

### IS FORCE THE ANSWER?

"A Democratic Manifesto," by Emery Reves. Published 1942 by Random House, Inc., 20 E. 57th St., N. Y. C. \$1.50.

"Why, little more than twenty years after the utter defeat of autocracy and militarism, is democracy once more in desperate danger?" Or, as the little people of the world are saying, "Why is the world at war again?" Answers to these questions are heard over the radio; we pick them out of the newspapers; they are analyzed and substantiated in many current books. Emery Reves, who has been close to individuals more stellar than average, and who has seen much of the world in the years between the two wars, attributes the tragedy to a crisis in nationalism. Nationalism, the ideal that was to give sovereign power to the people, has become a dogma that

sets nation selfishly against other nations. Obviously, if it is peace we seek, we must substitute for the national states an international organization.

Well, what about the League of Nations? Certainly that international body did not insure peace. Reves explains that the League failed in its purpose because it had no power to enforce the international law for which it stood. He would have the democracies proclaim a Declaration of Interdependence and limit the independence of the individual nations through an institution superior to all of them, with power to use force when democratic principles are violated—be the violator within or outside the subscribing powers.

In fact, FORCE is the keynote of *A Democratic Manifesto*. Reves maintains:

Peace is law.

Law is the justified use of force—a coercive order.

Consequently, peace without the employment of force is inconceivable.

The only way to prevent illegal and anarchic wars is to be forever willing and ready to wage a certain kind of legal war, just as the only way to fight and reduce crime is to be ready to commit the same "crimes" on a legal basis against the criminals.

Fear of punitive measures against them may dissuade would-be "illegitimate" criminals, but fear can hardly be the aim of a program to prevent crime. Criminologists and sociologists have progressed to the theory that criminals are not born, but made, and they seek to eliminate the conditions tending to cause men to satisfy their desires at the expense of others and through recognized unmoral acts toward their fellowmen. Poverty, disease, lack of education, enforced idleness—or, at the other extreme, undue power, special privilege, misused leisure—are at the root of the majority of individual crimes. In the enlarged sphere of national groups the same causes for violations of established codes seem indicated. Mr. Reves endorses prevention of disease, in world affairs as in medicine, but his sense of timing seems confused. He would prevent major world conflicts by using force to stop attacks military and ideological, but his suggestion would have effect only after bad "germs" already had brought about a diseased condition, so that physical mutilation alone could stop an epidemic. Can that be termed "preventive"?

If men had equal access to natural resources, if the markets of the world were open to all would-be traders, if free exchange of ideas spread recognition of the interdependence, not only of all the democracies, but of all inhabitants of the earth, then men would not be so ready to give power to leaders who preach physical aggression as a means to end national frustrations. They would understand that willful destruction of lives and wealth in any part of the world makes people everywhere poorer. Cooperation would be spontaneous, because it would be practical.

Raymond Gram Swing says of *A Democratic Manifesto*: "I know of no book about the problems of a

democratic world that I should more vigorously recommend for the widest reading." Yes, it should be read, but critically. We agree with Mr. Reves that the powers on the victorious side in the first World War were so desperately anxious to maintain peace in the years that followed that they were ready to acquiesce in any political manoeuvre if it but give promise of putting off a big shooting war, while they closed their eyes to economic and social conditions promoting unrest. Mr. Reves insists that the democracies should have been the first to shoot at such violators of international law as Japan, Italy, Germany, in order to forestall greater conflicts later. Would that have been anything more than merely making plain who were the stronger "policemen" of the world? But, then, the author of this book considers justice to have started on this earth with the first public execution of a criminal based on judgment. That is a very limited concept of justice. We would prefer to see the police forces of the world held to a minimum by reason of the fact that men find it desirable to live in accordance with man-made laws which appeal to their natural sense of justice.

By all means let the democracies now proclaim their principles of international integration, but let them not overlook a course of action after the war that will permit cooperation of all peoples, or they will discover that their shadow on the earth will resemble that of the despised Gestapo.

—FRIEDA WEHNES