

# THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S NEWS

## JUS SUFFRAGII

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THE MONTHLY ORGAN OF THE INTERNATIONAL WOMAN SUFFRAGE ALLIANCE

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### SLAVERY.

Most of our readers are familiar with the system known as 'mui-tsai' existing in Hong-Kong and against which women's organisations have been fighting together with others for many years. It may not be so well known that the same system of alleged 'adoption' exists in Ceylon. In fact this is slave-trading, as little children are bought and sold or sometimes given away into service which is entirely uncontrolled, and which is a slavery as complete as it is possible to imagine. These tiny little creatures are at the best over-worked, are most probably under-fed, and at the worst are treated with unimaginable cruelty. There is an organisation in Colombo which tries to mitigate the hardships of these wretched little slaves, but obviously only a law making this practice illegal and which would be strictly enforced under heavy penalties, can cure the evil. The women of Ceylon have the vote, and though it is futile to ignore the difficulties which local custom and vested interests put in the way of reforms, the Alliance Auxiliary is studying this question.

It is stated that the Women's Patriotic Society in Japan has been making a brave fight to stop the sale of daughters by distressed farmers. It raised a fund in order to make loans without interest to farmers so that they should not be driven to sell their daughters, and also offered to find employment for the girls. But it was but a drop in the ocean so great is this traffic in times of economic difficulty. The traffic is quite legal and it is stated that in Tokio there are over two hundred licensed dealers in girls.

It is good news that a woman, Mme. Isabel de Palencia, very well known to Alliance circles, has been appointed as a member of the League of Nations Slavery Committee.

It was a woman, too, Miss Dannevig, of the Mandates Committee who raised the question of the position of women in the Cameroons. 'The Catholic Citizen' for October has an extremely interesting article on this subject by the Archbishop of Carie, from which we would like to quote far more fully than we have space to do. In dealing with polygamy, the Bishop makes the moderate demand that if, as he agrees the custom cannot be suppressed by law, the Colonial Administrations should at least not actually favour it as they do by giving posts in public schools and other institutions to polygamous officials. One male nurse in charge of a hospital had 48 wives, keeping six or so with him and the others working as slaves on his plantations. The official salary is used to buy wives as a revenue making proposition by men who may be old, ill or syphilitic, while the younger men are often too poor to pay the bride price. The Bishop states that women in Equatorial and Western Africa are simply the property of the family, the owner being father, husband, brother or uncle. They are sold under the euphemistic term of a 'dowry payment' to the highest bidder without their consent, sometimes as children. If it is at present impossible to prohibit this system of the sale of wives, the Bishop suggests that at least the woman should have the right to redeem herself through the possible intervention of a monogamous suitor. For alas, he completely disposes of every possibility of the woman ever being able to obtain the means to pay her own redemption money, for her labour also is the property of the family. And lastly he suggests that a widow with her children should be regarded as freed by the death of her husband, instead of reverting to her husband's heir for disposal as he thinks fit. You see that the Bishop from his experience makes what seem the

most moderate proposals as to what Colonial Administrations might do in the direction of—not freedom, that is too strong a word—but some standard of decency for native women. His final plea is that monogamists, generally Christian, should be judged according to their custom, as fetisitic polygamists and Muslims are judged according to theirs. We know that behind that plea are some of the most tragic cases of girls brought up from infancy almost in mission stations in ideas and conditions totally different from that of their families, who find on desiring to marry a fellow convert that they are bound by a sale effected by their fathers to a man with whose whole standard of life they are completely out of sympathy. And the white administration will uphold that sale and enforce it.

#### ANNIE BESANT.

On October 1st, 1847 was born Annie Wood, of Irish descent on both sides, known throughout the world by what seems like irony by the name of her husband, the Reverend F. Besant, whom she married at the age of 20 but from whom she separated in 1873, largely because she had ceased to believe in Christianity. It was after she had taken that momentous decision, which involved separation from her children, that she met Charles Bradlaugh and also became one of the earliest members of the Fabian Society, where she was a colleague in the socialist movement of Sidney Webb and Bernard Shaw. She was a marvellous orator, a woman of unbounded courage, great gifts and, combined with those more showy attributes, a good organiser. Her work with Bradlaugh involved her in much bitter controversy and social obloquy, including if the present writer remembers aright, a period in prison for her share in advocating birth control. She was a great champion of the workers, and was the leader of the great Match Strike which resulted in a victory for the match workers and the formation of the Matchmakers Union, one of the strongest women's Unions. She was also elected a member of the London School Board.

That phase of her life ended with dramatic suddenness when she became converted to Theosophy, and as successor to Madame Blavatsky she was President of the Theosophical Union from 1907 to 1928, and spent most of the rest of her life in India both as a religious and political leader, being the first woman President of the National Indian Congress.

It is hardly necessary to state that Annie Besant was a keen supporter of the feminist movement, and up to the time of her death she was President of the Women's Indian Association.

In a short space it is impossible to do justice to that amazing career, but no one who has read her books or heard her speak could fail to recognise that here was a great personality, and women owe much to her for to them she was uncompromisingly faithful.

#### DISARMAMENT.

We deeply regret that the account of the very successful demonstration in Geneva on October 15th, and of the following deputation and dinner to Mr. Henderson, came too late for inclusion.

#### HUNGARY.

In all good faith we included in our paragraph on women Members of Parliament the name of Countess Apponyi of Hungary. We are now informed by a correspondent who met the Countess in Geneva that this is not correct, as after all she did not stand for her late husband's seat. We regret the inaccuracy, but the news was widely published.

#### WOMEN AT THE LEAGUE ASSEMBLY.

We regret that the list of Women at the League Assembly published in our last issue was not, as it should have been announced as, a preliminary list. From *The Vote* we have taken the final list supplied to it by the London Office of the League, and find that the following names must be added, not including those of secretaries: Dr. M. Unger and Frau von Tiling, experts in the German Delegation. It would also appear that Miss Burnside, whose name was given for South Africa without a description of her function, was a Secretary, of whom there were nine in all, but whose names space forbids us to include.

#### CORRESPONDENCE.

Dear friends of the Alliance,

On January 9th, 1934, our dear Mrs. Catt will celebrate her 75th birthday, and I am convinced that several of her old friends would like to send her a message of love that day, to show her that the women all over the world remember her with gratitude. The cable address is: Cattchap, New York.

I have another proposition to make to you. I am sending her myself a message on a gramophone record, and I am asking if some of you will likewise have one made. This is quite easy, as I am sure that in many countries there is a place where one can go and have a special record made. (His Master's Voice are always known everywhere). Have a talk in *English*. When you begin: say your *name* and *country* and then give your personal message or a message in the name of the women of your country just as you please. Be sure that this record will reach Miss Ruth Morgan, 1622, Grand Central Terminal Building, before the end of the year. Miss Morgan will then see that on January the 9th these messages will reach Miss Catt.

Mrs. Corbett Ashby and I are surely sending a record, so do let me know if you are sending one likewise.

ROSA MANUS,  
Jacob Obrechtst. 67.

Amsterdam.

Cable address: Romanus, Amsterdam.

#### FINLAND.

A General Election took place on the 1st and 3rd July. As the number of women members had dropped to eleven in the elections of 1930, it was with a certain anxiety that the result of the election was awaited from the feminist point of view. The result was that fourteen women were elected. The Swedish National Party has had no woman members since 1929, but a new candidate, Mrs. Ebba Östenson, B.A., was most successful in her election campaign and came out as number 3 on her party ticket of 9. A new political group of small holders succeeded in getting three of its candidates elected and amongst them one woman. One of the best known social-democrat women members, Miss Miina Sillanpää (our first and only woman cabinet minister) was defeated after having been successful at every election since the women of Finland gained the vote.

As the women of this country have gained equality as far as legal rights are concerned, there is only one stronghold left to overcome and that is the Lutheran Church, governed by its own laws adopted at Church Council Meetings. Women are not allowed to be ordained ministers of this Church, and so far no strong desire to attain this right has been apparent amongst the women students taking theological degrees at the University of Helsingfors. They prepare themselves and take degrees in order to become teachers of religion in the higher schools.

Elections for municipalities (town councils and rural

councils) are going to take place on December 3rd. throughout the country, and the nomination of women candidates has begun. Especially in the capital the fight will be a hard one.

Two former members of Parliament, Mrs. Ilmi Hallsten and Mrs. Hedwig Gebhard, have recently published a booklet in French 'L'Activité politique et sociale des Femmes en Finlande' in two parts. The first contains the development of the women's movement before the vote was gained, and the second gives the history of a quarter of a century of women's work in Parliament. It gives a concise survey of women's political achievements, showing among other things that women's political equality was gained rather along political than feminist lines. In her endeavour to be impartial, Mrs. Gebhard has certainly not overstated our gains considering that *all the points* included in the feminist women's programme adopted immediately after our suffrage victory, have become law. No bad record. It shows that the reforms contained in the women's programme of 1907 were timely since it needed the men to pass them through Parliament.

So far no organised attempt to turn married women out of gainful employment has been apparent, though economic depression and unemployment may force this struggle in time.

ANNIE FURUHJELM,  
Helsingfors, October 11th, 1933.

#### CZECHOSLOVAKIA.

In the June number, 1932, of the International Women's News there was certain misinformation about Czechoslovakia which we wish to correct. In the first place, the number of Slovaks was given as 5 million whereas the actual count is 2,747,000. It is necessary to add that the Slovaks are not a race distinct from the Czechs, but a branch of the same stock, having a language no more distinct than a dialect. The two languages are easily understood mutually, both in conversation and literature.

It is unfair to say, further, that the Slovaks are a primitive people of low culture. They have an intellectual class, have their own university, their own characteristic literature, their own original and highly developed art as proof of mature artistic talent. That there are also in Slovakia classes still lacking education is explained by the oppression under which the country laboured for centuries before 1918. Under the Hungarian regime the Slovaks were not allowed a single school of our second rank, no trade or craft schools, no middle schools. A mere 276 elementary (5 class) schools had to suffice for the whole population. Since the change of 1918, the Czechoslovak Republic has established 4,000 new lower and 50 high schools in Slovakia. These few facts will serve to prove the misinformation of the article referred to.

(*Editorial Note.*—We are always glad to publish any correction though we regret that this particular case should not have been brought to our notice till long after publication, though only pressure of space prevented its appearing in our previous issue).

#### NEW ZEALAND.

Our old correspondent in New Zealand, Miss Jessie Mackay, has sent us an enthusiastic note about the election of the first woman Member, Mrs. McCombs. She says: "No more capable highly-trained and intelligent candidate could have been found to become New Zealand's first woman M.P., and women and reformers are jubilant throughout the country. During her electoral campaign the Government drafted a bill on the long-shelved question of the Nationality of Married Women, and we hope to see it law before the session ends."

#### GERMANY.

(*Editorial Note.*—We deeply regret that this first paragraph of our news from Germany contains the announcement of the dissolution of the German Auxiliary of the Alliance, which became affiliated at the Rome Congress in 1923. We cannot publish this news without desiring to mark our sense of the immense value of the co-operation of the German Woman's Movement in our international work, a co-operation which long before the ten years' association with the A.D.F., had existed with the former Suffrage Society, and without expressing a hope that the future may see a resumption of our work in common).

The "Deutsche Staatsbürgerinnen Verband — Allgemeiner Deutscher Frauenverein 1865" decided to dissolve at an Extraordinary General Meeting of its Members held on 24th September in Leipzig. It was founded more than 68 years ago by Louise Peters in Leipzig as the first women's organisation with neither a religious nor charitable basis, and true to its name this "General Union of German Women" has stood for the association of all German women without respect to class or opinion — "Das ganze Deutschland soll es sein" (It shall be for the whole of Germany). All the organisations of the woman movement have sprung from the A.D.F., and the movement of working women owes its first impulse to it. Under the presidency of its founder, and later of Augusta Schmidt and Helene Lange, the A.D.F. played a decisive part in work for women's education, though its own particular field was local government work as shown by its sub-title "Association for Women's Work and Women's Rights in the Community." After German women had won their right to citizenship, the Union under the presidency of Dorothee von Velsen enlarged its object to cover the whole field of citizenship and took the title of "The Union of German Women Citizens." It became the German branch of the International Alliance, which held its Congress in Berlin in 1929. In close co-operation with other organisations it extended its work, and together with women's question, it occupied itself with national problems of Minorities, German communities abroad, Disarmament and the League of Nations. But always its main object was the political education of women from the general and non-party point of view.

German women will exercise their full voting rights in the coming General Elections and Plebiscite to be held on November 12th.

The leader of the "Deutsche Frauenfront" (the woman organisation of the N.S.D.A.P.), Frau Lydia Gottschewski, has been dismissed, and her post given to Herr Krummacker. Further the Frauenfront has been amalgamated with the "Arbeitsgemeinschaft deutscher Frauenverbände" (corporation of women's societies), headed by Frau Siber, of the Ministry of the Interior, and directed in the spirit of the N.S.D.A.P. Frau Siber has been appointed substitute for Herr Krummacker, now the leader of the whole of women organisations recognised by the government and a State official. This amalgamation is called "Deutsches Frauenwerk."

A most interesting new paper is "Die Deutsche Kämpferin," (the German Woman's Champion) edited by Frau Sophie Rogge-Börner (publisher, Adolf Klein, Leipzig). Based on strictly racial ideas, the paper fights for the liberty of the German woman, as it existed in olden times, before an "oriental" religion cast a blemish on womanhood. Very spiritedly and intrepidly it criticises public measures, claiming that

only a society where men and women are equals and where the men are being educated towards fatherhood, will be able to regenerate a nation.

A pamphlet "Frauenbewegung gestern und heute" (the woman movement yesterday and to-day) by Dr. Gertrud Baumgart, publ. Carl Winter, Heidelberg, is having a wide circulation among women and, let us hope, among men. The author, a fervent adherent of the Hitler movement, explains that however great the difference between national socialism and liberalism is, the main claims of feminism can, nay, must be upheld by women who work in the N.S.D.A.P. The leaflet is, moreover, an appreciable effort to shed truth on the "old" woman's movement and its work for national welfare. As the pamphlet bears on its cover the Swastika, granted only to publications recognised by the N.S.D.A.P., it may be conjectured that official quarters are not averse to this point of view.

D.v.V.

#### GREAT BRITAIN.

On Tuesday, November 14th, a great Mass Meeting for the Right of Married Women to Earn will be held at the Central Hall, Westminster, London at 8 p.m., with Mrs. Pethick Lawrence in the Chair. Speakers will include Lady Astor, M.P., Lord Buckmaster, Rebecca West, and Nancy Stewart Parnell, and there will be music by the Women's Symphony Orchestra, while the veteran composer, Dame Ethel Smyth will conduct "The March of the Women." The meeting is being organised under the auspices of 29 women's organisations, among them needless to say the three British societies affiliated to the Alliance. Every woman who cares at all for our movement should make a firm decision to be there to do what she can to ensure that this protest will by its magnitude exert the greatest possible pressure on the authorities and on public opinion in favour of the simple elementary right of a woman, be she married or be she single, to "earn her bread by the sweat of her brow."

Tickets at 2/6, 1/- and 6d., may be obtained from the Organiser, Room 5, 26, Eccleston Street, London, S.W.1.

#### "THE NEW GERMANY AND THE CHILDREN."

The article under the above title in the August-September issue of *Jus* is, it is to be feared, likely to cause misunderstandings. I should therefore like to point out that there exists a strict difference between public welfare as exercised by organs of State or townships, and between private measures. As we have been anxious to ascertain, public measures make no distinction between children of the Germanic or the Jewish races. The Reichsministries in question have issued no directions in that respect and the cities, where we inquired, have not changed their measures. Of course it is possible and even likely that over-zealous officials have taken steps of their own accord, as mistakes of this kind are almost unavoidable in times of upheaval; but if so they have not acted in accordance with the wishes of the authorities, and we trust that by now such action has been cancelled.

As regards private organisations, they are undoubtedly free to act on their own principles. We should deeply regret it if their tendency had grown anti-semitic. From all we have been able to ascertain, however, the demand for support by Jewish persons has been very slight. It has always been the pride of Jewish congregations to look after their own poor. It is practically only in those districts, where in recent years a considerable immigration has taken place (in Eastern

Germany), that Jewish persons have been compelled to call upon welfare measures from other than their own religious society.

As to the regrettable tendency in school life to make a difference between German and Jewish children, the authorities very soon ordered that abuse or moral discrimination was to be stopped. There remains the exclusion of Jewish children from examinations, etc., but it is not the wish of the government, as far as we can see, to put them into difficult situations that can be avoided.

It must be understood abroad that there decidedly exists a Jewish problem in Germany. It has been aggravated by the immigration from eastern countries. We trust and hope and endeavour that it will be solved in a Christian spirit.

DOROTHEE VON VELSEN.

#### INDUSTRIAL LEGISLATION FOR WOMEN.

No. 2.

##### REPLY FROM CEYLON.

(Note.—Owing to exigencies of space, the alphabetical order has had to give way in favour of a short reply. Belgium and Bulgaria will follow.)

The then President of the Women's Political Union of Ceylon, Mrs. Florinda Wijeyekoon, wrote to inform us that at the present time there is no labour legislation whatever in Ceylon, except that affecting the Indian labourers on the tea estates. The New State Council is, however, giving attention to certain labour measures. The Union has made representations to the Council with regard to maternity benefits and when these new laws come into operation will let us know how they affect women workers. There is a Government regulation prohibiting married nurses from taking service under Government. On representation being made by the Union this ban was removed as far as Health Nurses under Government are concerned.

#### NIGHT WORK CONVENTION.

We publish below the text of a Memorandum which was drawn up as the result of a discussion in Geneva between representatives of women's organisations. This Memorandum was supported by the Alliance, but is more specially designed to urge the views of women who are directly affected in their professional life by the terms of the Convention. It has been presented to the Governing Body of the I.L.O., who may deal with the matter at their meeting towards the end of October. Miss Heneker, Secretary of the International Federation of Business and Professional Women, took charge of the collection of signatures, and we hope that she received much support.

##### MEMORANDUM.

We the undersigned Business and Professional organisations have noted:

THAT the Permanent Court of International Justice has stated in an Advisory Opinion that "the Convention concerning the employment of women during the night, adopted in 1919 by the International Labour Conference, applies in the industrial undertakings covered by the said Convention, to women who hold positions of supervision or management and are not ordinarily engaged in manual work;"

and declare:

THAT this Advisory Opinion constitutes a serious menace to those business and professional women who are engaged in industrial undertakings, not only those in responsible positions of supervision or management, but also many others who do not ordinarily perform manual work;

THAT the enforcement of the present Convention would:

- (a) Entail a drastic interference with the normal routine duties of many classes of business and professional women employed in industrial undertakings during the night in such departments as, for example, the
  - Engineering department: Engineers engaged in electric generating plants and others.
  - Laboratory department: Bacteriologists engaged in analytical work which cannot be left;
  - Chemists engaged in experimental work which cannot be left, and others.
  - Legal department: Lawyers working during the night on urgent cases or in consultation with the Board of Management; and others.
  - Medical department: Doctors working on accident cases or serious operations during the night;
  - Nurses engaged on dangerous cases during the night;
  - Dispensers on duty during the night to make up necessary prescriptions; and others.
- Publicity Department: Editors, journalists, advertising agents, together with demonstrators, saleswomen, secretaries and others obliged to work at night during exhibitions and congresses.
- Secretarial department: Secretaries and translators employed during important evening meetings of the Board of Management, or during congresses;
- Accountants engaged in the balancing and auditing of books at the end of a fiscal year;
- Telephone operators and telegraph operators engaged on ordinary night work; and others.
- Social department: Superintendents and welfare workers in canteens open during the night for the benefit of workers; and others.

We therefore ask:

THAT in view of this serious situation and of its possible disastrous consequence to our members, the Governing Body of the International Labour Office so draft the Agenda of the next session of the International Labour Conference as to permit it to exclude from the Convention the work of business and professional women, often so important and of such value to the economic life of each nation.

#### ESCLAVAGE.

La plupart de nos lectrices connaissent le système du "mui tsai" qui sévit à Hong Kong, mais peu soupçonnent que la coutume dite "adoption" à Ceylan conduit aux mêmes excès. Des enfants sont vendus très jeunes par leurs parents et deviennent, qu'ils le veuillent ou non, des esclaves de la famille qui les a recueillis et pour qui ils travaillent. Ces pauvres petites créatures sont souvent mal nourries et soumises à une tâche au-dessus de leurs forces. Il est grand temps qu'un contrôle s'exerce à leur avantage et il y a déjà à Colombo une organisation volontaire qui tâche d'adoucir la rigueur de leur sort. Mais c'est une loi, en bonne et due forme qui s'impose; les femmes de Ceylan, qui ont le vote, ont mis cette question à l'étude.

Le même cas se retrouve au Japon, à l'heure actuelle, où des cultivateurs ruinés et insolubles sont conduits à vendre leurs propres filles. Une Société féministe patriotique a constitué un fond de prêts pour venir en aide à ces pauvres gens et aussi un bureau qui essaye de placer les jeunes filles. Mais cet effort louable n'est qu'une goutte d'eau dans un océan de misère.

#### LA "SAISON FEMINISTE" DE GENEVE.

Malgré les pessimistes qui en prédisaient l'échec, malgré les sceptiques qui en annonçaient l'ennui et la monotonie, la "saison féministe de Genève" n'a pas été, loin de là, inférieure en intérêt aux précédentes. Certes, elle a subi forcément l'influence de l'atmosphère agitée, parfois fiévreuse, souvent découragée, dans laquelle s'est déroulée cette année la "saison politique," nos problèmes étant en relations trop étroites avec les circonstances politiques, nos chefs de file étant trop préoccupés des questions nationales ou internationales qui se sont posées aigues, la grande affaire du désarmement, les chances de succès de la Conférence à sa réouverture, pesant trop lourdement sur tous les esprits, pour que nous ayons pu vivre comme jadis, avec la même tranquille confiance dans les événements. Mais nos réunions se sont tenues aussi nombreuses que d'habitude, les mêmes Comités et Commissions ont siégé, et tous comptes faits, le bilan de cette "saison féministe" a été bien supérieur à ce que l'on pouvait en attendre.

La liste des femmes déléguées, cependant, a été plus courte cette année, comme nos lectrices ont pu le constater, que l'an passé, 13 femmes seulement ayant représenté 12 pays, au lieu de 16 femmes représentant 16 pays. De ces 13 déléguées, une seule, Mlle. Hesselgren (Suède) était déléguée titulaire, et a d'autre part présidé avec clarté et savoir-faire la Ve Commission de l'Assemblée (questions sociales et humanitaires). A cette même Commission, deux femmes ont fonctionné comme rapporteurs: pour la question de la traite des femmes, Miss Horsburgh députée (Gde-Bretagne), et pour la protection de l'enfance, Mme. Hubicka, sénateur (Pologne), un membre actif de l'Alliance. Deux autres membres bien connus de l'Alliance, ont tenu une place importante dans les débats de cette même Ve Commission: Mme. Malaterre-Sellier, une de nos vice-présidentes, qui a présenté avec beaucoup de talent au nom de la délégation française, et fait adopter en suite une intéressante proposition développant l'activité du Comité de protection de l'enfance, et Mme. Palencia (Espagne) qui a eu l'honneur de signer au nom de son gouvernement la Convention contre la traite des femmes majeures—la première fois dans l'histoire diplomatique, assure-t-on, qu'une femme fonctionne comme ministre plénipotentiaire pour la signature d'un traité.

La place dont nous disposons est malheureusement trop restreinte pour que nous puissions, dans ce numéro-ci, donner un aperçu général de toutes les questions, d'intérêt direct pour nous, qui ont été discutées durant ces quatre semaines, tant à la S.d.N. elle-même que dans nos organisations féminines internationales privées. Bornons nous donc aujourd'hui à parler de l'activité de l'Alliance, et de ces autres organisations féminines, réservant pour le prochain numéro de *JUS* quelques détails un peu plus circonstanciés sur les problèmes traités à la S.d.N., notamment sur cette Convention contre la traite des femmes majeures, et la nationalité de la femme. Mettons à part aussi pour ce prochain numéro le récit de l'activité très-grande du Comité International féminin pour le Désarmement autour de la reprise des travaux de la Conférence, activité à laquelle les circonstances sensationnelles du milieu d'octobre ont donné une importance toute spéciale, et pour laquelle une de nos vice-présidentes, Mlle. Rosa Manus, a déployé comme toujours ses remarquables capacités d'organisatrice.

L'Alliance, d'autre part, s'est intéressée très-directement à l'aide aux émigrés intellectuels, un Comité International s'étant fondé à cet effet, dans lequel siègent aux côtés d'hommes politiques éminents notre Présidente et Mlle. Manus. C'est à faire con-

naître l'activité si intelligente et utile de ce Comité qu'a été consacrée une de nos soirées, qui a parfaitement réussi, comme le montrera l'article que lui consacra dans notre prochain numéro aussi Mme. Adele Schreiber. Comme membre alors du Comité de Liaison des Organisations féminines internationales, l'Alliance a contribué à organiser une séance fort intéressante sur la question de l'opium, séance présidée par la comtesse Apponyi, déléguée de Hongrie, et à laquelle ont pris la parole trois spécialistes, Sir Malcom Delevigns (Gde. Bretagne), M. Bourgeois (France) et le Sénateur Cavazzoni (Italie). Nos lectrices savent sans doute qu'est entrée en vigueur le 9 juillet dernier la Convention internationale limitant la production et réglementant la distribution des stupéfiants; mais on aurait tort de croire qu'il n'y ait plus maintenant qu'à dormir sur ces lauriers, et des tâches impérieuses attendent tous ceux et celles qui ont à coeur la lutte contre ce fléau: d'abord, l'application des dispositions de la Convention (et l'on sait qu'elle place pour la première fois dans l'histoire du droit international la souveraineté des Etats signataires sous un contrôle international, ce qui est un précédent remarquablement encourageant pour ce contrôle international des armements si fort réclamé à l'heure actuelle); puis la limitation et le contrôle de la production des matières premières (pavot à opium et feuilles de coca), et la répression du trafic illicite.

Indépendamment de l'intérêt de cette question en elle-même, il faut aussi signaler cette soirée comme un pas en avant dans le domaine de la coopération des organisations féminines entre elles, puisque, jusqu'à présent, c'étaient uniquement des réceptions et des dîners, comme la traditionnelle soirée offerte chaque année aux femmes déléguées, qu'elles se contentaient de donner en commun. Or, si charmantes et cordiales que soient ces réunions, elles ne peuvent constituer qu'une partie de l'activité de Genève; et nous avons tous spécialement salué cette année la demande adressée aux femmes déléguées par le Comité de Liaison de venir discuter avec ses membres quelques-uns des problèmes pour lesquels leur appui et leurs conseils nous sont spécialement nécessaires: mentionnons entre autres, et à côté de cette importante question de la traite sur laquelle nous reviendrons, le budget de la Section sociale de la S.d.N., contre toute diminution duquel nos organisations ont pris nettement position, et l'invitation adressée à trois nouveaux Etats à se faire représenter au Comité de Protection de l'Enfance. Nous avons eu la joie de voir sur ce dernier point aboutir les vœux des Sociétés féminines qui avaient chaudement appuyé l'idée que ces Etats fussent des Etats extra-européens, puisque la Turquie, les Indes et le Chili ont été désignés par le Conseil de la S. d. N.; et nous espérons vivement que les femmes de ces pays vont maintenant faire l'effort nécessaire pour que leurs gouvernements désignent des femmes comme représentantes: c'est en tout cas le désir ardent d'une déléguée de femmes hindoues que nous avons eu le privilège de rencontrer à Genève le mois dernier. Le "Joint Committee," qui a également siégé à Genève, a, lui aussi, vu aboutir enfin une de ses demandes maintes fois répétées: la nomination d'une femme à la Commission de l'Esclavage, en la personne de notre amie Mme. Palencia, à laquelle vont nos plus chaudes félicitations.

Disons encore, en matière de coopération féminine, que des déléguées de l'Alliance ont rencontré des déléguées du Conseil International des Femmes, en exécution des décisions prises à Marseille et à Stockholm, pour examiner en commun des possibilités de coopération (journal commun, conférences en commun, coordination du travail des Commissions spéciales). Et si l'idée émise par l'Alliance d'ouvrir un Bureau temporaire commun à Genève pendant l'Assemblée n'a

pas trouvé d'écho auprès d'autres organisations féminines, il y a eu cependant, et malgré tout, coopération, du fait que c'est dans le local même du Comité International féminin pour le Désarmement que s'est établi notre Bureau de l'Alliance, et que là, aux premières loges pour participer à toute cette activité intense pour la cause du désarmement, nous avons vu défiler bien des personnalités intéressantes dans notre petit salon, dominant le merveilleux spectacle du port de Genève et des Alpes. Cinq membres seulement du Board de l'Alliance, il est vrai, s'y sont rencontrés: notre Présidente, dont le passage a été bref, puisque la Conférence du Désarmement devait sous peu la ramener à Genève; Mme. Adele Schreiber, notre première vice-présidente; Mme. Malaterre-Sellier; Mlle. Manus; et la signataire de ces lignes. Mais de nombreux membres des organisations affiliées à l'Alliance ont passé dans ce Bureau, parmi lesquelles nous citerons au courant de la plume, et en nous excusant de ne pouvoir, faute de place, les mentionner toutes: Mmes. Szelagowska (Pologne), déléguée à la Conférence du Désarmement; Kralowa-Horakowa (Tchécoslovaquie), Jamieson Williams (Australie) déléguée à la S. d. N.; Rudnycka (Ukraine), Begges (Etats-Unis), Miss Barry (Gde-Bretagne), la princesse Cantacuzène (Roumanie), la comtesse de Robilant (Italie), sans parler de nos membres suisses et genevois. Une fois de plus, notre Bureau temporaire de Genève a prouvé son utilité pour la cause de la femme, — cette cause que la "saison féministe" de 1933, on peut s'en rendre compte par ce qui précède, bien loin de la desservir, a fait plutôt progresser.

E. Gd.

## POLOGNE.

**Intervention des sociétés féminines dans la question du travail des femmes mariées.**

Une circulaire du "curatorium" de Varsovie exigeant la liste des femmes mariées travaillant dans les bureaux de ses administrations provoqua une inquiétude très grande dans les milieux intellectuels polonais. Les femmes groupées en diverses organisations, envisageant les dangers tant économiques que sociaux qu'entraînerait le retrait du travail aux femmes mariées, se sont senties dans l'obligation immédiate d'intervenir afin d'enrayer si possible ce péril.

Sur l'initiative de la Société des Femmes Universitaires et de l'Association des Femmes pour le Service Social, un mémoire a été adressé au Premier Ministre.

**De l'admission des femmes aux conseils d'administration des sociétés d'assurances sociales.**

La chambre des Représentants, à sa dernière session, a révisé la loi des assurances sociales, et y a introduit nombre de changements.

Grâce à l'initiative de la députée E. Wasniewska les femmes seront dorénavant admises au siège des conseils d'administration des sociétés d'assurances sociales, des quatre associations fédérées (assurance en cas de maladie, en cas d'accidents du travail, assurances des travailleurs intellectuels, pension de vieillesse) et de la Chambre des assurances sociales. Ce droit nouveau qui vient de leur être conféré leur permettra de veiller activement et pratiquement à leurs intérêts.

Le nombre des femmes occupant des carrières libérales forme en Pologne environ 43% de l'activité professionnelle.

*(Notice de notre correspondante polonaise.)*

## ALLEMAGNE.

Nous regrettons profondément que cette première notice qui nous vient d'Allemagne contienne la nouvelle de la dissolution de notre Auxiliaire qui fut affiliée à l'Alliance au Congrès de Rome en 1923. La Deutsche Staatsbürgerinnen Verband fondée il y a 68 ans par

Louise Peters à Leipzig, fut dissoute à Leipzig le 28 septembre dernier. Son histoire est celle de la conquête des droits civils et politiques des femmes allemandes. Avec des présidentes telles qu'Augusta Schmidt, Helen Lange et de nos jours Dorothee von Velsen la A.D.F., a couvert l'activité entière de la femme que ce soit dans l'éducation, l'Assistance publique, l'administration municipale et les plus larges questions internationales de la Société des Nations, du Désarmement et du Problème des Minorités. Toujours son objectif a été l'éducation politique des femmes dans un esprit d'absolue impartialité.

Le "leader" du Deutsche Frauenfront, Frau Lydia Gottschewski a été convoquée et son poste donné à Herr Krummacker. Le Frauenfront est désormais absorbé par la Corporation des Sociétés féminines dirigée par Frau Siber du Ministère de l'Intérieur. Frau Siber est en quelque sorte l'adjointe de Herr Krummacker, chef de l'amalgame et reconnu par le Gouvernement comme fonctionnaire d'Etat.

Une nouvelle et intéressante feuille (le Champion de la Femme allemande) rédigée par Frau Sophie Rogge-Börner et inspirée par "l'esprit de race" proclame le droit de la femme allemande à la liberté qu'elle connaissait aux temps anciens avant qu'une croyance "orientale" l'ait marquée d'infériorité. Ce journal critique les mesures d'exception prises contre les femmes et déclare que seule une société, où hommes et femmes sont égaux en droit et en responsabilité, est capable de régénérer la nation.

Une brochure sur "le Mouvement féministe hier et aujourd'hui" par Dr. Gertrud Baumgart circule largement parmi les femmes, et les hommes aussi, espérons le. L'auteur est une fervente d'Hitler et affirme qu'en dépit des différences politiques et de la disparition du libéralisme, les réclamations féministes doivent être maintenues par les femmes qui travaillent sous le signe de la Swastika. Cette publication est reconnue par la N.S.D.A.P. et doit par conséquent avoir l'approbation officielle.

## Nota.

(1) **A propos de l'assistance aux enfants.** Il est juste de noter que si des intransigeances de groupes, ou des vendettas individuelles ont rendu l'existence de certaines familles israélites impossible ou précaire, les lois d'assistance n'ont pas été modifiées et ne font aucune distinction de race ou de religion entre les enfants bénéficiaires de secours.

(2) On nous rappelle qu'aux prochaines élections plébiscitaires toutes les femmes allemandes sans exception ont le droit de vote.

## ANNIE BESANT.

C'est une figure internationalement connue qui vient de disparaître à l'âge de 86 ans. Annie Wood, irlandaise de père et de mère, est par une ironie du sort connue seulement par le nom de son mari le pasteur F. Besant, dont elle se sépara en 1873 après six ans de mariage, "parce qu'elle avait cessé de croire." Cette raison fut trouvée suffisante pour que la Loi, inexorable, lui enlevât la garde de ses enfants. C'est alors que Mrs. Besant rencontra Bradlaugh, un des premiers socialistes et malthusiens dont le centenaire vient d'être célébré par les sociétés malthusiennes, une semaine après le décès de sa dévouée collègue. Mrs. Besant prêta sa foi et son ardeur à toutes les organisations qui, dans le domaine spirituel ou social, avaient un levain révolutionnaire. Elle fut l'âme des grèves de travailleurs, des groupes féministes, des syndicats d'ouvrières. Elle continua et amplifia le mouvement

Théosophique, fondé par Mme. Blavatsky, et sa nouvelle foi la rejeta définitivement vers l'Inde, sa véritable patrie spirituelle. Elle fut la première femme Président du Congrès National dont elle dirigea la propagande, avant d'être dépassée et effacée par Mr. Gandhi.

Née pour être animatrice, orateur hors ligne, d'une endurance physique à toute épreuve (elle était naturellement végétarienne) Mrs. Besant passa trois quarts de siècle à combattre et à créer. Elle-même partisan et promoteur de l'Emancipation des femmes, elle fut une gloire du Féminisme.

**Hongrie.** Par inadvertance nous avons annoncé l'élection de la Comtesse Apponyi au Parlement de Hongrie à la place de son défunt mari. La Comtesse nous apprend qu'elle n'était pas candidate bien que la nouvelle en ait circulé.

**Grand Bretagne.** Un grand meeting de protestation affirmant "le droit de la femme mariée au travail" est annoncé au Westminster Central Hall pour le 14 novembre. Le meeting est organisé par 29 organisations féministes, dont naturellement font partie les Sociétés affiliées à notre Alliance.

**Tchécoslovaquie.** Un article paru en Juin 1932, contenait une ou deux erreurs que nous désirons corriger. La population slovaque était chiffrée à 5 millions. Le nombre exact est 2,747,000. Les Slovaques ne sont pas une race distincte mais un rameau du scion tchèque. Leur langue qui est plutôt un dialecte est très proche du tchèque. Les Slovaques enfin ne sont pas un peuple primitif et ignorant. Il existe un art et une littérature slovaques du plus haut intérêt. Il est vrai de dire que sous la domination hongroise, seule une instruction élémentaire des plus restreintes était permise aux Slovaques. La République tchécoslovaque a fait passer le nombre des écoles primaires de 276 à 4,000 et a créé 40 écoles secondaires.

**Finlande.** Les élections nationales de Juillet en Finlande ont amené 14 femmes à la Chambre des Députés, trois de plus qu'à la dernière élection. Un nouveau groupe politique a eu une candidate élue. L'égalité des droits civils et politiques est désormais absolue en Finlande et le seul Bastion qui reste à prendre est celui de l'Eglise luthérienne.

## LA FEMME INDIGENE.

Le "Catholic Citizen" d'octobre contient un article signé par l'Archevêque de Carie, qui étudie l'effet de la polygamie sur la situation des femmes dans le Cameroun et autres Colonies Africains. Il cite le cas d'un infirmier dont le salaire lui assure la possession de 48 épouses; dont six employée pour son services personnel et les autres comme esclaves de plantation. Les hommes jeunes et sains, n'ont souvent pas le moyen de payer le douaire d'une fiancée. Les femmes de l'Afrique occidentale et équatoriale, dit l'évêque, sont la propriété de leur famille. De leur père, elles passent à leur mari; veuves, elles sont léguées à l'héritier. Et la vente d'une fille se conclut en général dès sa plus tendre enfance. Il arrive ainsi que des fillettes nourries et élevées par les missionnaires et converties à la religion chrétienne, se voient refuser par leur père le droit d'épouser un coreligionnaire, parce qu'elles ont été dans leur jeune âge promises et vendues à un individu dont la vie et les habitudes leur sont devenues antipathiques. Et ce qui est pire c'est que l'Administration des Blancs soutient la coutume indigène et la fait observer.

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