



a chorus of women

Meet the women who dared to change the world

Over a century ago 1300 women travelled from around the world under difficult and dangerous circumstances to gather in The Hague at the end of April 1915 for the only international peace congress of WW1 with farsighted and far reaching impact.

In the same week as the Anzacs' landing at Gallipoli their Congress passed resolutions prescient of 20th century advances in international relations and human rights. The women adopted the world's first plan for continuous mediation by neutral nations to end the conflict. They also founded the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), the world's oldest international women's peace organisation. Vida Goldstein and other Australian suffragist pacifists were intensely interested but unable to attend.

After the Congress the women's envoys carried the resolutions and peace plan to meetings with more world leaders than anyone else saw in the course of the war. The American President Woodrow Wilson included nine of their resolutions in his famous 'Fourteen Points', which formed the basis of the League of Nations Charter as well as the founding documents of the United Nations. Two Congress leaders, Jane Addams and Emily Greene Balch, later received Nobel Peace Prizes for their roles at the 1915 Congress and in WILPF.

WILPF held a second International Congress of Women in Zurich in 1919 while the Terms of Peace were being negotiated. The Australians Vida Goldstein, Cecilia John and Eleanor Moore attended and made significant contributions.

The women of WILPF changed the world and are still changing the world through the ongoing effects of their actions. In some ways, the #MeToo revolution continues what was begun with the 1915 Resolution 'Women's Sufferings in War', which led eventually to rape being declared a war crime. In spite of all these achievements their actions are absent from military histories.

A Chorus of Women's choral drama *The People's Passion* by Glenda Cloughley sings this remarkable story forward to inspire people's movements today.

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