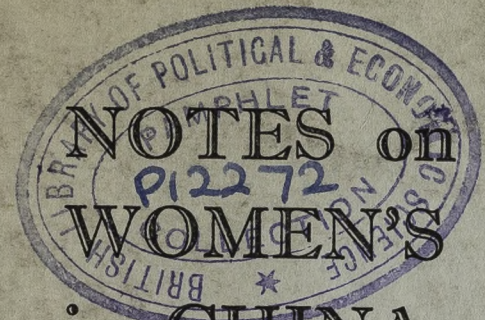


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NOTES on the  
WOMEN'S MOVEMENT  
in CHINA, 1928

By  
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WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE  
55, GOWER STREET  
LONDON, W.C. 1  
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## FOREWORD

A group of women of many nationalities, belligerent and neutral, meeting at the Hague in 1915 conceived the idea of an international league of women who throughout the world would work for the abolition of war as a means of settling international disputes, and for the promotion of that atmosphere of friendliness, understanding and respect for the point of view of other nations which makes peace real and possible. From this meeting arose the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom which since that time has been at work in many lands. Women of each National Section, working to promote its ideals, have the support of the other national groups, and the encouragement and inspiration of the International Executive, elected at the triennial International Congresses.

In the Spring of 1927 it still looked as though the peace of the world might be seriously threatened in the Far East. The Executive Committee, always on the watch for ways in which any action by women might help towards international understanding and peace, decided to send a delegation of its members to China, to get into touch with Chinese Women.

To Ireland in 1920 the British Section of the League had sent a delegation bearing an assurance of affection and sympathy from English women to their Irish sisters, which had had a marked effect in reconciliation and in friendly understanding, and the remembrance of this helped in the decision. It was realised how very little was known of Chinese women and their point of view, and it was felt that a delegation of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, representing women of twenty-four different nations, would assure the women of the East that western women were thinking of them with interest and sympathy and that they wished to get into closer contact with them in order to understand their point of view.

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Woman - History and condition of women.

The delegates appointed were Camille Drevet of the French Section, Kathryn Clark (resident in China), of the American Section, and the writer, a member of the British Section.

We arrived in Shanghai in December, 1927. Mrs. Clark had already made contact with the Joint Committee of Women's Organisations, and we were very glad to learn of the co-operation already firmly established between western women resident there and some groups of Chinese women. This Committee, which exists "to foster in all ways possible, friendly international understanding, to aid in civic movements and to promote the welfare of women and children of all nationalities in Shanghai," is an outcome of the valuable work of a committee of members of women's organisations directed towards the regulation of child labour in Shanghai. Women of differing nationalities found in their common work for the help of children a basis for co-operation and mutual understanding of incalculable value in international relations.

In the Committee and its individual groups and members we recognised an increasingly active force working towards international understanding and good-will.

Thanks to the help of our Chinese friends in Shanghai, Nanking, Peking, Hankow and Canton, we were able during our three months' stay in these centres to see an immense amount of their life that was of the deepest interest. We met with women of many different points of view and the following account of what we saw of the women's movement is compiled from careful notes taken at the time. Incomplete and fragmentary as it necessarily is, perhaps it may lead some who are interested to study the movement in China and be ready to give it sympathy and practical help.

The kindness, hospitality and help which we received from women of all nationalities were truly wonderful, and we hope that all of them who read this will accept our warm and grateful thanks.

E. M. P.

## WHAT WE SAW OF THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN CHINA.

WHEN one speaks of the position of women in China to-day, it must be remembered that one is speaking of a land in which all stages of civilization are represented and where the distances and difficulties of travelling are so great that it may take six weeks or two months to get from one part of it to another. Hence what is only a rumour frowned upon severely in one part of China may be an accomplished fact and working well in another part.

Without a knowledge of Chinese and a much longer time than we had to spare it would be impossible to give any picture of women in those parts of China to which modern thought had not yet penetrated, though from what we heard on all sides and from the fact that one hundred million newspapers were conveyed through the post in 1925,\* these parts are becoming rapidly more rare. Our message was to be given to as many women as we could reach to whom the West had become a menacing reality, and so our contacts were mainly with those who already knew something about other countries.

It is impossible to deny the influence of western thought upon the origin and development of the women's movement, wrapped up as it is with the question of the education of women.

Until 1844 there were no schools for girls in China, and the first modern school for girls was established by a Mission at Ningpo in that year. Between that time and 1860, eleven other mission schools for girls were opened in the five treaty ports. The first girls' school established by Chinese effort was opened in Shanghai in 1897, and since 1901 others have been opened. In 1907 the Ministry of Education, established in 1905 under

\* "China Year Book, 1928."

the Manchu dynasty, included for the first time in its system of modernized education an edict containing 36 regulations for girls' normal schools (Teachers' Training Schools) and 20 for girls' elementary schools. In 1911 China became a republic, and the Minister for Education in 1912 made the following pronouncement:—

“The firmness of the foundation upon which the Republic of China has been founded depends on education. We must, hereafter, make our best effort to develop and encourage women's education as well as that for men. We must emphasize and provide for social as well as school education.”\*

By this date the leaven of education had already been working and a group of women presented to the Provisional Government in Nanking demands for equal rights in government, education, marriage, and the prohibition of slavery and concubinage.† But it was not until the great awakening movement of 1919, called by some the Chinese Renaissance, by others the New Tide, that the women's movement in China took on an impetus which is only checked temporarily by the uncertainty of political conditions.

To those who have known something of the struggle of western women to be allowed equal opportunity of education and profession, the situation there to-day is particularly interesting. For every door has been thrown wide open to Chinese women by the men, and one has even a glimpse occasionally of a pushing through this open door of a not-quite-equipped candidate almost against her will, so eager are the men to share responsibility. Is it because the long ages of civilised thought and teaching have lessened the possessive quality in the minds of educated Chinese? Certain it is that the most eager supporters of the women's movement in China are their husbands, sons and brothers. It is very difficult

\* “Women's Education in China,”—C. Y. Tang.

† “Chinese Recorder,” Oct., 1927.—Irene Dene.

to get any idea of the numbers of women affected by the movement, but as most of the able women leaders we saw appeared to be doing the work of at least two the need for larger numbers of well-educated women was very evident.

The three main channels into which these women are throwing their energy are education, social work (including medical), and politics. Outside of these we met isolated examples, such as, for instance, Miss Soumé Tchong, the very able woman lawyer; Miss Tchiang Ying, who is on the editorial staff of the famous Commercial Press in Shanghai, and is editor of a woman's magazine with a large circulation; Miss Nyieu Sok Woo, Manager of a Woman's Bank that has been so successful that it has had to move into larger premises; and Mrs. Sophie Chen Zen, a writer for the press both in English and Chinese, who is a keen pacifist and internationalist. But these were exceptions.

#### WOMEN IN EDUCATION.

It is in the educational field that the Women's Movement is perhaps making its most lasting mark in China, and while western influence has been extremely important, especially in secondary and higher education of women, we were able to see some of the results of Chinese Teachers' Training Schools at work in municipal primary schools in Shanghai and Nanking. In one co-educational school we visited there were 700 boys and girls from kindergarten age to what looked like 16 or 17. There was a mixed staff, but the principal was an extremely capable woman who spoke no English. The kindergarten was entering with spirit into rhythmic dancing and action songs, taught by another woman with evident genius, and the smiles and sparkling eyes of the swaying groups of infants in their straight, stiff little padded dresses as they danced to the piano played by a colleague, showed the usefulness of the absorption of methods suitable to them by the able Chinese mind.

In the girls' department of another school of 1,400 children we found a statue to the memory of a former headmistress, and, as far as we could judge on our unannounced visit, education was being given by Chinese women teachers on thoroughly modern lines, the children being called up to demonstrate on the blackboard, and one class singing an action song in Chinese all about the way to live a healthy life!

Of the 400 Chinese teachers in the Shanghai Municipal Schools under the Nationalist Government, some 20 per cent. to 30 per cent. are women.

At a village co-educational school about seven or eight miles from Nanking, while there was a headmaster in charge, there were two young and charming women kindergarten students, and the keen and intelligent attitude of the little girls in the school was proof that their education was not being neglected.

In higher education very little provision has been made for women, but this has now been remedied by the throwing open of many of the Universities to women on the same terms as to men. So far not any very large number has taken advantage of this move, but we understood that it was chiefly a question of the provision of suitable dormitories, etc. In every university we visited there were a few women students, and they said that no difficulties had been experienced.

In higher education America has played a very important part in the provision of secondary schools and colleges for women in China and in sending Chinese women to colleges in the United States. If some of the institutions we saw seemed to us rather too western in arrangement in view of the future life of the students and the education too exclusively moulded on American models, there is no doubt that character building, towards which end the greatest efforts are made, has been successfully achieved, to judge by the able and devoted women, now leaders in the women's movement, who are the product of these schools and colleges.

As all mission schools within the provinces con-

trolled by the Nationalist Government must now have a Chinese Principal, old students are coming forward to shoulder the burden of direction, often at personal sacrifice of leisure and time, but being willing for their country's sake to work doubly hard to promote the education which they believe essential to its future.

At Yenching University, Peking, where the women's college has now been amalgamated with the men's university, the hundred women students have made for themselves certain rules which will help them over the period of adaptation of their relations with the men students, and the serious spirit in which they are setting to work to find a way through problems that must be very perplexing, is typical of the New China, as was the comradeship and gaiety that marked the relations between the older men and women students at a Teachers' Agricultural College of purely Chinese origin, where graduates were learning the theoretical and practical side of farming and country life together, so that they could teach and encourage it in the rural schools.

Both at Yenching and at Ginling College, which are mainly supported by American funds, the Chinese women professors seemed to us a particularly fine type with a wide outlook on social, educational and international problems.

We had from Shanghai College an interesting confirmation of the theory that Chinese women's brains are at least equal to those of the men. There are between six and seven hundred men students and one hundred girls. In last year's examination of the biology class of 140 mixed students the first five were all girls!

The "Mass Education" movement must necessarily play a very important part in the education of women and the opening up to them of the world of ideas outside their homes.

This movement is trying by a simplified system and intensive campaign to bring the knowledge of reading and writing to masses of the people throughout China,

both men and women. In one of the small towns, Chefoo, where the whole population appears to have turned out either to teach or to be taught, after one examination diplomas or certificates of being able to read were presented to 1,147 people, of whom 372 were girls and women. Three successive examinations have produced a total of 4,000 who hold the diploma of "literate citizen." These efforts are being made in many provinces and over four million of their text books have been sold.

Mrs. Hsiung Hsi Ling, one of the most remarkable women we met, is deeply interested in this movement and is the active collaborator of its Director in propaganda and organisation. She considers that education, especially of children in international thought and in the question of peace, is one of the most important problems facing them to-day.

We met many able women who are working in the educational field. Mrs. Chindon Yiu Tang is in charge of the Educational Extension Department of the State University of Nanking. When Secretary of the Committee on Women's Education of the Chinese National Association for the Advancement of Education, she wrote a very interesting statistical study of the subject, and is full of enthusiasm. In spite of the claims of her young family, she is giving enormous energy and her able mind to the solution of some of the urgent problems of education in China. Miss Kao Kim Shan, who is professor of education at the State University at Nanking, is also in the Central Ministry of Education and has charge of the examination and revision of text books used in elementary and secondary schools. Like Mrs. Tang, she obtained her degrees in America. Both of these women showed a grasp of their own and international problems that was very remarkable. Their power to look beyond the immediate future and their eager desire to work in friendship and understanding with other countries made one realise the power for good that lies behind the women's movement. These and many others whom we met

explain the confidence that exists in the future of education for women in that country.

The great need in China is for schools and more schools, and since these are now open to boys and girls alike, a public opinion so thirsty for education (as we saw) will see that the girls take full advantage of their opportunities.

#### WOMEN IN SOCIAL WORK.

In this field particularly the influence of the West has made itself felt, as until lately the experience and education necessary for its carrying out could only be gained through schools directed by western thought.

While in no way belittling the influence for good inherent in the religious and philosophic faiths indigenous in China, the practise and teaching of Christianity, with its inclusion of the larger family of humanity within the boundaries of family love and service, has had a very definite bearing upon social questions in that country. The spirit of self-sacrifice, understood and practised throughout the ages in respect to clan and family, has taken on a new and wider significance, and Christian Chinese are facing the huge problems of social reorganisation that confront them in this spirit.

The social work that has grown up in China during the last fifty years, carried on by western care and love for the Chinese people, has been the nucleus from which has grown the realization by them of some of the remedies for the social evils they see around them.

In so far as westerners were clear-sighted enough to perceive the ultimate effect of their work as a stimulus and an awakening to the people they were trying to help, it has been extraordinarily successful. The Nurses' Association of China is an example of this. Founded by western nurses in 1909, it has succeeded by the help of its members in raising the standard of nursing in China and has created a self-governing body of workers, 75 per cent. of whom are Chinese and who are tackling

with courage and determination some of the difficult health problems in China by the quiet individual method which alone can bring success. When in 1927 most of the foreign workers were withdrawn, many of the Chinese nurses in the 125 training schools up and down the country remained at their posts and devotedly carried on the hospital work and administration. We were present at a meeting of their Annual Conference in Shanghai to which fourteen provinces had sent over 100 delegates. The President, Miss Lillian Wu, is a Chinese nurse, but received her training in America, to which country the Association owes an immense amount of help. The proceedings were all in Chinese, and when during the speech of a Chinese doctor we caught the words Florence Nightingale and enquired what he was saying, we were told he was claiming her as the first *American* trained nurse, and their shining example! We saw something of the fine spirit that is training these nurses at the Peking Union Medical College, where we had the privilege of staying, and at the Margaret Williams Hospital in Shanghai, where, visiting babies in their homes with the Chinese public health nurse, one was delighted to recognise the same mixture of common sense and authority mixed with friendly chaff that appears to ensure obedience, gratitude and friendship from eastern as from western mothers. In Peking the public health nursing, or as we should call it, district nursing, is in charge of a Chinese nurse with a staff of 15, and the department is presided over by a very able Chinese woman doctor, Dr. Marion Yang, under whose scientific and creative direction continual progress is made.

The work of Chinese women doctors is extremely important, and there are said to be several hundreds practising, chiefly in the hospitals and nurse-training schools. The Hackett Medical College for Women, founded in Canton in 1899, has been steadily training them since that time; the Women's Christian Medical College, Shanghai, also grants medical degrees, and not a few Chinese women have qualified in America or Europe.

The throwing open to women of some of the Government universities and colleges that grant medical degrees throughout China will have a most important effect upon the number of women doctors available, as soon as the necessary secondary education leading up to it has been arranged. Such Chinese pioneers as Dr. Mary Stone and Dr. Ida Kahn are full of the spirit that can move mountains.

Another social force with creative vision for the future is the Y.W.C.A. of China. Within the framework of a western organisation a Chinese institution has been growing up year by year. When the testing time came and the supports had to go in many places, the ideals that had built it up kept it firmly rooted in Chinese life, and there seems no doubt of the immensely important part the organisation is destined to play in the future. In Nanking, where the troubles in the spring resulted in the loss of all the furniture of their little school and of their hostel, we asked them whether they were able to carry on at all. "We believe that Christianity means service to others," they said, and they had begun again to teach in the empty room, to restore their bath house for poor women, and to make of the hostel a home for the women workers in the new Government departments.

In Shanghai, in the classes for factory girls where the friendliest smiles and charming singing greeted us, in work among industrial women, among the children in the model village, teaching them how to play, they are spreading the ideas of service and sacrifice.

In Canton, the efforts of the Committee resulted in a magnificent building which houses a kindergarten, an elementary school, a technical school for girls, and on the top floor the club room for the Women's International Club, of which the president is a Chinese woman. In the grounds is a fine play-garden for the children of the city, as well as a recreation ground for the school. Energy and power of organisation of an unusual order must have gone into the management of the affairs of this



branch, and the same devoted spirit characterised the workers.

These are but specimens of what we understand can be seen in many cities throughout China. The international outlook of the work is hopeful indeed for the future, and the self-sacrifice and devoted support given to the Chinese leaders by the western secretaries, who are content to step down and follow where once they led, is a proof, if proof is wanted, of the spirit of service in which the Association is conceived.

Such women as Mrs. Mei and Miss Ting Hsu Ching, President and General Secretary of the National Association, Miss Law Tsit Yau of Canton and many others are certainly to be reckoned among those on whom the hopes of the women's movement are fixed. They are turning able minds, in co-operation with their western sisters, to the consideration of many urgent problems concerning women, and over the doors of the Chinese National Y.W.C.A. may rightly be fixed the notice which the Greek philosopher used to place above the lintel of his door, "Thinking done here."

The work of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, of which the President is Dr. Margaret Ling, a Chinese woman doctor, is chiefly concerned with propaganda against opium and other evils; but they also undertake practical work in an attempt to tackle the problem of the beggars of Shanghai. With great difficulty they have raised sufficient funds to obtain a cottage and build on to it a rough shelter which we saw, where they hope to house homeless women and girls while teaching them a trade such as spinning or embroidery. With their cry of "not charity but a chance to work" this association started five years ago to try and cope with the problem, and have made very valuable investigations into it. From these they drew conclusions encouraging them to make a start at the Shanghai Settlement House in giving daily industrial training to a small number of women and girls. The success in reclaiming women under this scheme has encouraged their under-

taking the more ambitious project. The secretaries seemed to have the courage and determination necessary for the handling of this tremendous problem, but the handicap of lack of funds and experience of institutions might well daunt less courageous souls. The fact that the problem is being tackled at its foundation in this way is of immense credit to the Chinese women who have conceived and carried on the work.

#### WOMEN IN INDUSTRY.

Of women in industry we saw but little. They have as yet few leaders, and while each individual factory or works was said to have its own union, where there were men and women employed, they were not separated in the union. But the violent reaction against Communist propaganda led to a disorganisation of industrial unions which made it apparently impossible during the time we were there to get in touch with them. The total number employed in industry is not yet very great and it is urgently to be hoped that the National Y.W.C.A. of China and the National Christian Council which is taking up this question, may be able, through a study of Women's Co-operation and Trade Union Movements in western countries that have bought their experience, to help Chinese industrial women to steer clear of some of the pitfalls that threaten them.

Mrs. Liao (a member of the Nationalist Government Council) and Miss Soumé Tcheng, before mentioned, attended the Pan Pacific Trade Union Conference in Hankow in June, 1927, as representatives, and there is no doubt that when conditions in China become settled the position of women in industry will come to the front.

We saw some of the conditions of their work in Shanghai in a Chinese cotton mill, a Chinese silk filature and a Chinese tobacco factory. In the first of these the conditions were good except for the long hours, and the manager was enlightened and anxious for welfare work among them. He told us that he had tried paying them

to come to be lectured to on Sunday afternoons, but that though they came they would not listen. No children were taken on there. There were comparatively few men in the tobacco factory, as the light work was done by children, the box making by women, and only the heavy work by men. The rooms occupied by women and children were light and well ventilated and warmed, and there seemed considerable freedom among the workers. The children especially got up from their seats and trotted about constantly and the shrill sound of their chattering and laughter filled the air. Some of the machines were worked by quite young girls to whom the rhythmic action required seemed already to have become natural.\*

The silk filature gave a very different impression. The steamy air, the heavy, weary faces of the young children standing before the bowls of hot water in which their sodden fingers dabble all day long, the firm turning back of little heads who looked round at us by the supervisor, who walked back and forth along the row of babes, made a picture on which one's thoughts dare not dwell.

In a Peking match factory, where girls and boys are employed, the concentration and rapidity of work were appalling to see in creatures so young. The poisonous phosphorus has been banished, so there is one danger the less, but even the fire engine, always ready in the yard, could not make one feel comfortable in a huge hall filled with children stuffing matches into boxes at tremendous speed with open coke stoves scattered about between them.

In the printing works of the Commercial Press at Shanghai, where there are several hundred women, the conditions were excellent. No children were employed, a comfortable and well-warmed nursery was provided for nursing mothers, the babes apparently being brought

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\* For an account of women's work in industry, see "Humanity and Labour in China."—Adelaide Anderson.

there by their grannies and taken away again. An eight hour day was the rule. In this establishment women clerks were employed in the counting house.

Our time was too short to do more than glance at the industrial situation and to realise that the question of industrial legislation within and without the International Settlement at Shanghai is an extremely complicated and difficult one. We felt, however, that an International Settlement that professed to be governed by western ideals and yet in which no kind of protection for workers was available since Chinese law does not apply there, and the Municipal Council had not evolved any of its own, was an anomaly that could not long be allowed to remain.

#### WOMEN IN POLITICS.

The revolution gave a great impetus to organisations among women for political purposes, and in 1922 the Women's Suffrage Association and Women's Rights League were founded in certain provinces of the South. Hunan was the first province to recognise equal rights for women in its constitution, and to the short-lived Parliament in Peking of 1921 returned a woman representative. In Kwantung to-day these two societies have amalgamated under the title of Women's Movement General Alliance, which has a number of groups scattered throughout the province and several thousand members, we were told. Its President, Mrs. Leung, lives in Canton. In May, 1927, this organisation sent out a message to "Feminist Organisations of Other Lands," in the course of which the members pledged themselves to work for their country, and stated that they were concerning themselves "with better international understanding between China and the Powers, so that genuine goodwill shall be achieved. . . . The world will be better for a modern, progressive and independent China," and gave the following points as necessary for consideration in bringing this about: observance of strict neutrality in

the internal affairs of China; avoidance of any threats or provocative displays of force and war measures; abrogation of the unequal and humiliating treaties.

These suggestions were repeated to us, and it was made quite clear that the Nationalist Government at Nanking had the support of the organisation in question.

The last year had not been a suitable time for active propaganda owing to the rapid changes in the political situation. It did not, however, prevent the organisation from joining with the International Women's Club, the Women's Department of the Provincial Government, the Y.W.C.A. and women students from Lingnan and Chungshan Universities and many women's schools, in organising a mass meeting for International Women's Day on March 8th, from which a number of demands were to be carried to the Government by delegates appointed by the representative committee of organisation.

There were over a thousand women and girls present, grouped with their banners in front of the open-air platform on which were seated the women of the foreign community, each one of whom had received a special invitation. Order was assured by girl guides or girl scouts, and some hundreds of men were present also at the sides of the mass of women. All stood and listened with apparently undiminished interest during the three hours of speech-making. Each organisation sent a representative to make a speech, and a chorus from the blind girls' school followed a touching speech from a blind teacher begging for more help and opportunity for blind girls.

Finally a series of slogans were called from the platform and answered by a shout of agreement and the raising of hands. These slogans were translated for us afterwards and are as follows:—

1. Unite all women's movements.
2. Equal education for men and women.
3. Equality of vocational opportunity for men and women.

4. Equality for women under the law.
5. Equal wages for men and women.
6. Protection of Motherhood.
7. Protection of child labour.
8. Organise women farmers and labourers.
9. Down with the slavery of etiquette for women.
10. Oppose polygamy.
11. Oppose child betrothal and removal of the girl to her future husband's home.
12. Demand equal moral standard for men and women.
13. The law must be made effective which gives women power to inherit property.
14. Women must rise quickly to take their share in the people's revolution.
15. Oppression of women is anti-revolutionary.
16. Execute the Communists.
17. Down with Imperialism.
18. Down with militarism.
19. Long live the Chinese Kuomintang party.
20. Success to the women's movement.

No. 16 showed the activity of the violent reaction against Communism which was widespread while we were there. One can feel certain that the moderation and good sense of so many of the women we met in Canton will prevail before long against such extremes of repression.

In National Government circles to-day there is one woman member of the Council, Mrs. Liao, but we were unfortunately unable to get into touch with her. There are able western-educated women also, such as Mrs. Chiang Kai Shek, Mrs. Kung, and Mrs. Tsai Yuen Pei, a sincere lover of peace who will be able to give enormous help to the cause of women in a settled and peaceful China.

Under the present regime we understood that the separate women's departments which had charge of everything concerning women, with a separate committee and chairman, are being discouraged, while the entry of

women into all departments is welcomed. But when we visited Nanking, the Province of Kiangsu and the Municipality of Nanking still had a women's department, and the Chairman of the former, Miss Nieu, a young woman who had not long left a Mission School, and her colleagues were full of interest in the work of western women. They longed to be able to work for their country and had the wisdom to realise that their experience of administrative and social work was not yet extensive. The spirit of service was there and a fine humbleness of mind that made one long to give them opportunities to see such work in other countries.

In Canton also the women's department appeared very busy over women's affairs. In Shanghai the Women's Suffrage Association has officers, but we failed to find any active political work being done by women. The same applies to Hankow, where the women's department had been dissolved, and Peking, where any political activities of any kind were being sternly repressed.

It was unfortunate that our stay there coincided with the Chinese New Year, when the schools and colleges were closed, so that we did not get in touch with the politically minded women students at all, though we met women University Professors.

In the New Year fairs at Peking we had a wonderful opportunity for seeing women and children of North China accompanied by their men folk, all in their holiday attire, enjoying life to the full. The gentle friendly aspect of those tightly packed crowds; the absence of all rudeness and pushing among themselves or to others; the serious absorption in the gay paper kites, lanterns, flowers and decorations of all kinds were irresistibly delightful, but the temples with their booths, fortune tellers and punch and judy shows, with an occasional worshipper looking rather out of place, were in strange contrast to the peace and silence of the Buddhist shrines in Indo-China.

In all these places we met and talked with many women, both individually and in groups. Everywhere

we found the belief among them in the ideal of a united China, of which the government at Nanking was considered to be the expression. "What if leaders do change?" they said, "government goes on just the same." The new China that is being slowly evolved under the surface of conflict and disorganisation appears a very real thing to them. In a meeting of a group of women in Peking we were asked why, if the British authorities could negotiate with the Nationalist Government over the question of reparations for the Nanking damage, they could not negotiate also upon the question of revision of treaties. The same impatience at the delay in recognition of the Nationalist Government was universally felt, but nowhere was there even a suggestion that force should be used to obtain revision. We had the impression that it was "unequal treatment" rather than "unequal treaties" that was at the root of much bitterness, especially among the younger women, but that the expressions "unequal treaties" and "Imperialism" signified to them an attitude of overbearingness and injustice on the part of the foreign powers. The absence of representation of Chinese ratepayers on the Municipal Council of the Shanghai International Settlement, and the maintenance of public gardens out of the rates, 60 per cent. of which are paid by them, to which Chinese were not admitted, were points which were continually cited as examples.\*

But with all their desire for equality and justice, freely expressed, we were tremendously impressed with the reasonableness and balanced outlook of many of them, their real desire for peace and international friendship, and their understanding of all that this involves. Their command of the English or rather American language is amazing! The progress in freedom among women generally during the last ten years was stated to us to be remarkable. While we saw older women everywhere with bound feet, we saw only two young girls

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\* Both these injustices have since been remedied.

at one of the fairs in Peking whose liberty had been curtailed in this way. The Commissioner for Education who showed us the Government schools in Shanghai called our attention to the fact that all the girls had short hair, which he said was very significant, and we noticed that it appeared to be the fashion among younger women in most places. We were told by one of the leaders of the new movement in China that when the extremists first propagated the idea of liberty between the sexes there were undoubtedly some disasters, but that their own common sense and the strong moral feeling innate in the Chinese people were rapidly making the necessary adjustments. This was borne out by the attitude of the women students at Yenching to which allusion has been made.

Their strong insistence on the abolition of polygamy was illustrated to us by a worker in Central China who told us of a certain women's institute governed by a Chinese committee which provided, among other privileges, hot baths for its members. The committee made a rule that no secondary wives or concubines might be admitted to membership. There were in the town two western women happily married to Chinese men whom they had met as students in Europe or America, without realising that these men had been previously provided with child-wives by their respective families. They were refused admission to the privileges of membership, as their status was that of secondary wife or concubine, the legal wives being those who were living far off in the homes of their husbands' childhood.

The question of the existence of slavery is a difficult one. It certainly exists, and in the Police Home for lost, destitute and runaway slave girls in Peking we saw a poor child whose life had been saved by the Chinese doctor who took us round, at the sacrifice of one leg. Her misfortune had been due to the cruelty of her mistress. It is, however, illegal now in China, though whether the custom of paying a lump sum to the parents for the services of a little girl as servant will rapidly die out is

another question. Most of those to whom we talked condemned it, but they said that often the girls were happy and well looked after and that husbands were often found for them.

There is in this, as in so many of the questions affecting women, a vast mass of tradition among the women themselves to overcome. In the old labyrinthine family houses, with the central temple for the worship of the ancestral spirits, one gets glimpses of that close-packed family or clan life, to break away from which must mean an emancipation greater than anything we can imagine. Some young couples now take the only alternative to the expensive old-fashioned marriage ceremony, dowry, feasts and presents, that of giving a simple dinner and sending out announcements that so-and-so are married. But what gossip and scandal, whispering and tales must go on among the 400 or so inhabitants of one such ancient mansion that we saw when this occurs!

We did not feel that it would be our place to touch upon the delicate question of artificial control of population, but we were much interested to be told by a European woman in the South, happily married to a Chinese of high position and whom we saw to be entirely received as one of themselves by the Chinese circle in which she moved, that birth control was the topic of chief interest among her Chinese friends, and that they were very anxious for information about it. Problems of population, its regulation and distribution, and birth control are among those that are being considered by the students of to-day.

The women who are ready and equipped to grapple with the tremendous national problems facing them are comparatively so few and so heavily burdened that we did not wonder to find that international questions and possibilities were laid on one side for the time being or that there did not appear to be much co-operation between the different elements that constitute the women's movement in China to-day.

We were particularly grateful for the warmth of our welcome everywhere and for the infinite trouble that was taken to let us see something of the real life of the Chinese people in spite of all the preoccupations of the leaders. They assured us that our visit had been a help and encouragement to them. The written messages we brought from a large number of our national sections and from other women's organisations made them realise that they were not struggling alone and unthought of, and the sincere expressions of sisterly sympathy and friendship appeared to be deeply appreciated. They asked for our help in their struggle against the importation of armaments and the smuggling of opium, and they begged us to send them literature about the women's movement in the West. They are keen to remain in the closest contact with the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and in each place we visited a correspondent has been appointed for this purpose. Several of them wished very much to become members and hope was often expressed that a section would be formed in China, but a letter from one of them in Peking puts the position so truly that it seems worth while to quote it:—

"In my opinion organisation is always the outcome, rather than the cause, of the social will to do something. What seems to me to be most important at present for us to do in China with regard to the world peace movement is the *conviction of the heart* as to the absolute necessity of the work. When many hearts are thus convinced they will naturally find an outlet, an expression for their conviction, as well as an opportunity to realise it. At such a time, the League will find that China will need a national section as readily as many overflowing streams will need an expansive base to form a lake upon. I shall keep on trying to convince the hearts of the high-minded young men and women in China of the great need of China's co-operation in the

movement for world peace. I shall indeed be very happy if I could succeed in digging up a basin for the lake-to-be, however humble the work must be at present."

We believe that the women's movement as we saw it contains tremendous potentialities for the future, and is one of the most hopeful aspects of the situation in China as a whole.

Chinese women need the experience of western women to help them to develop their movement to the best advantage. They need also opportunity of seeing and selecting what is best in western civilisation and culture so that they may assimilate it and reject what would be harmful or useless for Asiatic women.

In their wonderful power of assimilation and in the creative genius of the Chinese people we see the greatest hope for the women's movement in China and its place in the production of a new civilization from the synthesis of East and West.

*P.T.O. for information about the Women's International League.*

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR  
PEACE AND FREEDOM.

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The claim of women to equal political rights and equality is **based on the truth that moral right does not depend on force.** It was because some women believed this that they founded the League in 1915 at the Hague.

It is an Organization of women with Sections all over the world which are working for Peace.

It aims at uniting women in all countries who are opposed to every kind of war, exploitation, and oppression, and who work for universal disarmament and for the solution of conflicts by the recognition of human solidarity, by conciliation and arbitration, by world co-operation, and by the establishment of social, political and economic justice for all, without distinction of sex, race, class, or creed.

Thus members of the League work for the **Establishment of the Principles of Right rather than Might, and of Co-operation rather than Conflict in National and International Affairs.**

The International President is Miss Jane Addams of Hull House, Chicago, U.S.A. The President of the British Section is Mrs. H. M. Swanwick.

International Headquarters :  
(Sections in 24 Countries.)  
Maison Internationale,  
Geneva.

British Section  
(27 branches).  
Headquarters: 55, Gower  
Street, London.

*Edgar G. Dunstan & Co.,  
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