

The shock of the First World War

to achieve international peace security and disarmament. As the pre-war arms race was onsidered a key factor in the

outbreak of the war, the Peace Treaties included importan

limited, tanks and heavy artille In the Treaties of Neuilly,

would apply to all nations.

"The Parliaments and taxpayers of

the various countries will not need

they are severally called upon to expend on

the national income which is allotted

to be reminded of the sum which

armaments, and the part of

on petition to pay for past wars or for the preparation of future wars."

Arthur Henderson, opening speech of the World Disarmament
Conference, 2 February 1932

disarmament conference

- 10 million dead, 20 million wounded
- The development and use of more devastating armaments, such as heavy artillery, tanks, airplanes and chemical weapons.
- Total expenses of 337 billion dollars, a sum nearly equal to the combined pre-war wealth of England, France, Germany and Russia.
- Up to 7 billion dollars borrowed by France, Great-Britain and Italy from the United States to finance the war. More loans contracted after the conflict to rebuild infrastructure and economies.
- Germany required by the Treaty of Versailles to pay 226 billion primarily for the destruction caused in France and Belaium.

World War I resulted in:

- Reichmarks in reparations,

The League of Nations Covenant and Disarmament

"The Covenant, by recognising that the maintenance of peace requires a reduction of national armaments, not only promises this reduction, but solemnly proclaims at the same time that failure to reduce armaments would mean a



From the moment of the creation

purpose was to prevent war and

of the new international order

Although not the first attempt

Hague Conference had tried

pacific settlement of international

disputes - the Covenant of the

League of Nations for the first

time provided nations with an

rmulate plans accordin

The creation of the League

was a promise for a new era

relations between nations,

the links between the issue

Treaties, which were the result of

but which were not accepted by

to be a critical obstacle f

of the League of Nations,

that disarmament thus

that the victorious nation

wished to build.

it was clear that its primar

the League of Nations, Article-8

The Members of the League recognise that the maintenance of peace requires the reduction of national armaments to the lowest point consistent with national safety and the enforcement by common action of international obligations.

The Council, taking account of the geographical situation and circumstances of each State, shall formulate plans for such reduction for the consideration and action of the several Governments.

Such plans shall be subject to reconsideration and revision at least every ten years.

After these plans shall have been adopted by the several Governments, the limits of armaments therein fixed shall not be exceeded without the concurrence of the Council.

The Members of the League agree that the manufacture by private enterprise of munitions and implements of war is open to grave objections. The Council shall advise how the evil effects attendant upon such manufacture can be prevented, due regard being had to the necessities of those Members of the League which are not able to manufacture the munitions and implements of war necessary for their

The Members of the League undertake to interchange full and frank information as to the scale of their armaments, their military, naval and air programmes and the condition of such of their industries that are adaptable to war-like purposes



The Convention for the Supervision of Internation Trade in Arms and Ammunitie and Implements of War was export licenses. However, as it was not ratified b the signatory countries, never came into force.

ratified by 36 states by

a universal body, not least du to the absence of the United States, which did not become a member even though it wa national sovereign interests some important negotiation and decisions also took place outside of the League, such as the Washington an

1920 - The Disarmament Section is established in the Secretariat by the First Assembly of the League of Nations.

- 1920-1925 Creation and activities of the Temporary Mixed Commission for the Reduction of Armaments, mandated to address the political, social and economic problems related to disarmament.
- 1920-1932 Creation and activities of the Permanent Advisory Commission on Military, Naval and Air Questions, also referred to as the Permanent Armaments Commission a body of technical experts appointed by the members of the Council of the League.
- ¬ 1921-1922 The Washington Naval Conference and Treaty between the USA, Great Britain, Japan, France and Italy succeeds in a limitation of capital ships (battleships, battle cruisers and aircraft carriers).
- 1922 Publication of the Statistical Enquiry on Armaments, the first series of armament data ever collected on a global scale.
- ¬ 1924 Publication of the first Armament Year Book of the League of Nations, published until 1938.
- 1925 Signature of the Convention for the Supervision of International Trade in Arms and Ammunition and Implements of War (a.k.a. the Geneva Convention) and of the Protocol for the Prohibition of the use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous, or Other Gases and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare.
- ¬ 1926 Publication of the first Statistical Year-Book of the Trade in Arms and Ammunition, published annually until 1938 by the Disarmament Section of the League of Nations.
- 1930 London Naval Conference and Treaty - extending the Washington Treaty of 1922 - signed by USA, Great Britain and Japan

"A sense of insecurity leads to an increase of armaments; an increase in armaments further aggravates the sense of insecurity; and, unless the circle can be broken, the process goes inevitably forward. The overburdened nations can then find no release from their mutual distrust except in open conflict."

Arthur Henderson, opening speech of the World Disarmament Conference, 2 February 1932.



in the admission of Germany to the League in 1926, were

Nations Council to convene a The signatories of the final Protocol of the Locarno

Conference declared that they undertake to give thei League of Nations and t in a general agreement

By the close of 1925, everything seemed to point in a positive direction: economies ha improved, currencies had stabilized and the reparation question, addressed by the Dawes and Young Plans, had

- 1923 - The Draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance is presented to the Fourth Assembly of the League by the Temporary Mixed Commission, but no agreement is reached. The draft is based on the idea that war as an instrument of aggression must be regarded as an international crime. It proposes a general international system of collective security.

- 1924 Protocol for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes, also called the Geneva Protocol. Inspired by the Draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance, it attempts to create a complete system of compulsory arbitration and response by common action to acts of aggression. The Protocol is signed by 14 states but set aside in 1925 in favor of a partial application of the regional system, embodied in the Locarno Pacts.
- 1925 Locarno Pacts, which included a series of treaties of mutual guarantees and arbitration are signed by representatives of Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Czechoslovakia,
 - 1928 In August, fifteen States sign the Kellogg-Briand Pact prohibiting the use of war as "an instrument of national policy". It remains a declaration of goodwill without enforcement sanctions. However, it introduces the significant new idea that war could be outlawed.

system as a prerequisite

Building a collective security for disarmament

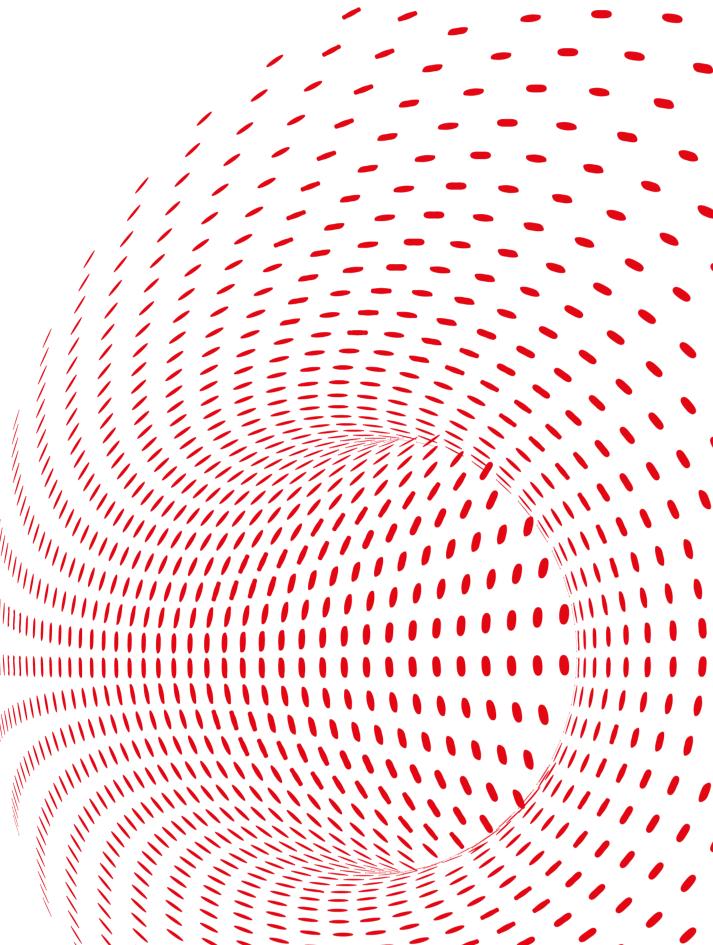




ATTENTION OF MR. TAXPAYER

"I would like to remind you that life - for nations as well as for individuals - is a story of opportunities missed as well as opportunities seized, and that some of the great tragedies of history have been due, not to wantonness of action, but to the folly of inaction."

Arthur Henderson, opening speech of the World Disarmament Conference, 2 February 1932.



composed of accredited

Germany (which became a (which became a member in held six sessions, all open to the public. It was assisted by the Financial, Economica

group of the International Labour Organization (ILO).

The USA and Great Britain

1927 - The Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference creates the Committee on Arbitration and Security, which aims to establish arbitration as a new tool for resolving conflicts and to determine how arbitration should fit into collective security together with disarmament.

- 1928 - The Ninth Assembly of the League adopts the General Act for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes, prepared by the Committee on Arbitration and Security. By November 1932, it is accepted and brought into force by twenty States.

 1930 - The Preparatory Commission for the Disarmament Conference submits to the Council a draft convention to serve as a basis for the work of the Disarmament Conference.

- 1931 - The General Convention to Improve the Means of Preventing War s adopted by the Twelfth Assembly By November 1932, it is signed by twenty States and ratified by two.

- 1931 - On January 24th, the Council of the League of Nations decides to for the Reduction and Limitation of Armaments in February 1932.

the World Disarmament Conference



Der deutsche Abrüstungsvorschlag und in Konsequenz des Kelloggpaktes

Oberreicht

der Abrüstungskonferenz in Genf

den Friedens- und Kulturorganisationer

RLAG DEUTSCHE LIGA FÜR MENSCHENRECHTE E.V

den Gewerkschaften aller Länder

BERLIN N 24 / MONBIJOUPLATZ 10

On 2 February 1932, the Conference for the Reductio and Limitation of Armaments, commonly called the World Disarmament Conference, opene in Geneva at the Disarmament Pavilion, especially built for the occasion by the League of Nation next to the Palais Wilson. The Conference was chaired

by Arthur Henderson, former Foreign Secretary of Great Britain, acting in his personal capacity, with Thanassis Aghnides, Director of the Disarmament Section of the League, as Secretary. Two Commission and the Bureau.

Sixty-four States were epresented at the Conference: this included not only

on land armaments, sea

Conference

December 1930 The Draft Convention for the Limitation and Reduction of Preparatory Commission after 5 years of preparation. It deals with:

- limitation of effectives in time of peace and limitation of period of service in conscript armies;
- limitation of the total annual expenditure on land, sea and air materials and armed forces and formations organized on a military basis;
- limitation of the total number and horsepower of airplanes;
- publicity and exchange of information;
- prohibition of the use of chemical and bacteriological arms;
- commission; procedure to be followed in dealing with
- 1931 The Twelfth Assembly of the League considers harmonizing the Covenant and the Briand-Kellogg Pact (which came into force in July 1929) – a question seen as tied
- to the enforcement of a convention for the reduction of armaments. The proposal is left for the Conference to consider. 1931 - A one year armaments truce
- is approved by the Twelfth Assembly (in effect as of November 1st 1931) in order to create an atmosphere of confidence before the World Disarmament Conference.
- End of 1931 No agreement is reached on the draft convention, therefore the Conference is free to consider any other texts or proposals that may be submitted to it.

High expectations of "No pains have been spared to make the world

the signing of these petitions an act of deep meaning and sincerity. Behind each of these eight million names stands a living personality, a human being oppressed by a great fear, the fear of the destruction of our civilisation, but also moved by a great will for peace that cannot be ignored and must not be denied."

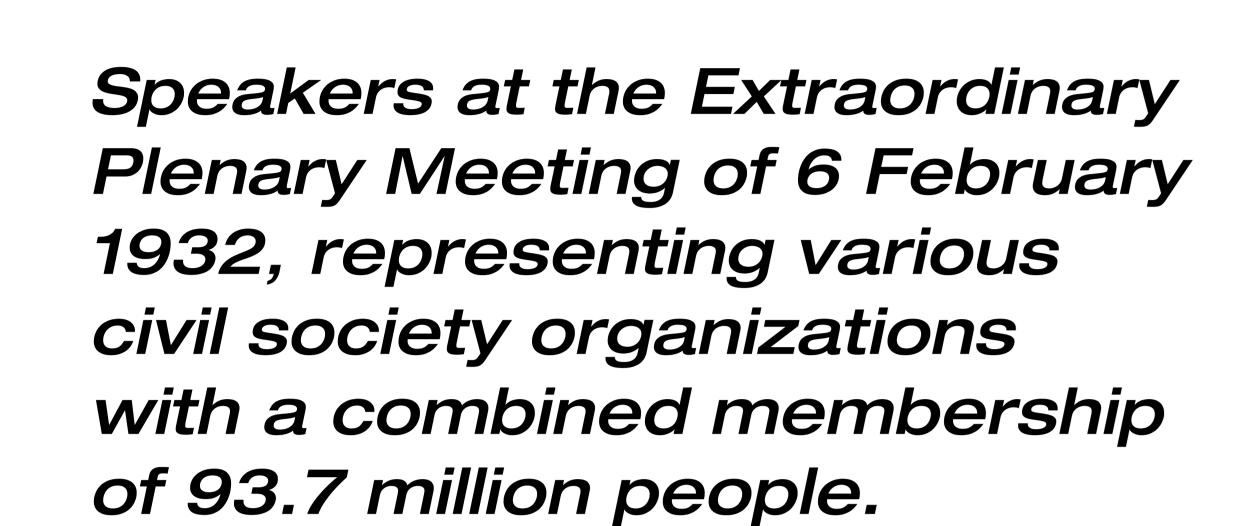
eech to the World Disarmament Conference by Mary. A. Dingman, Women's ernational Organisations, 6 February 1932

> public so that the world mig closely follow its work.

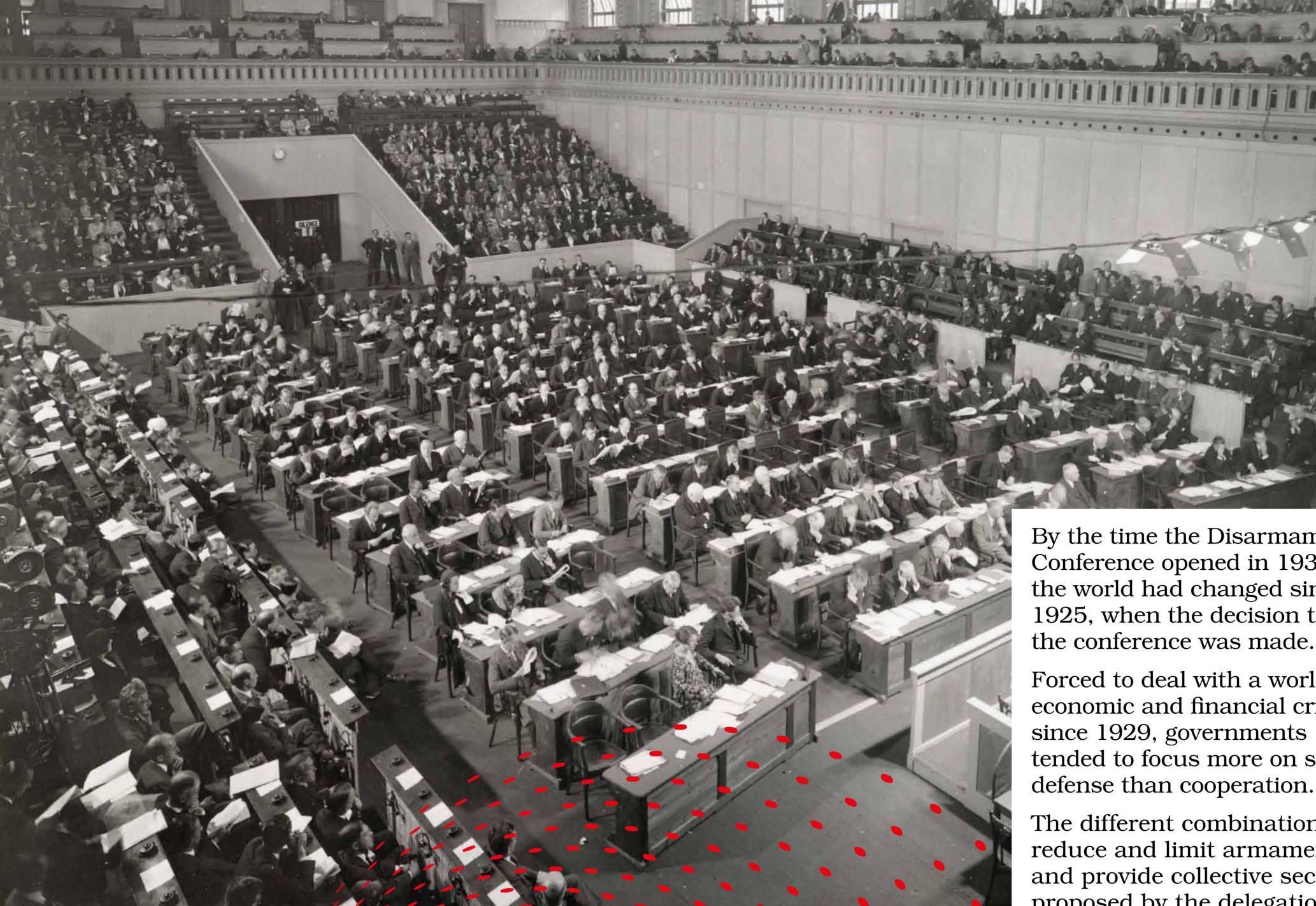
had been very active and bette informed than at any other common title of the Conferen with reference to the Covenan disarmament meant reducing and limiting arms, not comp

Prior to the opening of the

and private individuals.



- Women's International Organisations (Mary A. Dingman): represents 15 organisations with a total membership of 45 million.
- International Union of Catholic Women's Leagues (Madame Steenberghe-Engeringh): represents 54 women's leagues, representing 25 million women.
- Christian International Organizations (M. Müller).
- International Students' Organizations (Jean Dupuis): representing organizations with memberships totaling more than 2 million students.
- Intercollegiate Disarmament Council of the United States o America (James Green).
- International League for the Rights of Man and Citizenship (Paul Dupuy): presenting a petition containing 200,000 signatures.
- International Federation of League of Nations Societies (Viscount Cecil): representing 36 societies with a total membership of 1.5 million
- Labour and Socialist Organisations (M. Vendervelde and M. Jouhaux): representing Labour and Socialist International and the International Federation of Trade Unions, with a combined membership of 20 million.



of more than fifty countries submit verbal or written proposals. tended to focus more on selfreduce and limit armaments It does not take into consideration Germany's request for equality.

April 1932 - The General Commission

- April 1932 Germany's government starts working on a secret that were not important to som
 - June 1932 Proposal of US President Hoover defining defense forces and forces of aggression. It proposes a significant
 - July 1932 President Eduard Bénès' resolution combines the points of agreement of the various powers. The question of the equality of rights is not settled, however, and Germany announces that it will no
 - November 1932 Herriot-Paul-Boncour Plan, based on the Hoover Plan, proposes a reduction of forces of aggression, promotes a flexible collective security that would mobilize all Member states of the League in the case of a violation of the Briand-Kellogg Pact – states of continental Europe would be bound by a pact of mutual assistance - their armed forces reduced to militias, with stronger forces at

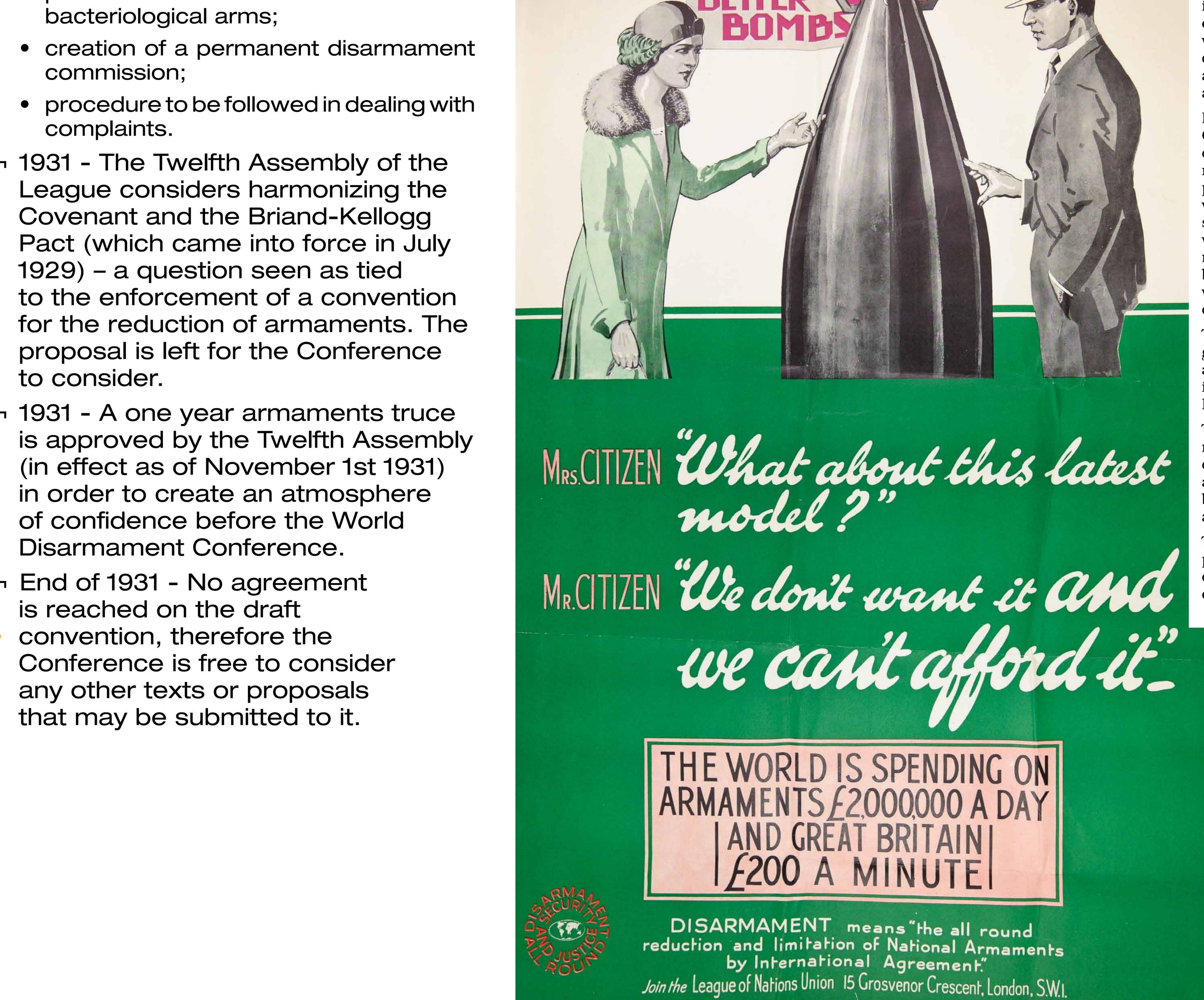
But at the center of the debates

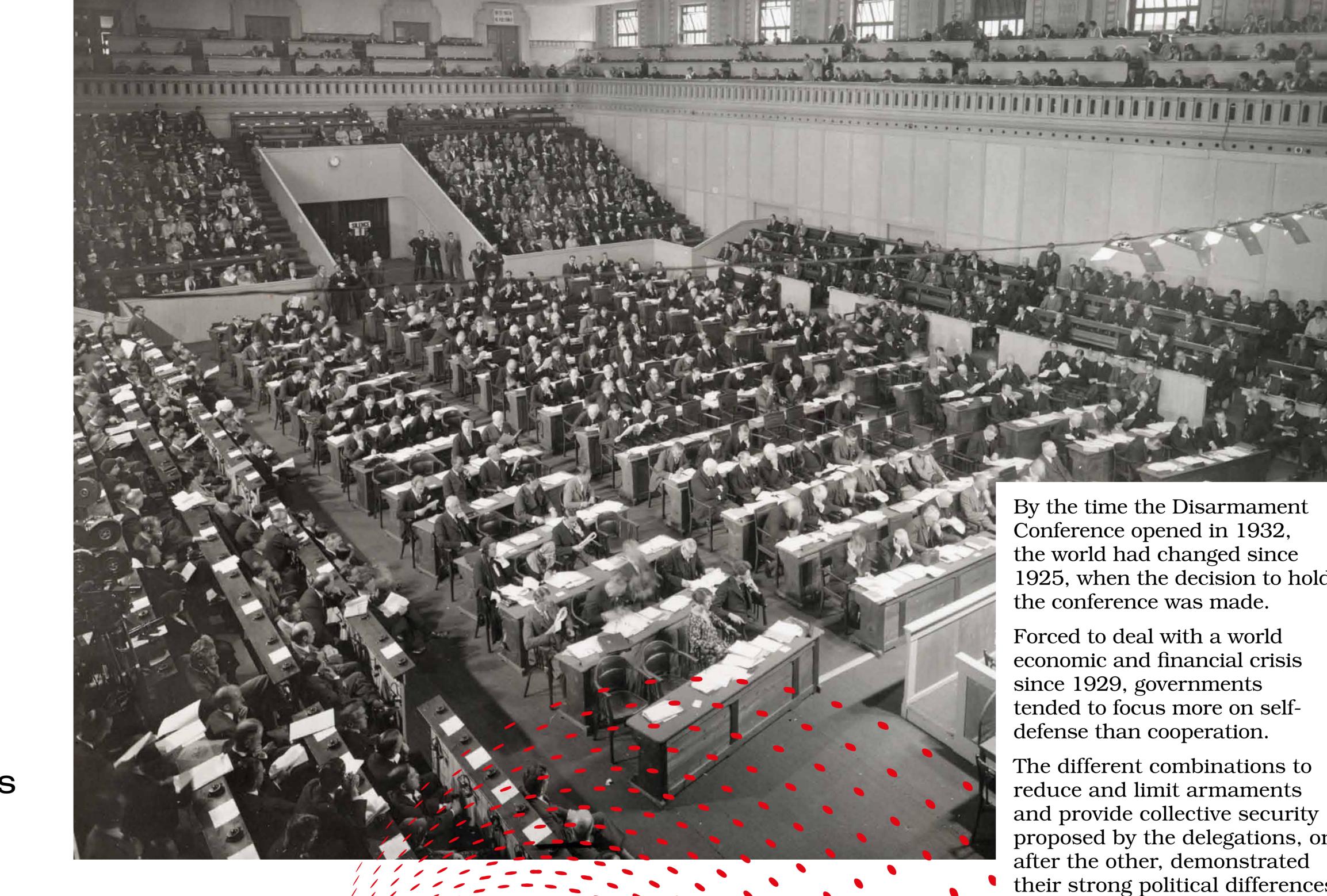
was the German request for

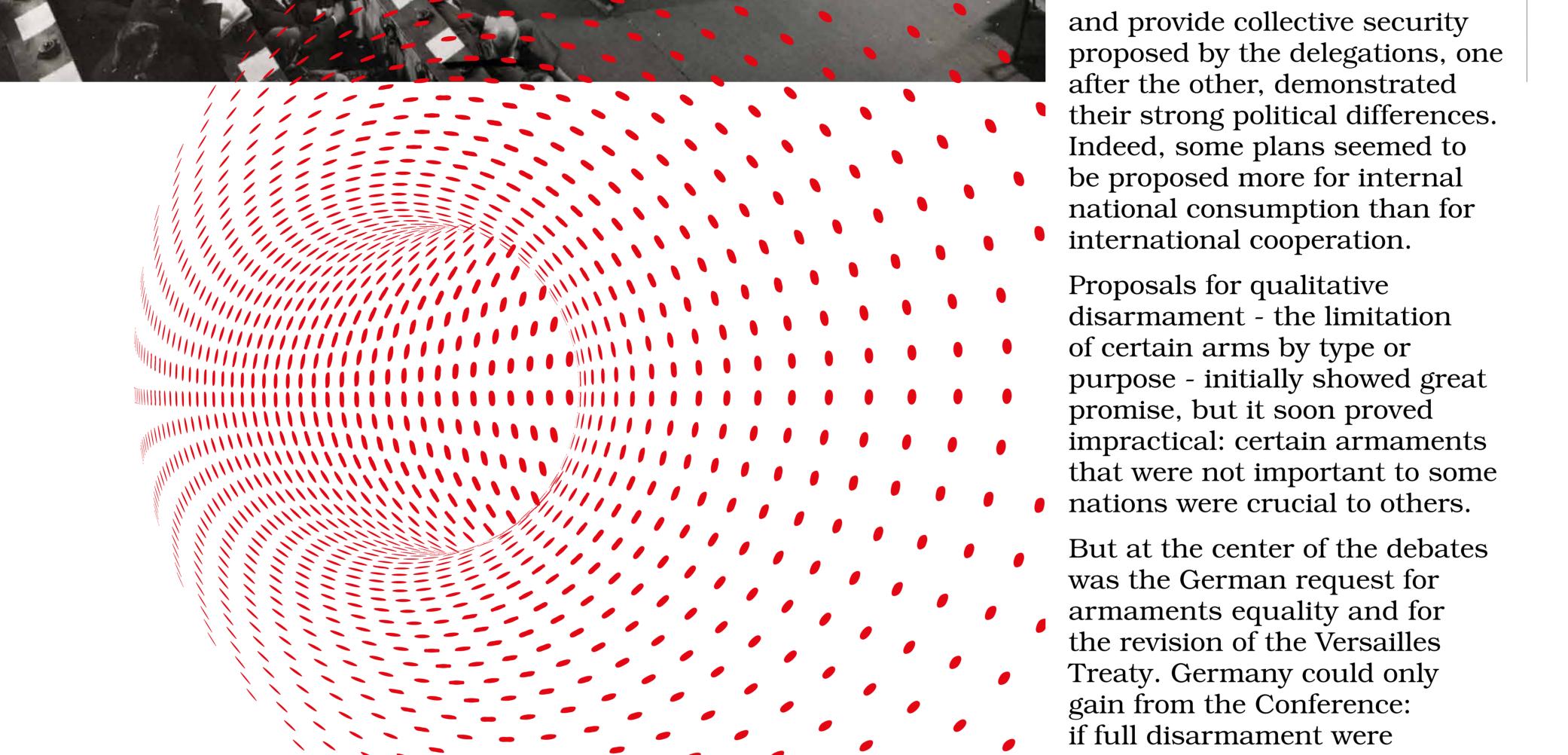
armaments equality and for

achieved, all nations would

disarm, then Germany would







"The limitation of armaments, moreover,

Disarmament is only one aspect of

cannot be considered as an isolated problem.

an organized peace system, and [...] an effort

entails the discussion of much wider political

to limit and reduce armaments necessarily

 February 1932 - The French delegation makes a proposal for qualitative disarmament and guarantees for collective security by building up an international force under the supervision of the League.

> of the Conference adopts the principle of qualitative disarmament.

February 1932 - Representatives

- rearmament plan (Umbau Plan).
- reduction of armaments.
- longer participate in the Conference.

Steps towards