



# WILPF MANIFESTO 2015

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR  
**PEACE & FREEDOM**



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We, members of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, on the centenary of our foundation, pay tribute to the courageous and far-sighted women who, amid the carnage of the First World War, took a bold initiative for peace and brought our movement into being.

We affirm their belief that women have a particular interest in stopping war and particular skills we can bring to the task. We remain convinced that the achievement of peace, and the achievement of equality and justice for all people, together with the full inclusion and representation of women in all our diversity, are inseparable goals.

After one hundred years that have brought another World War, five times more deadly than the first, the invention of the most destructive weapons ever known, increasing militarisation, and the emergence of new kinds of armed actor and conflict, we renew WILPF's commitment to eradicating war by addressing its root causes. Among them we identify:

- Militarism as a way of thought, and the militarisation of societies, such that perceived threats are likely to be met with weaponry rather than words;
- The capitalist economic system, involving the exploitation of the labour and resources of the many by the few, wantonly harming people and the environment, generating conglomerates of global reach and unaccountable power;
- The nation-state system as it is today, involving dominant states, imperialist projects, inter-state rivalry, occupation, contested borders, and, inside those borders, all too often, failure of democracy, political repression and intolerance of diversity;
- Social systems of racist supremacy, cultural domination and religious hierarchy;
- Patriarchy, the subordination of women by men, in state, community and family, perpetuated by the social shaping of men and women into contrasted, unequal and limiting gender identities, favouring violent masculinities and compliant femininities.

We understand these as intersected and mutually reinforcing systems of power, all founded on violence and together productive of war. We undertake, with urgency, to strive creatively to bring about, before another hundred years have passed:

- total worldwide disarmament;
- economic systems that will deliver wellbeing to every human being and other life forms on this precious planet;
- multilateral organisations capable of mediating between states and guaranteeing international law;
- democratic governance from local to global level;
- social systems that accord no privilege to people or peoples of a given physical type, culture or religion;
- the end of male supremacy, radical change in the way we live gender, and the fulfilment of women's rights and human rights.

Violence is not inevitable. It is a choice. We choose non-violence, as means and as end. We will liberate the strength of women and, in partnership with likeminded men, bring to birth a just and harmonious world.

We will implement peace, which we believe to be a human right.

## A Centenary Vision

Today, 28 April in the year 2015, we publish this text to commemorate our founding on this very day one hundred years ago. We celebrate our survival, our persistence and our undiminished commitment to the ideal that brought us into being - universal and enduring peace with justice and freedom. We seize this centenary moment to reaffirm the principles and purposes of our founders, as relevant today as ever they were; to set out our current concerns and tasks; and to foresee the challenges ahead in the century to come.

We are determined that WILPF shall grow and become more effective, that we will engage, mobilise and amplify the energies of women worldwide to do away with militarism as mindset, militarisation as process and war as practice. We will shake the foundations and topple the structures of power that foster it: capitalism and its class system, patriarchy with its gender hierarchy, and nationalism with its racist ranking of diverse peoples. We will continue to struggle to achieve full participation as women in all our communities, states and international organisations. We seek to liberate women's power to stop war.

### **The Founding of WILPF**

It was the sixth day of the Second Battle of Ypres, one of the First World War's most futile and costly engagements, which would end in stalemate, leaving 122,000 dead and wounded men. On that day, 28 April 1915, a mere 104 miles to the north of the battlefield, at The Hague in neutral Netherlands, 1,136 peace-seeking women from twelve countries, including nations on both sides in the conflict, sat down together to discuss how to stop the carnage. They did not argue about the relative responsibility of the parties to the conflict – indeed they believed that everyone, no matter where they lived, must shoulder some of the blame. Their aim was rather to find a mechanism of mediation that could end the conflict there and then. In the longer term they were determined to identify and eradicate the causes of war.

The four-day conference ended with the formation of the International Women's Committee for Permanent Peace, which dispatched women envoys to heads of state in fourteen countries, urging a peace commission of neutral states.

The women did not achieve their primary goal of ceasefire. Indeed the USA joined the war, and the bloodletting continued for another three years, until 16 million combatants and civilians had died. But following the Armistice, while the statesmen in Paris were devising the terms of 'peace', the women assembled

again at a second Congress, this time in Zurich. They protested fiercely against the punitive terms of the Versailles Treaty the victors imposed on Germany and its allies, warning that they were likely to cause a renewal of war. They were right. Twenty years later another World War would result in the loss of 80 million lives.

## **Early History of WILPF**

It was at the Zurich Congress that our movement acquired its enduring name, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). A permanent office was opened in Geneva, Switzerland. WILPF sought the demilitarisation of all countries, not just of the defeated states. Total, universal and immediate disarmament and an end to military conscription were among our key objectives. We called for the establishment of a permanent international mechanism to mediate and arbitrate between and among the nation states. For this reason, WILPF was an ardent supporter of the League of Nations, founded in 1919. From its inception we worked hard through our National Sections and our office in Geneva to overcome the shortcomings of the League, as prospects for a sustained peace diminished and war returned.

The First World War had been fought between rival industrial and imperialist nations, competing for control of territories and resources, of oil wells and steel industries. Therefore the papers presented at the 4<sup>th</sup> WILPF Congress held in Washington in 1924 did not limit our aim to disarmament, but outlined the economic aspects of a new international order. World peace, WILPF argued, depended upon an end to imperialism and colonialism; genuine equality between nations; free movement of people and goods; financial reforms; international governance of oceans and other waterways; and a fair allocation of resource materials between peoples. Our Manifesto of that year included a determination:

*'to bring about the organization of economic life, not for individual or class profit, but for the highest possible development of every human being'.*

*'...the dangerous peculiarity in the situation is the alliance between business in pursuit of profit, and nationalist policies in pursuit of power...the economic alliance between governments and business, where each hand washes the other...'*

Emily Greene Balch, address to WILPF 4<sup>th</sup>  
Congress, Washington DC, 1924.

Thus WILPF has been, from its earliest days, a social movement organisation, campaigning for fundamental changes in society with the long-term aim of ending

the scourge of war and laying the foundation on which a durable peace can be constructed. Many members of that early WILPF had been active in the pre-war suffrage movement, and had an unshakeable belief in the need for full and equal participation of women in every aspect of social, economic and political life, both as a measure of justice and a prerequisite of peace. WILPF's unique method has been to mobilise women in all their diversity, to engage their many strengths for this project – for, despite all, we are not powerless!

## **Restating our Purposes**

Today, we restate WILPF's intentions. Though they reflect the circumstances of our particular moment in time, they differ little from the League's original aims and objectives. They are:

- To bring together diverse women of a range of political beliefs and philosophies united in determination to stop current wars, and to study, make known and help abolish the root causes of war and the factors that are used to legitimate it.
- To campaign for total and universal disarmament and demilitarisation.
- To advocate the out-lawing of the use of coercive force to resolve conflicts of interest between and within nations.
- To imagine peace, and work to bring it about by inventing and empowering mechanisms of co-operation, sharing, mediation and negotiation between individuals, communities and states.

Emphatically we affirm our determination:

- To ensure the full inclusion of diverse women in defining and achieving security without militarisation, for the inseparable purposes of equality and peace.
- To lend our energies to achieving the principle and practice of human rights, extended to include a right to peace, sustained by a system of international law.
- To work towards a new international order free from neo-colonialism, political tyranny, economic exploitation and financial speculation, in which income, resources and opportunities are justly distributed between and within countries.

- To end, now and forever, the patriarchal relations of power, control and abuse that have deformed the lives of women, children and men for millennia, and which contribute to violent societies.
- To establish respect and co-operation between people of diverse physical appearance and habitat, culture and belief system, ability, age, gender and sexual identity, recognising our diversity as a human wealth, not a cause for hatred, division, subjugation and conflict.
- To learn, teach and practice relations of respect and care for the flora and fauna and natural resources of the Earth, in order to ensure its health and habitability and eliminate environmental causes of conflict.

## **WILPF's current programme of work**

Today WILPF has Sections in 30 countries. It is in our many local branches and National Sections that women come together, inspire each other and co-operate in action to end war and eradicate the roots of war, place by place. Each country Section elects a representative to WILPF's International Board. These representatives attend the International Board meetings and the Congress, which is WILPF's ultimate decision-making body and where WILPF's Executive Committee is elected. This, with a shifting array of working groups, committees and commissions on different topics, is our governing structure servicing the organisation is an international secretariat, headed by a Secretary General, working from offices in Geneva and New York. We have valued partnerships with academics in international relations, war and peace studies, with human rights lawyers, and with a wealth of women's movement and peace movement organisations that share our purposes. We welcome the engagement of like-minded men in WILPF's work.

The activities of WILPF at this moment in our history are organised under three broad themes: Challenge Militarism; Invest in Peace; and Strengthen Multilateralism. Below, as a historic point of reference to which a future WILPF may look back, we briefly summarise the conditions we are experiencing today and note our current activist priorities.

### **CHALLENGE MILITARISM**

In the first 15 years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, armed conflicts within and between states, though less deadly than in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, have nonetheless been causing an estimated 55,000 deaths annually worldwide. Global military expenditure grew steadily, to stand currently at around \$1.7 trillion, or \$236 for each woman, man and child on Earth.



The volume of international transfers of major conventional weapons has grown by about one-third during these 15 years. Meanwhile, nine countries together possess more than 16,400 nuclear weapons. Thirty-nine states still impose obligatory military service. This massive militarisation is deforming our societies, stifling civil liberties and wrecking the environment. Tending to masculinise our cultures, it diminishes and oppresses women and undermines the values so many of us cherish. We utterly condemn and resist it.

WILPF's project Reaching Critical Will provides information, evidence and lobbying tools for focused protest against the very concept of military 'security'. We argue for the reallocation of public funds from military to social provision. We expose the links between policy makers, military structures and private capital in the 'military industrial complex' that has a vested interest in war. Everywhere that WILPF has a presence today, we engage public opinion and lobby governments to slash military budgets; dismantle armed forces; end conscription; cease manufacture, sales, export and trafficking of arms; and eliminate war from among the instruments of foreign or domestic policy. We contribute our unremitting efforts to the current international campaign to rid the world of all forms of nuclear weapons, calling for a ban on their possession as well as on testing and proliferation.

To this struggle WILPF brings a feminist analysis that sees gender relations, as we live them today, as significant among the causes of militarism and war. Male dominance is tightly intersected with the class inequalities of capitalism and the racist domination of some nations and ethnic groups by others. Together they perpetuate war.

## **INVEST IN PEACE**

To pursue our task of ending war we have to be able to imagine peace. Although weaponry and standing armies are an immediate source of danger in themselves, making an armed response likely when a conflict of interests arises, the long-term causes of war are more deeply rooted in our social, economic and political systems. Physical violence is often a response to the intolerable 'structural violence' of unequal, oppressive and exploitative regimes. The populations of the world are grossly unequal today by several significant measures. Gross inequalities also exist between individuals and households, and worldwide this wealth gap is increasing. Currently the richest 10% of adults own 86% of global assets and 1.3 billion people are living in extreme poverty. Economic class inequalities are therefore a major source of strife, and an important component of WILPF's work for peace is campaigning for an economic system capable of delivering sustainable development and a fair distribution of wealth, income and resources.

'Structural violence' however is political and cultural, as well as economic, and another huge disparity is in people's recourse to human rights, sixty-five years after the Universal Declaration. The world will not be peaceful until human rights prevail. An important component of WILPF's work today, therefore, is advocacy and campaigning for transparency and democracy; for the eradication of racism and sexism, of oppression in the name of culture and belief, and for the observance and strengthening of international law.

A current priority under the theme 'invest in peace' is winning acceptance of a fundamental redefinition of the word 'security'. Traditionally security has meant armament. We believe that dependence on weaponry is a source not of security but perennial insecurity. We, rather, understand security to mean not the defensibility of the state but human security, the safety of its citizens. This depends upon access to nutritious food, clean water, health and reproductive care, education, shelter and income. Women's security calls for choice concerning sexual relations and marriage, control over fertility and reproduction, and freedom of movement and engagement in the public sphere. Our insecurity is manifest in sexual enslavement, trafficking, and gender based and sexual violence by men.

WILPF's objective is to lodge such a concept of security in policy-making at all levels with the effect of focusing governance on the wellbeing of populations – and, besides, of liberating women's energies and skills for peace-building. With partner organisations we have been instrumental in obtaining, since the year 2000, a sequence of UN Security Council Resolutions on 'women, peace and security' that embody this understanding, and require women's inclusion in peace negotiation and peace missions. We critically analyse and monitor their implementation, and seek to ensure that they are not used to co-opt women into military agendas. To this end we share information through our Peace Women programme and website.

## **REFORM AND STRENGTHEN MULTILATERALISM**

From its earliest days, WILPF has called for an 'organisation of the society of nations' to prevent war. We were strong advocates of the United Nations in 1945 as we had been of the League of Nations in 1919. But although the UN's many agencies and projects provide valuable services, its founding principles are being betrayed by the practices of governments. The five permanent member states of the Security Council, the principal victor nations of World War II, have a power of veto that they use to further their geopolitical and strategic agendas in direct contradiction of the UN's Charter. The Security Council is failing in its task, under Article 26, of securing world disarmament. Furthermore, in 2008, to the dismay of the peace movement, the Secretary General of the United Nations signed a highly questionable Joint Declaration of Co-operation with the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, an aggressive and nuclear-armed military alliance of particular states. Thus the essence of the Charter, which lies in

observing the wellbeing of all the human family, as opposed to the interests of powerful nations, is perverted.

Now more than ever a functional multilateral mechanism is needed to guarantee the best aspects of the nation state system, and eliminate its lethal tendencies. WILPF was one of the first NGOs to receive consultative status at the UN through the Economic and Social Council under Article 71 of the Charter, and has continually monitored, informed and lobbied government representatives in New York. We continue to work unremittingly to remind and educate diplomats and officials in the interests of returning the United Nations to its original principles, to make it truly a guarantor of world peace with justice. We insert a gender analysis and women's concerns into UN debates and programmes on disarmament, peace and security, while, conversely, we introduce discussion and action on militarism and war into the women's sphere at the UN. We engage with UN agencies, actively pressing for the worldwide local implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women to enable women's genuine political empowerment and thereby contribute to social justice and the greater likelihood of peace.

From the vantage point of our Geneva office we engage with the UN's Human Rights Council. We enable representatives of our country sections and partners to make an input to the Council's process of Universal Periodic Review, thematic debates and special sessions, and to carry back to their own governments an expectation of the full recognition and implementation of human rights, particularly the right of women to respect, equality and inclusion. We engage with the human rights treaty bodies to insert our message into their deliberations.

*'New times demand new deeds and conditions, new work, and perhaps even new principles. We must not forget that history is evolution. Time must find us ready...with the same self-respect and faith in what women have to give to the world as did the women in 1915.'*

Lida Gustava Heymann, WILPF International Vice President, 4<sup>th</sup> Congress, Washington DC, 1924.

## **Looking Ahead: Our Future Tasks**

The hundred-year passage of time we mark today has seen change on a scale our fore-sisters could scarcely have imagined. World population has more than tripled to 7 billion. Production has grown even faster: gross world product is around \$75 trillion today, more than forty times that of 1920. The 19<sup>th</sup> century empires have largely disintegrated, but economic, military and cultural domination of some countries by others perpetuates colonialism.

Capitalist conglomerates, banking and financial interests have gained global reach and, with it, unaccountable power to shape people's lives and chances on every continent. Scientific knowledge, together with technologies of engineering, extraction, production, information, communication, travel and warfare have advanced far beyond the imagining of those who died in the trenches of the First World War. There have been gains, some for the privileged few, some reaching a wider population. But there have also been massive costs, paid by poorer countries, and by poorer women, men and children. As the rate of technological innovation increases, so too does the potential for violence. Can we imagine WILPF's work in coming decades?

### **PREVENTING THE ADVANCE OF WEAPONRY**

Concerning disarmament and demilitarisation, our first challenge remains the dismantling of the world's nuclear arsenals. But new military technologies are on the horizon. We must track and expose their secret development and prevent their commissioning and deployment. The use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs, or drones) is rapidly augmenting states' powers of surveillance. Armed with bombs and missiles they are already in use by the USA, the UK and Israel, and have attacked targets in eight countries, in many cases killing civilians. We know a diversity of robotic weapons systems, designed to disable or assassinate without immediate human control, are in the design process. Biological and chemical warfare may have been outlawed, but we see the law flouted and the potential for this kind of unseen, intangible weapon is growing. As national economies become more and more dependent on the Internet, cyber threats and attacks are growing. Space is already being militarised by use of surveillance and communication satellites, and earth-orbiting weapons systems are a likely development.

### **RESPONDING TO CONFLICT BETWEEN AND WITHIN STATES**

It is in the hands of political actors – nation states, alliances of states, non-state militias – that weapons systems do their deadly work. National ambitions for control of territory, markets and populations will continue to be a serious threat, particularly as in coming decades the USA and Western European states see their pre-eminence assailed by up-coming economies – currently China, Brazil, Russia,

India and South Africa. Likewise, groups holding state power are likely to continue to strive for control of political machinery, and to repress, and be resisted by, aspirant minorities within and spanning their borders. There will continue to be major population movements caused by physical and economic disasters, persecution and armed violence, so that people's right to cross frontiers in search of a livelihood, refuge or asylum will need to be defended and extended. We urgently need international non-violent means by which to support states in fulfilling their human rights obligations, and curb them when they commit atrocities against their own people. The subcontracting of military and police functions to private companies is likely to become more common, undermining democratic control of armed forces. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization is a growing threat, aggressive, expansive and nuclear-armed, aiming to defend Western, and particularly US, interests in an ever-wider spectrum of world geography. It must be dismantled, along with all military pacts and 'foreign bases'. Our work to educate and train for peace and non-violence, to extend and improve processes and mechanisms of mediation and conflict resolution, will have as much urgency in the future as it has today.

### **ACHIEVING DEMOCRACY**

Democracy, in the sense of fully inclusive, representative, responsive and accountable governance of the people by the people still eludes us. It is the indispensable underpinning of peace. We will have to work hard, within our countries, to achieve non-corrupt electoral democracy, assure the practice of human rights, and prevent control of governments by business interests, while neutralising excesses of state power. Assuring a free, responsible and diverse media, monopolised by neither state nor corporate interests, will be a vital part of this task.

Meanwhile new challenges to democracy are emerging. Increased population movement is already resulting in tension between resident communities and migrant minorities in many regions, given violent expression by xenophobic political groups. Religious extremism and intolerance are increasing, with intensifying conflict between adherents of competing religions and sects, and between religious and secular movements. The effect is to diminish democracy in community and family, and further oppress women.

As women we have much to contribute and much to gain from changing the way power works, from decentralising and democratising governance and diplomacy, engaging and equalising people as individuals, in families and households, neighbourhoods and local communities. The future will challenge us to learn the skills of cooperation and collectivity at all scales of organisation. We will have to invent and strengthen practices of social healing, citizens' assemblies, and democracy movements capable of drawing together diverse participants from

across national and many kinds of internal borders. Such will be the practical content of struggle to eradicate the social, cultural and political causes of war.

### **BEYOND CAPITALISM**

In this global, neoliberal phase of capitalism, the power of corporations and financiers has far outstripped the ability of elected governments to moderate or control them. Slavery and forced labour are widespread and many of the victims are women and children. Identifying the capitalist system as one of the root causes of war, WILPF has always had the goal of revolutionary change by non-violent means for purposes of social and economic justice. This remains our objective. But the world has learned from the twentieth century experiments in which states, taking the means of production into public control, have failed thereby to empower the people.

The challenge for the future therefore is to contribute to a process in which people come to refuse the human costs of the capitalist mode of production, believe 'another world is possible' and devise non-violent means to bring it into being. It will involve mobilising our potential as employees, consumers and users to find ways to reject and resist existing economic relations and practices, to invent new forms of control on extraction of value, to disaggregate ownership, reverse the tendency to commodification, extend collective and public enterprise, and equalise distribution and consumption – with special regard to peoples' land rights and food sovereignty. This imagines a creative work of solidarity across hemispheres, national borders, cultural groups, localities, classes and genders that is unprecedented. But without it peace will never be within our reach.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION**

Recent decades have brought awareness of a new peril. The implications of run-away global warming and climate change are widely understood, along with the harm to sensitive ecological systems of extractive industries, destruction of forests, chemical pesticides, genetic modification of crops and other evolving practices. The threat of armed conflict will grow, due to displacement of populations by rising sea levels and desertification, and to competition between communities, nation states and corporate interests to control water, fertile land, pasture and forests in a changing geography. The survival and wellbeing of indigenous groups, the world's first peoples, will be in yet more peril. There will be increasing conflict for control of oceans and access to marine resources. Militarisation, the military industrial complex, conflict and war, of themselves, bear heavily on the environment. Sustainability and peace go hand in hand.

Nuclear power – expensive, unreliable and hazardous – is no solution to climate change. Nuclear reactors have shown themselves liable to accident. They are also vulnerable to attack, potentially turning conventional weapons into 'dirty bombs'.

Despite the imperative to reduce the burning of fossil fuels, competition for oil and gas resources is intensifying – witness the rush to access the melting Arctic, and the widespread introduction of 'fracking', which pollutes water and threatens agricultural land. Safe, non-polluting and renewable sources of energy are already competitive in price. Their speedy adoption is vital, in the inseparable interests of environmental wellbeing and peace.

Due to the marked, though varying, sexual division of labour throughout history in most human societies, women have characteristically engaged in such activities as gathering, horticulture, cooking, fertility, nurture and care of humans and animal stock. Our aim must be to see the knowledge and skills entailed more highly valued, better rewarded, and recognised as contributing to peace through the creation of the life-supporting societies and economies in which alone it can come to be.

*'We identified patriarchal values as the root causes contributing to environmental exploitation. These values which see women, animals and nature as objects to be owned, colonized, consumed and forced to yield and to reproduce, allow for the overall pollution and destruction of the earth and the oppression of people. The introduction of feminist values is essential to the healing of our planet.'*

Report of the Workshop on the Environment to the  
WILPF 24<sup>th</sup> Congress, Sydney, Australia, 1989.

## **TRANSFORMING GENDER RELATIONS**

Although substantial gains have been made by some women in some countries in the last hundred years, full and universal equality of status, opportunity and representation for women is still a distant dream. Patriarchy, though in shifting forms, is persisting over time as a relation of power in which men, hierarchically ordered, dominate women. The degree and features of the subordination of women vary between countries, classes and cultures, but it is reinforced by physical and sexual violence so widespread, persistent and frequently lethal that it has been termed a 'global war on women'.

Strengthening women, listening to women and amplifying their voices, WILPF will continue the work of our founders, many of whom were suffragettes, for the articulation and exercise of women's rights in every sphere of life, for like them we believe such justice to be a precondition of peace. As we gain a greater presence in elected bodies and positions of authority, we shall seek to avoid co-optation, changing the nature and functioning of power as we accede to it. We will strive to assure that coming generations of women and girls have gender choices other

than the constraints imposed by religious authoritarianism, on the one hand, and, on the other, the hyper-sexualisation mandated by consumer capitalism.

The gender system, as we experience it in most societies and subcultures, shaping men and women in contrasted and unequal gender identities, is harmful and limiting to men as well as women. A competitive, combative masculinity, alien to the temperament of many boys and men, is valued and rewarded, while qualities such as empathy and patience are shunned as 'feminine'. A violent model of masculinity is insistently marketed to men and boys in computer games, videos and films. Some individual males resist this shaping, and a few subcultures discourage it, but a militaristic model of 'proper manhood' continues to be widespread.

*'Women must cease to admire a man with a gun in his hand and must seek to counteract the destructive tendencies in the masculine mentality.'*

Anita Augspurg, delegate to WILPF's 4<sup>th</sup>  
Congress, Washington DC, 1924.

It is foundational in feminist thought, however, that biology is not destiny, that gender difference is to a large extent culturally produced. How our boys are reared and educated, how our young men are socialised, the behaviours for which our adult men are rewarded - these can and must be the subject of conscious and explicit policy. One aspect of WILPF's pursuit of peace, therefore, will be working to transform gender from a power relation to one of partnership. This can only come about if men wish for it as women do, and cooperate with us to achieve it. We warmly welcome and look forward to working with the small but growing number of organisations in which men are engaging with each other to sever the link between masculinity and violence, reshaping the notion of manhood in ways that reduce the appeal of militarism and contribute to the possibility of peace.

## **ORGANISING INTELLIGENTLY**

Meeting such future challenges will call for ever more effective organising. WILPF needs a growing membership in local branches, building into more and stronger national sections, especially in the 'global south' - the poorer countries of Africa, Asia, the Pacific, and Central and South America. We need to be tireless in fundraising to gather the means to support their development, as well as a strong international secretariat. The latter must be staffed by politically informed and practically skilled women, capable of responding creatively to the insights coming from the grassroots, linking and amplifying the Sections' activities and representing them at international level. We must be at the cutting edge of information technology, achieving a lively presence on the Internet, in the



media, in the institutions and on the street, so that feminist activism for peace and justice becomes a widely recognised and influential force for change.

We must urgently develop links among and between women and women's organisations, ensuring that we are embedded within, and lend our energies to, a feminist movement against violence and war that has expression at every level and in every location of a more and more complex world society. We must reach out to and cooperate with peace organisations everywhere, raising a unified voice of men and women against war that cannot be ignored in the institutions of power within states and at international level.

As WILPF grows older, our membership must grow younger. In our centenary year, WILPF calls out to you, WILPFers of tomorrow. We imagine many of you as living in the 'global south', and as belonging to diverse minority or disadvantaged groups in the 'global north'. We urge you to organise in your schools, colleges and universities, in your workplaces, in your villages, towns and cities. Bring the particular knowledge of contemporary conditions that young women possess. Bring the foresight your generation has of the changes on the horizon. Bring your deftness with new technologies, your vibrancy and hope.

Together we will make a reality of women's power to stop war. Let us have no need to celebrate another centenary!

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) is an international non-governmental organisation (NGO) with National Sections covering every continent, an International Secretariat based in Geneva, and a New York office focused on the work of the United Nations (UN).

Since our establishment in 1915, we have brought together women from around the world who are united in working for peace by non-violent means and promoting political, economic and social justice for all.

Our approach is always non-violent, and we use existing international legal and political frameworks to achieve fundamental change in the way states conceptualise and address issues of gender, militarism, peace and security.

Our strength lies in our ability to link the international and local levels. We are very proud to be one of the first organisations to gain consultative status (category B) with the United Nations, and the only women's anti-war organisation so recognised.



## WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR **PEACE & FREEDOM**

WILPF Geneva  
Rue de Varembé 1  
Case Postale 28  
1211 Geneva 20  
Switzerland

T: +41 (0)22 919 70 80  
E: [secretariat@wilpf.ch](mailto:secretariat@wilpf.ch)

WILPF New York  
777 UN Plaza, New York  
NY 10017 USA  
T: +1 212 682 1265

[www.wilpfinternational.org](http://www.wilpfinternational.org)