

WILPF US section

Principles and Policies

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE & FREEDOM

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom was founded in 1915 during World War I, with Jane Addams as its first president. Throughout its history its purpose has been to work for the achievement by peaceful means of those political, economic, social, and psychological conditions throughout the world which can assure peace, freedom, and justice for all.

Peace is more than the absence of war or the maintenance of order through force. Peace requires the dedication to nonviolent means of the resolution of conflict and the building of institutions for world development and world community. WILPF believes that to achieve freedom and justice in our own country and peaceful relations with other countries we must build a non-exploitative society. As our third International Congress of 1921 stated, we must "transform the economic system in the direction of social justice". Peace and freedom are indivisible.

Freedom means equal rights and responsibilities for all under a system of law based on justice. It includes the right to government responsive to the will and the needs of the people, and freedom from political or economic subjugation. Freedom requires safeguarding minority rights and the right to dissent.

THE UNITED NATIONS

A world organization for world peace, world development, and human rights, in which all nations are represented, can succeed only if all members respect its authority. Major powers must cooperate and provision must be made for participation of small states and all parts of divided nations.

UN Role in Assuring Peace and Freedom

1. The primary goal of the United Nations should be general and complete disarmament, which offers our only hope for human survival in the nuclear age.
2. UN machinery for peaceful settlement of international disputes must be established.
3. All nations must agree to UN mediation.
4. Aid to refugees from war and oppression must be carried out by the UN.
5. The UN covenants and conventions relating to human rights must be ratified and implemented by all nations.
6. The status of non-self-governing territories must be reviewed, and deadlines for ending such status established. National sovereignty must replace this status, except in the case of Antarctica.

UN Role in Protection and Development of World Resources

1. The UN should assume jurisdiction over unclaimed areas such as the seabed, outer space, and the polar regions, as well as over international waters. The resources of the seabed should be developed for the benefit of all people, with a share of the revenue allocated to the United Nations for expansion of its social and economic programs.
2. The UN should have authority to regulate trade and access to resources to prevent the exploitation of developing countries. All transnational corporations must be regulated by the UN.
3. The UN must be given authority for long-range planning to protect against pollution and depletion of irreplaceable natural resources.

U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

Pressures from the military establishments and the arms industries for increased military budgets and ever more sophisticated weapons escalate a run-away arms race, which threatens the future of all the peoples of the world.

Self-Determination

The United States must respect the right of peoples to choose their own political and economic systems, and must cease attempts to control the governments of other nations, whether by military intervention or subversive manipulation by the CIA or other agency.

World Disarmament

The United States must actively promote world disarmament through the UN.

1. To prevent the unleashing of nuclear forces capable of destroying all life, and to free our resources for peaceful purposes, it is imperative that the US halt research, stockpiling and use of chemical, biological, nuclear, and meteorological weapons, and destroy all existing stockpiles.
2. It is imperative that foreign US bases which provide launching sites for nuclear missiles be closed and US military alliances terminated.

World Development

The United States has a responsibility to support through the UN the economic and social progress of the developing nations with technical, not military, assistance and improved terms of trade.

In order to permit adequate planning the US should make long-term financial commitments to the UN of at least 1% of its gross national product.

DOMESTIC POLICY

The Women's International League is committed to an open society in which each individual is respected and all groups have the opportunity to cultivate their traditions, cultures, and institutions

while working together for the benefit of all. Racism permeating our national life is moving us toward a divided society, separate and unequal. All-out efforts must be made by governments, organizations, and individuals to combat this evil.

Civil Rights

1. WILPF opposes discrimination based upon race, color, gender, sexual or affectional orientation, religion, disability, age, national origin, marital status, or receipt of public assistance. Laws must be enforced with adequate financing to ensure open housing, quality education, protection of voting rights, equal access to public services, child custody, public accommodations and federally funded programs for all.
2. Workers must have the right to organize; opportunities in the skilled trades and professions must be opened to all minorities.

Rights of Women

Legal restrictions and sexist attitudes have kept women from full participation and a rightful share of power in our society. WILPF calls for:

1. Elimination of all laws which discriminate between the sexes.
2. Passage of the Equal Rights Amendment.
3. Equal opportunity for education at all levels.
4. Equal opportunity for all jobs, and equal pay for equal work.
5. Full opportunity for participation by women at decision-making levels in public and private institutions.
6. Freedom of choice concerning abortion and an end to enforced sterilization.

Civil Liberties

Freedom of speech, press, association and assembly, due process of law and the presumption of innocence until proven guilty are basic to a free society. Repressive legislation and unequal treatment before the law of minorities and dissenters are threats to freedom.

WILPF supports:

1. Constitutional rights for all people, including those in the armed forces, hospitals, jails, prisons, schools, and for children, aliens, the mentally ill and retarded.
2. Abolition of capital punishment.
3. Reform of the penal system, with the ultimate goal of abolition of prisons.
4. The principle and practice of separation of church and state.

WILPF opposes:

1. Inquiries into ideas, opinions or association of individuals
2. All forms of invasion of privacy, including wiretapping, eavesdropping, compilation of data banks of personal information, government surveillance, government infiltration of dissenting groups, and government entrapment by *agents provocateurs*.
3. Censorship of all kinds and suppression and manipulation of news.
4. Conscription, including registration and any other involuntary service.

5. Restrictions on travel.
6. Preventive detention and undue delay in judicial process.

WILPF supports the principle of obedience to conscience, and the right to nonviolent civil disobedience if necessary to oppose unjust laws and conditions. WILPF supports full amnesty for all those whose refusal to participate in wars has brought them punishment or threat of punishment by civil or military authorities.

Economic and Social Development

Production for private profit rather than for human needs fosters war, racism, violence, and social and economic injustice. Fundamental economic change is needed to achieve more equitable distribution of resources through public ownership of the sources of wealth and the participation of workers in the control of industry.

WILPF advocates:

1. An end to private monopoly control of such basic essentials as fuel, utilities, and transportation.
2. An adequate guaranteed annual income.
3. Jobs for all who wish to work.
4. A comprehensive national health care and maintenance program for everyone.
5. A fair and progressive tax structure, eliminating loopholes and preferential subsidies.

Ecology

People have the right not to have their person, properties, environment, food, air and water contaminated with radiation and toxic chemicals.

WILPF advocates:

1. An immediate halt to hazardous nuclear products, stringent control of radioactive waste disposal, funding research and development of new, safer sources of energy.
2. A halt to the poisoning of cities and countryside by toxic chemicals and the development of alternatives to their use.

EDUCATION

All children must have equal access to quality public education which encourages free inquiry and full creative development. Busing may be necessary and we need to guarantee this right. WILPF upholds the principle of community control of schools, and tax-supported programs where needed for bilingual or compensatory education. WILPF seeks an end to the militarism, racism, and demands for sexual, socio and political conformity which undermines our entire educational system.

WILPF advocates teaching:

1. Appreciation of human differences and commonalities, the history and contributions of women, and of all cultural and ethnic groups.
2. Methods of nonviolent conflict resolution and the stupidity, rather than the glorification, of war.

3. The inseparable connection of bread and peace.
4. The principles of ecology and respect for life.
5. About total life processes, including human sexuality, family planning, and aging.
6. About the United Nations Charter, the Declaration of Human Rights, and the contribution of the UN and its specialized agencies.
7. About the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution, with special emphasis on the Bill of Rights.