laid in the appeals to the governments, the reorganized Conference set itself to get in touch as far as possible with the belligerents, endeavoring to find the least common multiple of their conflicting purposes. The difficulties are enormous and often it has been like fighting a fog, yet the wonder is not that so little but that so much recognition should be given to a purely unofficial group. Just what is being planned and done along lines of unofficial conciliation can naturally not be published. The pamphlet "A Better Germany" sums up the impressions of the visit of one of the Conference members to Berlin.

It is obvious that while an unofficial conference has the advantages of its irresponsibility it cannot replace the governmental neutral conference which

so many students of the international situation have been and are urging on their respective governments. To work for the calling of such a conference is one of the objects of the Stockholm body. The proposal has been brought forward by its members and friends in the different parliaments, and largely owing to Burgermaster Lindhagen's influence a unanimous vote was passed by the Swedish lower house in favor of the courageous policy of an independent initiative on the part of Sweden, and a calling of the Conference of neutral Powers on her own responsibility.

The feeling toward the United States in this connection is interesting. With enormous prestige and illimitable resources she is widely felt to have failed the cause of international order by her inaction and preference for playing a lone hand. If she does not yet take a bolder and more constructive policy she will lose a miraculous opportunity to serve belligerents, neutrals and her own cause.

The mediatory work of the Conference could not alone occupy all its attention. It has left opportunity for much propaganda and educational work which is the fire under the boiler. It is its ability to focus and energize opinion which gives the Conference a power which governments are the first to realize. It is itself one of the "imponderables" that dour old Bismarck insisted must not be lightly rated.

This is why Milyoukov and Professor Gilbert Murray give it their views, why the English government officially instructs its representative to receive the Conference appeal with its proposals as to peace terms, why a Spanish minister believes that "the whole neutral world is indebted to the Stockholm conference."

One of the methods of the Conference is to persuade distinguished men in various countries to agree to be ready to comment in the press on each outstanding pronouncement and event as it occurs, bringing out its international significance, emphasizing the approaches made toward the line of solution, and the necessary steps still untaken by an Asquith, a Bethman-Hollweg or a Wilson.

American public opinion receives much less of this clarifying leadership in international affairs than does European opinion, and both cause and result are to be traced to our provincialism.

When peace comes it will come as a resultant of military and political pressure. On the political side, even in autocratic countries, public opinion and the public will, "imponderable" as they are, weigh heavily. In helping to clarify and unify the opinion that will finally bring peace the Conference is, incidentally, also making history, if only on the "little drops of water" principle.

EMILY GREENE BALCH.

## VERSE

## Old Man Laks

They tell me Old Man Laks is dead.  
 Old Man Laks—burned in his bed;  
 Dropped a lighted cigarette;  
 Now his neighbors can't forget  
 How, after midnight beer discussion  
 They had drunk and rolled and chattered,  
 How their stupid doze was shattered  
 By his screaming oaths in Russian.  
 I'd been in his unkempt store;  
 Went to try his cigarettes.  
 When I slam the loose-hung door  
 An old voice somewhere thinly frets,  
 "Well, what would you?" from the dark.  
 He tells me where his wares are kept  
 But to serve me does not deign,  
 So I explore his musty ark.  
 When no buyers came he slept  
 Or lay silent with his pain.  
 Through the curtained door was seen  
 His red table and his lamp.  
 Things smelled of fish and kerosene  
 And the outer room was damp,  
 But when buyers were so few  
 There was scarce enough to eat;  
 He could not buy comforts too.  
 And he seldom left his cot  
 And was never on the street,  
 Lay there silent and forgot,  
 With a rug across his feet.  
 But I never saw him read,  
 Though he seemed to know by heart  
 All the heavy Hebrew tomes  
 That were heaped in those two rooms;  
 And he knew each subtle part  
 Of his strict and ancient creed.  
 He had cigarettes for sale.  
 Were they smuggled? That's a pale  
 Weak transgression, if you please.  
 Every stranger can't be taught  
 That to break a law in Kiev  
 May be virtue; but deceive  
 On this side the swarming seas  
 And it's deadly sin—if caught.  
 So his life was sordid, yet  
 He deserved a nobler death  
 Than to choke in flaming breath  
 From his blazing coverlet.  
 Once I looked at his white hair  
 Out upon his dingy bed  
 And I saw the shadow there  
 Of some blessing on his head.  
 There was something, some denial,  
 Some great thought he locked within,  
 Or some undiscovered passion,  
 Ghost of some long-conquered sin,  
 That had given him his trial  
 In no overt, common fashion  
 But in secret. Or some power

Lay forever unaroused,  
 And the breast where it was housed  
 Never throbbed in its great hour.  
 That was all. But it was there  
 In that face and outflung hair.  
 But he lived and burned. God mocks  
 Greatness in such men as Laks.  
 My soul with searching has grown lean  
 But this moment has been mine,  
 To see the smudge of fire divine  
 In life so pitifully mean.

LYMAN BRYSON.

## CORRESPONDENCE

## Claims Leader's License

SIR: In your recent controversy with the *Call* over the nature of truth, you appear to have forgotten the principles stated in an article that appeared in your issue of February 13th, 1915.

This article was occasioned by the meeting of Mother Jones and the younger Rockefeller at a hearing of the Industrial Relations Commission. Mr. Lippmann (the fact that the article was unsigned does not make the authorship any less certain) referred to Plato's hope of a perfect state when philosophers should be kings, and kings, philosophers. Pending this time, the writer said, there would continue to be a clear division, especially in the political field, between thought and action, between thinkers and leaders. The leaders would continue to see so singly their end that they would not trouble to be nice about the means, nor could they reckon with the incidental results of their policies. The thinkers, on the other hand, would see all sides of every question and all courses of action; their difficulty would be to find any enduring compromise between what they wanted and what they could get. Thus the leaders often defeated their own ends by ill considered action, and the thinkers theirs by the inability to act at all.

You, the thinkers, forgot this division of functions when you utterly damned the *Call*, a leader, for lying. In the heat of battle the truth is whatever appears to be a useful weapon. Only an endowed sheet with no specific ax to grind can afford the luxury of eternal verities. It would have been just as reasonable if the *Call* had denied your right to exist because of your failure to support Benson and the Socialist ticket.

Understand, I do not quarrel with you for pointing out the *Call's* deviations from absolute and relative truth. I claim only that you have no right to intimate that these deviations, *per se*, make the *Call* useless as an organ of its cause. If your suggestions were offered in a different spirit, if you put your philosophic attainments at the service of this brave, if blind, little fighter, you would both come nearer your not wholly diverging aims.

FLORENCE L. TANENBAUM.

Merrill, New York.

[Suppose that in the heat of battle the truth is whatever appears to be a useful weapon, the "truth" offered by the *Call* to the car strikers was a gun that fired through the breach rather than through the muzzle. It may be necessary to lie in order to act. That is too large a question to debate here. But why not at least lie effectively?