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NEWS LETTER

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WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE
FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM

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Our Message for 1940

We send out the first number of Pax International with a feeling of deep gratitude. We are thankful to know that it is eagerly expected and will be heartily welcomed in all the countries where it is still allowed to enter, and we are thankful for the fact that it can bring our readers the good news of the unswerving faithfulness of our co-workers to the fundamental ideas of the W.I.L.P.F. and of a renewal rather than a slackening of their activities in spite of many obstacles a peace-worker finds nowadays barring his route. On the other hand we are, it is true, deeply conscious of the limitation from which our work, and with it Pax, is suffering, and we must more than ever ask for the indulgence and kind comprehension of our readers if Pax cannot appear in the form they are used to nor can contain as much as we should like it to contain. Some contributions do not reach us, some reach us very slowly so that they have become obsolete by the time they arrive, and some news that comes to us is not of a character to be passed on to a larger public because it might render still more precarious the already precarious situation of some of our friends.

So it is not only with a grateful but also with a very sad heart that we are preparing this issue. This all the more so because we are thinking also of all those we cannot reach any more, some being cut off from communication with the outer world on account of the mail of their country being so severely censored, some being separated from their usual surroundings by prison walls or the barbed wires of a concentration camp, some having been driven from their homes and perhaps from their country, we do not know whither. And we are thinking of those who to-day have still food and shelter, but whose homes may be destroyed to-morrow and who then may be obliged to take part in that terrible new migration of nations which set in with the reign of Fascism and Nazism.

And yet we did not enter this new year in despair. We know it may bring catastrophes, it certainly will bring suffering and misery to wider and wider circles of populations, perhaps also to new peoples, and we dare hardly hope that it will lead us to the great turning of the road we are looking forward to. But we are sure of one thing: the number is increasing of those who, like ourselves, recognize that peace must be founded on quite a new basis if it is to be PEACE and not only a "breathing space

between two wars". It is for us now to prepare this basis. Much preparatory work has been done already by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and others, and this has to be continued, intensified and enlarged in accordance with the new lights which the experiences of the last two decades and the chaotic situation of to-day throw on the real back-grounds of the whole war-problem. 1.

The report of the December Executive will, in spite of its necessarily very condensed form, give some indications as to the field of action and the methods of work we see before us. It was expressly pointed out also how each country and each individual can and must make their own contribution according to their traditions, history, connections and sphere of life.

There are those who can, under present circumstances only resist and suffer for the common cause. Those who are still free to think, free to speak, free to act, must take up the old problems with new zeal, new energy, and a new desire to go to the roots of the problems. Our hope and wish for the new year is that we may learn to suffer and to work so as to further the cause of Peace and Freedom.

C.P.-N.

W.I.L.P.F. International Executive Committee Meeting
in Geneva, December 5th to 9th, 1939.

This was the first gathering of the International Executive since the outbreak of the war at the beginning of September which had made the meeting planned for those very days impossible. The obstacles in the way of travelling, obtaining transit visas etc. were great and could only be conquered by persistent efforts. Many members who, up to the last minute, tried to come, were prevented through the refusal of transit visas.

There were, however, present, the three international chairmen - one of whom is from England - and two other British, one French, two German, two Swiss members, and a delegate from the U.S.A. whose arrival was specially hailed. Those who came from warring countries enjoyed - after weeks and weeks of black-out - the lighted streets and normal city life of Geneva; and for all, the coming together at the Maison Internationale with friends from other countries, had a stronger significance than in former years.

The reports of National Sections reflected the difficulties created by the war which every country, neutral or belligerent, is facing. A detailed report on the economic and political situation in the U.S.A. made clear the background of the U.S.A. neutrality policy which is too little known in Europe. (*)

A survey of the political developments since the last Executive meeting in April 1939, and of the work of International Headquarters in connection with them, was given by one of the Chairmen. The administrative report registered an increase of international membership and mentioned new activities arising out of the war situation which keep the international office very busy.

The WORLD SITUATION naturally occupied the greatest part of discussions. The three main questions examined by the Executive were: (1) the shortening of war, (2) the preparation of peace - peace terms, (3) tasks and composition of the Peace Conference to come - women's contribution to it.

(*) It will be printed in condensed form in the February issue of Pax.

2.
The two statements "Recall to Reason" and "Sovereign Rights" (see Resolutions pp.3/4) formulate the findings of the Committee on the first two points. The problem of FEDERATION which was recognized an essential part of any Peace Terms was referred to National Sections for careful study. A committee was charged with the working out of an International Declaration of Human Rights, the recognition of which, it was urged, should be a preliminary condition for the admission of countries to a European Federation and to a world-wide Association or League of federal and individual States.

As to the future Peace Conference, the Committee emphasized that the widest possible representation of the people should be assured. Taking up the proposals made by various Sections, it recommended National Sections to get into contact with different groups of scientists and technicians in their countries asking them to study and bring up to date all plans for peace made hitherto: Peace must be prepared as scientifically as only war has been up to now! It was also decided to interest other women's associations for holding an International Women's Conference at the time and place of the future Peace Conference, so as to present women's contribution to a New Peace.

Of the numerous other questions dealt with which lack of space forbids to go into, the following may be mentioned:

A very interesting report by a British member on the situation in India was read and the Executive passed a resolution (see p.4) thus supporting the appeal the British Section had made to its Government some time before.

Letters were sent from the Executive to the French Information Ministry and to the British Broadcasting Corporation expressing appreciation that up to now they had abstained from inciting hatred against the German people, and the hope that they would continue to do so. National Sections were urged to form Women's Commissions on Radio in their respective countries, on the model of the U.S.A. Commission, which shall watch broadcasting and see to it that the standards of humanity be maintained, and press for the diffusion of news on constructive peace work.

A letter of sympathy was sent to the Finnish Section and a message addressed to Mr. Benes.

The Committee honoured the memory of Mrs. Swanwick and Mrs. Despard of England and of Dr. William Hull, U.S.A., who passed away lately.

The Chairman, in closing the meeting, gave voice to the general feeling when she said: "It was good to meet and to discuss together the problems which occupy all our minds. We can take to our Sections the good message of our firm resolve to stand together on the principles for which the W.I.L.P.F. has worked for more than 20 years. We do not know when and where we shall meet again, but though we may be separated by distance, we shall know of each other that we are working for the same ideal."

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L.B.

Statements and Resolutions
adopted by the International Executive Committee:

3.

RECALL TO REASON

The International Executive Committee of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom meeting in Geneva, December 5-9, 1939, declares:

In a world at war we come together to seek the road towards peace in a world founded on justice and freedom.

We recognise that the Governments of the world have persistently refused to use peaceful means for the adjustment of international disputes and for the remedying of injustices.

As a result of this we find ourselves again involved in wars which threaten to engulf the world and destroy civilisation. Brutality and aggression seem to dominate the world and the freedom of men is in many places blotted out.

Nevertheless, even in this moment of chaos, we believe in the essential dignity and sanity of mankind, and we believe that out of the present disorder a new and better world can and will arise.

We reaffirm our conviction that the method of war is impotent to bring either justice or the foundation of peace and freedom into being.

We therefore appeal to women everywhere to maintain their belief in methods of reason and to work for the employment of these methods in the settlement of political, economic and social conflicts and for the safeguarding of human rights.

Further we urge that the Governments of the neutral countries should at this time with patience and with persistence seek avenues for mediation taking opportunities to open the way to negotiation.

And more especially we appeal to the President of the United States of America to call a Conference of all neutral countries having as its aim the putting forward of recommendations to the belligerent countries for the ending of conflict on such terms as will secure a just and durable peace.

SOVEREIGN RIGHTS

The International Executive Committee of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom meeting in Geneva, December 5-9, 1939, states:

The post-war period has never been one of real peace, in part because of injustices in the Peace Treaties and the interpretation of the treaties by the victor nations.

An attempt was made to assure through a League of Nations freedom for certain small nations without the realization that no true association of nations can function without surrender of certain sovereign rights and ideas of sovereignty and prestige.

The rise of the doctrine of supremacy of the State in certain countries has destroyed completely the conception of the rights of the individual and all freedom has been extinguished.

Therefore, if there is to be a peace which shall be just and durable, there must be a League or Association of countries which are prepared to

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surrender a part of their sovereign rights and to make concessions in the interest of the community of nations even if apparently opposed to their national interests.

If there is to be freedom, peace must be based on the acceptance by all countries concerned of the principle of individual human rights.

COMPOSITION OF PEACE CONFERENCE

The International Executive Committee of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom meeting in Geneva, December 5-9, 1939,

urges most strongly that at a Conference which will eventually determine the Terms of Peace, the widest possible representation of the people shall be assured.

INDIA

The International Executive Committee of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom meeting in Geneva, December 5-9, 1939,

earnestly hopes that the Government of Great Britain will soon recognise the claim of India to enter on a footing of equality into the Comity of Nations in accordance with the conception of Justice and Freedom expressed in Parliament by its Statesmen.

PROTEST AGAINST FORCIBLE TRANSFER OF POPULATIONS

The International Executive Committee of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom meeting in Geneva, December 5-9, 1939,

protests strongly against the forcible removal and resettlement of groups for political purposes. It is a barbaric proceeding to tear human beings from their homeland against their will, and is a denial of those human rights on which alone the natural and peaceful life of the nations can be built.

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From a Letter

from Mildred S. Olmsted, National Organisation Secretary, U.S.A.

Dear Editor: " So many branches of the W.I.L.P.F. United States Section have been doing interesting things that it is hard to select the projects to describe in this letter. You may find that some of these peace activities could be adopted or modified to suit the abilities of branches and groups on other continents.

The New York Branch has established the Jane Addams Peace School with six courses: Public speaking, Organization methods and techniques, Principles of Peace education and war propaganda, Non-Violence in an aggressive world, Alternatives to War, and Economics of war and peace. The classes are in the evening, and cost \$ 2.- for one, \$ 3.- for two classes a week, per semester. There should be such a school in each large center of population. Swarthmore, Pa. is experimenting with a Peace Center with regular office hours for consultation.

The Fairfield, Conn. Branch concentrated last year on labor problems and has under way an excellent study course in ten sections, each with its own bibliography, covering: the History and Leaders of the Labor Movement, Past and Present, the Importance of Labor to the Peace Movement, the Danger of War Preparations to Labor, Methods of Dealing with Labor, and United States Membership in the International Labor Office.

The Minnesota State Branch has carried their interest in labor into the practical field, and established a Voluntary Work Camp. (A report in this issue of the News-Letter gives details on this very interesting experiment.) The Wilkes Barre, Pa., Branch has prepared a seven-page skit showing right and wrong ways of setting committees to work which they gave before the State Annual Meeting. The Denver, Colorado Branch has done a great deal to develop better understanding of the many races represented in that part of the world.

The California State Branch made a strong appeal that "every branch set up a new branch" - which is producing fruit in the organization of a new Long Beach-San Pedro and "Harbor area" branch in Southern California. The Pennsylvanian State Branch has undertaken to enlist 1000 new members and has 327 women working in teams in different parts of the state in arranging a series of small, informal teas for non-members in private homes. They have passed the half-way mark, and report that one of the most interesting results of their efforts is the number of former members - some of whom have been "lapsed" for eight or ten years - who are re-joining as a result of personal visits. They hope to follow up with a succession of meetings, especially for new members, at which questions about W.I.L.P.F. history and policies will be discussed. The California Branch sends a letter of welcome and a packet of "background" material to every new member.

I draw your attention to a Monthly Review of Peace Literature published by The National Peace Conference under such headings as "American Foreign Policy", "Europe", "Latin America", "National Defence", and "International Organization".

We are proud of the fine and beautiful spirit with which W.I.L.P.F. Sections and Groups over there are carrying on. My greatest hope is that we may show up as well if we are ever put to the test

Minnesota Volunteer Work Camp - by H.B. Wilcox.

A deep appreciation of the value of the coming to grips with some of the real problems of life, more intimately than is permitted in the classroom, was felt by both students and directors who participated in the two-weeks' work camp at the St. Louis County 4-H Club Camp, Sept. 1-14. This was the poignant period when the fateful news of the war in Europe was coming in over the radio producing an undercurrent of heightened communicativeness which resulted in a bond of fellowship and offset the worst depressive effects of the outbreak of war.

The PLAN was for a selected group of 20 - 30 young people of college age: To live cooperatively together near the iron range in the midst of an area of economic tension and readjustment. To work on community projects of social significance involving physical labor.

To study the varied problems of the area under leaders expert in their fields and thoroughly familiar with the local social and industrial problems.

To discuss these problems with employers and workers; civic, educational and labor leaders.

To seek to understand the conflicting forces of the region under the guidance of the Camp Director.

Together, To work out the non-violent approach to these social problems.

The human problems of northern Minnesota are mainly those of a laboring population - first and second generations of imported immigrants from northern Europe - thrown out of work in the iron mines by the increased use of machinery and electrification, trying to subsist in cut-over land denuded of its rich timber resources, and too rocky, sandy or swampy for good agricultural purposes. 28% of the people are on relief in St. Louis County, one of the richest counties in the world in raw natural resources. Resettlement on small farms in the better agricultural areas, and, in addition, the consumer cooperative movement were discussed as possible solutions. We were acutely aware of the need for more time to make the problems vital in human terms to young people from an entirely different, city, environment. However, this project under the direction (at different times) of a State, a county and a federal forester gave ample opportunity for instruction in some of the basic principles of woodcraft, conservation and scientific reforestation.

Organization: On the first day of camp the students organized themselves, electing a chairman, a secretary and a librarian. One of the students came provided with a typewriter and published a camp newspaper with some thought-provoking contributions.

Work projects included weeding and care of the extensive shrubbery around the building and grounds and the rock amphitheatre on the lake shore. Dead trees were removed over several acres, trimmed and stacked in piles. The last three days were devoted to planting about 1000 young trees over this same area, including a number of varieties. All the students shared in the work of the camp. The results in improvement in cooperative living were most gratifying to the directors as well as to the students whose own interest in seeing the project continued was manifested in their determination to organize an alumni association to help promote the camp for another year.

Testimonials: An unsolicited letter from one of the students expressed his appreciation for his personal growth in seeing the need for the application of non-violent methods in any situation! "Before I went to camp I was a 'fair weather' pacifist. Now I am a pacifist!... My belief is that peace cannot be attained through violence no matter how necessary it may seem at a vital moment." The role of pacifists in war time was discussed the last Sunday morning with Dean Milton D. McLean, who commented that a "truly educational atmosphere" was maintained at the camp. He was delighted with the freedom and earnestness of discussion of problems among the students.

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Scandinavian Women's Appeal to the President of the
League of Nations Assembly, Geneva, December 1939:

" Peace Committee of Scandinavian Women of the Left, constituted in a meeting at Stockholm December 3, wishes to express with its unshakable will for Peace its conviction that conflicts can never be solved by resort to violence and that, consequently, the struggle between democratic States and totalitarian States cannot be solved either by force of arms. With infinite sadness we protest against war which is sowing suffering and hatred and we respectfully turn to you, Mr. President, asking that the League of Nations try to get hostilities suspended so as to prepare a general conference which should meet, without preconceived ideas, with the sole aim of bringing about peace. Since women have to bear the burden of war just as much as men and as their work is indispensable for the reconstruction of the world, we ask that they be represented at such a conference in the same proportion as men and that women holding the ideas expressed above be represented among them. "

This telegram was signed by well-known women among whom Juli Arenholt and Anna Westergaard from Denmark, Marie Lous-Mohr and Sigrid Helliesen-Lund from Norway and Ada Nilsson, Elin Wägner, Elisabeth Tamm and Dr. Sahlbom from Sweden.

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Women's Peace Procession in Norway.

On Sunday, December 10th — the date which was in former years known as the day of the distribution of the Nobel Prize, over 20 women's organisations went in silent procession through Oslo and held a big mass meeting for Peace and Reconciliation between nations.

The meeting was opened by Manny Altern who appealed to all women to take a personal and active part in the struggle for goodwill between nations, and reminded the women present of the great importance of public opinion. The first speaker, the president of the Y.W.C.A. asked: "What can we do?" and answered, that, according to her personal experience, women can start to contribute their share at once beginning with the education of the children and the youth by giving them examples of the application of truth and kindness. Women have a great responsibility and in speaking about nations, personalities and the events of our time they must always endeavour to be neutral.

Architect Odd Nansen spoke of the ever growing number of refugees and of the ideals and ideas of humanity and charity so cynically attacked and violated by the forces of brutality and violence. The president of the Norwegian Section of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Marie Lous-Mohr, appealed to the Women of the Northern countries and all the women of the world to help to stop the war. " We must ask for negotiation NOW before hatred makes a cleft between the peoples which cannot be bridged. Let us implore the belligerents to establish peace and reconciliation between them at once, "

CHARLOTTE DESPARD *

Charlotte Despard died at the end of November 1939 in her 96th year.

In the Iron-Age of technical science, in which violence and war fury are raging, thinking men and women can no longer grow old "in beauty", i.e. in quiet and wise clearness. To-day the lips of those growing old whisper: "Those whom the Gods love are allowed to die young." What a sad testimony against the totalitarian States run by men.

Charlotte Despard came from a rich, feudal Scotch family. Her father was Captain French, well-known under the name of "Sea-bear". Her brother Sir John French, later Earl of Ypres was, after the world war, military Governor of Ireland.

From her early youth Charlotte was independent and self-reliant. Birth, family-ties and traditions were nothing to her, she wanted to shape her own life. At the age of 16 she loved and married a sick man, the Irishman Maximilian Despard. The greatest part of the twenty years of her married life were spent in travelling about the world and she acquired great knowledge of countries and people.

After the death of her husband she devoted her whole strength to the good of mankind, to Freedom, Justice, Peace. Better education of the people was a permanent concern with her from her earliest youth; she served on Boards of Guardians and on the London School Board and founded the Lambeth Working Men's Club.

She fought passionately for political equality of women. Because she refused systematically to contribute to national taxation while representation was denied her, her goods were seized and sold on several occasions. Several times she went to prison. Numerous deputations were led by her through the streets of London and she succeeded in obtaining entrance to the House of Commons.

She also worked passionately for the independence of Ireland. She was a friend of De Valera, who had been condemned to death and was later released under amnesty.

All international and national movements for Peace found in her a vigorous supporter. She attended the international congresses of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, whose work and aims she held in high esteem, at Zürich in 1919 and at Dublin in 1926.

Even in the last years of her life she took part in "No More War" Processions in Hyde Park; in 1933 she raised her voice there warning people against Hitler.

The life, action and outward appearance of Charlotte Despard were all of one cast — inflexible when the safeguarding of Justice, Freedom and Peace was concerned. Tall, slim, carrying herself straight even in her old age, with her high forehead and sharply-cut nose she made a strong impression on all who met her. She will remain in the memory of those who knew her as a vigorous and heroic woman. In times to come there will be great need of women like her in all countries.

L.G.H.

H.M. SWANWICK

In the death of Mrs. H.M. Swanwick on November 15 last the Women's International League in Great Britain has lost a loyal friend, a most able leader and an irreplaceable link with its early days.

The international movement too owed much directly or indirectly to her initiative and wise counsel. Over a period she constantly served on the International Executive, and attended Congresses and Summer Schools. Those who were at Salzburg in 1921, realised that it owed much of its success to her presence.

She threw herself naturally and whole-heartedly into play and work, and leavened any group where she found herself with her sincerity of purpose, enjoyment in the struggle we were all engaged in, and her conviction that the cause of building up a world at peace was the greatest of all causes.

Her penetrating intellect, her warm human sympathies and her disinterestedness and entire lack of self-seeking, inspired her contribution to our work.

We have had women to lead us, of whom the term "great" is not too high a claim - Mrs. Swanwick was a great woman.

K.E.I.
