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The World Assembly for Peace opened on 22 June, 1955 at Helsinki. There were 68 countries represented by 1640 delegates and 300 observers and guests.

The largest delegations numbering 100 each came from India, France, (Japan) and Italy. The Chinese, the Russians, the British, the Japanese and the Canadians were about 50 strong. Between 10 and 20 members came from Sudan, Korea, Indonesia, Switzerland, Australia and Vietnam, and similar delegations from Portugal, Iceland and U.S.A. and other countries.

The delegations from the French Colonies, that is Sudan, Se.... Madagascar, French Cameroons were African people who spoke French. It was rather strange to us that they spoke no English. The delegates came from all walks of life, writers, actors, teachers, peasants, workers, businessmen, about 72 clergymen of various churches. There were 437 women present. Messages of goodwill came from many prominent people. Queen Elizabeth of Belgium, Mrs. Rameshuari Nehru, the Congress of Canadian Women and Edward Herriot ex President of the French National Assembly.

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(councilor to the Indian Ministry of Rehabilitation).

I will never forget that wonderful assembly representing the overwhelming majority of mankind. Practically every language in the world was spoken. Hands were clasped in friendship and brotherhood. The few South Africans were greeted everywhere by people who were delighted that we had managed to come. We heard many people speak on the problems they have to face in their countries.

There were four speeches which received an outstanding ovation :- Madame Pak-Der Ai of Korea. Ily Ehrenburg. Mr. Kuo-Mo-Jo, Vice President of the Chinese Peoples Republic and the speech made by the leader of our delegation. He said "That the message he brought came from the African Indian and Coloured people of South Africa, and from the millions of other Africans not represented at all at the Assembly, and also from those white people in South Africa who believe in the brotherhood of man". The message stated that our efforts for World Peace will remain in jeopardy, will remain important as long as there exists in the world racial discrimination. Women played a vital role throughout the assembly and on the Commissions.

Mrs. Eugene Cotton President of the Women's International Democratic Federation spoke on the very important role that women can play in the struggle for peace. Women in every country had responded to the Vienna Appeal and have been active in collecting numbers of signatures.

She ended by saying :-

More and more women are coming to understand that there are other ways than war of solving difficulties between states and that they must act in order to protect their children from death and suffering.

The Conference was divided into 7 Commissions.

The Education Commission to which I went was most interesting. The Agenda was Education for Peace in School and in life. Delegates spoke on the problems of education in their countries. I was amazed at the extent to which the American comic with its accent on violence and death had infiltrated to every part of the world except to those countries behind the so-called Iron Curtain. Nearly every delegate mentioned the American comic as a major educational problem. Particular stress was laid on the necessity of revising history and geography books. It was recommended that the Peace Council set up a small permanent body

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whose task it would be to advise and promote suitable literature and good text books. It was also felt that it was extremely important to develop the exchange of teachers, students, sportsmen, young workers of every kind either individually or collectively. Gatherings of youth speaking different languages, having different religions or of different colour should be one of the main tasks of the Peace Councils in each country.

Mr. Obratsov of the Soviet Union who is the director of the Russian Puppet Theatre said :- "The future is not abstract, The future is our children, it is warm, it is something one can hold in ones hands".

He ended by saying "I believe in a brilliant happy future, I believe that children in world will be saved from War and that they will not fear to look up into the sky because death will not fall from it.

Professor Battaglia, an Italian History Professor said that one of the reasons for inaccuracy of history books is that they have been written by specialists and that ordinary people are not consulted. Also the tendency of leaving out the present and dwelling on the past is like giving a man a coat by no shoes to wear in Winter.

Mr. Ndao Ndéné an African from Dakar stated that African children are taught in French in the schools and not in their mother tongue. A child cannot spend two years in one class and that is one of the reasons why such a small percentage of children attend schools. There are however schools to prepare children for military service, there they are taught the benefit of American civilisation, that their forefathers were bandits but that those who came to enslave them were heroes.

Mrs. Ryerson from Canada said that a regular part of the education programme in Canada and U.S.A. was atomic drill for the children. Children wore identification tags. Pressure by parents on the abolishing of atomic drill had been successful in a number of schools in Canada. This shows what can be done by the united efforts of ordinary people.

The Delegate from Japan said there were 700 U.S.A. Air bases in Japan and that teaching in schools in these areas is very difficult. The roar of planes overhead make it impossible for the children to hear the teacher. There were 200,000 illegitimate children of United States Service men.

I would like to mention here that the Japanese delegation brought a wealth of material to the assembly particularly on the shocking after effects of Atomic warfare and the Hydrogen bomb.

Assembly ended by issuing the Helsinki Appeal which stated that the work for peace can be achieved if the forces for peace unite their efforts and support negotiation.

The closing speech was made by Kuo-Mo-Jo who said that conditions are not the same in all countries and that one should not be discouraged if the task of striving for peace was more difficult in some countries than in others. In his own words. "Dear Friends, the seeds of the dandelion are ripe and will be scattered far and wide, when they flower they will cover the earth with gold.

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TREASON TRIAL, 1956 1961

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