

Germany, Great Britain and Italy in January last; a resolution endorsed by 23 other European foreign Ministers and representatives of four other European States, favoured the liberal principle. It asserted that the economic recovery of the world was hindered by widespread political anxiety and that the best service they could render toward meeting the economic position is the firm assurance of European peace. "We therefore declare," they said, "as foreign Ministers or responsible representatives of European States that we are resolutely determined to use the machinery of the League to prevent any resort to violence."

This resolution suggests a brief reference to the connection between economic conditions and the functioning of the League. The current severe depression from this point of view has influences for good and evil. On the good side—it increases international meetings in the effort to find a solution; it brings nations together (Czecho-Slovakia and Hungary); it gives a new stimulus to the reduction of armaments; on the other hand, it has most unhappy political effects which have been abundantly illustrated by the events of this year when the temper of the peoples have been darkened by the economic gloom; fear of disaster and of loss of prestige increases in times of depression; political dangers are exaggerated in the public mind; there is a lack of confidence, of trust in the future, and a positive suspicion of other countries.

This latter increases international friction through the aggravation of economic nationalism; a country is only too eager to adopt tariffs and other devices discriminating against other countries (in 1930 and 1931 there were many and important tariff changes and they were generally in an upward direction). Depression always disturbs the political situation in countries—discontent finds expression in change of Governments and later feeds upon the disillusion that usually follows fast upon such changes; and measures are taken in haste that often lead to quarrels with other countries. This year of 1931 in which the temper of the peoples has been dominated by the depression has exhibited all these features in strong relief.

Up to August there were hopeful signs that the political situation in Europe was improving—opinion sympathetic with the spirit of the Locarno treaties and the Pact of Paris was growing in most countries; responsible European statesmen were developing a habit of close and almost constant

contact with one another at Geneva, where there was a wholesome anxiety visible in the discussion of recent events and apparently genuine efforts to avoid provocative action. This was due largely to M. Briand and the leadership of Great Britain. The reputation of Mr. Henderson grew as the year advanced.

Politically the Franco-German problem is the most central of European problems. Mr. Troup has already spoken of this. Last year the success of the Hitler party in Germany was due largely to the discontent of the young men with the economic situation and the outlook for the future; they were determined they would not be bound down by the terms of a peace unjust and impossible of fulfilment.

The evacuation of the Rhineland (five years before the due date) had a twofold effect within Germany—it stimulated and intensified the nationalist spirit and on the other hand the political differences which had been put in the background in the presence of the common enemy began again to divide the people. The growth of German nationalism stiffened up France and her resolve to persist in her policy of dependence on troops and alliances.

As the year progressed the Briand policy of conciliation and genuine utilisation of the League weakened. France clearly aimed at the military predominance of herself and her allies; she had felt herself deserted by U.S.A. and Great Britain after the peace, and the League having no force at its command, she had decided to police Europe herself. That military predominance she has recently increased, as we shall see later. In effect, she succeeded in isolating Germany by using the old methods of diplomacy, and on occasions the League when it could serve her ends. The new idea of an international government for Europe, which seems the only means of safeguarding Western civilisation, is in danger of being overshadowed by the old idea of the domination of a group of Powers subservient to one. The French believe that the only real alternative to their own supremacy is the supremacy of Germany and her allies. They demand security not only against invasion, but against any alteration of the treaties by force.

Germany demands equality in armaments and a revision of the terms of the peace. As one writer says:

"We ought to be much more surprised than we are that a German revolution is again stayed off. No people are so law-abiding or so patient. When the history of the last twelve years comes

to be written we shall see that the central tragedy has been the failure to make use of the pacific mood of post-war Germany. For years after the war Germany was not only disarmed, but she did not want to re-arm. The Hohenzollerns, the Junkers, the whole paraphernalia of Prussian militarism, were utterly discredited, and if the Allies had made a different use of their victory, the endless chain of Franco-German hostility—war, revenge, and revenge again—would have been broken.

Surprise Items

IN order to avoid undue uniformity, we hear that a policy of occasional surprise items is to be adopted from Station 2YA. This will be by way of experiment in order to determine the appeal made to listeners. The first surprise item will be given on February 1.

"The German universities were filled with sincere pacifists, anxious not for revanche, but for a new kind of understanding, a new kind of Europe. Sentimentalists, if one cares to call them so, they had believed in Wilson's terms. They had accepted the League idea.

"It would be idle to pretend that the same spirit prevails among young men and women in Germany to-day. How could it? The astonishing thing is that it has lasted so long as it has and that it is not yet dead.

"First, there were the crushing humiliations of Versailles, based on the obvious lie that the whole 'war guilt' was on Germany's shoulders, the surrender of German territory, east and west, the loss of her colonies. Then followed the black troops on the Rhine—the kind of savage incident that the aggressor thinks trivial and that the humiliated nation never forgets. Then the invasion of the Ruhr, the continuous struggle over reparations, and the running sore of the Polish corridor, the opposition to German entry into the League—was any opportunity missed to outrage German pride and evoke German nationalism to make pacifism impossible and to recreate the spirit that awoke in Germany more than a century ago after the disaster of Jena?"

Solution by Force.

If her claims are not considered and some pacific means of revision devised, there is no doubt that Germany will abandon the League as a sham and try to find a solution by force.

We must agree with a writer in "The Round Table" of September, who says that "to attempt to keep Germany in the strait-waistcoat, political, economic and military, in which she has been confined since 1918, is to lay the foundations for another world war."

He describes the growth of conditions that seem to show it is only a question of time until the effectiveness of the French alliance system is neutralised and even out-matched, and notes the growing opinion in France itself "that, even from the narrow standpoint of the security of France, Poland, and the Little Entente, no less than from the wider standpoint of the League of Nations,

the right policy is to aim at some moderate scheme of revision in so far as the peace treaties are concerned and at the same time to carry all-round disarmament sufficiently far as to render it impossible for any nation to invade its neighbours of comparable size with any hopes of success,

and to make the co-operative machinery of the League of Nations for the settlement of disputes and the prevention of war really effective."

Since this was written France has greatly increased her ascendancy, but on the other hand the feeling that Europe is on the edge of a precipice and may take a fatal plunge has been enormously intensified by the events of the last few weeks, and is evidently spreading in France.

Italy would probably welcome an international pacific settlement; the action of Grandi at the recent Assembly session in proposing a temporary 12 months' armament truce and Mussolini's speeches reported these last few days are symptomatic. And the U.S.A., though determined to remain outside the European political structure, has co-operated with the League in many ways, knows that the preservation of world peace is essential for her interests, and is using her financial control as a lever to help on European disarmament. Over the Manchurian question, her influence has undoubtedly been exercised in the direction of peace in co-operation with the League. Russia is too busy with internal development to spare effort toward national aggrandisement, and would welcome disarmament, probably for more reasons than her fear of attack by the capitalist Powers.

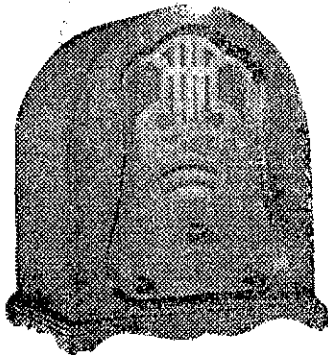
Events of 1931.

IS there space to glance at a few of the details of the calendar of events in 1931?

In January there was an international conference at Paris concerning the drain of gold to France; this showed the developing consciousness that international co-operation is necessary to tide over an economic crisis of that nature. The oppressive treatment of racial minorities by Poland was the subject of German and Russian protests and subsequent resolutions by the League.

In February, the tension between France and Italy tightened; France, suspicious of Italy, increased her naval expenditure; there was some fear of a German-Italian alliance to which Bulgaria, Hungary, and even Russia might adhere. In Germany the Hitler Party seceded from Parliament and there were signs of a decline in their power.

(Concluded on page 22.)



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