

Press Release

Zurich, 5 April 2019

Zurich for Peace

100 Years Women's Peace Conference

#zurich2019

Zurich, 12-15 May 1919: 150 women from 16 nations met at the Zurich Glockenhof for the 2nd International Women's Peace Conference, invited by Clara Ragaz and the Swiss section of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), the world's largest women's organisation for peace.

Zurich, 11 May 2019: To commemorate the 100th anniversary of the conference, a historical re-enactment will take place at the original location, organised in collaboration with the European project Women Vote Peace. The event at Zurich's historic hotel "Glockenhof" recalls the political and social situation after the end of the First World War, where courageous women committed themselves to overcoming the causes of war.

For the women participating in the conference in 1919 it was a very emotional moment, meeting for the first time after having been separated by WW1, and reflecting on a way out of the political and social disaster caused by the war. They demanded an end to the hunger blockade, discussed their first experiences with the pursuit of women's voting rights and extensively debated approaches to non-violence in education and in respect of the revolutionary movements they had been witnessing in the month before the congress. A central issue was the request for the establishment of the League of Nations, which was hoped would become the tool to prevent future wars and nationalism, and to reach universal disarmament and the participation of women. At the end of the congress they elected a delegation to bring the women's resolution of Zurich to the "Peace Negotiations" of the all-male war victors in Versailles. Yet, doors remained closed to them and their requests were not heard!

As their ideas are still relevant today, the 100th anniversary of the Peace Conference on 11 May 2019 is an excellent occasion to celebrate and recall their vision. WILPF Switzerland and WILPF International will unite with Swiss-based and international peace organisations in Zurich.

The conference #Zurich19 not only intends to recall the situation after the end of WW1, when courageous women campaigned for equal participation of women, but also to elaborate on the important role of civil society in peace making. Therefore, workshops following the re-enactment will give women and civil society space to express themselves as "agents of change" and develop new ideas for peace work.

Date and venue: Saturday, 11 May, 2019, Glockenhof Zurich, Sihlstrasse 31, CH-8001 Zurich; free entrance 10 a.m.; welcoming/historic re-enactment 10.30 a.m. A British film crew will record the event.

After a light lunch is served, renowned facilitators will lead into six different workshops on specific peace issues (2-5 p.m.). Please see detailed program attached.

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