

# PAX INTERNATIONAL

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## A TRIP IN SOUTH-EAST AND CENTRAL EUROPE

This tour, from a political, psychological and human point of view, was an enriching experience, for daily it brought new and vivid impressions. I got to know countries and peoples and this gave to the problems of South-East Europe a real and living background. I visited Northern Italy at the time of the National Holiday and drove, on a shining clear afternoon, through the Karst, just when Autumn was weaving a delicate web of gold over the trees, the deep blue of the sea and the emerald of the southern sky: and on the distant horizon the snow mountains glowed in the setting sun. On All Saints' Day I saw Croatian peasants in their colourful national costume going in crowds along the road to the delightful village of Cestinez where, at nightfall, they lit hundreds of white candles on the graves of their relatives and knelt down in prayer, whilst from the little overcrowded church the voices of the priest and the congregation flowed out to them. A picture of unforgettable beauty. I visited the rich Ethnographical Museum in Sofia on the Day of the Invalids when the Bulgarian peasants pour into the capital and never fail to look at the costumes and jewels, the tools and embroideries "which my great-grandmother (or father, wore or made)". These peasants complain immediately to the Director of the Museum if a plough or loom or a jewel is exhibited in such a way as might possibly give a wrong impression to the spectator.

Everywhere I received lavish hospitality. Everywhere Sections and Branches of the W.I.L.P.F. are striving to carry on the work. But under what political difficulties! Nearly everywhere Left parties and Left organisations are either under governmental control or completely disbanded. The whole essence of the idea of peace and freedom is lost. Here a Section is forbidden to give scientific lectures on the League of Nations and its work, although the country in question is a Member State of that organisation at Geneva. There, groups are on the point of being completely extinguished although they limit themselves to pure educational work for international and internal peace. Psychologically there exists a visible difference between the territorially satisfied states and those who were deprived of territory as a result of the war. In the latter those who criticise the violation of civic and political freedom are even less able to come out into the open.

In these countries the fight for peace and freedom is often identified with the attempt to win back their lost possessions. The daily little subterfuges in the economic, intellectual and personal relationships at the frontier, keep the scars, inflicted by the war on the inhabitants always open. Incitements by the press and political parties from the Capital sow fresh seeds of discontent in places where the inhabitants of separated territories have begun to get accustomed to things as a new generation grows up into new conditions.

Here lies the most imperative problem for the W.I.L.P.F.: to interest our Sections in the satisfied countries in the just demands of those countries which are in a disadvantageous position. One of the main objects of our work has always been that the most politically, economically and socially powerful countries should strive to help the weaker ones—a field of work in which there is unfortunately unlimited scope. I asked the Chairman of our Yugo-Slav Section, who organised a big public meeting on Armistice Day in Belgrade, to meet in conference with our Bulgarian workers in Sofia. Macedonia is no problem for the Kingdom of the Serbs, Slovenes and Croats, for the faithful subjects of Yugo-Slavia. But Macedonia is one of the most pressing problems for innumerable Bulgarians. The W.I.L.P.F. has Sections in both countries, Sections which adhere to the same principles, Sections which, motivated by good will, could work in common for the elimination of the present difficulties and for a future policy. The W.I.L.P.F. has also a Section in Czecho-Slovakia and Hungary. We are sure that the interests of Hungarians in Czecho-Slovakia are in good hands if our Czecho-Slovakian co-workers make themselves their advocates.

The development of the political and economic situation of the South Eastern States of Europe is of quite extraordinary interest. It would need a further article to show, by means of import and export figures, how the economic hegemony of Germany, and through that her political and cultural influence has established itself more and more in these countries, whilst the economic, and with that the cultural and political relationships with France have become quite insignificant and have been taken up only in the last few weeks.

Whilst the attention of the world is concentrated on Spain, a new grouping is taking place in the South East of the European Continent which may become a decisive factor in the future of Europe. This development provides definite and urgent tasks for an international political organisation such as ours. This development demands a definite attitude towards the political and economic problems of the day, which are bound up in the European problem. The W.I.L.P.F. may secure the enthusiastic co-operation of youth in the countries of Central and Southern Europe if it realises that it must become the pioneer for a policy which will deal with these burning questions along the lines laid down by its principles and aims.

GERTRUD BAER.

### BACKGROUND AND HOPES FOR THE PAN-AMERICAN CONFERENCE

The Pan-American Conference which opened on December 1 in Buenos Aires, Argentina, has been aptly described as a constructive attempt to "create an American Zone of sanity in a mad world." Although this conference is not the first of its kind there are many reasons why it is justifiable to look for new unity against war and a common policy of peace and neutrality among the Americans as the fruits of this meeting.

There is a long tradition behind the ideal of Pan-Americanism and inter-American peace conferences. In fact, it goes back to Simon Bolivar, one of the greatest leaders in the South American struggle for independence for its origin. His vision was of a union of North and South America, based upon a spirit of harmony and co-operation which would subordinate national boundaries and local prides. The first conference was called at his insistence in Panama in 1826, but the six nations meeting there unfortunately showed none of that spirit for which Bolivar had hoped. After over seventy years, the next conference was called by the United States in 1889. Whereas the Bolivar Conference had talked of the souls of men, this conference talked of trade. Since that time the seven Pan-American conferences have been more practical. The main emphasis has been upon the technicalities of commercial intercourse but each succeeding conference has contributed to the building up of peace machinery for the settlement of international disputes between American states.

In 1889 a protocol of adherence to the Hague Convention was signed. In 1923 the Gondra treaty extended to all American Republics a system of conciliation which provided for a commission of inquiry to adjust such disputes as could not be settled by diplomatic means. In 1929 this was amplified and strengthened by the General Convention of Inter-American Conciliation. Little has been accomplished in effecting any agreement for the reduction of armaments and there has been a tendency to avoid the discussion of other important matters for fear of endangering the somewhat superficial unity which existed due to the lack of mutual trust and understanding between the American Republics.

Although the most tangible results have been the straightening out of the details of postal arrangements, the mechanics of commercial exchange, intellectual co-opera-

tion, etc., there has been established the structure for peaceful settlement of disputes. The weakness lay in the slowness of the respective nations to ratify the conventions and treaties and fear of United States dominance.

The last conference held at Montevideo, Uruguay in 1933 during the first months of the Roosevelt administration marked a turning point in the history of Pan-Americanism and it is generally agreed that this is due to the efforts of Cordell Hull, Secretary of State for the United States and then, as in 1936, the leader of the American delegation. The outstanding achievement of this meeting was the promulgation of the Argentine Anti-War Pact. There was also evidence of a greater vitality in the discussion of peace pacts, real vigour in the discussion of reciprocal trade agreements and a breaking down of fear and hostility towards the United States. Since then, due to the genuine admiration for Secretary Hull, the extension of the policy of reciprocal trade agreements, the emphasis on President Roosevelt's Good Neighbour Policy, the withdrawal of marines from Haiti and Nicaragua by the United States and the abrogation of the Platt Amendment, an arrangement which made intervention in Cuba by the United States legal and which had been used by many administrations as an excuse for financial and economic exploitation of the Cubans, this friendly feeling towards the United States has grown in intensity and scope.

In this connection we might point out that the United States Section of the W.I.L.P.F. has worked for a pronouncement of the Good Neighbour policy since 1924. A Bill introduced in Congress by the late Senator Ladd for the W.I.L. called for such action in that year. Since the United States marines were landed in both Haiti and Nicaragua the W.I.L. has worked unceasingly for their withdrawal and it was probably due to a mission of goodwill to Haiti, headed by Emily Balch, and the resultant report edited by her which brought action by the United States Government in the matter of withdrawal of marines from Haiti and established a new treaty arrangement there. The United States Section is also probably responsible for initiating the agitation which led to changing the Platt Amendment by a Cuban-American Conference held in Washington six years ago. In view of the success of these various policies and the fact that at this time there is no Inter-American warfare, the Conference at Buenos Aires meets under more favourable auspices than any Inter-American meeting in the history of this hemisphere.

Early in 1936 President Roosevelt suggested this Conference to the Presidents of the twenty Latin American Republics and his invitation was warmly received and accepted by all concerned. The agenda includes: the organisation of peace, neutrality, the limitation of armaments, juridical problems, economic problems and intellectual co-operation. The emphasis will undoubtedly be upon peace organisation, neutrality and trade problems. President Roosevelt's opening speech to the Conference stressed these points and the need for the protection and maintenance of democratic governments and of freedom as a first step towards permanent peace. He further said in part: "This is no conference to form alliances, to divide the spoils of war, to partition countries, to deal with

human beings as though they were pawns in a game of Chance. Our purpose under happy auspices is to assure the continuance of the blessing of peace." . . . "Sacrifices in the cause of peace are infinitely small compared with the holocaust of war."

It has been suggested in editorial comment that Mr. Roosevelt's speech implied an endorsement of sanctions but we of the peace movement find in it rather an emphasis upon an abstention from trade involvements with any belligerent nation and the need for American solidarity against any aggression by a non-American nation towards any nation or nations in this hemisphere.

The United States Government has circulated a tentative neutrality proposal to the other American nations containing a plan for joint action along the lines of our existing neutrality law which expires on May 1 of the coming year. It suggests that the American nations agree to ban the export of arms, implements of war and ammunition and prohibit the extension of loans and credits to belligerents. This proposal is not to be operative in the event of war between an American country and a non-American country. We of the W.I.L.P.F. are supporting this movement with all our power and urging that the agreement be backed up by an Inter-American trade treaty which would serve to divert trade in the event of war abroad and compensate to some extent for the losses resulting from such a programme of neutrality. The National Grange Association of the United States is but one of the growing number of agricultural and labour organisations which are urging the need of supporting such a programme upon its members in an effort to educate the American worker to the need of sacrifices for peace rather than for war.

By the time this copy of *Pax* reaches you the Conference will be over and its findings and achievements known to the world. It is useless to prophesy under these circumstances but the peace forces in the United States have real hopes that the improved economic conditions in this hemisphere, the threat of a European war, the menace of fascism and the new mutual trust and friendship between the nations of the two Americas will result in constructive and forward steps for Peace and Neutrality which will serve as a challenge to war forces and an inspiration to peace forces throughout the world.

DOROTHY DETZER.

### A VISIT TO INDIA

The name of Agatha Harrison is familiar to many in the W.I.L.P.F. and it has been suggested that a short account of her visit to India this winter would be of interest to her friends as well as to a wider circle.

Agatha Harrison is a member of the Executive Committee of the British Section of the W.I.L. and she has also been for some years the Hon. Secretary of the Indian Conciliation Group, which meets in London. She has twice before visited India, the first time being attached to the Whitley Commission that investigated and reported on conditions of labour in India. Her experience as a social worker, not only in her own country but also in the U.S.A. and China, proved very helpful to the Commission. The personal result of this first visit was a deep and abiding interest in Indian problems and a desire to devote herself to the work of improving relations between British and

Indians. Later this brought her into contact with Mr. Gandhi and during her second visit to India she toured with him and his party when they visited the stricken countryside in Bihar after the earthquake.

In the autumn of last year, and after a period of intense work at home, she again felt the urge to visit India. The visit was the more easily arranged as she had received an invitation to attend some important conferences in Ceylon in connection with the World's Y.W.C.A. After her arrival there in October she wrote "This is one of the most remarkable conferences I have ever attended. The chief thing has been that the East has been at the helm, we Westerners as listeners. The findings that emerged from the discussions are a milestone in the history of the Association. It is no slight thing that we have had China, Japan and Korea together and running like a thread through it has been the Indian situation". She spoke of it as "a fearless conference, which faced realities in a spirit of humility and love". At the second conference an important resolution was passed asking the I.L.O. to call an Asiatic conference in those regions.

Wherever Agatha Harrison goes she seems inevitably to find herself in situations calling for her reconciling influence! She has a genius for bringing people of divergent views together and finding a meeting ground for those in opposing camps. She believes that sooner or later in any struggle opposing sides have to meet and arrive at some compromise or settlement and she always says "Why not sooner rather than later?" Thus, in any condensed account of her travels, this comes to be the dominating theme. Before Agatha Harrison left Ceylon she had been drawn into the difficult situation that has arisen there between Cingalese and Indians. The causes of friction seem to a large extent to be due to unemployment. She wrote at this time "The best opinion on both sides want to see some move that will bring the two sides together to agree among themselves what is to be done."

Arriving in S. India in November she soon became immersed in another difficult problem, this time in the religious sphere. Largely owing to Mr. Gandhi's work for the depressed classes there is now a move among them to improve their status. Some of the politically minded of their leaders have declared their intention of leading these so-called "untouchables" away from Hinduism, which up to recent years has treated them so harshly, and they have made overtures to leaders of other religions in turn. It is most unfortunate that political bargaining should play any part in the movement, but with the "communal award" operating in the elections for the Legislatures the votes of millions of converts would be valuable. We believe that Christian missionaries have no such motive for wishing that the untouchables should embrace Christianity, but some of their methods are, nevertheless, deeply resented by Mr. Gandhi and other Hindu leaders, who deprecate the desire to proselytise. Agatha Harrison wrote at this time, after meeting both missionaries and Hindu reformers—"It seems as if there is some gulf fixed in the religious field as exists in the political field. It all points to the need for contact and a clearing of the situation". She spared no efforts to bring religious leaders from both sides together. Meanwhile, during her visit in the South came the dramatic edict from H.H. the Maharajah of Travancore with regard to the opening of temples to all

classes, including the lowest. Agatha Harrison wrote—"It is difficult to relay the sensation this has caused". It is worth noting that Mr. Gandhi has declared that "This is a unique demonstration of the power of non-violence. It is a mass conversion of the caste Hindus", and he adds that he considers that it is due to the influence of women in the State. From S. India Agatha Harrison went further north and has stayed more than once in the vicinity of Mr. Gandhi, with whom she has had many talks. She has also stayed with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, President of the Indian National Congress, and with Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, one of India's finest women leaders, who is now devoting herself to village reconstruction work. She also spent an important week in Delhi, where she was received by some of the highest Government officials, and met many British and Indian Leaders, of divergent points of view. She is appalled at the what she calls "an impossible situation, where neither side is willing for any compromise and where an atmosphere exists full of mutual suspicion and resentment." Once more all Agatha Harrison's energies have been exerted to break down barriers. She felt it terrible that there should be this atmosphere on the eve of the elections, which will usher in the new constitution.

In December she attended the annual meeting of the Congress, at the largest organised political party in India, which once again registered its opposition to the new constitution. Miss Harrison was also present at the annual session of the largest women's organisation in India, the All India Women's Conference, which she attended as the specially invited guest to represent the Liaison Group of British Women's societies, which co-operate in their work. Her impressions of these two important gatherings have not yet been received as we go to press, but enough will have been said to give some idea of the scope of this visit to India. Agatha Harrison has the love and confidence of Indians to an extent that is not given to many Britishers and the value of her presence in India this winter cannot easily be estimated.

G. LANKESTER.

### HEADQUARTERS NEWS

#### Spain

The following letter has been addressed by the Chairmen to the *Governments of Spain, France, England, Soviet Russia, to the President of the League of Nations Council and the Secretary General of the League of Nations.*

"Disturbed by the political situation in Spain which is growing more serious with every day we venture to submit to you the following proposals. We ask you kindly to bring them to the notice of your Government in order to have them transmitted to the President of the League of Nations Council for immediate action.

1. Immediate withdrawal of foreign troops fighting with the Rebels on Spanish territory;
2. Establishment of strict and effective control of withdrawal;
3. Agreement of Governments in sympathy with the Spanish Republic to withdraw the volunteers fighting in the ranks of the Republicans, as soon as the foreign Rebel elements have evacuated Spanish territory."

#### Subscriptions, please!

The Secretary reminds all subscribers that if they have not already paid their subscriptions they should send them without delay to the Geneva office.

The Editor offers sincere apologies to the photographer "Angela" for having omitted to insert her name under the photograph of Miss Balch in the last issue of *Pax*. She wishes to thank "Angela" for her kind permission to reprint this photograph without the usual fee.

### NEWS FROM SECTIONS

#### Hungary

The audience that attended the crowded Annual General Meeting of the Feministák Egyesülete seemed to be impressed by the activities of this organisation, although for six months the society has been doomed to silence owing to the prohibition on public meetings enforced on political organisations. The leaders of the F.E. take it as a compliment that of all the women's organisations it is the only one to which the prohibition applied.

After the formal business of the meeting several resolutions were passed. One proposed by Dr. Margaret Vági-Ungá requested the F.E. to present to the Government a Memorandum on the Status of Hungarian Women and asked for an early reply to be given to the League of Nations Questionnaire by the Government. Another Resolution was proposed by Mrs. Osváth, who reminded the meeting that in 1940 it will be 150 years since the first appeal of the Hungarian women was made to the National Assembly demanding more rights for women. This appeal was made some years before the memorable publication of Mary Wolstonecraft's famous book from which the history of the modern women's movement is dated, and was published in a document by Rosika Schwimmer in the first decade of this century. The General Meeting resolved to celebrate this Jubilee. Another resolution confirmed the activity of the Executive in attempting to get Equal Suffrage for Women adopted by all political parties as one of the planks of their platform now that the Suffrage Reform seems to have become a reality.

A suggestion was made and adopted, that the F.E. should watch the attitude of politicians and journalists on questions concerning women so as to be able to advise voters at elections. This task is always performed by the Office of the F.E. but recent events have given special point to this proposal. In the Lower House of Parliament an altogether retrograde Bill has been passed called the "Reform"! of the Order of the Lawyers' Chamber. One paragraph declares that all women other than those already members of the Chamber are barred from the profession. The discussion on this Bill in the Upper House has not yet taken place and we hope that there will be a protest from many important Members. Women's rights have been valiantly defended by a number of M.P.s in the Lower House and the one woman Member of the Government Party voted against the Bill, but many men M.P.s when driven in by the party Whips stole out by another door.

At the end of the General Meeting Jolanda Földes, to whom an international prize for her novels has been awarded, fascinated her audience by giving some of the stories that were the cause of her writing a novel on the sufferings of the emigrants and of the stateless exiles.