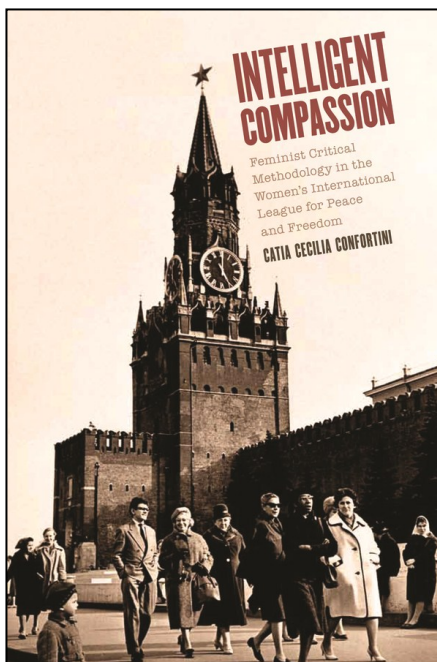


# Intelligent Compassion

Feminist Critical Methodology in the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

By Catia Cecilia Confortini



## Traces changes in the ideas and policies of the longest-living international women's organization between 1945 and 1975

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) has a unique role in post-war peace activism. It is the longest-surviving international women's peace organization and one of the oldest peace organizations in the West. Founded in 1915, when a group of women from neutral and belligerent nations in World War I met at The Hague to formulate proposals for ending the war, WILPF sent delegations of women to several countries to plead for peace, and their final resolutions are often credited with influencing Woodrow Wilson's 14 Points. Today, the organization counts several thousand members in 36 countries, on five continents. Since 1948, it has enjoyed consultative status with the UN, and it was instrumental in bringing about recent United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security.

Beginning in 1945, WILPF began identifying the limitations of its ideological foundations in relation to the international liberal order. Catia Cecilia Confortini argues that this period ushered in a turn in the organization's policies and activism, one that culminated in the mid-70s and served as an important antecedent to feminist activism that continues today. In *Intelligent Compassion*, she traces the organization's changing strategies and ideas over a thirty-year period, focusing on three key areas of its work—disarmament, decolonization, and the conflict in Israel/Palestine.

By analyzing the shifting ideas and policies of the longest-living international women's peace organization, *Intelligent Compassion* finds answers to IR questions about the possibility of emancipatory agency in the theoretical methodology of women peace activists and the extent to which activists can transcend the prevailing practices, rules and relations of their eras.

### Praise for the book

"In this superbly sensitive and conceptually innovative book, we see the constitutive nature of women's peace activism and the radically changing international political context of the period from World War II to the mid-1970s in action. This is no small feat, but Confortini goes further, clearly articulating a productive relationship between feminist methodology, constructivism, and international relations theory that should be read by all students of feminism, international relations, and peace studies."—Cecelia Lynch, University of California, Irvine

### About the Author

**Catia Cecilia Confortini** is Assistant Professor of Peace and Justice Studies at Wellesley College. Her research interests focus on the contribution of women's peace activism to peace studies as an academic field and as a practice. She is the US representative to WILPF's International Board for 2011-2014.

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