

# 1. Lucy Thoumaian

1890 – 1940

At the Women's Congress in The Hague, 25th of April 1915, Madame Lucy Thoumaian, born Rossier de Visme in Switzerland, appeared in traditional Armenian dress, one day after the beginnings of the massacres of Armenians in the Turkish-Ottoman Empire.

Lucy Thoumaian had been active in relief work since 1893, when her husband, Professor Garabed Thoumaian, a Christian missionary, was imprisoned and tortured in his hometown Marsovan. Exiled to England, they established a shelter for Armenian orphans, known as 'The Armenian House', in their home in Chigwell in 1906. Six years later, Lucy Thoumaian initiated an 'International Movement of "Every Woman" for Peace'. She stated in a Manifesto distributed in September 1914: 'war is man-made - it must be woman-undone!'

After the Women's Congress, Mme Thoumaian stayed in the Netherlands until November 1915. With the 'Every Woman' committee she distributed a peace plan, calling for a 'Tribunal-Parliament' of neutral states, international arbitration and joint peace-keeping forces. Through diplomatic channels, she also urgently appealed for tracing deported Armenians, in particular her 30 relatives in Marsovan.

After the war, Mme Thoumaian became member of the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations, appointed under pressure from WILPF. Until her death in the US in 1940, she continued her campaign for international protection of Armenian victims of the massacres, on the basis of justice and forgiveness.