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A CALL TO REASON AND COLLECTIVE CONSULTATION

THE PEOPLES WANT PEACE: THE PEOPLES WANT FREEDOM: THE PEOPLES WANT TO LIVE!

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Executive Committee assembled in Emergency Session at Paris, from April 22 to 26, 1939, has reviewed the world situation in the light of its principles.

It sees the situation broadly as follows:—

1. We are faced to-day with a deliberate attempt to dominate by superior force and methods of violence. In face of this threat some democratic Powers have either conceded to bluff or half connived at it, out of a certain sympathy for Fascism and a fear of Communism. On the other hand, Russia distrusts the democratic Powers for their past attitude and their recent disbelief in her pledges of support. These facts have made a united front against aggression slow to develop and hesitating.
2. There has been a deliberate abandonment of the League of Nations and the development of a policy which is simply a reversion to pre-war military alliances, due to the fact that Power politics are in contradiction to the League of Nations system, both politically and economically.
3. Even those nations which condemn aggression, do not really condemn war as such—though there is real fear of it. The truth of this is shown by:—
 - (a) The abandonment of the League of Nations.
 - (b) The fact that there is no official attempt to prevent aggression, by other means than war and by piling up armaments, while potential enemies are supplied (by the British Empire, U.S.A., U.S.S.R. and most other countries) with materials essential to war industries.
 - (c) The absence of organisation for a world at peace among those countries desiring it.
4. Finally, there is progressive abandonment of freedom, of democratic principles, and of the maintenance of human rights and a truly alarming deterioration in moral standards in international relations brought about by the theory and practice of the Totalitarian States and the failure of the Western Powers to keep their pledges. The resulting absence of mutual trust is disastrous and dangerous.

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, reasserting its belief that non-violent means can be and must be found to check aggression, and solve our differences, proposes in the face of such a situation that the democratic countries should endeavour to return to collective consultation and planning, by taking the initiative in immediately calling a Conference under clearly defined conditions, i.e., the recognition of equality of race and of the rights and liberties of the individual, and respect for the integrity and independence of small as well as large nations; such Conference to be open at all times for the adherence of all nations prepared to accept this basis.

To this Conference the representatives of Governments must come prepared to state what concessions they are prepared to make, and to accept, in the interests of the community of nations, even if opposed to their national interests.

The Conference shall

- I. Make plans for:
 - (a) Right of access to raw materials and a just regulation of production and distribution in the interests of the consumer;
 - (b) The removal of trade barriers;
 - (c) The removal of restrictions on migration;
 - (d) Steps towards disarmament.
- II. Consider methods for the restoration of morality in international relations.
- III. Deal by Governmental action with the immediate problems of refugee settlement.
- IV. Prepare beforehand for resistance to aggression, by laying down diplomatic, economic and financial measures which each country would be prepared to carry out in the case of aggression anywhere by any Power—these measures to be understood to apply equally to any Power breaking its pledge under this arrangement.

IMPLEMENTING A CALL TO REASON AND COLLECTIVE CONSULTATION

Action Proposed by the Swedish Section

The Peoples want Peace: The Peoples want Freedom: The Peoples want to live!

The International Executive Committee of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom assembled in Emergency Session at Paris from April 22 to 26, 1939, decides to start

THE EMERGENCY MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, PARIS, APRIL 22nd—25th, 1939

In view of the situation in Europe, the Chairmen decided that the Executive Committee, planned for Zurich at the end of May, should be cancelled, and an Emergency Committee be called in Paris for April 22.

At very short notice thirteen Sections responded and sent representatives, including the U.S.A., whence Mrs. Hommel started within two days, arriving in Paris on April 21st. The Sections represented, and individuals present, were: Austria (Frau Hertzka), Denmark (Miss Clausen), Egypt (Mlle Lina Miloslawsky), France (Mme. Duchêne, Mlle Rolland, Mme. Abraham), Germany, Great Britain (Mrs. Duncan Harris and Mrs. Lankester), Hungary (Mrs. Meller), Netherlands (Miss Repelaer van Driel and Mme. Wulfften Palthe), Norway (Miss Mohr), Sweden (Mme. Höjer and Mrs. Waern Bugge), Switzerland (Dr. Woker and Dr. Stähelin), Tunis (Mme. Fichet), U.S.A. (Mrs. Dorothy Hommel and Mrs. Mabel Speight), and of the elected members of the Executive, the following: Gertrud Baer, Greta Engkvist, Thora Daugaard, K. E. Innes, Edith Pye, C. Ramondt-Hirschmann, C. Ragaz and Dr. Sahlbom. In addition we were glad to welcome several visitors at different Sessions from the French Section, one from Norway, one from Switzerland, and our old friend Mrs. Zweig, now living in Paris. We owe special gratitude to Madame Duchêne, who secured for us a pleasant, quiet hall in a central position, near the Sorbonne—and made it beautiful with carnations. To her, too, we owe the pleasure of a much enjoyed opportunity for social intercourse at an 'At Home' at her flat, and hospitality for an afternoon for two Committees, when the hall was not available.

The French Section also arranged an interesting evening meeting, where speakers dealt, from differing angles, with "La France devant la crise mondiale."

The Executive did not meet in any spirit of 'panic,' but at the same time all were fully aware of the seriousness of the situation and of possible developments. In case of a catastrophe, the W.I.L.P.F. must be ready to carry on through all possible channels, and while definite plans are obviously impossible, and such as can be made are not for publication, the general lines of procedure have been thought out, both from the administrative and the individual aspects. If disaster comes, any Section that can do so will be ready to take the initiative, and Headquarters will take measures to ensure that such initiative can be supplied with the necessary material and financial support.

For the rest—our Executive went on with its normal business, though, of course, every discussion was in relation to the immediate situation and our present policy in regard to it. The resolutions printed else-

A World Campaign in support of initiative on the lines of President Roosevelt's Message,

including work for the condemnation of aggression and a conference for the reorganisation of world commerce in order to satisfy the real needs of all peoples, and for disarmament; and urges the National Sections to join with all their power and energy and to try to get other women's organisations to co-operate for this purpose.

where, show the conclusions accepted in different fields. The Statement on the Situation in the light of W.I.L.P.F. principles, has appended to it suggestions for action, through a soundly based world conference, along the lines of our policy in three directions. Let us all concentrate our work along these urgent and essential lines. Points from a Swedish proposal for a general campaign in support of President Roosevelt's message, were embodied in the Title of the Statement finally agreed upon, and in the discussion on the proposal the decision was taken to send the cable as printed to President Roosevelt. The proposal itself was accepted in the form quoted above.

Extremely interesting reports on the Spanish refugee, and the general refugee problem, were given by Mlle Braun and Miss Pye respectively, emphasis being laid on the continued need of assistance to those in trouble from Republican Spain, and on the necessity for governmental action with vision and on a large scale to deal with the whole problem. The urgent question of the position of the Stateless, aggravated by the recent annexation of Czecho-Slovakia, was put before us by Gertrud Baer. It was suggested in the discussion, and recommended that we should press for the extension of the "Nansen Passport" to all Stateless people.

Another important discussion, introduced by Mme. Duchêne, was on the need of "concerted Peace Action," both governmental and organisational. Here, too, is scope for much work.

The 1940 Congress, too, was discussed, an invitation from the U.S.A. Section being considered, and a provisional invitation from the Scandinavian Sections, to meet in one of the Northern Countries. We should all have liked to accept both proposals! The width of the Atlantic and the cost of crossing it, are big considerations, and after expressions of opinion the final decision was left until the Northern Sections and the U.S.A. Section have explored possibilities further. The matter will come again before the September Executive. The Executive meeting planned for Zurich having been cancelled, a proposal was made again that the September Committee should meet there, and this was welcomed and accepted, subject to arrangements proving possible. The facilities granted to visitors during the National Exhibition in Zurich will still be available in September, and the Swiss Section feels that our meeting there during the Exhibition would be helpful to their work.

We called an Emergency Meeting because of the threats in the situation, but we planned hopefully in our sessions for ordinary meetings in the Autumn, and in 1940. . . .

THE CHAIRMAN'S OPENING ADDRESS

"When we met in September of last year the threatening clouds that lay over Czecho-Slovakia formed the dark background of our meeting. We then concentrated our thoughts on how to make the so-called democratic Powers aware of the immense importance of the independence of Czecho-Slovakia and the integrity of her territory being preserved. And when we took leave of our Czech friends, the thought which was most forward in our minds was: What will be their attitude, how will they be able to stand by our W.I.L.P.F. principles, if their country is forced into war? Their country was not forced into a war, it was forced into a peace which was no peace, which meant the destruction of their country and only a new threat of war to Europe. The peace of Munich which was, at the moment, praised as a glorious achievement and deliverance, is now in almost everybody's eyes an utter failure and curse. We of the W.I.L.P.F. can say that we were never deceived by it. But, and this is a question that is again and again put to us: What should we have had instead of it? Should we have been ready to run the risk of war? Should we have denied our own principles and have advocated the use of armed force against Hitler's demands?"

I think that some of the saddest misunderstandings arise out of the misinterpretation of our own principles, such as the badly employed slogan of "peace," where there is no peace, "self determination of the peoples," where there is only a terrorising of the peoples themselves and a more or less cleverly managed deception of the lookers-on.

We were convinced and are still convinced that in September Hitler could not have made his threat true if he had found the resistance—perhaps even of Czecho-Slovakia only, at any rate, not if he had met with the opposition of the Great Powers also.

And there are two other things also to be considered in connection with the Peace of Munich, not to be forgotten and not to be underrated:

(a) We have not to do with anti-militarist or pacifist Governments or peoples. Their policy is distinctly not ours. If they believe in armed force and if they believe in democracy let them use their armed force in the defence of democracy.

(b) We have to take into consideration that Czecho-Slovakia was a State-Member of the League of Nations and as such had a right to expect help of all the other State-Members in case of attack by another power.

Do we realise what such a betrayal of a given word, the rupture of a treaty means not only to this one country which is suffering from the loss of its liberty, but to the peace of the world in general? The peace of the world can never be attained without the sanctity of a given word or of a signed treaty being recognised.

That is why the tragedy of Austria, Czecho-Slovakia, Ethiopia, Spain, Albania, is the tragedy of humanity, and that is why we come together so unspeakably sad at heart. It is not because, as some like to say, our principles have failed. They have, on the contrary, proved to be the only sound ones, and the fact that our

opponents are taking up our own slogans and are playing themselves off as the bringers of peace and of freedom, is in a way a recognition of the right of our claims. But, of course, this cannot satisfy us. It is not a question only of being right; it is a question of how we, a handful of people and with a more and more restricted possibility of action, can find new and better means of putting into action what we have recognised as Truth and Right.

Here I must confess that, although I have never for one moment doubted the validity of the truths we have been advocating and working for, I had moments when I did not see how we could impart them to a humanity that seems to react only to bluff and violence and terrorism, and to a world that is governed by the interests of a relatively small group of powerful financiers and industrialists. I have never felt so much in the hands of unknown and uncontrollable powers as throughout these last few years, when one political event after the other put us before new enigmas: the "non-intervention" in Manchukuo, in Ethiopia, in Spain, in China, in Austria, in Czecho-Slovakia. Why were the economic sanctions never employed to their full extent? Was it because the Governments were afraid of hurting the peoples or was it not really because they were afraid of hurting the interests of capitalists and industrial concerns? These are powers that we cannot trace easily. We can attack the system and we have attacked it before, but its backgrounds are more hidden than the political ones, i.e., the political backgrounds very often are not political in the strict sense of the word. At any rate, we must turn our attention still more to these facts and must make it clear to ourselves and to others that neither peace nor freedom nor democracy can be maintained without a new economic order.

Shall we be able to stress these claims anew in such critical times as we are living through? It seems to me that we must, because it is part of the message we have to bring. We shall not be able to do anything but advocating it, because we have no means of organising a change of the economic system. But, as a part of our programme, we may not neglect it.

And my second and not less important claim is that we must be more ready to suffer for our cause. Many of our co-workers have suffered for it already and are suffering very hard for having stood for our principles and having withstood the claims of the tyrants. Some of us may within a short time fall into the hands of those we are working against, and even those who will not be directly touched by an enemy power may in their own country be obliged before long to resist State decrees and to come into conflict with their own Governments.

May we be able to resist in the right spirit and to run the risks and to bear the sufferings as nobly as some of our co-workers have done. And may this emergency meeting be a help to all of us to see the problems rightly and to see how to defend our convictions and in what way to bring our sacrifices for them."

C. RAGAZ.

THE RESOLUTIONS

The following is the text of the resolutions passed:—

Concerted Action in Defence of Peace

The International Executive Committee of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom assembled in Emergency Session at Paris from April 22 to 26, 1939, cordially welcomes President Roosevelt's fine appeal.

The Committee hopes that this appeal may be favourably received by all nations.

But if—as we fear to-day—the Totalitarian States do not send a favourable reply, the Executive Committee asks the national sections to support by all the means in their power, the proposal made many times by President Roosevelt for concerted action by the peace-loving nations, having as its object the prevention of fresh aggression and the re-establishment in the world of peace and of respect for democratic principles.

The Executive Committee urges that such action should be taken immediately and that, to make it effective, no State should be excluded which is a member of the League of Nations and has loyally adhered to its obligations.

Against the Recognition of the Annexation of Czecho-Slovakia.

The International Executive Committee of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, assembled in Emergency Session at Paris from April 22 to 26, 1939, protests very energetically against the annexation by Hitler Germany of Czecho-Slovakia.

The annexation of a sovereign State represents a most serious violation of international law and cannot, therefore, be recognised de jure.

The recognition of an annexation undermines the basis of international law and leads to the destruction of every moral standard in political life.

The annexation of Czecho-Slovakia also means the destruction of one of the bulwarks of democracy.

Camps of Spanish Refugees

The International Executive Committee of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, assembled in Emergency Session at Paris from April 22 to 26, 1939, notes with satisfaction that the French Section, moved by the tragic situation of the Spanish refugees in France and desirous of contributing to the amelioration of their situation, undertakes to bring pressure to bear on the French Government to grant to the refugees from Republican Spain full right of asylum, including all individual liberties (passport, freedom of movement, freedom to work, etc.) and to grant this on the ground of human dignity.

The Executive Committee asks every country represented in the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom to make a special effort to persuade their respective Governments to open their doors to a certain number of Spanish refugees; asks the League of Nations to extend the authority of the High Commissioner for Refugees to include the Spanish refugees, and to ensure that an international Convention shall apply to them, which will grant them juridical protection.

Juridical Protection for Refugees

The International Executive Committee of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, assembled in Emergency Session at Paris from April 22 to 26, 1939, asks the League of Nations to extend the authority of the High Commissioner for Refugees to include refugees of all nations and races and to ensure that an International Convention shall apply to all and grant them all equal juridical protection.

Help for China

The International Executive Committee of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, assembled in Emergency Session at Paris from April 22 to 26, 1939, once more urges that economic and financial help shall be given to China for the first necessities of life, for cultural and for other reconstructive purposes.

Japan: Hands off China

The International Executive Committee of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, assembled in Emergency Session at Paris from April 22 to 26, 1939, reiterates the demand that materials for munitions of war be withheld from Japan, in order to put an end to the bombing of the civil population of China, and to the war as a whole, so that the existence of China as an independent State shall no longer be in jeopardy and she may be able to resume her peaceful traditions.

India

The International Executive Committee of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, assembled in Emergency Session at Paris from April 22 to 26, 1939, believing that there can be no peaceful solution of Indian problems without recognising the increasing unity of the people of India, which superseding all barriers, demands representative and responsible Government alike in both States and Provinces, earnestly hopes that the British Government in India will do nothing to discourage spontaneous movements within States for the removal of oppression and recognised grievances, and will not go forward with the proposed scheme of Federation until it is so amended as to be acceptable to organised opinion in India.

Text of Cable sent to President Roosevelt, April 25th, 1939.

"International Executive Committee Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, assembled in Emergency Meeting at Paris April 22-26, 1939, appreciates initiative in calling halt to aggression as well as constructive proposals for international discussion. It supports the belief that if Peace is to be secured obstructions to economic life of nations must be removed. It earnestly hopes your noble attempt to save world from disaster and to restore human liberties will be successful. If totalitarian States refuse, urge you to arrange for immediate concerted action of peace-loving nations."

Our office has, during the last seven months, sent out an average of 268 letters and 844 "envelopes" of printed and duplicated matter each month.