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INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN.

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# EXPLANATORY PREFACE

TO THE

# REPORT

OF A

# MEMORABLE CONFERENCE

Held at WEMBLEY, MAY, 1924,

on

“The Prevention of the Causes of War.”

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CITY OF LONDON POLYTECHNIC  
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A "fraternal delegate" writing anonymously, says:

"In May 1924 a wonderful International Conference, organised by the International Council of Women, took place at the British Empire Exhibition. It was wonderful because from it pealed forth the clarion note of the New Age, the clarion note of international co-operation and help to all weaker states and peoples.

Most of the speakers were experts, but there was something about their addresses that differed from those of ordinary Conferences. It was not that they were not technical, it was not that they lacked statistics, but both statistics and technicalities were made to glow with living intensity because of the enthusiasm and human love which moved the speakers of so many different nationalities. For the four days during which the Conference was sitting there was an atmosphere of unity and friendliness, and after it was over, and the delegates dispersed to return to their different countries, a feeling of expansion and understanding went with each one which cannot fail to work towards the "Prevention of the Causes of War" for which the Conference was called together."

This little book aims at gathering together and preserving the Addresses which made such an impression at Wembley; for

our friend the "fraternal delegate" was not alone in feeling that this Conference was exceptional in its character and tone, both speakers and audience combining together to create an atmosphere of reality and spiritual power.

Simultaneously with this gathering at Wembley, remarkable Conferences having the same object and adopting in large measure the same programme, were being held at Budapest, and at Sydney, Brisbane, Hobart and Launceston, under the auspices of their respective National Councils of Women, whilst we hear of further meetings and Study Circles being organised in other countries to carry on the good work, and to fan the flame of earnest purpose to search out the causes of War and steadfastly to help in removing them.

Our programme indicates that our plan and policy is the promotion of the international mind in all relations of life, through education, through intellectual co-operation, through travel, and encouragement of all national and international humanitarian

activities, and through support of an all inclusive League of Nations.

Our Conference did not profess to discover any new scheme, but rather attempted to call on the ordinary rank and file of women to realise the power with which they are endued, but do not use.

Let us cull a few sayings from some of the speakers.

"People say War is inevitable; but it is not inevitable ten years before it breaks out; it must be prevented before the nations are aflame."

"The real danger lies not in the growth of existing armaments, but in the invention of new ones. In America, in Britain, in all the countries, the chemical laboratories at the Universities, etc., are especially occupied, not in searching for fresh means of preventing disease and suffering, but in devising poisonous gases by which whole civilian populations can be killed within a few hours, dying in agony. It is a race between education and catastrophe."

"Essential products, such as coal, iron, oil, are often the causes of War. Why?"

“Peace can only be established on all round justice.”

“There are two great classes of people in the world—the disintegrators, and the assimilators. To which do we belong?”

“The question of the world’s poverty or prosperity rests largely with women. It is they who create the atmosphere which either leads to antagonisms between the nations and the consequent poverty of all, or on the other hand, to mutual understanding, happiness, peace and prosperity.”

“Every country owes much of its national life to contributions from the world—not only from the big nations, but also from the small ones.”

“Culture which keeps exclusively to its own nationality will ultimately perish.”

“What we need are people prepared for tedious, diluted, uninteresting martyrdom, in taking the unpopular side.”

“What we need is the willingness to do that sort of work for the world that in a simple state of society the ordinary Mother did for the tribe to which she belonged.”

Friends of the International Council, and all who take up this volume, may we call on you to pass on our message, to make it your business to interest some woman who thinks that she has no

responsibility or influence in this great question of promoting world peace?

In the name of those dear to her, in the name of the little children who will be sacrificed if War is permitted to raise its head again, ask her to look into these things for herself, and to join the great company of men and women who are everywhere striving to promote good-will amongst the nations, and to save the world.

We do not ask our members to take any pledge which will prevent their giving aid to their own country if the madness of War overtakes it, but we do entreat them to endeavour to save their country and their homes from the horror of such madness.

A movement has been initiated to enlist everyone in a seven years crusade to prevent War, on the plea that people will often support an undertaking more heartily if they know it is for a definite period, and that if War can be prevented for seven years it is likely to be prevented for ever.

We who belong to the contingent entered for life-long service, find no difficulty in supporting the same cause for seven years; but whatever you do, do not be indifferent and let the world perish because of the apathy of its own citizens.

*“Curse ye Meroz,” said the Angel of the Lord, Curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.”*

ISHBEL ABERDEEN AND TEMAIR,

*President of the I. C. W,*

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