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# The League of Nations Union.

President: VISCOUNT GREY OF FALLODON K.G.



A British Organisation founded to promote the formation of a World League of Free Peoples for the securing of International Justice, Mutual Defence, and Permanent Peace.

22, BUCKINGHAM GATE, S.W 1.

## WOMAN'S PART IN THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

CHATHAM  
HOUSE  
CANCELLED

BY A GROUP OF WOMEN.

### 1.--What is the "League of Nations" ?

IN speaking of "The League of Nations," we mean an organisation which shall enable the States of the whole civilised world to take counsel together in order (1) to prevent future wars, (2) to improve conditions of living for the whole of humanity. One great lesson of the war has been to teach us how much more dependent is one nation upon another than we ever before realised. We have had to widen our ideas to include the conviction that all civilised States are members of one huge community throughout the world—whatever the differences of race, language, and individual interest. Germany and Austria, the "Central Powers," have crumbled to pieces, the map of Europe is to be re-made, and a number of small, new States have come into being. It is obvious that some organised council, must be set up to grapple with the new conditions, in order that the fruits of victory for the whole civilised world may be secured, otherwise there is no way to prevent the rise of military despotism once again. It is

obvious that "The Central Powers," now utterly



defeated, must in their new form take part in this organised council, for, were they excluded, the necessity of forming a League of their own would be forced upon them, and Europe would once again be divided against itself.

"The League of Nations" will, then, be a federation of the civilised States of the world, having its powers of action vested in a representative council. The Draft Covenant of a League of Nations was given to the world on February 14th—the greatest political document of our age. But the idea and the actual proposals are still condemned by the short-sighted and the pessimistic as impracticable. It has become now the solemn duty of every public-spirited citizen to work for its ultimate success.

For what is the alternative to "The League of Nations" in the new Europe? Continued competition, continued distrust, continued struggle, and the certainty of future wars. Let us not forget that "the next war" would far exceed in horror, destruction, and brutality anything that even this generation has yet seen.

## 2.—How would "The League of Nations"

### Work?

Huge difficulties of detail surround this question. The ordinary citizen can but leave them to the expert, but should concern him or herself very deeply with the task of understanding the expert's efforts in the cause, and with developing public opinion according to his or her honest convictions. The "League of Nations" is not the affair of a few weeks' deliberation, like the decision of the peace terms or the amount of the indemnity. The League is rather a growth and a development, with which the whole future of civilisation will be concerned. We must not say, "Here we have our longed-for child; let us leave it to others to bring up!" We must concern ourselves with every stage of its up-bringing in order to make it the best possible development of the united effort of mankind. The

working body of the League will consist of a council of representatives of the various States. There must be a permanent staff constantly at work, and big gatherings of the heads of Governments or their deputies at various intervals. All matters of dispute between nations will be submitted to this Council, and no two nations will be allowed to go to war, but must submit their case to an international tribunal. In most, ultimately in all cases, the cause for war would thereupon disappear, in the same way that the cause for a fight between two individuals disappears when the matter has been threshed out before a magistrate or other arbitrator. Alongside of such machinery for preventing war at the last moment, the League will also direct and control machinery to prevent the causes of war, and thus provide the soundest basis for the reduction of armaments. Furthermore, the existence of the League of Nations will lead to a widely increased interest among the peoples in International affairs, and this will tend to build up a very strong international public opinion, which has never previously existed, and will also held to guide the policy of States into reasonable channels.

Besides matters of dispute between nations, the League will concern itself with all affairs of international importance, such as posts, cables, air traffic, trade regulations, &c, and will develop International Courts of Law, Arbitration, &c. The internal affairs of nations, of course, will not be interfered with by the League.

## 3.—"The League of Nations" and the Citizen's Daily Life.

Apart from the question of Peace and War, which must ever be bound up with the life of every citizen, the League of Nations will have an all-important bearing upon the existence of everyone of us. (1) By degrees it will free the States from the haunting fear of war, huge manufactures of war material will become superfluous, and national skill and energy will be free to devote themselves

to the betterment of social conditions. (2) By working for the wiping out of selfish competition in trade between nations, the League will be serving the cause of the workers' happiness, and will be helping to establish that higher standard of general well-being which every great nation desires for mankind, not merely for its own people. (3) International Labour Laws will put a stop to the "dumping of foreign sweated goods" by putting a stop to foreign sweating. Even before the war International Labour Laws had been tried and found successful. Thus, the terrible disease known as "phossy jaw" was stamped out in England and in several other countries by an international law forbidding the use of yellow phosphorus of which matches had been made because it was cheaper than the non-poisonous red phosphorus.

#### 4.—Women and "The League of Nations."

Women cannot remain outside this great effort. The dire need of the world calls for their help, asking them to throw their weight into the scale on behalf of justice, fair dealing, and Peace. Future security and happiness, nay, perhaps existence itself, may depend on what is done now. Although overwrought and weary after four years of war, women must now throw their energies into the League of Nations movement, if not for the sake of the whole world, then, at least for the sake of their own children. It will need the unswerving faith and reiterated demands of the great majority of men and women in our Commonwealth to make this League of Nations really effective; not one voice can be spared.

Women who would gladly help in the cause of Peace often declare themselves handicapped by lack of money, influence, and opportunity. But some of the finest work the world has ever seen has been done by people who lacked all these things! To wait for them would mean, in many cases, to wait for ever! The very humblest and poorest can begin at once to work for Peace.

The first and most essential step is to educate ourselves in the plans for the League of Nations. In this pamphlet, it has only been possible to give the merest outline. No matter how busy we may be, let us make time to learn, for knowledge is necessary before any definite action can be taken. Leaflets, magazines, or newspaper articles should be obtained and studied, and then passed on to others.

Meetings should be attended. Most men and women nowadays belong to some Club or Society. Women's Institutes, Women's Citizen Associations, Women's Co-operative Guilds, Mothers' Unions, Temperance Societies—will all hold meetings to discuss the League of Nations. Committees arranging such meetings should invite a good speaker to make the principal speech of the evening. The League of Nations Union may be able to send speakers where local ones cannot be found. An important point to remember is, to invite all the pessimists, doubters, and disbelievers to the meeting (as well as all the enthusiastic supporters) in order that they may be converted to a happier way of thinking. Leaflets should also be obtained from the Union to give away at the doors. If such meetings were held all over the country, an irresistible tide of public opinion would be behind those who will have to struggle with the difficulties of the scheme as a working proposition. The power of the vote, too, is a power which counts not only at election times but at all times. Members of Parliament will carefully observe now the trend of women's opinions in their constituencies, and shape their course in Parliament accordingly long before an election comes round.

How wonderful it seems that, on the very threshold of their wider life as citizens, women find this great work for Peace awaiting them! To take a share in hastening the advent of a lasting peace for the whole world is a great privilege and a great responsibility. We cannot ignore it.

More and more, in the future, men will seek guidance from women in political matters where spiritual values are involved; we must not fail them now!

Those to whom religion is the mainspring of their actions will find that in working for Peace on earth they are living up to their utmost beliefs, while those whose faith lies in a glorious future for Humanity on earth should eagerly take this opportunity of bringing that future nearer. Whatever the motive, to work for the "League of Nations" is to work for all Humanity; the opportunity is *here, now*. Let us not neglect it.

#### 5.—The Work of the Union.

The League of Nations Union was formed last year for the purpose of focussing public attention on the vital necessity for a League of Nations to prevent war, and to bring pressure to bear on the Government, so that immediate steps might be taken to create such a League. The Union also links up the efforts of all sympathisers and supporters; influences the Press; supplies leaflets, information, speakers, &c.; holds meetings and performs other valuable propaganda work. Such an organisation should find adherents everywhere, especially amongst women, and should speedily become the recognised mouthpiece of many thousands of people in this country who earnestly desire a lasting peace and are willing to make sacrifices in order to obtain it.

#### 6.—The Need for Immediate Effort.

A League of Nations is, to-day, well within range of practical politics, for every public speech contains references to it, every magazine publishes weighty articles on it; it has the warm approval of some of the finest thinkers of our time, and, at this moment, the Peace Conference in Paris is deliberating on its possibilities. There is, however, a certain section in every nation, who, from motives of self-interest, do *not* desire to see such a

League established, and who, if they cannot altogether prevent it, will endeavour to hinder and hamper its operations, so that it will be hardly more effective than the old Arbitration Councils. We must therefore be constantly on our guard against the efforts of those who would make all our labours for peace of no avail. Should another war come, we know it must far exceed in cruelty and horror anything experienced in our time, and when we remember that this awful fate may overtake the little ones who are growing up amongst us to-day, surely no effort, no sacrifice of time and strength can be too great, if only we can prevent so terrible a disaster.

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We can shake hands across all the barriers which separate us, with all men and women everywhere who long to see struggling humanity entering into a happier lot and who are ready to work for that end in the spirit of brotherhood. In promoting the cause of international peace we shall be doing even more than we seem to do. The new spirit will spread to industrial and social relationships. It will spread to the impact of developed races upon undeveloped ones and produce a revolution there for good. Instead of the wretched old exploiting of backward races, we shall have a new era in which the strong will stretch out a helping hand to the weak to lead them onward into the light. The thought of it makes the heart beat faster. It is the will of God that there should be peace and goodwill among men. Let us toil as well as pray that His will may "be done in earth as it is in heaven."—DANIEL LAMONT, Glasgow.

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[For further information, leaflets, terms of membership, &c., apply The General Secretary, the League of Nations Union, 22, Buckingham Gate, London, S.W. 1.]

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