

Greetings WILPF sisters on our 101st Birthday!

It is a beautiful sunny day in Geneva, but the wind is strong. What will it bring? It's easy to be pessimistic. Our foremothers 101 years ago also had grounds to be pessimistic, but in their deeds and words decided to act rather than be despondent.

The practical issue of economic justice preoccupied the women at The Hague, and again in Zurich, where they identified capitalism as the principal source of conflict between nations.

Capitalism is again at the forefront of political debate as tax avoidance scandals are exposed at the same time as austerity is imposed. It is also increasingly understood that the root cause of catastrophic climate change is capitalism. Critiquing its inherent injustice and use of the word socialism is featuring in the US election of all places!

The election of Corbyn in Britain to lead the Labour Party, whether he will survive or not, also shows that when you really talk to the public, you get support, in spite of Murdoch's press domination. Everywhere people understand that investing in public services and being strong on disarmament, investing resources in what people need, serves everyone.

Racism is showing its ugly face in so many places where refugees and asylum seekers are vilified and detained. The human tragedy and suffering is terrible to see; people are fleeing wars and despair and have a right to seek asylum, which some solidarity movements and organisations do support.

The Syrian negotiations here in Geneva are not going well; what is needed is a cease fire and all parties to negotiate without preconditions. The Syrians need to

decide who leads their country, and the conditions need to be created for that, not regime change orchestrated by the west.

Another round of nuclear disarmament talks will be held in Geneva next week. We hope they doesn't disappear into arms control and tinkering with words. The planet cannot afford us being distracted from the real problems of companies producing and profiting from arms who should be named, shamed and shut down!

We are sitting here in the West, that continues to dominate and bully, but we wish to send strength and courage to WILPF women everywhere - in Africa, the Americas, in Asia and the Pacific, in the Middle East and in other parts Europe - that are part of building movements that end war, racism, poverty, surveillance, destruction and bring about peace with justice!

On our 101st anniversary, let us read again our aims and principles, and act to move them forward. As the WILPF women of 1915 showed us: instead of being afraid of what might happen, let us fight what can be defeated!

Edith Ballantyne & Felicity Ruby

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Aims and Principles

1. The aims and principles of WILPF are:

(a) To bring together women of different political beliefs and philosophies who are united in their determination to study, make known and help abolish the causes and legitimization of war.

(b)

i. To work toward world peace

ii. Total and universal disarmament

- iii. The abolition of violence and coercion in the settlement of conflict and their substitution in every case of negotiation and conciliation
- iv. The strengthening of the United Nations system
- v. The continuous development and implementation of international law
- vi. Women's political, social and economic empowerment to achieve gender equality and justice for all.
- vii. Cooperation among all people
- viii. Environmentally sustainable development

2. Believing that under systems of exploitation these aims cannot be attained and a real and lasting peace and true freedom cannot exist, WILPF makes it its duty to further by non-violent means the social transformation that enables the inauguration of systems under which social and political equality and economic justice for all can be attained, without discrimination on the basis of sex, race, religion, or any other grounds whatsoever.

3. WILPF sees as its ultimate goal the establishment of an international economic order founded on the principles of meeting the needs of all people and not those of profit and privilege.