

ing the "spoils of war" (Germany's assets), demanding disarmament from belligerent countries only and proposing economic and social policies which would encourage poverty, starvation and disease.

The congress did approve of the League of Nations but noted several problems in its constitution which would hinder the creation of lasting peace. The women said the league's covenant neglected to offer membership to all nations, its terms for reduction in arms did not apply equally to all countries, and it did not allow for the right of self-determination in all territories.

In the years following the First World War, the WILPF continued to campaign for the revision of the treaty. It attended several League of Nations conferences and was able to introduce some changes to this organization to ensure international cooperation. The WILPF also became involved in fact-finding missions in places where civil unrest was increasing such as Ireland and Germany.

### **VOW lobbied for the test ban treaty by collecting baby teeth**

The concern for peace was coupled with efforts in social justice and education campaigns. As WILPF spread throughout the world, members adapted the cause to their own communities — some protested against cadet training in schools as it promoted militarism and peace committees were organized in unions and churches — but retained the ideas of international sisterhood, abolition of competition and the support of universal disarmament.

The Second World War introduced the atomic bomb and its devastating effects. The subsequent Cold War increased fears about world annihilation and this marked the beginning of the anti-nuclear movement. The Vietnam War also galvanized people into protest although many did not become prominent until the late 1960's.

In 1960 the WILPF was joined by the Canadian-based Voice of Women (VOW). This group was non-partisan and enjoyed support from many so-called middle-class feminists including the wife of Lester B. Pearson. VOW had organized two international conferences, sponsored exchanges between Canadian and Soviet women to learn more about peace, lobbied for the test ban treaty by collecting baby teeth with Strontium-90 and began an anti-war toys campaign by 1969.

### **"It wasn't until the late 70's that nuclear war began making headlines"**

In the United States, the Women Strike for Peace (WSP) successfully organized over 20,000 women — some say 50,000 — to hold a one-day strike on November 1, 1961 to protest against the threat of a U.S. nuclear war. A letter and telegram campaign followed this action, and WSP eventually was called to testify at the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). It was thought that WSP was being controlled by foreign agitators or Soviet-backed communists, a charge used often to discredit the different peace movements.

But it wasn't until the late 1970's that the real battle against nuclear war began making news headlines. Demonstrations began in Holland and spread throughout Europe as large numbers of women protested the promised deployment of American missiles. "Hollanditis", as it was called by American analysts, was based on mothers wanting to protect their children from war, which many women had already witnessed in 1939-45.

With the added consciousness of the revitalised feminist movement in the 1960's, women's role in the peace movement became more than a motherhood issue, and the peace movement became more than a call for universal disarmament.



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