



MRS. H. M. SWANWICK,  
M.A., C.H.,  
President, Women's Inter-  
national League for Peace  
and Freedom, British  
Section, 1915-1929.

Member of British Govern-  
ment Delegation to League  
of Nations Assembly,  
1924 and 1929.

## LIVE DANGEROUSLY

This article by Mrs. H. M. Swanwick was written during the world war, and appeared in the monthly News Sheet of the Women's International League, 1916. It is reprinted in 1940 in memory of Mrs. Swanwick because its message applies to conditions today.

## LIVE DANGEROUSLY

THE principles of the Women's International League are a standing challenge to its members. If we are to act consistently upon them we must be prepared to live dangerously and all the while to keep our serenity. To achieve that glorious ideal of peace for which we stand, we must have courage of a high order: courage to tolerate the expression of opinions which we regard as wrong and even dangerous; courage to think out to conclusions and to stand firm in those conclusions. The controversy over the conscientious objector has revealed that most people think they need show tolerance only for the opinions they can "understand." But that is not tolerance at all. Tolerance is to allow expression of opinions you cannot understand. Those who cannot show tolerance are either uncertain of the truth of their own opinions and afraid of being converted, or they are fundamentally contemptuous and distrustful of human nature in the mass. Authoritarians in Church or State are of the second order; they could conduct an Inquisition in order to save the soul or the State by force. But there are a very large number of persecutors who are only revealing their own pathetic vacillation and uneasy conscience; like Saul, they persecute for fear of their own conversion.

They know that by conversion the inner change of heart would constrain them to an outer change of life and they do not wish to change their life.

By our fundamental principles we are committed to tolerance of opinions wrong and dangerous. We reject force as a reforming agent; we believe in the people; we believe in everyone telling the truth as he sees it and that the right will win out in this way and only in this way.

But there is a great and destroying temptation to which we shall be peculiarly liable unless we are actively on our guard against it. This is the blurring of the edges of truth as we see it; the timid shirking of decision upon matters which must be decided; the confused notion that, because we are bound to tolerate the expression of an opposite opinion, it is possible for each of two opposite opinions to be right. If we are to build up a constructive peace we must not build with one hand and throw down with the other. We must not play with the doctrine of force, contemning it when it is thrown against our opinions and upholding it when it is used on our side. We must not lazily say "We work in one way, and they in another. All methods are equally good." They are not equally good. Those who "make peace by preparing for war" are not pursuing the right way; those who "make war to end war" are not pursuing the right way; those who plan violence in the cause of peace are not pursuing the right way. We must understand them if we can; we

must tolerate them if we can't ; we must do our utmost to think as rightly ourselves as we can, and be always prepared for revision and growth ; but we are organized to establish the principles of Right rather than Might and of Co-operation rather than Conflict in national and international affairs and we shall establish nothing but our own muddle-headedness if we think we are being tolerant when we are only confused.

H. M. SWANWICK.

*Printed by the Women's International League, 55, Gower Street, London, W.C.1.*

*April, 1940.*

Price 6d. per dozen, 4/- per 100, post free.

---

*Edgar G. Dunstan & Co., Drayton House, Gordon Street, London, W.C.1*