

THE WAY TO PEACE

A Brief Exposition of The New Commonwealth Programme

THE Italo-Abyssinian dispute has demonstrated clearly the inability of the League of Nations, as at present constituted, to prevent the outbreak of hostilities in spite of the loyalty to the principles of the Covenant which has characterised the attitude of the majority of its States Members.

No event could have shown more conclusively the vital necessity for strengthening the machinery of the League if the supreme catastrophe of another European war is to be averted.

It is precisely for this purpose that the New Commonwealth has been called into being. Its fundamental principle is that a durable peace can only be founded on justice. From this starting-point we deduce two propositions—(a) that the function of law-giver must reside in an International Authority, and (b) that this Authority must be endowed with the power of upholding the law. This means that no nation has the right “to be the judge in its own cause or the punisher of its own wrongs,” and that the right use of force should be limited to the police function.

To give concrete expression to these principles, the New Commonwealth Society proposes the establishment of two international institutions as part of the machinery of the League of Nations :—(1) a Tribunal in Equity empowered to deal with all disputes threatening the peace of the world, and (2) an International Police Force to prevent aggression from within or without the circle of the League and to uphold the decisions of the International Authority.

THE Covenant of the League of Nations was drafted in a war atmosphere under grave drawbacks and great pressure. Like every other human institution, the League must go forward or backward. The New Commonwealth regards it therefore as a foundation upon which to build.

The League has accomplished many useful things in fifteen years, but it has also displayed flaws and weaknesses which, unless they are recognised and dealt with, are bound to bring about its complete disintegration and collapse. Its moral authority and prestige have already suffered, and although the desire for peace is still strong, the League has been unable to make it effective. This result is due to the absence of appropriate institutions through which the will to peace can operate.