

FILE

Women's International League

British Section of the Women's International League
for Peace and Freedom

WILPF 21 19



Thirty-Fourth Annual Report

MARCH, 1949 — FEBRUARY, 1950

Address: 104, SOUTHAMPTON ROW, LONDON, W.C.1

THE WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM

Head Office:

12, Rue du Vieux Collège, Geneva, Switzerland.

Secretary General—Mrs. Ann Bloch.

International President—Miss Emily Greene Balch.

Formed at the Hague Congress of Women in 1915 to bind together women in every country who desire to promote the following objects:—

- I. The Settlement of Disputes by some means other than War.
- II. The Emancipation of Women.

At present we have National Sections or Correspondents in Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Czecho-Slovakia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Holland, Yugo-Slavia, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland and the U.S.A.

The BRITISH SECTION of the LEAGUE is known as

THE WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE

Address: 104, Southampton Row, London, W.C.1.

President—Mrs. Barbara Duncan Harris, J.P.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR 1949-1950.

Chairman—Mrs. G. R. McGregor Wood.

Vice-Chairmen—Mrs. Cusden, J.P., Mrs. de Swiet, Miss Agatha Harrison.

Miss Dickinson, Mrs. Kemp, Mrs. Nuttall, Mrs. Scholefield Allen, Mrs. Twiston Davies, Mrs. Warner.

Representing Branches: Mrs. Ashworth, Mrs. Ballinger, Miss Camfield, Mrs. Evans, Mrs. Goring, Mrs. Mitchiner, Miss McAra, Mrs. Malcomson, Mrs. Needham, Mrs. Schlossmann, Mrs. Sussams, Mrs. Sutherst.

Hon. Secretary—Mrs. E. F. Ineson.

Hon. Treasurer—Mrs. Olaf Stapledon.

News Sheet Editor—Miss Amy Haughton.

Vice-Presidents—Miss B. M. Baker, Miss Vera Brittain, The Rev. Constance Coltman, The Hon. Mrs. Franklin, C.B.E., Mrs. Mary Grindley, Mrs. K. E. Innes, Lady Mayer, Mrs. McGregor Ross, Lady Parmoor, Lady Pethick Lawrence, Miss Edith Pye, Mrs. Mary Graham White.

MEMBERSHIP is open to all women who are BRITISH SUBJECTS, who desire to work for the above objects. Associate membership is open to women and men of any nationality resident in Great Britain. Minimum subscription to Headquarters, 5s. per annum. Monthly *News Sheet* 2d., 3s. per annum, post free.

THIRTY-FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT

March, 1949 — February, 1950

The twelve months which have passed since the last annual report was published present at first glance a picture as dark and confused as that of any year since the cessation of hostilities. But, nevertheless, even in the pattern of a year which begins with the events leading up to the signing of the Atlantic Treaty and ends with the decision of the President of the U.S.A. to continue work on the development of the Hydrogen Bomb, a sober and careful scrutiny may discover some hopeful signs that we are perhaps at least emerging from the period of apparently hopeless deadlock.

It is easy to misinterpret the events and trends of a time like the present, when fear and mistrust play so large and so damaging a part in directing action as well as in forming opinion. It is a fact however that, although the cold war still hangs like a sullen cloud above us, it has at least remained cold, even though there have been several occasions when a hot war could easily enough have been touched off had this been the real aim of either of the two great powers primarily involved.

There is also overwhelming evidence of a deep—indeed of a desperate—desire for peace among the peoples of every country concerned, and it is perhaps this longing for an age of security, generosity and prosperity which has held in check and may within imaginable time overcome the destructive forces, employed by all sides, of the propaganda machinery of a cold war.

On the credit side of recent international history there must also be reckoned the patiently achieved and often so inadequately recorded successes of the United Nations and the establishment, by unanimous consent, of the Technical Assistance Board. This progress in various fields of international co-operation has been accompanied by the uneasy stirring of a world conscience which is here and there beginning to make itself felt.

Four new nations have achieved full independence and now play their parts on the stage of world affairs: Burma, Indo-China, Indonesia and Israel.

There remain many acute problems to be solved, and the outcome of developments—for example in China, in the question of Kashmir and from the confused issues of Germany and Western Europe—are not yet to be foreseen.

The British section of the Women's International League has throughout the year been increasingly conscious of its responsibilities and of its potential influence both as a national body working within the limits of national policy making and, as a component part of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, in the wider fields of international organisation and action. How much more it could and should do is a question which must become a matter of growing concern to every member in this country.

Executive Committee

During the year eleven meetings have been held, one of which was presided over by Mrs. Cusden, one by Mrs. de Swiet and the rest by the Chairman, Mrs. McGregor Wood.

A new development of the Executive this year has been its division into three Commissions which meet separately for the first hour on Executive days. They discuss problems relating to the United Nations, Current Affairs and the Colour Question, and their findings are reported to the full Executive with suggestions for necessary action. The time of the Executive now extends from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

An Extended Executive was held in London in October following the Copenhagen Congress and was successful in spreading the inspiration received there.

Executive Commissions

THE UNITED NATIONS' COMMISSION.—This Commission works under the guidance of the Liaison Officer at Lake Success, Miss Gertrude Baer, whose frequent letters form the basis of discussion.

The two main subjects on which the Commission is now working are the attitude of H.M. Government to the Convention on Genocide and the importance of ensuring that the United Kingdom continues to give proper support to the United Nations' International Children's Emergency Fund.

Other matters considered include four resolutions for the Copenhagen Congress, a recommendation to the Executive to support Gertrude Baer in her backing of Dame Rachel Crowdie at Lake Success, and a most stimulating discussion with Mrs. Zeuthen, President of the Danish Section, about the best ways of making the United Nations and the Specialised Agencies matters of concern to ordinary women everywhere.

The Commission instituted an enquiry to find out how many Branches received the International Letters of Gertrude Baer and to hear what use was made of them. These findings are available in the office.

It is hoped that Branches will get in touch with the Commission both by asking questions and by reporting on their own related activities. It would be valuable and stimulating to the Commission and to the work of the British Section as a whole if this "two-way traffic" could be achieved.

COMMISSION ON CURRENT AFFAIRS.—The following resolution was passed by the Commission and adopted by the Executive:—

This Commission reports that they are confirmed in their belief that the WIL, whilst maintaining its stand for freedom, should continue to seek occasions to co-operate with representatives of totalitarian countries as a means of living amicably with them.

The Commission recommended that a copy of the Government Report on Population should be obtained for office use and that members should study it for future discussion.

A discussion on the Dock Strike and its implications, with the emphasis laid on the need to find the cause of it, led the Executive to the view that this subject came within the jurisdiction of the WIL.

The deteriorating situation in Germany as a result of Dismantling of Factories led the Commission to recommend that representations be made to Mr. Attlee on the general policy, a copy of the letter to Mr. Attlee to go to all the Branches urging them to bring it to the notice of their M.P.s.

At the following meeting great satisfaction was felt that our effort, combined with those of other organisations and individuals, had helped to bring about the cessation of dismantling factories in Germany.

The German wish not to be re-armed caused much discussion and we were unable to arrive at what we thought could be their motive behind this.

We very much regret that the superior attitude and behaviour of high officials of the occupying powers in Germany and of intelligent Germans towards the Russians do not produce the right atmosphere for conciliation.

At the meeting in January we discussed how best the resolution passed at Copenhagen on Atomic Energy could be brought to the notice of policy makers in this country.

COLOUR COMMISSION.—Letters have been sent to:—

- (1) Mr. Tom Driberg, M.P., to express our pleasure that he initiated discussions on Racial Relations.
- (2) Mrs. Florence Paton, M.P., to protest that a coloured American visiting London after the WIL Congress at Copenhagen was refused admission to three hotels because of her colour.
- (3) "Picture Post" to express our appreciation of their article on the Colour Bar.
- (4) Mr. Creech Jones, Secretary of State for Colonial Affairs, to ask why British Delegates voted against the Rev. Michael Scott being given a hearing at Lake Success.

Dr. Wilson and Mr. Ritchie Calder sympathetically discussed with Mrs. de Swiet the evil practice of circumcising ten year old Sudanese girls.

The committee has watched with interest the re-opening of the Stanley House Community Centre for Coloured People in Liverpool. It is the only one of its kind in the country and had to close from lack of funds. It is now opened four nights weekly by voluntary helpers from among its members.

Executive Sub-Committees

ORGANISATION COMMITTEE.—The Committee arranged the Extended Executive and through the London Group, led by Mrs. Scholefield Allen, were responsible for the following:—

- July 15th. Meeting at the home of Mrs. Maxwell at which Miss Vera Brittain took the chair and Mrs. McGregor Wood spoke on her recent visit to Germany.
- September. Meeting with the Rev. Annerlee Stewart.
- November 1st. Meeting with Mrs. Zeuthen who spoke on the work of the Danish Section.
- November 14th. Meeting addressed by Senator Ballinger on native problems in South Africa.
- February 4th. Annual New Year Social.

PUBLICITY COMMITTEE.—During the year there has been published a Report of a Conference on the Problem of Refugees and Displaced Persons in Europe.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE.—The committee was established in October, 1949, in recognition of the growing need for the WIL to keep in close touch with developments in the political field and for headquarters to take on more responsibility for conveying information to Branches to help them in the direction of their local political action.

At its weekly meetings the Parliamentary Committee has studied and in some cases has taken action on: the control of atomic energy, the threat to civil liberties, conscientious objection in France, FAO, UNICEF, the problem of Africa, and establishment of relations between the Committee and M.P.s and between the Committee and the official national authorities responsible in this country for H.M. Government's relations with ECOSOC and UNESCO and other agencies of the United Nations. The Committee was largely responsible for the formulation of the questions to be addressed to prospective candidates in the General Election and for the compilation of the reference material to be used with these questions.

FILM COMMITTEE.—This Committee was formed at the end of the year to investigate the best ways of using films in WIL work.

Affiliations, etc.

Organisations to which we are affiliated or to which we send observers, and the names of our representatives:—

- Abyssinia (Ethiopia) Association—Miss Dickinson.
- British Commonwealth League—Mrs. de Swiet.
- Joint Standing Parliamentary Committee—Miss Edith Hayler.
- Liaison Committee for World Government—Mrs. McGregor Wood and Miss Haughton.
- Liaison Group of British Women's Societies working in co-operation with the All India Women's Conference (formerly Liaison Group of Women's Organisations interested in Indian affairs)—Miss Dickinson, Miss Harrison.
- National Peace Council—Miss Haughton, Miss Harrison, Mrs. Duncan Harris and Mrs. Longson.
- No Conscription Council—Mrs. Nuttall and Miss Hayler.
- Status of Women Committee—Mrs. Nuttall, deputy Mrs. McGregor Wood.
- UNA Women's Advisory Council—Miss Dickinson.

Women's Council Co-operating with the women of India, Pakistan and Ceylon (formerly Women's Council on Indian Affairs)—Miss Harrison and Miss Dickinson.

Women's Group on Public Welfare—Mrs. Ineson.

Women's Peace Movement—Mrs. Cusden and Mrs. McGregor Wood.

Groups Affiliated to our Headquarters

- East Hull Branch, NBWTAU.
- London Diocesan Board of Women's Church Work.
- Hendon Central Women's Co-operative Guild.
- Holiday Fellowship Limited.
- Knighton Fields Women's Co-operative Guild.
- London Congregational Union Women's League.
- New Malden Congregational Women's League.
- Peckham Women's Co-operative Guild.
- Penzance Labour Party (Women's Section).
- Ross-on-Wye Women's Co-operative Guild.
- Wallasey BWTAU.
- Winchmore Hill Women's Adult School.
- Women's Co-operative Guild, Colwyn Bay.
- Women's League of the London Congregational Union.
- Women's Permanent Peace League.

Formation of the All Nations Group

This was undertaken as a direct result of the Conference on Refugees and has proved to be a valuable link between the WIL and women of other nationalities living in this country. A Committee representing at present nine nationalities meets monthly and arranges evenings of lectures, discussions, folk music and dancing, which provide an opportunity for an interchange of ideas and the gradual building up of a common life and purpose. The latest nationality to be welcomed into the circle is that of the United States of Indonesia.

From this All Nations Group has emerged:

The Polish WIL Group Attached to the British Section

This was established in December and consists of a group of Polish women who have accepted the aims of the WIL and the conditions of membership. Several meetings have taken place between the officers of the British Section and the leaders of the Polish Group to decide on procedure, and the following Polish Officers have been elected:—

Secretaries: Miss H. Dmochowska, Mrs. H. Cumft.

Chairman: Mrs. Irena Komorowska.

Representative to the Executive: Mrs. M. Lesniak, deputy Mrs. Malewska.

Membership reported in February was roughly about 30.

Events of the Year

ANNUAL COUNCIL.—This was held at the Hayes, Swanwick, Derbyshire, from March 25th to 28th, 1949. The general subject was "Human Rights," and the principal speakers were: Dr. Kathleen Lonsdale, F.R.S., on "The Right Use of Science," Mr. E. P. Jacks on "Saving the Soil," and Councillor Miss Marion Billson on "British Responsibility in Carrying out the Declaration of Human Rights."

The following resolutions were passed and sent to Government Departments and to appropriate organisations:—

World Government.—This Annual Council of the Women's International League registers its belief that the time has now come for action and calls upon its members, after studying various approaches to World Government throughout the winter, to enroll themselves as voters in the 1950 ballot for a Peoples'

World Constituent Assembly which shall devise a constitution for a World Government.

Declaration of Human Rights.—This Annual Council meeting of the Women's International League welcomes the adoption by the United Nations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and urges His Majesty's Government to take such steps as are necessary to ensure that the laws and customs of this country and of its colonial territories are in line with the rights and principles expounded therein, and to instruct our representative on the Human Rights Commission to give the utmost support to the speedy preparation of a draft covenant on Human Rights.

Provision of Community Centres.—This Annual Council Meeting of the Women's International League, believing that the foundation of a friendly peace-loving nation can be sought in the family life within its borders, urges all authorities responsible for the building of the housing estates to provide for community centres where all members of the families comprising the unit can make social and cultural contacts.

Equal Pay for Equal Work.—This Annual Council Meeting of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom calls upon His Majesty's Government to put into operation, without delay, the policy of equal pay as between men and women, i.e., the rate for the job, in all Government Services.

Abolition of the Death Penalty.—This Annual General Meeting of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom deplors the retention of capital punishment in this country, despite the majority vote in the House last March in favour of abolition, and urges His Majesty's Government to put into practice the five years' experiment recommended by the Select Committee set up in 1930.

Western Union.—At this Annual Council Meeting of the Women's International League it is resolved that Western Union or any other regional alliance be so developed as to lead towards world co-operation and not to a military alliance against a potential enemy.

Study of Soil, Food and Population.—This Annual Council of the Women's International League, realising the close relationship between the problems of soil, food and population, urges the Social and Economic Council of the United Nations to give special consideration to these related questions with a view to achieving world-wide co-operation for the satisfaction of human needs.

To International Congress, 1949.—The British Section of the WILPF asks the International Congress, meeting in Copenhagen, to endorse the following resolution passed at its Annual Council, March, 1949:—

This Annual Council of the Women's International League, realising the close relationship between the problems of soil, food and population, urges the Social and Economic Council of the United Nations to give special consideration to these related questions with a view to achieving world wide co-operation for the satisfaction of human needs.

Conscientious Objection.—This Annual Council Meeting of the Women's International League urges His Majesty's Government to take the earliest opportunity of pleading that all nations represented at UNO acknowledge the right of every citizen of whatever race, creed or sex to refuse military service on grounds of conscience.

Disarmament.—This Annual Council Meeting of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom reaffirms its opposition to all forms of warfare.

Believing that military preparedness tends to lull the nation into a sense of false security, and prejudices the atmosphere of reconciliation which is a necessary condition to the settlement of disputes, it urges His Majesty's Government:

- (a) To continue its efforts to seek agreement of outstanding problems round the conference table.
- (b) To advocate in the United Nations a systematic reduction of armaments in all member states, so working towards their entire abolition.
- (c) To consider sympathetically and seriously any proposals along these lines put forward from any source.
- (d) To overcome fear by extended functional co-operation and so achieve the peace which the peoples of the world desire.

Conscription.—This Annual Council Meeting of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom deplors the establishment of peace time military conscription. It believes that:—

- (1) It interrupts the education of our youth at a vital stage and creates conditions that endanger their moral character and stamina.
- (2) Young men who have been conditioned to obey orders without questioning the morality of these orders have had the worst possible training for citizenship.
- (3) It is an aggravation of our economic difficulties and an obstacle to our industrial recovery.

It therefore urges His Majesty's Government to take immediate steps to repeal the National Service Act.

Rearmament.—This Annual Council Meeting of the Women's International League deplors the gigantic sums mentioned in this year's Service Estimates.

Refugees and Displaced Persons.—We, the members of the Annual Council of the Women's International League, being greatly impressed by the work undertaken by the recent fact-finding conference on the refugee problems in Central Europe held at Hamburg under the auspices of the World Council of Churches with the approval of the Foreign Office, and attended by representatives of German and British authorities, ask for the consideration by His Majesty's Government of the proposals put forward in the conference report.

We are convinced of the wide international implications of the refugee problem and of the disastrous effect on the economic and psychological recovery of Europe of the presence of some ten million uprooted and homeless people in Germany, and are shocked at the wastage of human life lived in such hopeless misery. We therefore appeal to His Majesty's Government to proceed with a sense of urgency and responsibility to facilitate the absorption of the major part of the refugees into the German economy, giving them opportunities to work out their own schemes for rehabilitation. In this context we welcome the proposal of His Majesty's Government to revise their programme of dismantling of German factories.

In addition we welcome the scheme of His Majesty's Government to settle workers in this country from the Displaced Persons' Camps in Germany and appreciate the fact that many of their dependants have also been provided for in the face of housing difficulties. We are convinced that only as family life can be re-established amongst these working guests and young men and women can look forward to marriage and home life, will they settle permanently and make a full contribution to the life and stability of our nation.

We therefore urge that every effort be made to continue to reunite workers with their family groups and facilitate integration into the normal life of this country.

Atlantic Pact.—This Annual Council Meeting of the Women's International League views with dismay the alignment of the world into opposing blocks, each heavily armed and divided by ideologies. It deplors the organisation of the Atlantic Treaty in terms of military defence, believing it to be a challenge to the U.S.S.R. calculated to foster a new and more dreadful arms race and the fear and suspicion which prepare the nations for war.

THE EXTENDED EXECUTIVE.—This was held in London on October 4th and 5th and delegates and visitors were present from fourteen branches in addition to Headquarter and Executive Members.

The main theme of the meeting was the Copenhagen Conference, and on the first afternoon the whole session was devoted to reports from delegates, to discussion and to the consideration of recommendations for the better functioning of the next congress. Dr. Gertrude Bussey was present and encouraged the British section to make constructive criticism. It was decided to send a list of recommendations to the International Executive for study before the next congress. The overcrowding of the agenda and the undue length of speeches were the main points which were criticised.

The evening session took the form of a public meeting, at which impressions of the congress were given by Lady Parmoor, Miss Agatha Harrison, Mrs. McGregor Wood, Mrs. Stapledon, Mrs. Cusden and eight other delegates.

On the second day, besides dealing with the normal business of an executive committee, decisions to take action were made: (1) in the case of Garry Davis, to whom a telegram supporting him in his policy of non-violent action was sent; (2) by an appeal to the French Government through H.M. Government urging legal provision for alternative service to military conscription; and (3) in a letter sent to the Foreign Office expressing concern about the hard core of refugees which would be left in Germany and Austria when IRO ceased to function, and the hope that the whole problem of stateless persons would be dealt with as a matter of first urgency by the United Nations.

The following letter was subsequently received from the Foreign Office.

October 22nd, 1949.

Madam,

With reference to your letter of October 15th regarding the welfare of displaced persons who will remain in Germany and Austria after the closing down of the International Refugee Organisation, I am directed by Mr. Secretary Bevin to inform you that the protection of these people will continue to be the concern of the Occupying Powers and that arrangements are already being made in the British Zone of Germany for the permanent institutional care of these displaced persons who are unable to become self-supporting on account of their age or physical disabilities.

The problem of statelessness has already been considered by the United Nations Economic and Social Council and the present session of the General Assembly will be considering the machinery for ensuring continued international supervision of the well-being of refugees. In this connection, H.M. Government are in favour of the establishment of a United Nations High Commissioner to exercise supervision.

I am, Madam,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) A. W. H. WILKINSON.

CONFERENCE ON THE PROBLEM OF REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS.—This was held at Kingsway Hall on March 5th and was attended by representatives of Branches and many outside organisations. At the first session Brigadier Cyrus Greenslade, C.B.E., chief of the London Office of the IRO, gave a comprehensive account of the work of the IRO on behalf of the non-German refugees under its care. At the second session the Rev. Henry Carter, C.B.E., Chairman of the Standing Conference of Refugees of the World Council of Churches, gave an over-all picture of the immense and urgent problem of Central Europe and enumerated the findings of the Hamburg Conference recently held. The following resolution was passed:—

This Conference deeply impressed with the fact that uprooted people of various nationalities are far more numerous in Central Europe than at the close of the war in 1945, and that a large proportion are in dire need of housing and a higher standard of maintenance, urges upon His Majesty's Government that priority should be given to remedial action in these matters in the British Zone of Germany. Further, the Conference requests the Government to make representation on the subject to the Governments of the United States and of France with a view to joint action in the three Western Zones.

At the third session the Rev. Percy Ineson, of the Refugee Division of the World Council of Churches, gave an account of the problem in this country concerning the European Volunteer Workers and their conditions of work and ultimate settlement. Representatives of the Ministry of Labour took part in the discussions. Dr. E. Arüja from Estonia gave arguments for and against the Government Scheme. The following resolution was passed:—

This Conference assures His Majesty's Government of its appreciation of the difficulties involved in the provision of accommodation and work for the European Volunteer Workers who have been brought to this country.

The Conference, however, is convinced that it is only as normal home and family life are restored to these homeless people that there can be any permanence in their life here and that only so can they contribute to the stability of our Community. It therefore urges His Majesty's Government to accept as a matter of primary urgency the task of facilitating the entries into this country of the dependants and families of these workers, and their integration into its normal life.

A full report of this Conference was published and a large number of copies sold.

CONFERENCE ON "THE COLONIES TO-DAY."—This was held at the Cora Hotel on December 3rd.

Lord Darwen took the chair at the first session and Mr. Reginald Sorensen, M.P., and Miss Marjorie Nicholson, of the Fabian Colonial Bureau, were the speakers on the subject of "The Colonies and Ourselves." Their speeches were followed by a contribution from Mr. David Pitt, of Trinidad, and by Mr. Arikpo, of the Gold Coast, who gave frank and helpful criticism of the British Government's policy.

The evening session, under the chairmanship of Mrs. McGregor Wood, took as its subject "Commonwealth Relations: Some Factors in the Present Spiritual Crisis." The speaker was the Rev. Norman Goodall, M.A., of the International Missionary Council. Afterwards Miss Lily Baeta, of the Gold Coast, gave an account of the position of women in her country.

The following resolution was passed:—

This Conference, convened by the WIL, believing that it is urgently necessary to deepen the confidence of the colonial peoples in the good faith and sincerity of H.M. Government suggests that H.M. Government should dissociate itself from the policy of the Union of South Africa and, whatever the technical difficulties may be, should give its moral support to the Rev. Michael Scott in the stand he is taking in defence of the indigenous peoples of Southern Africa.

At the same time the Conference urges H.M. Government to recognise the desire of the colonial peoples to govern themselves by hastening wherever possible the grant to them of independent status within the British Commonwealth.

At this Conference contact was made through Mrs. Grace Lankaster with the wife of the Indonesian Chargé d'Affaires, to this country, Dr. H. Soebandrio, and WIL literature has been sent to the All-Indonesian Women's Conference.

Action Taken by the Executive on Vital Issues

ITALIAN COLONIES.—The following points were given in a letter to the British Delegation to the General Assembly of the United Nations as expressing the view of the WIL:—(1) That Italy should not have any of her colonies returned to her; (2) That the inhabitants of the colonies should be called upon to state their views.

GENOCIDE.—Throughout the year the Executive has continued to press the Government to sign and ratify the Genocide Convention. A letter was received from the Government stating that the position was obscure and that legal investigations were being carried out. Further pressure will be brought to bear.

UNICEF.—By correspondence with the Foreign Office it was discovered that H.M. Government takes the view that owing to the present financial situation it is impossible for them to contribute to UNICEF. Further action will be taken.

CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION IN FRANCE.—In October a telegram was sent to Garry Davis in Paris to support the non-violent measures he had taken in protest against the prison sentences given to a conscientious objector against war.

An unsuccessful attempt was made to appeal to the French Government through our own.

The Parliamentary Committee sent the following letter to the *Times* in February and obtained the signatures of many distinguished people.

Sir,

It may not be known to the majority of your readers that no law for the recognition of conscientious objection to military service exists in France. As a result, young men called up for such service may be sentenced to imprisonment for one or two years at a time from the age of 20 until 50. In prison they are treated as common criminals. M. André Philip and a group of French M.P.s who have this matter at heart have prepared a Bill which will come before the Chamber shortly, and they hope that by this means France will be brought into line with the policy of her sister democracies.

In Britain a determined and largely successful effort was made to preserve the right to freedom of conscience even in the midst of a long and frightful war which strained every reserve of man power, and this I think impelled Frenchmen to appeal to public opinion here. We deplore the fact that France, a member of the United Nations, and approving the Declaration of Human Rights, should not legally recognise one of the most fundamental to any civilised society, the more so because a clause embodying it has even been written into the new Constitution of Western Germany. Article 4, para. 3 states: "No one may be compelled against his conscience to perform war service as a combatant. Details shall be regulated by the Federal Law." The issue here goes far beyond the mere question of pacifism. It reaches down into the structure on which our whole life as free peoples has been built and which has been so rudely shaken by the blast of totalitarianism and the exigencies of economic crisis. In this country and in America freedom of conscience, not only to abjure military service, but to worship and to think and speak, has survived. May we not hope that in passing this law France will do away with an anomaly surprising in the nation which is traditionally an exponent of Liberty, Fraternity and Equality.

Signed by:

ERNEST BARKER	PETER PEARS
DAVID LOW	BENJAMIN BRITTEN
EDWARD LICHFIELD	SYBIL THORNDIKE
LINDSAY OF BIRKER	B. DUNCAN HARRIS
B. H. LIDDELL HART	MARION E. PARMOOR
JULIAN HUXLEY	THE REV. DR. LESLIE WEATHERHEAD, M.A.
BERTRAND RUSSELL	

We were unsuccessful in having it published.

GERMANY.—Letters were sent to Government Departments on Dismantling and on the Control of the Ruhr.

With regard to dismantling it was pointed out that for psychological as well as for humanitarian reasons it was much to be desired that dismantling should cease.

A reply was received in which the Government explained their policy in detail.

With regard to the control of the Ruhr a letter to the Rt. Hon. Herbert Morrison expressed our fear that the pre-war industrial control of the Ruhr by large combines might reappear. Our letter was forwarded to the Foreign Office who replied that they had taken the most careful steps to "break down the concentrations of the largest of these combines."

MICHAEL SCOTT.—A letter was sent to Mr. Creech Jones to enquire why the British Delegate voted against the Rev. Michael Scott being given a hearing at Lake Success. An answer was received from the Commonwealth Relations Office which stated that it was feared that an undesirable precedent might be created. Reference was made to questions asked in Parliament and reported in Hansard, November 30th, 1949.

CONSCRIPTION.—In addition to the resolution passed at the Annual Council the following resolution was passed unanimously and sent to the No Conscription Council for use at their Conference on February 4th:

This Executive Meeting of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom deplores the establishment of peace time military conscription.

It believes that:—

- (1) It interrupts the education of our youth at a vital stage and creates conditions that endanger their moral character and stamina.
- (2) Young men who have been conditioned to obey orders without questioning the morality of those orders have had the worst possible training for citizenship.
- (3) It is an aggravation of our economic difficulties and an obstacle to our industrial recovery.

It therefore urges H.M. Government to take immediate steps to repeal the National Service Act.

BRITISH COUNCIL.—Two letters were sent to the British Council on the subject of the provision of hostels for Coloured Students. An interesting and satisfactory reply was received.

HYDROGEN BOMB.—The following letter was sent in February to the heads of the four political parties.

February 2nd, 1950.

Dear Sir,

The Women's International League is gravely concerned by the decision of the President of the U.S.A. to develop the Hydrogen Bomb. The conscience of the peoples demands that a halt be called to this development of the means of destruction.

We ask you and your party to press that a meeting of the heads of the U.S.A., U.S.S.R. and the United Kingdom be convened to consider the complete renunciation of atomic weapons as a step towards the abandonment of the use of force.

I have the honour to be Sir,

Your obedient servant,

Hon. Sec.

India and Pakistan

Last year's report began with the news that Miss Agatha Harrison had just left on her sixth visit to India. On her return in May she gave a graphic account of all she had seen and done, particularly of the pleasure of attending the 21st session of the All India Women's Conference at Gwalior and the wonderful experience it was to be in a free and independent India. Miss Harrison also visited Pakistan and described the astonishing awakening which events and the pressing needs of their country had brought to the women there, an increasing number of whom, recently in purdah, are now undertaking public work to an extent undreamed of a few years ago. An All Pakistan Women's Conference has been formed, organised on much the same lines as the conference in India. The Women's Council on Indian Affairs (to which the WIL is affiliated) has lately been reconstituted and, at the Annual Meeting in December, adopted the title of Women's Council Co-operating with the Women of India, Pakistan and Ceylon. It is hoped to promote friendly contacts with the women of those countries resident in or visiting Britain.

As before, London has been a rendezvous for distinguished Indian women on their way to and from the United Nations, and we have had the pleasure of meeting Mrs. Renuka Ray, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Mrs. Kitty Shiva Rao, and Mrs. Kripalani, the last named being a member of India's delegation to the UN Assembly. Some of us have also had the privilege of meeting and hearing Pandit Nehru.

For the World Conference of Religious Pacifists which met in December Miss Harrison is again in India, an ever ready counsellor and helper, and Miss Vera Brittain is one of the invited representatives from this country.

A letter of congratulation was sent from the Executive to Mrs. Urmila Mehta, President of the All India Women's Conference, on the inauguration of the Indian Republic on January 26th, 1950. The most heartfelt good wishes were expressed for the future prosperity, happiness and well-being of the citizens of the new Republic. In reply Mrs. Mehta thanked us and said that she hoped to meet Miss Agatha Harrison in Bombay.

International Affairs

The outstanding event of a notable year for the WILPF was the Copenhagen Congress which is discussed fully elsewhere in this report. For most of 1949 there has been an International Secretary, Mrs. Anne Bloch, working with Louisa Jaques in the old "Maison" in Geneva, and this has brought a greater sense of unity and has helped national sections to become more integrated in the International work of the WILPF. Partly though not entirely because of the Congress, the British Section has been privileged to receive several International Officers and a number of members of other Sections including Miss Marie Lous-Mohr (an International Chairman since 1946) Dr. Gertrude Bussey, Mrs. Dorothy Meders Robinson (International Treasurer), Mrs. Zeuthen and the Rev. Annerley Stewart.

Mrs. McGregor Wood and Mrs. Agnes Stapledon visited Germany and Lady Mayer attended the United Nations meeting of Non-Governmental Organisations at Geneva in June on behalf of the British Section.

Perhaps the most important event of the year, not forgetting the Congress, was the recognition of the WILPF by UNESCO. It was granted Consultative Status in June, and Mme. André Jouve has been, and still is, the accredited Consultant, and has done valuable work in that capacity. In the autumn she invited Mrs. Sutherst to assist her at some of the sessions of the November Session of UNESCO, and the British Section is proud to have had this share in the work.

We again owe to Gertrude Baer a debt of gratitude for her work as Accredited Observer and Permanent Consultant with the UN. The five letters she has issued during the year have been of great value, not least the studies which have been included on the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the Trusteeship System, and a further review of the situation of women in the UN. This last is a document which has been widely used far beyond our own ranks. Some of the branches of the British Section are now using these letters as a basis for study and have no doubt realised more fully the responsibility of belonging to an organisation which has the privilege of being represented at Lake Success and having opportunities for pressing its views. Gertrude Baer has performed this service on many occasions, among others on the Status of Women, the functioning of ECOSOC, Trusteeship, the Genocide Convention, UNICEF, Statelessness, and the Non-Governmental Organisations.

Mention should also be made of the delightful Summer School organised by the Swedish Section at Gripsholm from July 31st to August 6th. There were 121 people present, including lecturers, and many of the students were young people, including a considerable group of boys and girls from Germany.

XIth Congress of WILPF, Copenhagen, August 15th to 20th, 1949. "People United Against War for Peace and Freedom"

Meeting in the beautiful hall of the Danish Houses of Parliament, the XIth Congress was an inspiration—and a disappointment; a source of renewed enthusiasm, and of a sense of frustration. Disappointment was perhaps inevitable since it was impossible to deal with the mass of resolutions in the brief time available. Many well conceived speeches died before they could be born, and many of the untouched resolutions dealt with some of the most vital problems which disturb international relationships to-day.

The sense of frustration was perhaps a reflection of the mood of the present-day world. Speakers from floor and platform ably diagnosed the maladies from which mankind is suffering but, with a few notable exceptions, they failed to prescribe or to agree upon satisfactory remedies.

There could have been no better background, however, to the Congress than the heart-warming and generous hospitality extended to us by our Danish hosts both officially and unofficially.

Members who had attended the Luxembourg Congress noted a mellowing of the atmosphere. The understandable emotionalism of the immediate post-war period had gone and in its place was a real determination to adopt an objective and truly international attitude towards the problems that faced the League and the world. The British Section sent a large delegation consisting of one Executive member, two Consultatives, ten Delegates and ten Alternates, with some visitors. A high light of the Congress was the statesmanlike and truly inspiring speech of Lord Boyd Orr, who spoke of the discovery of new forces in the world which made it easy to establish Peace and Freedom, and of the political obstacles which rendered it difficult. He exhorted his hearers not to be discouraged because the new world could not be achieved immediately. Politicians talked about Socialism, Capitalism, Communism—these were abstract terms, slogans. If they came down to concrete realities they knew what they were talking about; e.g., food, clothing, housing. Food was the easiest road to peace and freedom. He ended a great speech by declaring that organisations like the WILPF had great power. If the people spoke with with one voice, Governments would be glad and would carry through what every decent person wanted.

The resolutions passed by Congress will appear in the Congress Report together with the main speeches. It was regrettable that many of the most important motions were not reached and had to be referred to the Executive, and that no concrete plans were laid for the guidance of the Sections during the next three years.

Three able Chairmen were elected by the Executive: Marie Lous-Mohr, of Norway; Dr. Gertrude Bussey, of U.S.A.; and our own Agnes Stapledon.

An informal meeting of Delegates was held at the close of formal business to discuss proposed revision of the Constitution; and a Constitution Committee was set up under the Chairmanship of Barbara Duncan Harris.

The British delegation acquitted itself well. Agnes Stapledon's paper on "The Values of East and West" aroused an animated and lengthy debate. The Section may well be proud that she was elected one of the co-Chairmen of the WILPF, and that Barbara Duncan Harris was re-elected to the Executive.

British Delegates:

Mrs. Coppock
Mrs. Hartley
Dr. Marwick
Miss McAra
Mrs. Needham
Mrs. Phillips
Mrs. Silyn Roberts
Dr. Snodgrass
Mrs. Sutherst
Mrs. Tiller

Alternates:

Mrs. Beard
Mrs. Holmes
Miss Paterson
Mrs. Peat
Mrs. Schlossman
Miss Stanley
Mrs. Sussams
Mrs. Weiss
Miss Wright

Accepted as Delegation Officers:

Chairman to Delegates: Mrs. McGregor Wood
Secretary " " Mrs. Peat
Convener " " Mrs. Cusden
Resolutions Officer: Mrs. Hartley
In Charge of Welfare: Miss McAra

Women's Peace Movement

Following the Mass Meeting in the Central Hall, Westminster, there had been nine meetings in the Provinces. Much interest was aroused. Two delegates were sent to the World Peace Conference in Paris.

Owing to financial difficulties it was decided to modify activities and the following Resolution was passed:—

That the WPM should continue in the form of a Standing Committee, which shall meet at the request of any three of its constituent organisations when the international situation be deemed to warrant joint action.

Membership

The need was felt during the year to give more detailed consideration to our membership, and with this end in view Mrs. Sutherst was appointed Membership Secretary. Mrs. Sutherst has been in touch with many Headquarters' Members from whom the office had not recently heard and has written to some fifty women who had been suggested as potential members. Some of these have in fact now joined the WIL.

The Membership Secretary is also compiling a register of members' names and addresses, based on information provided by Branch Secretaries. There are two main objects in establishing this register: in the first place, it will at last give an overall picture of our membership at a given moment, and, in the second, it will mean that better use will be made of the expert knowledge and skill of individual members.

The Branches

There are now twenty-five branches in the British Section:—

- ACOCKS GREEN, BIRMINGHAM.—Hon. Sec., Mrs. Bisson, 21, Ladbrook Road, Solihull, Birmingham.
- BIRMINGHAM.—Hon. Sec., Miss D. Robinson, 651, Shirley Road, Birmingham, 28.
- BRIGHTON.—Hon. Sec., Mrs. Goring, Hatherley, Chancellors Park, Hassocks, Sussex.
- BROMLEY.—Hon. Sec., Miss A. Bishop, 90, Plaistow Lane, Bromley, Kent.
- CAMBRIDGE.—Hon. Sec., Mrs. Schlossman, 8, Latham Road, Cambridge.
- CHILDWALL, LIVERPOOL.—Hon. Sec., Mrs. N. Greaves, 60, Woolecombe Road, Liverpool, 16.
- COVENTRY.—Hon. Sec., Miss E. R. Gloyne, 99, Sussex Road, Coventry.
- CROYDON.—Hon. Sec., Mrs. Percy, 45, Ashburton Avenue, Croydon, Surrey.
- EDINBURGH.—Hon. Sec., Mrs. Nelson, 53, Spottiswoode Street, Edinburgh, 9.
- FOLKESTONE.—Hon. Sec., Mrs. Sussams, St. Stephen's Hall, Cooling Lane, Folkestone, Kent.
- GLASGOW.—Hon. Sec., Mrs. Shanks, 32, Crompton Avenue, Glasgow, S.4.
- HARROW.—Hon. Sec., Mrs. M. Swoboda, Langdale House, London Road, Harrow.
- LEICESTER.—Hon. Sec., Mrs. Pick, 80, Letchworth Road, Leicester.
- LIVERPOOL.—Hon. Sec., Mrs. Holmes, 33, Vernon Avenue, Hooton, Cheshire.
- LONG EATON, NOTTS.—Hon. Sec., Mrs. Beard, 142, Derby Road, Long Eaton, Notts.
- MANCHESTER.—Organising Sec., Mrs. Needham, 1, Princess Street, Albert Square, Manchester.
- NORTH WALES.—Hon. Sec., Mrs. Pritchard, Bronllwyn, Menai Bridge, Anglesey.
- NOTTINGHAM.—Hon. Sec., Mrs. Wilde, The White House, Lambley, Notts.
- ORPINGTON.—Hon. Sec., Mrs. Sutherst, 8, Clarendon Way, Marlings Park, Chislehurst, Kent.
- OXFORD.—Hon. Sec., Mrs. Napier, Windrush House, Shotover Hill, Oxford.
- READING.—Hon. Sec., Mrs. Mitchell, 19, Kidmoor Road, Caversham, Reading.
- SHEFFIELD.—Hon. Sec., Mrs. Wood, 10, Norwood Road, Sheffield, 5.
- WARRINGTON.—Hon. Sec., Mrs. Davies, Bleak House, Heath Road, Penketh, Warrington.
- WEST DERBY, LIVERPOOL.—Hon. Sec., Mrs. Pearson, 19, Lydford Road, Liverpool, 12.
- WORTHING.—Hon. Sec., Miss Camfield, 71, Church Walk, Worthing.

One new branch has been formed during the year at Bromley, Kent, with Miss A. Bishop as the Secretary. Our thanks are due to the Orpington Branch who co-operated in its foundation. A much larger branch representation on the Executive this year has resulted in close participation by the branches in the work of the British Section. The Chairman and Officers have much enjoyed their visits to several of the branches.

The Office

The resignation of Miss McLaren was received with great regret by those who appreciated her excellent qualities.

After a period of unavoidable changes the office is now in the charge of Mrs. Lydia Dennis, assisted by Miss Marion Wilkinson. They have both of them brought experience and a genial team spirit to the office, and every confidence is felt in the efficient running of office affairs.

Voluntary Workers

The work of the Headquarters Office could not be carried on without the help of the voluntary workers. It is impossible to thank them too much for all they do.

Invaluable work has been done by Miss Alexander, Miss Gill, Miss Ruth Harrison, Miss Orr-Paterson and Mrs. Warner. In January we were delighted to welcome a new helper in Mrs. Mitchiner.

News Sheet

Miss Haughton has again been Editor with H. G. Mather, Ltd. as printers. There have been nine issues during the year, with eight supplements. Encouragement and congratulations have been most gratefully received in letters and documentary communications from many sources; among others: United Nations, International World Peace Day Committee (California), Le Citoyen du Monde (Brussels).

Hon. Treasurer's Report

To attribute our big financial deficit on the year's work to the fact that we have had very heavy additional expenses in connection with the Copenhagen Congress is certainly justified to some extent, but it is not the whole of the story. This situation only serves to illustrate very clearly and forcibly a warning which I have given in recent successive reports that we are spending each year considerably more than we are receiving in income. Each year we have to draw on our reserve and capital fund—and each year that fund is getting smaller. Taking an average of our excess spending over the last four years, our capital will be all used within the next four years. *But*, if we repeat the deficit of 1949, we shall be bankrupt within the next two years.

Our main sources of income—subscriptions, donations, and branch quotas—brought us less than in 1948. Sale of *News Sheets* is £30 less than last year, while increased costs in various items of expenditure help to account for the grand total loss of £303. If these figures mean anything to WIL members, something more is needed than just sympathetic concern expressed at the Annual Council. If the WIL means anything to WIL members, each of us must give on a scale we have not expected to have to give hitherto. Action is needed. If we can make a great effort to collect £300 to send delegates to Copenhagen, are we not capable of making a great effort to get new members and to give money or collect money and raise money in order to save our Section from bankruptcy? I believe we are capable and I believe the WIL is worth saving.

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1949

1948	To	EXPENDITURE	£	s.	d.	1948	By	INCOME	£	s.	d.
130	Rent	...	130	0	0	264	Subscriptions	...	233	18	10
16	Lighting and Heating	...	14	13	4	301	Donations	...	174	17	4
41	Office Expenses	...	85	19	8	214	Branch Quotas	...	162	2	0
—	Insurance	...		11	3	27	Affiliation Fees	...	25	6	9
507	Salaries and National Insurance	...	472	2	0	32	Sale of Literature	...	9	9	6
75	Travelling Expenses	...	51	6	4	123	Sale of <i>News Sheets</i>	...	93	3	5
7	Affiliation Fees	...	5	15	0	61	Meetings	...	7	12	0
63	Postage less Refunds	...	55	15	6	52	Proceeds of Christmas Appeal	...	77	0	0
24	Telephone	...	21	11	5		Balance being Excess of Expenditure				
72	Stationery	...	84	4	7	121	over Income carried to Balance Sheet		303	7	11
58	Literature	...	1	19	0						
105	<i>News Sheets</i>	...	113	14	6						
85	Meetings and Hire of Rooms	...	33	10	2						
12	Audit and Accountancy	...	15	15	0						
<u>£1195</u>			<u>£1086</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>£1195</u>			<u>£1086</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>9</u>

BALANCE SHEET AS AT DECEMBER 31, 1949

LIABILITIES		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	ASSETS		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
SPECIAL FUNDS:—								Cash at Bank	...	32	5	7			
	Congress	28	4	1				Cash in Hand	...	30	6	9			
	Ford Memorial	66	6	8								62	12	4	
	Shrewsbury	7	0	0				Co-operative Permanent Building Soc.	...				838	18	1
	Penny-a-Week	179	5	1				Electricity Deposit	...				3	0	0
							280	15	10						
SUNDRY CREDITORS							51	14	2						
SUBSCRIPTIONS IN ADVANCE							5	6	3						
CAPITAL FUND:—															
	Balance, January 1, 1949	911	10	6											
	Add Legacy	20	0	0											
	Building Society Interest...	19	7	7											
		950	18	1											
Deduct Income and Expenditure Account:															
	Balance, January 1, 1949	£121	6	8											
	Transfer from Thanksgiving Fund	40	10	8											
		80	16	0											
	Excess of Expenditure over Income for the year	303	7	11											
		384	3	11											
							566	14	2						
			<u>£904</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>5</u>								<u>£904</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>5</u>

I have audited the accounts of the League for the year ended December 31, 1949, and certify that, in my opinion, the foregoing accounts are properly drawn up so as to exhibit the position of affairs in accordance with the information given me and as shown by the books.

CLUGSTON, SELBY & ROBINS,
25, Victoria Street, London, S.W.1

M. E. ROBINS (Certified Accountant),
Auditor

January 23, 1950

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