

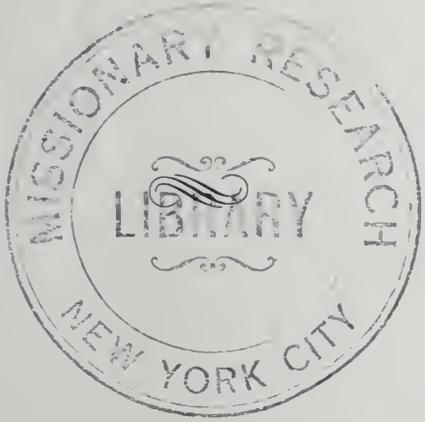
Bull -
Peace

World Conference
for
International Peace Through
Religion

(Formerly *Universal Religious Peace Conference*)

The Geneva Meeting

AUGUST, 1932



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Abstract of Minutes
of the
Meeting of the Executive Committee
held in
Geneva, August 16 - 18, 1932.

The Executive Committee of the World Conference for International Peace Through Religion met in Geneva, August 16 - 18, 1932, with an attendance of fifty members and a number of invited friends interested in the movement.

The Committee, as it discussed ways and means of furthering peace, was not unmindful of the exceeding gravity of the world situation. In fact, with representatives from so many nations and religions, it would have been impossible not to have felt the weight of depression which has settled upon the shoulders of the world.

It is conservatively estimated that in the great industrial countries there are at least 25 million people out of employment, and the economic life, practically, of the whole civilized world has almost completely broken down. Since the war, we have passed through a series of crises and a large number of intricate and difficult problems have demanded individual attention at various times, and if they have not been solved satisfactorily, at least open war has been averted. All these old problems are to the front now, and some new ones present themselves which demand immediate attention. Can the peace machinery as now constituted bear the strain of the added burdens? Some progress has been made, but everyone asks: have we gone as far as we thought we had in getting rid of war and the threat of war?

When the Disarmament Conference met last February, a new hope sprang up in the hearts of men and women in every land. At last the nations were at grips with the real issues of war and peace as implied in the Briand-Kellogg Pact. It looked as if there was a sincere desire and a real purpose to accomplish something worth while. Time dragged on. Political interests outweighed human needs. The Conference soon found itself floundering in the midst of intricate details. The commissions of experts spent their time weighing the fine possibilities of effectiveness as between various weapons and their uses. In the hands of these technicians of war the Conference adjourned with very little to show for its six months of labor.

Never were the religions of the world and religious leaders challenged in the same way and to the same degree at this time. When The Church Peace Union first

proposed a World Conference of religious leaders representing the various faiths of mankind, not one of those responsible for the suggestion realized how far-reaching and significant would be the issue of that proposal.

The following reports were presented: The Chairman; the General Secretary; Mr. A. A. Paul, representing the All India Committee and telling of the reorganization of its work; Prof. F. Siegmund-Schultze, on the work in Germany; report from the Japanese Committee, and a report on the efforts being made among the Jewish groups. Mrs. Alexandra David-Neel made an interesting and helpful address regarding the cooperation of the Buddhists. Mr. W. Loftus Hare reported for England, and others took part in the general discussion. Mr. Charles F. Andrews told of his observations in South Africa and other countries which he had visited during the year.

All the reports indicated a growing interest in the World Conference and a determined purpose to support it.

After considerable discussion it was agreed that in view of recent developments, the purpose of this Organization would be to work for the development of a world-wide cooperative interest on the part of various religions in behalf of world peace, rather than to consider itself *simply the machinery for the holding of a single world conference*. In view of the general turmoil and uncertainty throughout all nations, and the imminent danger of war, the problem is not whether a world conference can be held. Rather, it goes much further. The threat of war is a threat to every type of civilization and the responsibility for preventing war is a joint responsibility of all the religions; therefore it was agreed that the organization of groups within the various countries should be strengthened, and that other areas of the spiritual life of mankind should be brought into the general movement. For instance, little or no contact has been established with the great Moslem world. Dr. S. M. Abdullah representing the Moslem Faith, spoke on this point and felt that the effort not only would be of value but that an adequate organization could be established.

In view of this decision, the following set of proposals were adopted, and now become, in a sense, the Charter of the Movement:

- I. The ideals of religion are to be recognized as motive and inspiration in international affairs.
- II. Chief among these are:
 - (a) The recognition of human brotherhood.
 - (b) Co-operation in behalf of human betterment.
 - (c) The recognition of love as expressing itself in the mutual giving of justice.
 - (d) The emphasis of hope rather than fear.

- III. Each regional and co-operating group should adopt practical methods and program best fitted to express these principles in its own circle of influence.
- IV. Membership in the World Conference, as well as in all groups, shall be based on individual devotion to the purposes of the World Conference.
- V. In all activities and programs, the emphasis shall be upon spiritual and educational methods.

The following committee was appointed to draft a Resolution on the question of Disarmament: Sir Francis Younghusband, Chairman; Dr. Casper Mayer; Prof. F. Siegmund-Schultze; Father Albert Hublan; Rabbi Lieber; Miss Helen Clarkson Miller and Prof. Stefan Zankow. After a lively discussion, the Resolution, which is as follows, was adopted:

The Executive Committee of the World Conference for International Peace through Religion, assembled at Geneva, August 16-18, while deeply disappointed in the achievements of the first session of the Disarmament Conference, nevertheless rejoices in the fact that the Disarmament Conference, met and remained in session until there had been secured an agreement to continue its efforts for the mutual limitation and the reduction of the weapons of war. This Committee trusts that these efforts will now be made with a reinforced determination to effect this object.

Realizing the special responsibility of the religious communities of the world for strengthening the spiritual forces that make for peace, we urge the governments and all responsible agencies to agree upon and to further plans to increase mutual understanding and good will by means of education and the appropriate use of present-day methods of disseminating information.

The Executive Committee reaffirms its conviction that the hope of all social progress, economic stability, and the development of religious life throughout the world depends, in large measure, upon the elimination of war in this generation. The burden of arms under which the world is staggering today and the lack of effective juridical guarantees against war, constitute the greatest menace to peace and good will. We, therefore, call upon all religious-minded people everywhere to support the efforts made for the limitation and reduction of arms as a first step toward total disarmament in the near future.

A report was made regarding the publication and distribution of the Report of Commission No. I, under the title **THE CAUSES OF WAR**. The book is published by the Macmillan Company and has had a very favorable reception and a good sale up to the present time.

The General Secretary stated that a study pamphlet had been prepared containing twelve lessons based on this Report. These lessons are designed for the use of classes and groups in the various communities.

It was agreed that the Report should be printed in a cheaper edition; that an edition for India should be authorized and that it should be translated into French and German; that the lessons based upon it should be widely used so that the largest possible number of groups and classes may study the Report, which deals with the fundamental question as to the origin of wars, and will result in what is so much needed, a conception on the part of religious leaders that the function of religion is not simply to prevent war, but to help to change social and economic conditions and create a will to peace that will make war impossible.

The Report for Commission II could not be given in full but considerable work has been done in its preparation. It was voted therefore, that the General Secretary should take over the task of putting this Report into shape so that it may be sent out to the members of the Commission for their criticism.

The Report of Commission III was presented by the Chairman, Dr. Herman Neander, who had given a great deal of time and attention to its preparation. There was also the contribution to the Report made by M. Jules Jezequel, one of the International Secretaries. Unfortunately, M. Jezequel could not be present because of illness. A message was received from Professor Rudolf Otto who had given valuable assistance to Dr. Neander in the preparation of this Report.

A general discussion followed and the third Report will now be put in form and sent to the members of the Commission for their criticism and then turned over to the Editorial Committee for final revision before publication.

Dr. Shailer Mathews, Chairman of Commission No. IV, presented the Report which was discussed at length and then referred back to the Commission, with the request that the Commission complete its work and submit the Report to the Editorial Committee.

When these three Reports have been edited they will then be submitted to the Macmillan Company for publication in one volume and issued as a companion volume to the Report of Commission No. I. This volume will appear early next year.

The World Conference for International Peace Through Religion is therefore in a position where, for the current year, and on through the middle or the end of next summer, various groups and religious agencies throughout the world will be promoting a study of Report No. I. Commencing with next autumn, a similar effort will be made to issue a study course and discussion of the second volume embracing the Reports of Commissions II, III and IV.

A minimum of time was spent on organization. The Conference took account of its loss in the death of Monsignore Seipel and unanimously passed the following resolution:

Resolution on Monsignore Seipel

WHEREAS the death, on August 3, 1932, of Monsignore Ignaz Seipel, former Chancellor of Austria, has deprived the Continent of Europe of an outstanding political statesman and the entire world of a tireless worker for international peace and good will, and

WHEREAS, in addition to his numerous duties at home and abroad, Monsignore Seipel found time to act as one of the presidents of the World Conference for International Peace through Religion, and thereby gave practical proof of his desire to promote world peace.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the World Conference for International Peace through Religion records its sentiments of profound loss in the death of Monsignore Seipel, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of these resolutions be incorporated as a part of the minutes of the executive meeting of the World Conference for International Peace through Religion held at Geneva, August 16 - 18, 1932.

Upon the nomination of the Catholic members of the Committee, His Excellency Guiseppe Motta, President of the Swiss Confederation, was elected as one of the Presidents, to take the place of Monsignore Seipel.

The discussion of the Conference centered about the question: "What is the attitude of the religions to the ideals of truth and justice, and especially international justice as the basis for world peace, and the practical contribution that the religions may make towards its establishment?"

This discussion is being brought together into a small volume and will be issued at an early date, not as a report of the Conference, but as a contribution to the general information connected with this movement.

