Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Resolutions of the Zurich Congress 1919

Resolutions of the Hague Congress 1915

Constitution of the W.I.L.P.F.

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The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
Geneva, Switzerland
B. RESOLUTIONS FOR
FUTURE WORK SUBMITTED TO THE
NATIONAL SECTIONS

V. LEAGUE OF NATIONS

This Resolution as here printed embodies in a logical order the decisions of the Congress regarding the type of League of Nations for which the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom ought to work: the text was not before the Congress in just this form. The brief statement of these decisions presented at Paris will be found on p. 243 and following.

This Congress resolves to work for a League of Nations with a constitution which is of easy amendment, and on the following basis.

8. Membership.

Membership of the League should be freely open, from the time of its establishment, to all States which express their desire to become members, and their willingness to perform the duties of membership.


a. Governing Body.

Such League should have a democratically elected Assembly, consisting of men and women, and holding regular meetings to deal with practical proposals for further international cooperation. This Assembly should be so constituted, that it could formulate and enforce those principles of justice, equity and goodwill, in accordance with which the struggles of subject communities could be more fully recognized, and the rights not only of the great powers and small nations, but also those of weaker countries and primitive peoples gradually adjusted under an enlightened international public opinion. The number of nations included in its executive body should be not less than eleven.

b. Courts of Justice and Arbitration.

A permanent International Court of Justice should be established to settle differences of a justiciable character, such as arise on the interpretation of treaty rights or of the law of nations.

c. Conciliation.

International differences arising from economic competition, expanding commerce, increase of population and changes in social and political standards, should be settled either by this International Assembly or by some body appointed by it.


The decisions of this Assembly should under no circumstances be enforced by military means, or by cutting off a population from the necessities of life.

e. Women’s Eligibility.

Women should be eligible to every position in the League of Nations.


a. Self-determination.

The right of self-determination and of self-government should be conceded to all nations.

b. Rights of minorities.

Representation and protection of the rights of minorities within each nation, with regard to such questions as language, religion and education should be assured.
c. **Right of Appeal.**

Nationalities and dependencies within any government should have the right to present directly to the League their desires as to self-determination and representation.

d. **Territorial Adjustment.**

 Provision should be made for adjusting questions of territory and nationality, in accordance with the principle of self-determination.

e. **Abrogation of Treaties.**

The following should be void:

i. Secret treaties;

ii. All treaties or international engagements inconsistent with the constitution of the League of Nations;

iii. All treaties and international engagements not registered at the Headquarters of the League.

f. **Ratification of Treaties.**

Ratification of treaties should take place by plebiscite.

g. **Revision of Treaties.**

 Provision should be made for the revision of treaties which may have become inapplicable under changed international conditions, or the continuance of which might endanger the peace of the world.

h. **Mandatories.**

All backward races under the tutelage of more advanced nations should be put under the guardianship of the League and any power entrusted by the League with their administration should be required to promote the development and the power of self-government of its wards and to present an annual report to the League.

i. **Abolition of Governmental Censorship.**

Abolition of Governmental censorship should be required.

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j. **Women's Equality.**

The suffrage and all legal, political and economic rights should belong equally to men and women.

11. **Military.**

a. **The Right to Declare War.**

The right to declare war should be abolished.

b. **Reduction of Armaments.**

Immediate reduction of armaments on the same terms for all states, and the abolition of private manufacture of and traffic in munitions of war, should be undertaken, as steps towards total international disarmament.

c. **Conscription.**

Military conscription should be abolished.

12. **Economic.**

a. **Free Trade.**

Free trade should be established; trade routes by land, sea and air should be opened to all nations on equal terms.

b. **Concessions.**

Concessions in undeveloped countries should be under the control of the League of Nations, and withdrawn if abused; the right to protect investments of capitalists of one country in the resources of another should be abolished.

c. **Production and Distribution.**

Such methods of production, trade and transit should be adopted as should insure a just distribution of the necessities of life at the least cost.

d. **Universal Coinage, Weights and Measures.**

A universal system of coinage and the same weights and measures in all countries should be adopted.
VI. ACTION TO BE PROPOSED TO THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS WHEN ESTABLISHED


In view of the difficulties for women in international marriages caused by the national differences in marriage and divorce laws, this International Congress of Women urges the League of Nations to appoint a Commission of an equal number of men and women to investigate marriage and divorce laws as they affect marriages between persons of different nationalities.

15. International Commission on War Profits.

This International Congress of Women asks the League of Nations to appoint an International Commission, to sit in public, with power to take evidence on oath and to command the attendance of any witness it may desire to call, to enquire into the facts regarding profit-making due to war and preparation for war.

VII. PROGRESS IN THE POLITICAL POSITION OF WOMEN 1915-1919

This Congress welcomes the progress made in the establishment of the principles laid down at the Hague Congress of Women, in 1915, in national and international affairs.

In particular it welcomes:


The international recognition of women in the proposals put forward by the Entente Powers:

a. Providing in their draft for a Covenant of a League of Nations for the admission of women to all positions in connection with the League, thus making them eligible for the Assembly, the Executive Council and the Commissions therein proposed, and urges that this be explicitly stated in the Covenant;

b. Recognizing in the Labour Charter, proposed by them for incorporation in the Treaty of Peace, the principle of equal pay for work of equal value as between men and women:

17. National.

The national acceptance of the principle of woman suffrage by the extension of the franchise to women in Iceland (1915), Denmark (1915), Canada (1917), Great Britain (1918), Ireland (1918), Germany (1918), Austria (1918), Hungary (1918), Poland (1919), and Russia and the extension of suffrage to women in many States of the American Union.)*

It urges the other countries of the world to come into line with these nations by recognising the citizenship of their women.