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AN EXPERIMENT IN A
SECONDARY SCHOOL

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LEAGUE OF NATIONS UNION
15 GROSVENOR CRESCENT, S.W.1

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AN EXPERIMENT IN A SECONDARY SCHOOL

IN the Secondary Schools, as in the Universities, the Training Colleges and the Elementary Schools, we are faced with the problem of how best to train our pupils to play their part in the new world which the League of Nations is helping to shape. League instruction in Secondary Schools may be given in two ways, in the ordinary course of school lessons and through a Junior Branch of the League of Nations Union. Both methods are in use in the Central Foundation Girls' School where I teach, and I have been asked to pass on to-day any little experience we have been able to gather in the course of the last three years.

The League of Nations has, by common consent, the closest links with the History and Geography lesson. I hope I shall not be suspected of a lukewarm attitude towards the League of Nations, which is very far from being the case, if I say that in giving their lessons, the History and Geography teachers should think first of the claims of their subjects, and only secondarily of the claims of the League. If we go to our classes, as enthusiasts are sometimes tempted to do, and see how often we can "bring the League in," we shall be in danger of distorting our facts and losing our sense of proportion. If, on the other hand, we consider the demands of our subjects, we shall see that it is one of the first duties of the History or Geography teacher to explain the world in which the child lives, and give him some idea of how it came into being. Now even to the outsider, the existence of the League of Nations is one of the great new facts of the world; the History teacher is bound to explain how it came into existence and what it has done, while the Geography teacher frequently comes in contact with it. If he speaks of the new industrial developments in India or Japan, he must certainly refer to the changes which the International Labour Organisation is making in these countries;

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when he comes to Palestine, or Mesopotamia, or far-off Samoa, he cannot escape some reference to the mandatory system. In fact, without an adequate knowledge of the League of Nations, the History or Geography teacher is quite unable to interpret the world intelligently, so that if we consider the demands which these subjects make on the teacher, the League scores much more heavily than if we consider the League's claims on the teacher. It ought not to be necessary for the League's Assembly, or for the League of Nations Union, to beg for League instruction in the Schools. The nature of their work demands that efficient up-to-date History and Geography teachers should have a knowledge of the League and its work as part of their equipment, and should pass on that knowledge as part of their duty.

The most satisfactory way we have found of explaining the League at the Central Foundation Girls' School is by means of Lantern Lectures. We have a set of slides,* and with their help very clear, definite and connected lessons can be given on the League. In the quiet atmosphere of the classroom its difficulties as well as its triumphs can be discussed in a way that is hardly possible in large Junior Branch meetings, and a scholarly knowledge of the League can be acquired which may prove of great service at a time of national crisis.

Another thing for which the League of Nations Union has begged, and which is obviously desirable on purely educational grounds, is the teaching of World History in general and of European movements in particular. The best critics of History teaching have long advocated this, partly because of the intrinsic importance of these subjects, partly on the grounds that the history of our own country can never be properly understood until it is put in its world setting. Any History teacher, therefore, who is a League enthusiast can satisfy both his heart

* Particulars of the League of Nations Union Lantern Lecture can be obtained on application to the Secretary, League of Nations Union, 15 Grosvenor Crescent, London, S.W.1.

and his conscience by teaching World History, and the help it will afford to a fuller understanding of the peoples of the world, and of the unity of civilisation, will be no small one.

Other subjects besides History and Geography can be combined with League instruction, to their mutual profit. If the Mathematics master is interested in the League the facts and figures which he is always meeting in League literature will serve him very usefully when he wants materials for graphs, or for problems in Arithmetic and Algebra. If the drill mistress is enthusiastic about the League, her interest in foreign countries will suggest that foreign dances harmonise well with the English folk-dance. Two years ago we had a series of national dances in costume, and were surprised to see the light some of them threw on national character. The same thing was true when we had a series of songs from our own and other lands in connection with a Geography competition; not only did the traits of other nations stand out, but our own national character received illumination from the force of contrast. The League of Nations seems to bring a new and wider point of view into school life, and to enrich most subjects in the curriculum to which it gains an entrance.

Though children in the ordinary course of their lessons can thus learn a great deal about the history and work of the League of Nations, and about other nations and their characteristics, the Junior branch of the League of Nations Union is an immense additional help, for it binds together pieces of knowledge received from many sources into one intelligible whole, and in many cases makes the children as eager to learn as their teachers are to teach. Besides this, it has the additional value, which class-teaching hardly provides, of making the children feel that the League belongs to them, and that its success or failure is bound up with them. They pay their small yearly subscription, they often wear the penny badge, and feel as much a member of the League of Nations Union as Lord Cecil himself. He does his part, they do theirs, and any failure in anyone weakens the whole weight of opinion behind the League. In our own Branch,

far from any waning of enthusiasm, we notice a deepening seriousness and sense of responsibility as time goes on, a feeling of union with something large and fateful, which not only makes the Branch more efficient, but helps to deepen the character of the girls themselves.

But though in all study of League work there must be an underlying seriousness, there is scope in a Junior Branch of the League of Nations Union for plenty of fun and gay activity. At the very outset, when our branch was formed, the mistresses in charge determined never to make the study of the League dull if they could possibly help it, and I think that the girls have never found it so. One of the advantages of Junior Branch work over class-room teaching lies in the fact that it is so much more attractive. The other day I was asking a girl, who left school last summer, which she thought the better medium of League instruction, the Junior Branch or the ordinary lesson. She at once replied: "Well, you see, there's the psychological effect to be considered." Much impressed, I waited attentively to receive the deep truth which I thought she was about to propound, but she went on: "Of course, the girls like the League much better if they feel 'Oh! how jolly! We're going to have a League of Nations tea this afternoon,' than if they have to learn a lot about the League for homework." We have a League of Nations tea every year, for which the girls themselves pay, and invite a speaker from the League of Nations Union Headquarters to give an address. Visitors from the outside world are always a treat, and the speaker is especially appreciated, as he never fails to allow an opportunity for asking questions, which the girls regard as one of the best features of the whole evening. Next year we hope to have a birthday party for the League as near January 10 as possible, and a birthday cake with five coloured candles to represent each year of the League's life. It is easy to despise such trivialities, but, after all, it is the little things of life which often make the difference between success and failure. At any rate, the girls are staunch upholders of the League, and are for ever giving proofs of their eagerness to

help it. Practically every girl in the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Forms joins the branch, about 200 in all. We have no room for the smaller girls, though they sometimes say reproachfully, "Why can't we join the League of Nations Union?" Though it distresses us to be obliged to refuse them, yet it gives the Junior Branch all the attractiveness of forbidden fruit, and when the girls reach the Fourth Form they eagerly seize the longed-for opportunity to join it.

The greatest advantage that a School Branch can have is the sympathy and support of the Headmaster or Headmistress, an advantage which our Branch is fortunate enough to possess in the fullest measure. But a great additional help is a strong committee of boys or girls, who will help the Staff to carry on the work of the Branch, and make themselves really responsible for its success. We have two representatives from each Form on the committee, and not only do they make admirable suggestions at the committee meetings, but largely on their own initiative they have made themselves responsible for keeping their Forms up to date in League subjects. Every week they copy the latest news of the League on a League news-sheet, which hangs in their classroom, and which often presents rather a funny mixture of news. One week you may see that the King and Queen of Roumania have visited the League Headquarters at Geneva, the next that Mary Smith, an Old Girl, has become assistant financial secretary in her Branch of the League of Nations Union; chatty paragraphs about the Old Girls' work and the latest news of our own Branch are mingled with all that the League itself is doing. Still, the news-sheet has plenty of human interest, and helps the girls to realise the unity existing between their little efforts and those of the great workers in the League. In Needlework lessons, instead of the book that is generally read, a committee member will sometimes rise and tell all the latest news of the League to her class, or in a History lesson will deliver a little speech or read a paper on some important new development, such as the Treaty of Mutual Assistance. We hailed the appearance of the Quarterly News-sheet for the Young issued by the

League of Nations Union last April with great joy; it is only 3s. 6d. a hundred, so every girl can have a copy, and it should do much to keep her knowledge up to date.

Half the fruit of Junior Branch work will be thrown away if the girls are not encouraged and helped to join the Adult Branches of the League of Nations Union in their locality on leaving school. Almost all our girls wish to do so, and we see that there is no break in their membership, but write as soon as possible to the Secretary of the Branch they are joining to introduce them, and say what work they are fitted for. Lately, we have been doing a good deal in the way of finding work for them, as, of course, the people who work for the League are those who really care for it. Some of the Old Girls give most devoted service and are getting astonishing results in the shape of new members. One girl of seventeen has been attacking family after family of cousins, all of whom seem to have scoffed at first at the idea of anyone so young being interested in so serious a subject. However, she has won them over and gained eighteen new members in the last three or four months. Another girl is going through her church, asking everyone to belong, from the Vicar downwards. He is already a member, but she wrote the other day to say she had got the Curate! Last February we held the first of what we hope will be a series of yearly gatherings at school for former mistresses and girls who have joined the League of Nations Union. Several of them made little speeches, and told us about their work, and we discussed what Branches needed help, and how we could best get new members. We have been conscious of the stimulus which that meeting gave, both to their work and ours, ever since.

Perhaps the greatest source of inspiration a Branch can possess is a League song. My colleague, Miss Rosenberg, who is responsible with me for the organisation of our Branch, and who has made many admirable suggestions which have borne good fruit, suggested to one of our girls, Esther Staub, who was then sixteen years old, that she should write a song for the Branch. She did so, and we sing it at every meeting

and have found it a wonderful help. Personally, I feel that most of my enthusiasm for the League was due in the first instance to that song. We were very proud when the League of Nations Union printed it last March, and are glad to know that several other schools are using it now. If you will allow me, in conclusion, to read the last verse of the song, you will see that it expresses, in a rather charming way, the hopes we all have for the future of the League, and for the part that the children will play in building it up:—

“Then come, O ye children, belov’d, ever-dear,
And see the great radiance of Peace drawing near.
Ye young of the earth,
Thrice-blessed from birth,
’Tis ye who shall welcome her here!
Peace! Peace!
The song shall not fail when we’re gone!
Then sing, nations, sing
At the message we bring,
The children shall carry it on!”

LEAGUE OF NATIONS UNION JUNIOR BRANCHES

The best way to ensure in the coming generation a strong public opinion on behalf of the League of Nations and just international politics, is to develop in the children of to-day an intelligent understanding of these subjects. Probably this is best done by forming school, or junior, branches of the League of Nations Union. The mere act of joining such a society must help to create an interest in the League and a desire on the part of members to get to know what the League is and for what it stands.

ORGANISATION

- (1) A junior branch of the League of Nations Union may be formed in any school or educational institution attended by pupils over 12 years of age; it should be constituted in a similar way to other School Societies in a manner convenient to the authorities and in general conformity with the Rules of the Union.
- (2) Any person connected with the School or Educational Institution may become a member of the branch. Members over 16 years of age pay annually at least the Union's ordinary annual membership subscription of 1s., but one of the following schemes may be adopted for pupils under 16:
 - (a) Each pupil to pay an annual membership subscription of an amount decided upon locally but not less than 3d.; the branch to pay annually to Union Headquarters a capitation fee of 3d. for each member and 7s. 6d. a year for *Headway*, the monthly journal of the Union and various other publications supplied for the use of the branch. (The first payment of this literature fee of 7s. 6d. need not be made till the branch has been in existence a year.)
 - (b) If it is not deemed advisable to ask pupils to pay annually a certain fixed amount, the sum of £1 may be collected each year and sent to Union Headquarters as a joint capitation fee for the whole branch.
- (3) A register of members should be kept by the branch and if system 2 (a) has been adopted, membership cards should be issued to all members. Blank membership cards will be supplied free from Union Headquarters for this purpose as soon as the branch is ready for "recognition."
- (4) A junior branch will be "recognised" by the Executive Committee of the Union, and the despatch to the Secretary for the use of the branch of *Headway* and other publications will be commenced, so soon as a suitable number of members have been enrolled and the capitation fees referred to in 2 (a) and 2 (b) above have been received at Union Headquarters.
- (5) When a branch is "recognised" the Executive Committee will issue a Certificate of Constitution which, they trust, will be displayed in a prominent place in the School.

WORK

LECTURES.—The main object of a junior branch being to stimulate interest in the League of Nations and world affairs, one of the first tasks of the branch should be to arrange for a series of lectures on the League—its origin, constitution, achievements and possibilities. Such information can be given in an attractive form by means of the lantern lecture prepared by the League of Nations Union, particulars of which can be obtained on application, as can also details of available lecturers.

LITERATURE.—Adequate provision should be made by junior branches for some of the simpler publications of the Union to be given their members, such as the quarterly *News Sheet* and the quarterly *League News for the Young*; *An Insurance Against War* (Pamphlet No. 66, 3d.); *Some Questions and Answers* (Leaflet No. 21A, 9d. per 100); *The Fight for Peace* (Stories about the League of Nations, 2s.); *Peggy and the League of Nations* (1s.); *The First Fruits of the League* (Leaflet No. 74, 1d.—7s. 6d. per 100); *A Vital Question* (Leaflet No. 20, 1s. 6d. per 100); *The Covenant Explained* (Pamphlet No. 34, 6d.); *Some Side Shows* (Leaflet No. 93, 1s. per 100); *The Wonderful League* (Leaflet No. 24, 2d.); *The Blue-Eyed Infant*, popular misconceptions about the League (Pamphlet No. 118, 1d.); *Human Welfare and the League* (No. 155, 3d.). These publications can all be obtained from the Head Office of the Union, 15 Grosvenor Crescent, S.W.1.

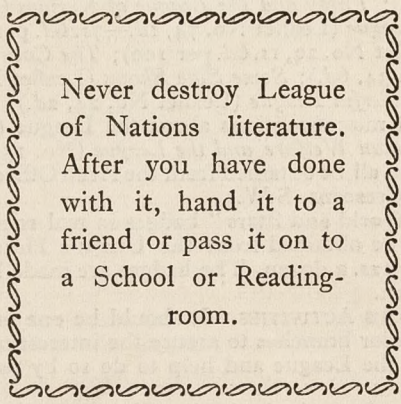
BADGES. "World and Stars" badges in real enamel and white metal can also be obtained from the Union's Head Office, price 1s. 3d. each or 12s. a dozen. The badges are made both in brooch and stud pattern.

MISCELLANEOUS ACTIVITIES. It should be one of the duties of members of junior branches to arouse the interest of their parents and friends in the League and help to do so by passing on their literature.

After the members of a junior branch have had the opportunity of getting to know about the facts of the League, the branch should embark upon some other activities in order to sustain interest in the League, such as:—

- (1) The performance of one of the pageants published by the Union, e.g., "The Crowning of Peace."
- (2) Arranging for the interchange of correspondence with pupils in schools abroad—particularly American schools.
- (3) Taking part in essay competitions on the League.
- (4) Taking part in public meetings and local demonstrations on behalf of the League.
- (5) The holding of a Model Assembly—now becoming a popular feature with junior branches in just the same way as a Model Parliament is a feature of the activities of a school debating society.
- (6) The frequent holding of debates, at which it should always be the duty of the Chairman to give a brief account of the activities of the League of Nations since the last meeting of the branch.

The League of Nations literature is a valuable asset to the world's peace-loving people. It contains the records of the League's work and the views of its members on the most important international questions. It is a record of the League's efforts to bring about a more just and peaceful world. It is a record of the League's efforts to bring about a more just and peaceful world. It is a record of the League's efforts to bring about a more just and peaceful world.



Never destroy League
of Nations literature.
After you have done
with it, hand it to a
friend or pass it on to
a School or Reading-
room.