© 2021 Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom

Permission is granted for non-commercial reproduction, copying, distribution, and transmission of this publication or parts thereof so long as full credit is given to the publishing organisation; the text is not altered, transformed, or built upon; and for any reuse or distribution, these terms are made clear to others.

April, 2021

WILPF Heritage Month
1st edition
18 pp.

Authors: Thanks to WILPF Sections and Staff.
Design: Nadia Joubert

All photos and illustrations are from the WILPF archives, Sections, partners, and the former WILPF international magazine Pax et Libertas.

www.wilpf.org
This April marks WILPF’s 106th birthday!

To celebrate, we shared a look into significant people, moments, and movements in WILPF’s history throughout the month.

#WILPFHeritageMonth
WILPF’s first Congress took place in The Hague, the Netherlands in April 1915. Our first Resolution called for an end to “the madness and the horror of war.”

Read all of WILPF’s original Resolutions from 1915.

1919

One of the co-organisers of the International Women’s Congress for Peace and Freedom in 1915, Anita Augspurg (1857-1943) was a woman ahead of her time. A rebel at heart, she studied law in Zurich in 1890 and spent her entire life fighting against the patriarchal system. With her short hair and unconventional clothing, she never went unnoticed. She also fiercely opposed anti-semitism, and fought for the end of capitalism.

"I call out to the men to strive to suppress the use of weapons. I know that this is infinitely difficult for us women. But I also know that the power of women is completely gone the moment men have the weapons in their hands."

Anita Augspurg at the 1919 Zurich Congress

"We women, in International Congress assembled, protest against the madness and the horror of war, involving as it does a reckless sacrifice of human life ..."
WILPF’s global movement for feminist peace started strong! In our first five years, 19 Sections launched around the world.

WILPF Japan is one of the oldest Sections outside of Europe. It was created in 1921 and its emergence was inspired by international solidarity. In 1923, WILPF pioneer Jane Addams travelled to Japan and met with the members of WILPF Japan. WILPF Japan is celebrating its 100th year anniversary this year. Congratulations!
The Great Peace Pilgrimage of 1926 was organised by WILPF UK, but united over 28 women’s and peace organisations under the banner of “Law Not War”. The participants, who assembled on 19 June 1926 in Hyde Park for a pageant, had travelled from all over the UK along seven different routes. On their way, they organised meetings and rallies in over 1,000 small villages and towns. They wanted the British Government “to agree to submit all [international] disputes to conciliation and arbitration, and to take the lead in the proposed Disarmament Conference of the League of Nations to show that Great Britain does not intend to appeal to force.”

In 1931, WILPF’s founder, Jane Addams, became the second woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize.

Watch this video to hear her speak at 0:37 and 1:30!
In 1932, WILPF collected an incredible six million signatures for the World Disarmament Petition, which was delivered to the World Disarmament Conference in Geneva.

"The Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom desires solemnly to affirm its adherence to the necessity of firmly maintaining respect for the human rights of each individual friend or enemy alike."

WILPF Resolution passed at the 10th Congress

WILPF’s first Congress after the Second World War took place in Luxembourg from 4–9 August 1946. The first Resolution passed reaffirmed a collective commitment to upholding human rights for all.
Nobel Peace Prize winner Emily Greene Balch (1867–1961) was one of WILPF’s original founders. Learn about her life and work by listening to this radio play from 1947!

In 1946, a WILPF group in Pennsylvania launched a campaign called “Art for World Friendship” and exhibited drawings created by children from around the world.

The art pieces show how the children envision a world in which all people live together in harmony and equality, and where war has been abolished.

You can see all the art pieces in:

Swarthmore College Peace Collection
In 1965, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was the keynote speaker at WILPF’s 50th anniversary celebration in The Hague. Thank you Swarthmore College Peace Collection for the photo!

In 1968, WILPF member Coretta Scott King spoke at a WILPF press conference calling for an end to the Vietnam War.

In her 1969 book My Life with Martin Luther King, Coretta Scott King shared her motivations for joining WILPF: “[The] women of the world, united without any regard for national or racial divisions [could] become the most powerful force for international peace and brotherhood.”

"As long as we kill men, women and children in Vietnam, millions of poor people face an unnecessary death and suffering in America."
In December 1965, the Queensland branch of WILPF Australia hired and decorated a tram. The dozens of balloons they brought on the train were printed with the slogan NO WAR TOYS PLEASE. WILPF mothers and their children then rode it across the city in the company of Father Christmas to spread their message.

For WILPF Heritage Month, Jeanette McLeod of WILPF Australia shared with us pictures of a 1965 protest against war toys.

Check out this review of Simone de Beauvoir's famous book *The Second Sex* by an anonymous WILPF member in an early 1970s edition of *Pax et Libertas*. According to the reviewer: "Simone de Beauvoir shows us how education to become a 'woman' inhibits the full development of the individual and explains in part why so few women have reached the top".

Of course, not every person who identifies as a woman was raised as a woman. But de Beauvoir’s book was groundbreaking for its time: it showed how gender as a social construct is in part enforced through education, and how this influences the opportunities we have access to.
1971 was the UN-designated International Year for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination. WILPF used the opportunity to call for action.

In the January to June 1971 issue of Pax et Libertas, WILPF listed all governments that had not yet signed the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (passed in 1969).

WILPF then called on the National Sections to “undertake efforts to bring about ratification of the Convention” by these governments. In the same article, WILPF members were also asked to organise against the Apartheid in South Africa.

In January 1973, WILPF delegates met in Hanoi with other international women’s organisations to negotiate peace agreements with Vietnamese government officials. They saw first-hand the devastation caused by the Vietnam War and US intervention and shared the information in their respective countries. WILPF Sections were some of the earliest opponents to the war.
1975 was known as International Women’s Year. To mark the occasion, Kay Camp—WILPF’s then-President—created a book featuring the stories of 50 women working for peace and justice.

The Stop The Arms Race (STAR) Campaign was started in 1982 under the slogan ‘One million women can stop the arms race. Be one in a million’ and involved most WILPF Sections across the world. The campaign aimed to collect a million signatures against nuclear weapons development and testing, as well as in support of UN disarmament efforts.
At WILPF’s 22nd Congress, which took place in Sweden in 1983, the focus was on disarmament and an end to the arms trade.

"Considering that the sale of arms to foreign countries is a means to maintain, encourage or start wars, Congress calls upon all governments to stop the sales of arms to foreign countries."

WILPF Resolution passed at the 22nd Congress in 1983

In 1983, Harriet Otterloo – Chairwoman of WILPF’s Göteborg branch – wrote that “Peace work includes knowledge of and respect for the earth … Therefore the ecology movement is part of the peace movement.”

"Peace means peace with the earth. Peace work includes knowledge of and respect for the earth. If we destroy air, water and soil because of ignorance or ruthless exploitation, we have nothing to live off or in peace. Therefore the ecology movement is part of the peace movement."

Harriet Otterloo, WILPF’s 22nd Congress, Göteborg, 1983
In 1983, WILPF co-founded Seneca camp along with the Upstate Feminist Peace Alliance (NY) on the outskirts of Seneca Falls, New York.

Located near a US army base that was suspected of storing nuclear weapons, Seneca camp was established to protest against the imminent deployment of nuclear missiles to Western Europe.

The farm was soon dubbed the Women’s Encampment for a Future of Peace and Justice (WEFPJ) and was reserved entirely for women. It quickly became envisioned as a space where feminist activists could imagine and experiment with a way of living outside of patriarchal norms and expectations.

Between 1983 and when the camp closed in the 1990s, thousands of women travelled from all over the US, Canada, and beyond to unite in their shared vision of a future of feminist peace.
In December 1986, WILPF's Section in Sweden – Internationella kvinnoförbundet för fred och frihet – posted this call for members to join the Section in the WILPF International magazine.

Big things happened in 1987 when the International Secretariat bought its first computer for 18,000 CHF or 10,000 US dollars ... and then opened WILPF's Computer Fund!

We continued protesting against war toys. This is a cartoon published in our Pax et Libertas magazine in 1987.
1990
To celebrate WILPF’s 75th anniversary, in 1990, WILPF’s US Section published a special 10 minute video describing the founding and mission of WILPF.

Watch the video

1995
Edith Ballantyne is a WILPF legend. She has been a prominent and active member of WILPF since 1968 and in that time she went on several peace missions around the world, served as WILPF’s Secretary General and International President, and was awarded the Gandhi Peace Award in 1995.

Edith Ballantyne
In 1999, WILPF launched a disarmament project called “Reaching Critical Will”. The project was to lead analysis and advocacy for disarmament and the reduction of global military spending. Learn more about Reaching Critical Will, which became a full programme of WILPF in 2013:

reachingcriticalwill.org

“Money for women and environment, not for soldiers and torturers!” chanted the participants of a #MovetheMoney rally at the 2016 COP22 in Marrakech. The rally was co-organised by Heidi Meinzolt of WILPF Germany. Check out this video from the 2016 rally:

Watch the video

Watch the video