10. Rosa Genoni Tirano
1867 –1954

Rosa Genoni was a pioneer in several fields. She was a founding mother of transnational feminism, of peace activism and of Italian fashion. The story of Genoni's life is one of multiple but parallel and intersecting tracks: her initial work in dressmaking led her to become a designer in her own right and a leading figure in the call for the development of a home-based Italian fashion industry to rival the then fashion hegemon Paris; that led her to teaching in Milan's Società Humanitaria, which in turn exposed her to the plight of workers and working girls and contact with the city's women's and socialist circles (where she also met her life partner and father of her daughter Fanny, the well known lawyer and socialist Alfredo Podreider); contact with those circles led to her forceful opposition to Italy's entry into World War I and to the fascist regime that came to power shortly after the war ended. Genoni achieved international recognition as a result of her opposition to World War I.

She was the Italian Delegate to the First International Women's Conference in The Hague of 1915. Her humanitarian and pacifist initiatives, her dream for a more egalitarian and democratic society was politically annihilated by the outbreak of the First World War, which she forcefully opposed, and the triumph of fascism, which she also, equally forcefully, opposed.

WOMEN'S POWER TO
STOP WAR