

Peace Now Is Getting a Taste of War

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Things are getting right lively around 15 E. 40th St., where the embattled Bessie Simon, who survived America First, is currently having Peace Now shot out from under her.

Miss Simon who wants peace loudly and with the aid of a lot of assorted rag-tag from countless lunatic fringe organizations which have gone before, wasn't getting much of it today—what with being dispossessed come Monday and a mysterious Mr. Birmingham hanging around the place asking questions.

Miss Simon decided yesterday to cancel her New York City organization meeting scheduled for last night.

"Too many people would have been there," explained a woman who answered Peace Now's busy telephone.

"It was supposed to be for a few special people, but it got into the newspapers and there'd be too many reporters and other people."

The decision to cancel the meeting was reached while the landlord at 15 E. 40 was explaining that unless Peace Now moved by Monday four other tenants were going to leave, and he wanted action.

But the straw on Peace Now's sagging back yesterday was Mr. Birmingham.

This Mr. Birmingham, a taciturn gent with an official air, elbowed

himself through the throng of ex-Bundists, former Christian Fronters and Roosevelt-haters in Peace Now's outer office yesterday and let it be known he was "from the Government."

This "Mr. Birmingham from the Government" asked a lot of questions of Peace Now employes, mainly having to do with their antecedents, and, still mysterious, went away.

The Dies Committee, which is even a better racket than Peace Now, maintains in New York City a taciturn gent with an official air named Stephen A. Birmingham.

"Any information will come from Washington," he said. He hedged with the finesse of a good Dies Committee investigator.

"As long as I can make no statement," he said, "what's the use of talking about this?"

On Wednesday, the Dies Committee, which coincidentally got a \$75,000 appropriation, announced it would investigate Peace Now after the negotiated peace movement already had received yards of newspaper space.

To add to the confusion surrounding Peace Now, the venerable Mrs. Hannah Howes, star performer at a meeting of the peace-at-any-price boys Dec. 30 at Carnegie Chamber Music Hall, intimated today that she had been "tricked" into appearing.

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A member of the Mayflower and New England Societies, Mrs. Howes referred inquiries to her attorney.

"I love peace," she said. "But I wish I'd never heard of Peace Now."

The attorney, John Griffin, of 84 Williams St., explained that his client was a "member of a fine New England family brought to the meeting without realizing what the organization stood for."

Griffin said he knew nothing about Mrs. Howes' past affiliations, which included the fascist-minded Paul Reverses. At the meeting, Mrs. Howes said she hated war because her mother thought it was ugly.

John Haynes Holmes, pastor of the Community Church, 40 E. 36th St., which is scheduled to hear Dr. George W. Hartman, Peace Now *fuehrer*, at a forum on Feb. 20, didn't "care to discuss the matter" yesterday.

Meanwhile, the Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League, which, together with PM, first exposed the Peace Now movement more than a month ago, took the Dies Committee's sudden interest in Peace Now more seriously. It said:

"After getting on the bandwagon, the Committee will try to cash in on the publicity and make it look as if it's doing something for the money Congress is wasting on it."