

in February, 1934. Her family have lived in the Canton of Berne from time immemorial, they trace their ancestry back to the 14th century. She is a woman of high character, wise, gentle, humorous and resolute, a first-class nurse and ward sister and a born administrator.

I feel sad to think that a fellow nurse could act so unfairly and ungraciously as you appear to have done in this matter.

Yours sincerely,  
(Signed) EMILY E. MACMANUS,  
Matron.

P.S.—A copy of this letter has been sent to Mr. Somerville Hastings, Chairman of the Hospitals and Medical Services Committee of the London County Council.

THE BRITISH JOURNAL OF NURSING.  
19, Queen's Gate,  
London, S.W.7.  
June 21st, 1940.

DEAR MISS MACMANUS,

I beg to acknowledge your letter dated June 20th, received this morning.

Your personal attack upon me for taking action, which I consider to be my public duty, needs no reply, and will not alter, in the slightest degree, my convictions or course of action in connection with placing 10,000 British nurses under the control of an alien born woman, by the London County Council.

You make a misstatement in saying that in any publication under my name I have called "in question the integrity of Miss Rosalie Dreyer." I have done no such thing, nor mentioned her name, but as a Registered British Nurse I entirely sympathise with hundreds of my colleagues in the Nursing Service of the London County Council, especially those nursing the sick and wounded, that during this War to the death they should be called upon to obey any senior officer who is not of British blood.

The fact that you yourself placed an alien born lady, *unnaturalised* at the time, in the position of Matron of Guy's Hospital during your absence is, in my opinion, greatly to be deprecated.

I am,  
Yours sincerely,  
ETHEL G. FENWICK,  
Editor.

To Miss E. E. P. MacManus, O.B.E., S.R.N.,  
The Matron,  
Guy's Hospital, S.E.1.

Personally we do not know, neither do we care, what constitutes a "true Swiss." There is no Swiss nation, and Switzerland has no common speech. There is a Swiss State and a Swiss confederation, but the nation is composed of Germans, Italians, and Frenchmen, with the Germans in the large majority, and German was the mother tongue of the present Principal Matron-in-Charge of the Nursing Department of the L.C.C. What we are out against is the inexcusable action of the L.C.C. in compelling British Nurses in time of War to submit to the control of a woman of alien birth, whatever her nationality may be.

On June 7th we communicated with the Clerk to the Council, by request of many colleagues, and again on June 12th, asking that our protest addressed to the Chairman and Members of the London County Council should be placed before them and considered at its Meeting on June 25th.

We received an explanatory letter which confirmed previous information, and in reply to a second letter, were informed that the communication would be placed before the appropriate authority. Ultimately we found this authority would be the Civil Defence and General Purposes Committee.

#### THE CIVIL DEFENCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE.

The Civil Defence and General Purposes Committee consists of the following persons (exclusive of *ex-officio* members): (The Right Honble. Herbert Morrison, retired from the Chairmanship when appointed Minister of Supply,

and Mr. Charles Latham was elected to succeed him), Mr. Dan Frankel, Mr. C. W. Gibson, Sir Samuel Gluckstein, Mr. Eric Hall, Dr. Somerville Hastings, Mr. I. J. Hayward, Mr. Charles Latham, Mr. W. C. Northcott, Mr. Charles Robertson, Mr. Lewis Silkin, Sir Harold Webbe, M.P., Mr. John Wilmot, Mr. Edmund W. H. Wood. Again no Registered Nurse!

#### THE COUNCIL MEETING, JUNE 25th, 1940.

The following pre-arranged business was transacted at the Meeting of the Council at County Hall, held on June 25th last.

#### Question asked by Mr. Henry Studholme:

"Whether he (the Chairman) will make a statement with regard to recent comments in a section of the Press as to the employment of a naturalised British subject in the Council's nursing service."

#### Reply by the Chairman of the Civil Defence and General Purposes Committee (Mr. Charles Latham):

"I am grateful to the Honourable Member for giving me an opportunity to state the full facts. The lady in question was born at Berne, Switzerland, in 1895. Her ancestors on both sides for three generations back are known to have been Swiss born. She was educated in Switzerland up to the age of 18. She came to England in 1914 and received her general nursing training at Guy's Hospital and remained continuously in England until 1923. Apart from a short period as a nursing sister at the Leysin Clinic in Switzerland, she has resided permanently in England since. She became a naturalised British subject in February, 1934, shortly before entering the Council's service as Matron of Bethnal Green Hospital. She has been a principal matron in the Public Health Department of the Council since 1935, and on May 1st, 1940, she was appointed to act temporarily as Principal Matron-in-Charge. I understand that she has only been in Germany once, travelling with three English companions on a motor tour to Austria, and has no association with Germany.

"After the most careful enquiries had been made in the appropriate quarters, the Civil Defence and General Purposes Committee considered the whole matter in the light of all the facts and unanimously decided to take no action. I think I am speaking for all members of that Committee when I say that they regard the agitation as unfair, and detrimental to the public interest."

Thus the decision to take no action means that the London County Council confirms its previous action, in placing a naturalised alien as Principal Matron-in-Charge, in control of the Council's nurses in time of War, a tyrannical determination which, in our opinion, is as unjust as it is unpatriotic, and which will, of course, be bitterly resented by hundreds of London's nurses, whose economic circumstances makes the retention of their work almost obligatory, —a cruel choice indeed!

#### "Qui s'excuse s'accuse."

What use, it may be asked, has been the publicity given by the Press to this question? We will tell you. We have compelled this notorious bureaucracy to vindicate its decision in open Council, to defend the principle of alien born control of British Nurses in time of War, and to proclaim our opposition to this affront to professional conscience and prestige, as an "agitation as unfair and detrimental to the public interest."

Who are these persons who have, in their ignorant self-sufficiency, ventured to trample on our most sacred convictions? We have been associated with every movement during the past half-century for liberty of conscience and the uplift of nurses and nursing, and so far as our experience goes no member of the L.C.C. has ever lifted a finger in

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