

(1)

E 446

## EXTRAORDINARY SESSION OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF PEACE

Berlin, 23 - 28 May, 1954.

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M. SERENI.

Mr. Chairman, Dear Friends,

During yesterday's session, speeches such as those of Professors HIRANO, INFELD, and COSYNS, and those of Dr. SOKHEY and Dr. KITCHLEW, brought into our discussion important new elements which give us something to detail and clarify the main lines of the picture given by Mr. Pritt in his report. However, it seems to me that at this point in our discussion a question arises which we dare not avoid on pain of failing in our task.

From the birth of our movement we have distinguished ourselves from any other Peace movement or grouping in that we have presented ourselves and have acted as people who do not limit themselves to seeking and debating peaceful solutions which are reasonable and possible. We came forward as people who act for Peace and who organise the action of the peoples for Peace.

The clarification that we have received from our friends the scientists, the emotion we felt as we listened to the pathetic appeal of the peoples of Asia in the speech of Professor Hirano and the message of Dr. Kitchlew, should not confine us to the serene beatitudes of scientific laws or passive anguish over the fate of our civilisation. Neither should we limit ourselves to putting forward yet once more the reasonable solutions that we have worked out and which hundreds of millions of men and women have supported by putting their signature to the Stockholm Appeal. Each of our national movements and a hundred millions of men and women throughout the world expect that, as a result of this discussion we shall give a clear and concrete answer to the question which they are asking themselves as they confront the menace of a new and monstrous horror. The question is - what is to be done?

I should like to try and give an answer to this question in the name of the Italian Peace Movement on the



8 446

SERENI

- 2 -

basis of our national experience integrated and confronted at this session with that of other European, Asian and American movements. And I hope you will excuse me if in my contribution, I touch on questions which are more particularly related to our discussion on the second point on the Agenda.

The reason is that at the present time, questions related to the deadly threat of weapons of mass destruction hanging over humanity, are more closely related than ever to the effort which is needed to give all peoples the benefit of collective security. The H-bomb threat is not a metaphysical or mystical threat of a cosmic nature hanging over our world through the action of forces which are foreign to it. It is a real and present danger which darkens mankind's horizon in close relationship to concrete and definite threats of war which can be seen on this same horizon.

Public opinion in all countries clearly felt this by reacting so differently to the announcement of the creation of the first thermo-nuclear weapons which was given a year ago by Mr. Malenkov and to the news of the H-bomb explosions recently made by the United States Government in the Pacific islands.

From several sides at once we have been asked the following question in a polemical tone: "Why is it?" people have asked us with a knowing air, "that the Peace Movement is so moved by the Bikini and Rhiwetok experiments? Why is it that you only realised the mortal dangers of the H-bomb when America has finally managed to construct one? Why do you take advantage of the emotion aroused among the public by the bad luck over a few yellow-skinned fishermen to rouse public opinion against the policy of Mr. Foster Dulles?"

The reply to this question can, in my opinion, help us to see more clearly the tasks imposed upon us by the development of the international situation. To begin with it is true that our World Council, has never, since Stockholm, stopped warning the whole of mankind against the mortal dangers created by weapons of mass destruction;



8446

SERENI.

- 3 -

and we may say that our movement has no document in which this warning has not been repeated and which has not made concrete proposals for the prohibition of these weapons.

But on the other hand, it is no less true that at various times our World Council's repeated Appeals on this question have met with a very different response from the men and women of the whole world and even from those who belong to our Movement. In this way, Long before the Bureau of our World Council issued a new Appeal for a campaign against the H-bomb at its last Session, public opinion in the U.S. was roused by an unprecedented wave of feeling as a result of the latest experiments at Bikini. This cannot be explained only by our initiative and our propaganda.

Why did public opinion in the United States not feel a similar emotion at the time when Mr. Malenkov announced the first thermo-nuclear explosion in the Soviet Union, even though he did not fail to stress, on that occasion the new dangers menacing the future of humanity as a result of the continuation of the atomic armaments race?

The reply is easy. It is that at the very moment when the Soviet Government could boast that it had a monopoly of the new weapon, it did not hesitate to declare that it was more than ever determined to give up such an advantage, to accept an agreement on the absolute and controlled prohibition of use and construction of all weapons of mass destruction. In these circumstances even sections of American public opinion which are confused and poisoned by the war-mongers' propaganda could see no threat of a thermo-nuclear war being launched against their country in the announcement made by Mr. Malenkov.

But these are the very sections of American public opinion which first gave <sup>the</sup> alarm to us and to world public opinion by their worried and hysterical reaction to the first American H-bomb explosions in the Pacific Islands. And it is not only a question of the tragic consequences which these uncontrolled explosions have had for the innocent victims, it is not only a question of the disregard which is shown in this for the men called "coloured" who were treated as guinea-pigs, it is not only a question of the attack which is seen in this against



6446

SERENI.

the freedom of the seas, all that perhaps would not have been able to produce such a wave of emotion in all sections of public opinion in the United States where the man in the street is subjected to the hammering of the propaganda of a policy of strength. In the United States, as in the rest of the world, the deep feeling aroused by the thermo-nuclear experiments at Bikini was the consequence of the fact that it finds its place precisely within the framework of the striking demonstrations of this "policy of strength".

And through coincidences which cannot be considered fortuitous and rightly so, the threat of a thermo-nuclear war no longer appear as an abstract possibility but as a present and immediate reality, in which no man or woman can afford to be disinterested.

At the beginning of this year in fact, the "New Look" of the American strategy took shape and was proclaimed as the basis of the "policy of strength" of the United States; and it was by the declared intention to have recourse to weapons of mass destruction that the American leadership committed itself to the "New Look".

At the very moment when, on the eve of the Berlin Conference the action of the peoples had imposed the principle of meeting and negotiation for Peace, the atomic diplomacy of Mr. Foster Dulles exerted unheard of pressure on France, Great Britain and Italy to enforce the ratification of a treaty such as E.D.C. which would render impossible any peaceful solution of the German problem. And further, it was at the actual moment when events were coming to a head in Indo-China that the open threat of atomic action against China and the internationalisation of the war in Viet-Nam were declared by the American diplomacy; and it was in this framework that the first thermo-nuclear explosions took place with great publicity by the United States and were carried on until the eve of the Geneva meeting. It seems to us that no more was necessary justly to expose to American and world public opinion the threat of a thermo-nuclear war as a concrete, real and immediate threat, indivisibly linked with the real threats



SERENI.

of war which hang over the world, in Asia and in the very heart of Europe. And it is this which explains the new feeling which the Bikini experiments have aroused in the world in circles which we had not been able to touch with the great campaign around the Stockholm Appeal. The wideness and the intensity alone of this feeling show the measure of the peril which we must face; they show us, we feel, the link which we must establish between our fight for the banning of the H-bomb and our fight for the peaceful solution of the problems which divide the world; they show us the new possibilities which are opening up before our proposals and action for peace; they suggest to us the reply which we can give to the question which people ask us - what is to be done?

It might be interesting on this subject to tell you briefly of the experience of our Movement in my country, where the fight around the problem of E.D.C. holds the centre of the political scene at the present time. Considering the particular importance which Rome has for the whole Catholic world, we thought that the illustration of our experience about the campaign for the banning of the H-bomb and its link with the campaign against E.D.C. could be of interest extending beyond national Italian scope.

The appeal for the banning of the H-bomb issued by our Bureau at its last session, was immediately interpreted by the Italian Movement as the beginning of a great campaign and our National Committee quickly studied the conditions and form of it. Having considered the broad character which the campaign around the Stockholm Appeal assumed in our country, where 17 million citizens signed this Appeal, it seemed clear to us that there could not be a mechanical repetition in our country of this campaign. Besides, Communists and Socialists, millions of Catholics had given their support to the Stockholm Appeal; but the Catholic organisations by their very nature, had always abstained from giving such support and had even opposed our campaign with the whole weight of their organisation and discipline.



8446

- 6 -

# SERENI

In a country like ours where the Church and the Catholic organisations direct and control a large section of public opinion the decisive expansion of action for peace, required by the development of the international situation, would have been impossible without a move capable of closing the gap which still divides the supports of peace. The feeling which has been aroused in our country by the explosions at Bikini has overcome this gap and extended well into the camp of the Catholic masses as well as into that of the masses influenced by Socialist ideas. That is why we think our National Committee was correct, following the Vienna meeting of our Bureau, to give the Appeal for a world campaign against the H-bomb expression in a national appeal. In this we made a particular point of the necessity of uniting in this campaign both the masses of the people with Socialist tendencies and those masses of the people and organisations under the influence of the Catholic Church.

From the time of launching our national appeal which closely linked the denunciation of the atomic threat with that of the threat arising from the division of the world into opposing military blocs, the correctness of our analysis was proved by the immediate repercussion which our appeal aroused in official Catholic circles themselves. A reference made by us in our resolution on the stand taken by the Pope on weapons of mass destruction, in his address to the Congress of army doctors in October 1953, was immediately taken up by the Vatican newspaper "L'Osservatore Romano". A discussion was started during which "L'Osservatore Romano" <sup>was</sup> made to work out an explicit interpretation of the Pope's address favourable to an international agreement for the absolute and controlled banning of the weapons of mass destruction. At the same time there was the announcement of the action taken by our Peace Committee, for the unanimous vote on resolutions against the H-bomb by municipal and departmental councils and administrative, political and cultural bodies of all opinions.



6446

- 7 -

## SERENI

But a few days after the publication of our Appeal, two events of great political importance occurred which nurtured the discussion which we had set going and gave a powerful upsurge to our campaign. At a meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, Mr. Togliatti in the midst of the discussion stressed the political importance of the problem of joint efforts by Catholics and those inspired by the ideals of Socialism, in the fight to save civilisation, which is threatened by the division of the world into opposing military blocs and by the H-bomb. Only a few days had passed after this speech when the Pope renewed with a remarkable precision, the warning against the fatal dangers with which the atomic armaments race threatened mankind. In spite of the well-known attitude which the leading Vatican circles have generally taken to all forms of collaboration by Catholics and Communists, it was noticed that the Pope's address did not on this occasion contain a single word which would close the door on the joint effort previously advocated by the Italian Peace Movement and by Mr. Togliatti.

The result of these moves has been quickly seen in the development of our campaign. In spite of the hostile attitude of the larger part of the government press which tried to minimise the scope of our proposals and even those in the Pope's speech, the united moves and declarations increased by hundreds, and have assumed an extent and a political significance far greater than those which we obtained from the Stockholm Appeal. On the basis of the Pope's address a new correspondence started between our movement and the catholic press; and in the course of this correspondence the "Osservatore Romano" was once more made to reject explicitly all excessive interpenetration of the case of "legitimate defence", which the Americanised press had used, in order to justify, from the moral point of view, the policy of atomic blackmail.

The size of this movement of opinion in Italian catholic circles was finally confirmed by the fact that the leaders of the Christian Democratic Party themselves, after having



6446

- 8 -

## SERENI

violently attacked our proposals as a communist manoeuvre, and after having ridiculed "resolutions which change nothing" was forced, itself, to publish a resolution envisaging the controlled banning of the atomic weapon, and when recently a motion along these lines was moved in the Italian government, by a fighter for peace who is well-known to you, the Socialist Deputy BERLINGUER, an agreement was arrived at by the combination of his motion with one moved by the Christian Democrat Deputy JACCAGUINI.

It is the first time since the breaking up of the government of national unity in 1947, that a unanimous vote of such importance has been won, and this event is without doubt one of those worthy of note in the history of our country. Even the government has been obliged to associate itself with this vote which involves it in a movement in a direction of the lessening of international tension and for an agreement on the atomic sphere.

We have no illusions as to the scope of this undertaking, and we know that our campaign has only just begun. We know that it will not have any real effect, if it does not link the fight against the H-bomb to the fight against the division of the world into military blocs, and to the fight against the inclusion of Italy in the aggressive EDC military bloc, which is the core of the struggle in our country. But we also know that - independently of the goodwill of a government - the discussions which we have started will grow, and the common efforts which gave us our first results will develop. No one will be able to halt the effects: against the weapons of mass destruction, against the division of the world into military blocs, against the E.D.C. military bloc, for the international relaxation of tension, for the collective security of all the peoples of our continent and of the world.

And then everybody in Italy will know what it would mean for him to have, the flames of war lit in the very centre of Europe by the E.D.C. or the internationalisation of the war in Indo-China, or the policy of the American "new look" atomic



8446

- 9 -

# SERENI

blackmail. The campaign against the H-bomb has now become, in our country, the general and permanent frame-work on which we base and will continue to base <sup>all</sup> our great struggles against the E.D.C. for the international relaxation of tension and for peace: a framework in which we can develop a broader front, a union of more effective forces.

And that is, I believe, the reply which we ought to give on a world scale, to the question: what is to be done? What is to be done against the horrors and threat of the H-bomb?

It is not a question of repeating Stockholm, however important was our success then. The demands which the situation of to-day impose on us are more urgent; the danger has become more terrible and more real. But our forces and the possibilities of bringing these forces together have grown even more. It is not so much a question of searching for, or inventing peace solutions. It is a question of taking hold of all possible contacts and of achieving every possible grouping of forces capable of imposing these solutions. This is the present task which we propose for our whole movement.

We were alone at Stockholm, other voices are being raised to-day along with ours to demand agreement. Let us draw closer together, let us unite these efforts, surmounting all division and all distrust. Let us fashion out of the struggle against the atomic threat, a common framework of all our actions, with the view to peaceful solutions, and fight for the safeguarding of our human civilisation; they will be forced to listen to us, our common effort will be victorious.

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**TREASON TRIAL, 1956 1961**

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