**Disarmament**

Correspondence with
Dr. James Shotwell

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**Dossiers précédents**

- 7A/5762/5155 (1925-32)

**Dossiers suivants**

- No. 1673

**Dossiers connexes**

See also:

- 7A/5762/5155 1928-1932
Dear Monsieur de Montenach

I have delayed writing you any news of the activities of the American National Committee because I had expected to see you in London and go over the program of our Committee in detail. Unfortunately the situation here has developed in such a way as to make it impossible for me to attend the London Conference and I am writing to give you the narrative of our work so that you may have it in mind in connection with the Annual Meeting of the Committee on Intellectual Cooperation in so far as it may bear upon its program of work. I have also written Professor Murray.

The Annual Meeting of the American National Committee was held on April 29th. It was a very successful meeting. Members came from California and from all through the Middle West as well as from the Eastern part of the country. Not only was the attendance good, but the discussion was very satisfactory. The new organization of the Committee, with its technical sub-committees, is now ready to take on its regular functions and can, I think, deal with the business of the C.I.O. competently. A copy of the Proceedings of the meeting will be sent you in a few days.

Although our Committee covered a wide field in its program of work, the main interest centers upon the proposal for Moral Disarmament and the main work has been done on that project. I have already sent you the redraft of the American declaration on Moral Disarmament which was adopted by the Problems and Plans Committee of the American Council on Education early this winter. This is the body which has consented to act as the Advisory Committee on Education of the American National Committee. Its membership is drawn chiefly from Presidents and Deans of Universities and other high dignitaries. The chief event, however, was at the meeting of the National Educational Association at Minneapolis in March. The attendance at this Convention runs from 10,000 to 20,000, so you can judge of its importance. It is also the occasion for the meeting of the Department of Superintendents of Education, which is the most important governing body in our very complicated educational system. This has also been a very reactionary body, nationalist to the core, and yet, on hearing the declaration for Moral Disarmament, it, for the first time, not only accepted it but passed a unanimous resolution in favor of it. This act of the Department of Superintendents marks a very definite turning point in their policies.
Then at the same time there was a meeting of the National Society for the Study of Education, which is the body most influential in determining the curriculum of the schools of the country. It also showed the greatest interest in the declaration and turned aside from its regular program of work to substitute for its Year Book for 1934 the subject of Moral Disarmament, (or better, International Civics), finding a place for this subject in the school curriculum, not only in the study of History and Politics, but with reference to Languages and Literature, Art and Science, and even Recreation. The Year Book is the most important single volume in the United States with reference to the school curriculum and it has been placed in my hands to edit this year, with the cooperation of educational authorities, so as to ensure in the school system of the United States a proper regard for the study of the international problems of today and the organization of peace.

I think you will agree with me that this is at least a notable start towards realizing the aims toward which you yourself have been working so hard during the past year, and it gives me much satisfaction to be able to report this to you and through you to the Committee at Geneva.

The pertinence of this work depends of course upon the completion of a treaty by the Disarmament Conference. It will mean everything to us here to have Moral Disarmament in the Treaty. It will especially mean a justification of the C.I.C. I sincerely hope, therefore, that the authorities of the Committee will appreciate the indirect but very important bearing of this upon the functions of the League in the United States. It will bring us prestige and strengthen our influence if Moral Disarmament becomes a part of the Disarmament Treaty. Unfortunately, with the situation calling for definite and actual measures of disarmament, this section may seem somewhat unreal but in my opinion it may prove ultimately to be as important as anything that the Treaty could contain.

At our Annual Meeting one resolution which was passed by our National Committee bears upon the work of the C.I.C. for the next year. I had already written to Professor Murray about this. It was to the effect that in the opinion of the American National Committee, the present crisis presents such great dangers to civilization that it would seem as though the C.I.C. should, by way of exception to its regular line of action, undertake an emergency program of education in international understanding during the coming year. Writing solely on my own account, and not as Chairman of the American National Committee, I ventured to suggest to Professor Murray that it might be well to concentrate any available funds which the C.I.C. may have at its disposal upon this activity alone. The future of art and science may depend upon the possibilities of educational cooperation in this field in a world that is so pressing in a world that is so near the verge of a still greater catastrophe than it is suffering from now. In these earnest and serious hours, should not the C.I.C. step to the fore with a call for intellectual cooperation that will be a definite fulfillment of the plans outlined in your wide scheme of Moral Disarmament? Should we not put life and energy into the fulfillment of this instead of merely providing that it should be done by others?

I, for my part, cannot escape the feeling that a branch of the League of Nations which enlists the interest of the intellectual leaders of the civilized world, should come to grips with so terrible an emergency
as that which threatens the whole peace machinery of the world today. I am writing this to you a few hours after Hitler's speech. Why not fasten upon some of its phrases for a program of German cooperation and thus engage the very forces of nationalism themselves to cooperate towards reaching a working understanding of the way to apply pacific settlement of international disputes? There is an old adage that the worst of obstacles can be made the best of stepping stones, and I think that might be an approach to the program of the C.I.C. this summer.

Of course I fully realize that the American Committee has no monopoly of such ideas as these and I merely send along the suggestion so that you may count upon us to cooperate to the full in any steps that may be taken by the C.I.C. along these lines.

You will find in the Minutes reference to the fact that I have appointed Miss Alice S. Cheyney, Ph.D., to be Executive Secretary in the place of the late Mr. J. David Thompson. Dr. Cheyney will continue to give part of her time to the I.L.O. and that will enable her to spend part of her time in Geneva. She will be sailing in a few days and will call upon you when she reaches Geneva. She can then describe in detail the work which we have in hand. Miss Carol Siegelman is still working with me both on the Committee and on my other research work, and my daughter, Margaret Grace Shotwell, is also assisting in the office. We have in addition a stenographic assistant, so you see we are ready for work as the program becomes more and more real.

I have written Professor Murray about the report of the Chinese Education Mission. It has aroused very adverse criticism here, not out of any sensitiveness about the American educational system, but because the text was unsatisfactory in itself. I must, in all frankness, tell you that it has distinctly lowered the prestige of the C.I.C. in the United States, a fact against which we shall have to make headway by other achievements, especially that of Moral Disarmament.

With best wishes and kind regards,

Very sincerely yours

James T. Shotwell

Monsieur J. D. de Montenach
League of Nations
Geneva, Switzerland
GENEVA 20th June 1933.

Dear Professor Shotwell,

I would feel rather ashamed of myself for having so long delayed my reply to your letter of May 16th if I had not intentionally postponed writing until I was able to give you a clearer idea of the work of the Conference in regard to Moral Disarmament.

The Committee on Moral Disarmament restarted its work after an interval of several months, and one of the first things I did was to have distributed to all its members the memorandum with the Draft Protocol, dated December 10th, 1932, which you had been good enough to forward me. You will be glad to hear that this text aroused considerable interest.

As there is a prospect of my seeing you soon, I shall confine my present reply to - (1) giving you an idea of the direction in which the Committee on Moral Disarmament is now continuing its work; and (2) to answering some of the points raised in your letter.

1. The Committee on Moral Disarmament has, as you know, lost its Chairman, M. Perrier, whom you met last year and who has entered a monastery. Mrs. Corbett—Asby, British Delegate, has been elected and I think the change is excellent, as she has both a wide knowledge of the question and a considerable influence on the members of the Committee. The Committee started a new method of work. As you know, Moral Disarmament has been considered from three aspects—penal legislation, press, education and intellectual cooperation.

   The first group of questions has been studied lately and with, I believe, considerable success. You will find herewith the texts which have been adopted.

   The second question—Press—is still pending. Some conversations have begun, but it is rather difficult to get proposals put forward.

   The third group of questions is the one which interests you most and you will not be surprised if I lay more emphasis on it.

Professor J.T. Shotwell, Chairman
American National Committee on
Intellectual Cooperation,
405 West 117th Street,
NEW YORK CITY.
You will remember the method we followed last year - presenting a draft convention of 25 articles as a basis of discussion. You will remember that at your suggestion the British and American Delegations submitted a draft resolution which embodied the same ideas but in a more synthetic form. These two documents have had an influence on the minds of the delegates. The latter realised the advantage of a rather short article which would have to be inserted in the body of the General Convention, together with a short preamble. They admitted moreover that it might be useful to retain some of the more interesting suggestions and to make them the object of another text, which might find its place either in a final protocol of the Convention or in an annexed report or recommendation.

It is on these lines that I have worked during the last two weeks in order to prepare new drafts to be submitted to the Committee on Disarmament about the 28th of the present month. You will find the two texts herewith: at present they exist only in French.

The first, as you will see, is in several places inspired by your draft resolution, and you will notice that we have been able to maintain your proposal about examinations for government office. We prefer the form of a convention to that of a resolution, as we would like this draft to be embodied in the Convention itself.

The second text, which I have just drafted and which has not yet been submitted to the Rapporteur, contains the various elements of the practical measures which were indicated in our first draft, which cannot be maintained in the body of the Convention but which, in our opinion, should not be completely ignored. My impression is that the first of these two texts, with, of course, some possible amendments, will most certainly be adopted very shortly by the Committee and recommended to the approval of the members of the General Commission of the Conference.

As far as the second text is concerned, it is of course of less interest and I believe that we shall have to wait and see what form the General Convention on Disarmament finally takes before we can decide what sort of annex we can add to it.

I should mention that the spirit of the members of the Committee, even after such a long interruption of their work and in spite of general conditions not being very favourable, has been excellent and most encouraging. I am sorry to say that Miss Woolley has not been replaced and that no member of the United States delegation has taken part in the recent work. I intend to approach Mr. Wilson or Mr. Norman Davis when the Conference resumes, to ask them to appoint a delegate to the Committee. Perhaps you can help by sending a cable. By the time you are in Geneva it is possible that further progress will have been made and the first of the two documents will be approved in principle.

...
Your letter contains so much interesting information on the work of the American National Committee and on your personal activity that I very much hope you will make a statement to the C.I.O.I. with regard to both. I do not think I shall circulate your letter, on account of its personal character; but I think that the Committee would be most interested to hear of the work that is being done by the American National Committee, by the National Educational Association, etc., with regard to Moral Disarmament.

We should be most interested to receive some copies of the Year Book of the National Society for the Study of Education, which you are now editing. We are sure to find in it many data and suggestions which we could broadcast either through our "Educational Survey" or through the Paris Institut's Bulletin. I really believe, as you do, that if the Disarmament Conference succeeds in adopting a Convention part of which is devoted to Moral Disarmament, there is a very large field of activity open to Intellectual Cooperation. I am convinced, as you are, that our Organisation should try to make an immediate effort, before the Governments ratify the Convention, to prepare in the various countries the course of action which we will have to develop in the future.

Although I do not feel quite as pessimistic as you with regard to the dangers which threaten civilisation - it has always been menaced but has nevertheless survived a few centuries! - I agree that our Committee should try to carry out a certain emergency programme. By that I do not exactly mean that it should devote itself entirely to a single field of activity, which would mean leaving fallow other fields where interesting results have already been harvested; but I admit that a kind of hierarchy should be established between work which is considered as urgent, and the means of execution.

You mentioned "available funds." I am sorry to say that they are decreasing every year, as Governments are less willing to vote money and are delaying the payment of their contributions to the League. We are therefore very strictly limited and we have to try to do the best we can with the small amounts granted to us. The C.I.O.I. will have to re-consider its programme and to choose from among its activities those subjects which should be retained for development within the existing possibilities. For the last two years, my friend Bonnat and I have tried to press for a general discussion on the aims and programme of Intellectual Cooperation for the coming year. We always felt that the resolutions voted would be insufficient indication for us unless they were framed within a general programme.

As you observed, it is amazing to see that it is in the intellectual domain that the forces of nationalism seem to be opposed to the eventual reaching of a harmonious understanding. I shall greatly appreciate the opportunity of talking to you about these questions before the session of the C.I.O.I., with a view to supporting any proposal you may like to submit. If possible, we might devote one meeting to a general discussion of the future aims and work of the Organisation.

...
Before your arrival I am expecting a visit from Dr. Alice Cheyney. I hope to have a talk with her and will try and make new links between the International Secretariat and the Executive Officers of the American National Committee.

There is a great deal to be said about the criticisms made in your country of the report of the Chinese Educational Mission. I prefer, however, to discuss this question with you when we meet in Geneva. I do not think that the interested circles in America have quite seen the point, which in our opinion is of considerable interest. The report may be weak in some places; in others, it may even be unsatisfactory to certain people, but we should remember that from the point of view of collaboration between our Organisation and Young China, this first effort has considerable significance. I am sure that in time, when the American circles to which you allude have forgotten their first impressions on points of detail and see the undertaking from the wider ground of intellectual cooperation, they may reconsider their judgment.

Looking forward to the pleasure of seeing you,

Believe me to be,

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]