

International Congress of Women

The Hague 28th April- May 1st 1915

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JUS SUFFRAGII

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MESSAGE TO THE I.W.S.A.

If our President, Mrs. Chapman Catt, were within reach, I am sure she would send a message to our friends and colleagues in each country auxiliary to the I.W.S.A. that would be helpful at the present hour. In Mrs. Catt's absence I must endeavour, however inadequately, to supply her place.

I want particularly to say this: We are faced by the disruption, the animosity, the misunderstanding caused by war; but all the same, notwithstanding the cruel strain, we must firmly resolve to hold our International Alliance together. We must believe all through that good is stronger than evil, that justice and mercy are stronger than hatred and destruction, just as life is stronger than death. We women who have worked together for a great cause have hopes and ideals in common; these are indestructible links binding us together. We have to show that what unites us is stronger than what separates us. Between many of us there is also the further link of personal friendship cemented by many years of work together. We must hold on through all difficulties to these things which are good in themselves and must therefore be a strong help to us all through these days of trial.

In nearly all countries, whether belligerent or not, the war has caused great suffering. In our country in particular the suffering has already been overwhelming. Suffragists in each country will, I feel confident, set themselves heroically to the work of healing, restoring, assuaging, remembering always that women stand for the life force and the future, impersonated in the woman and the child.

At the I.W.S.A., ordinary international Suffrage work being for the time suspended, Headquarters Committee have undertaken to extend help of various kinds to the large numbers of foreign women left stranded and in some cases penniless and friendless in London in consequence of the war. Our treasurer, Mrs. Coit, and our recording secretary, Miss Macmillan, have been indefatigable in carrying out this work; they have been at the office every day and all day working at it ever since the war began. They have been helped in this most important and difficult task by a large band of willing volunteers. Details will be found on another page.

On behalf of my colleagues I offer to each country auxiliary to the Alliance an expression of deep sympathy and sorrow. In many countries we have to face the fact that the immediate realisation of our hopes in regard to Women's Suffrage has been frustrated by the war. But this should by no means cause us to despair. Good work done for the equal citizenship of women will not be lost, and is certain to bear fruit in due season. The unprecedented calamity of an almost world-wide war, bringing millions of men face to face with each other for mutual slaughter, destroying daily millions and millions of painfully accumulated property, besides the priceless and irreparable monuments of antiquity, will throw a fresh light on the necessity for a political reorganisation of society, giving

power to the masses of the people and to women to control their own lives and destinies.

If the political citizenship of women in all the countries concerned had become an established fact long enough to secure its organisation into concrete political power, it is impossible to doubt that this power would have been used to ensure such a political reorganisation of Europe as would have rendered it certain that international disputes and grievances should be referred to law and reason, and not to the clumsy and blundering tribunal of brute force. The very vastness of the present calamity may bring a remedy to prevent its ever happening again. This is what we should all strive for.

MILLCENT GARRETT FAWCETT.

INTERNATIONAL MANIFESTO OF WOMEN.

Drawn up by the International Woman Suffrage Alliance and delivered on July 31st at the Foreign Office and Foreign Embassies in London.

We, the women of the world, view with apprehension and dismay the present situation in Europe, which threatens to involve one continent, if not the whole world, in the disasters and horrors of war. In this terrible hour, when the fate of Europe depends on decisions which women have no power to shape, we, realising our responsibilities as the mothers of the race, cannot stand passive by. Powerless though we are politically, we call upon the Governments and Powers of our several countries to avert the threatened unparalleled disaster. In none of the countries immediately concerned in the threatened outbreak have women any direct power to control the political destinies of their own countries. They find themselves on the brink of the almost unbearable position of seeing all that they most reverence and treasure, the home, the family, the race, subjected not merely to risks, but to certain and extensive damage which they are powerless either to avert or assuage. Whatever its result the conflict will leave mankind the poorer, will set back civilisation, and will be a powerful check to the gradual amelioration in the condition of the masses of the people, on which so much of the real welfare of nations depends.

We women of twenty-six countries, having banded ourselves together in the International Women's Suffrage Alliance with the object of obtaining the political means of sharing with men the power which shapes the fate of nations, appeal to you to leave untried no method of conciliation or arbitration for arranging international differences which may help to avert deluging half the civilised world in blood.

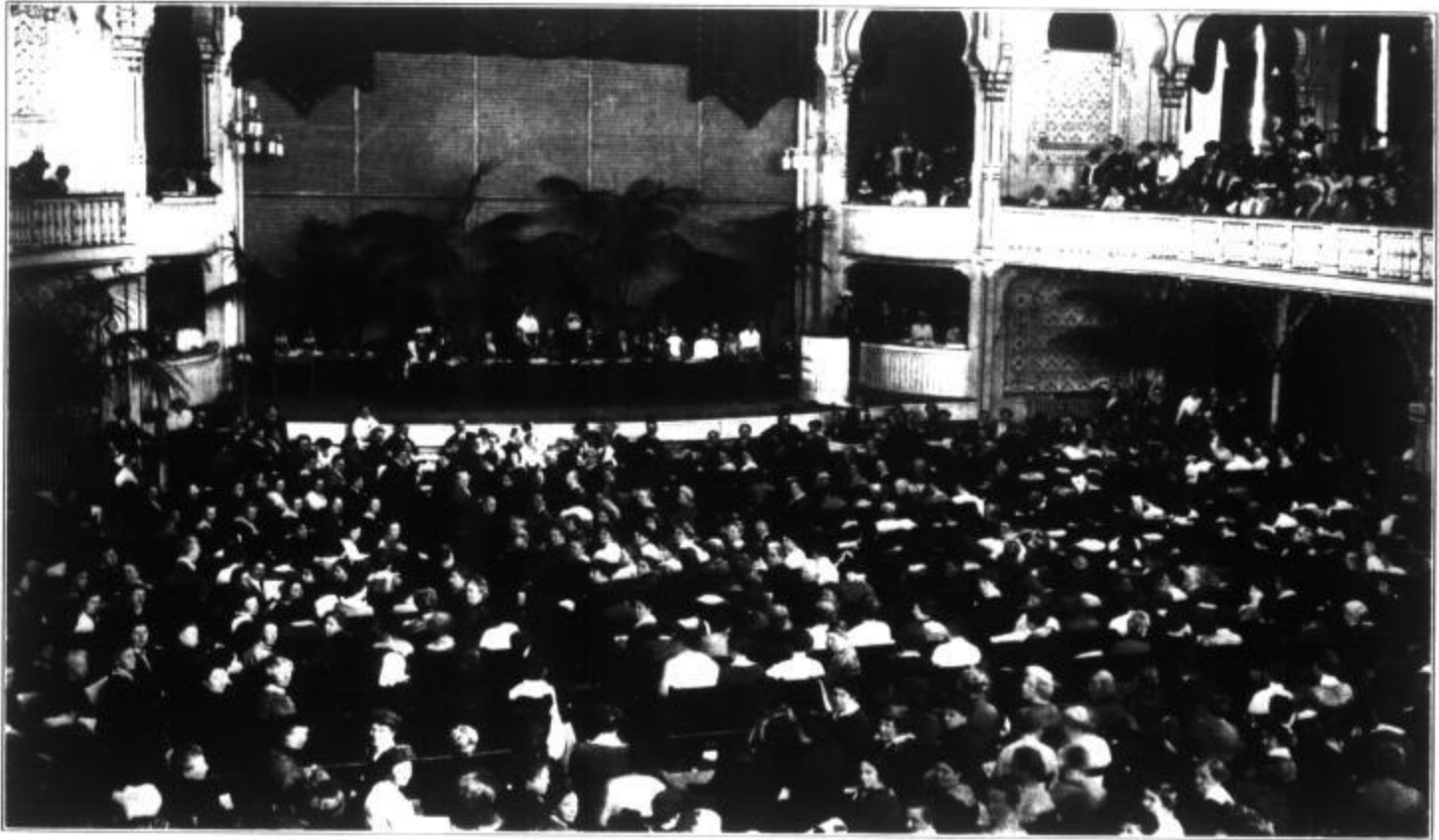
Signed on behalf of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance,

MILLCENT GARRETT FAWCETT,
First Vice-President.
CHRYSAL MACMILLAN,
Recording Secretary.



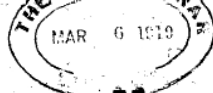
Photograph of the platform

Reading from left to right: Mrs. Thoumaian, Armenian; ~~Rosa and Dr. P.~~
 A Leopoldina Kulka, Austria; Miss Hughes, Canada; Rosika Schwimmer,
 Hungary; Dr. Anita Augspurg, Germany; June Addams U. S. A. President of
 the Congress; Eugénie Flamer, Belgium; Dr. Metta Jacobs, President of the Dutch
 Executive Committee; Crystal Macmillan, Great Britain; Rosa Genoni,
 Italy; Anna Uleman, Sweden, Thora Daaegaard, Denmark;
 Louise Heilhan, Norway.



THE CONGRESS IN SESSION.





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Bye-law of I.W.S.A. Constitution.

"The International Woman Suffrage Alliance, by mutual consent of its auxiliaries, stands pledged to preserve absolute neutrality on all questions that are strictly national."

Notice on the Policy of Jus Suffragii.

In the present critical position of affairs, when any reference to political conditions may hurt national susceptibilities, it must be clearly stated that the International Woman Suffrage Alliance maintains a strictly neutral attitude, and is only responsible for its official announcements. Reports from affiliated societies are inserted on the responsibility of the society contributing them. Other articles are published as being of general interest to our readers, and responsibility for them rests solely with their signatories.

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PEACE.

The slaughter is at an end. Infinite relief comes to the hearts of men and women all over the world. But joy is chastened and restrained in a mourning world by the vast cemeteries of France, and by the famished populations of Europe and Asia. Solemn and terrible are the thoughts that four years of bloodshed and destruction leave behind. Bereavement, mutilation, blindness, madness, disease, and despair, in spite of heroism, patriotism, and humble devotion, have been the harvest of these sad years. Anarchy and chaos reign over part of Europe; famine and disease are crushing the life of the people. But at least organised international suicide is over; a bloody chapter in history is closed; and if the peoples of the world have the will and intelligence to grapple with the problems that confront them, a new and better chapter may be opened.

In every country women have played their part in carrying out the national policy and supporting its economic existence. In doing so they have obtained access to work hitherto reserved exclusively for men. This has been a great gain in experience and power, but politically it has been a subordinate position. Women must take a leading part in making the history of the future. The ghastly horror to which selfish and one-sided governments have led "civilised" Europe (and which have involved hundreds of thousands of "uncivilised" Africans and Asiatics in the general destruction) must spur women to claim their full share in making a better world. Women have so far been debarred from any share in framing policy, and even in recent years, when their claims to full citizenship have met with growing recognition, there has been a tendency to wish to confine them to a narrow circle of domestic politics, conceding them at the most the right to influence legislation on education, temperance, housing, food supply, social welfare, and the like. We have been told that foreign affairs were beyond women; but in practice they were treated as not only beyond women but beyond men in general, a sacred preserve for diplomats and courts. All this is quickly changing.

Democracy, the mass of the peoples, has suffered and died in obedience to governments who framed the policies which, backed by armaments, produced the most devastating war in history; but having paid this price, democracy now demands control of its own destinies. Previous revolutions in history have demanded rights for men only: the women's cause is now

REPORT
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