

A PARTIAL CHRONOLOGY OF WOMEN'S PEACE ACTIVISM

- 1820 A female peace society is founded in Cincinnati.
- 1837 *Boston Women's Peace Association* is founded.
- 1843 The first of many universal peace congresses is held. Women are allowed to attend but not to speak.
- Late 1840s Three thousand women in Britain establish 150 women's peace groups known as the *Olive Leaf Circles*.
- 1854 Swedish feminist Frederika Bremer proposes the creation of a women-only international alliance for peace.
- 1863 Six hundred French women sign a petition to the Emperor in protest of the Russian invasion of Poland.
British women petition Queen Victoria.
- 1867 Eugenie Niboyet founds an autonomous organization of women for peace, the *Ligue Internationale de la Paix et de la Liberté*. Niboyet argues that international peace is inherently connected to economic and social justice.
- 1872 The British Peace Society establishes a *Women's Peace and Arbitration Auxiliary*.
- 1877 Forty-three thousand British women sign a petition against the imminent Russo-Turkish war
- 1878 Priscilla Peckover, a British Quaker, forms the *Wisbech Peace Association* to promote women's participation in the struggle for peace. The group, including men and women, came to number in the thousands and worked with peace groups in other countries, advocating peace through arbitration and disarmament.
- 1880 More peace societies are established in Europe and women become increasingly active. The *Universal Alliance for Women for Peace* is founded in France.
British women publish a pamphlet called "How to organise a local peace association in your neighbourhood".
- 1896 The International Congress in Berlin debates "Women's Part in the Peace Movement".
- 1898 The *Swedish Women's Peace Association* is started.
- 1899-1902 Women in Europe protest the Boer War between Britain and South Africa.
- 1901 The first women delegate attends the International League for Peace and Liberty
- 1905 Austrian-born Bertha von Suttner becomes the first woman to be awarded a share of the Nobel Peace Prize as a result of her work as a campaigner for disarmament and international arbitration. Von Suttner was very critical of the effects of exaggerated nationalism and armaments. She died 2 months before the eruption of WWI, which she had warned against.

- 1910 Dr. Anna Shabanova helps found the *Moscow Peace Society*, arguing that, if Russian women become politically active, the idea of “universal peace would be immensely easier to realize”.
- 1911 South African feminist, Olive Schreiner, publishes *Women and Labour*, arguing that women will eventually end war because “she knows the history of human flesh.”
- 1914 In July, a manifesto published by the *International Woman Suffrage Alliance* calls on governments to prevent war. In August, the war begins and women in the suffrage movement split over whether to support it.
- 1915 *The Women's Peace Party* is formed in the US under the leadership of Jane Adams. *The International Congress of Women* assembles at The Hague (1,136 delegates from 12 countries) to protest against war and suggest steps to abolish it. The Congress establishes an *International Women's Committee for Permanent Peace* which visits the heads of state of 14 European countries to stop the war. The meeting leads to the establishment of the *Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)* and Jane Adams becomes its first president.
In Paris, Gabrielle Duchêne, prevented from attending the Hague conference, publishes “Un devoir urgent pour les femmes”, which challenges her government's support for the war and the idea that war is natural. Almost at the same time, an anonymous pamphlet, “Militarism vs. Feminism” appears in England.
- 1916 Conscription is introduced in Britain, where Rosa Waugh makes a peace pilgrimage and is imprisoned. Women are active in anti-conscription campaigns.
- 1919 Not long after the end of the war, women from both sides hold a second international congress to coincide with the meeting of leaders at Versailles to draft the peace treaty. The women strongly criticize the punitive terms of the treaty, arguing that this will lead to a renewal of war.
- 1923 *The War Resisters League*, an American branch of *War Resisters International*, is set up by three women, Jesse Wallace Hughan, Tracy Mygatt and Frances Witherspoon. The organization – the oldest secular pacifist organization in the United States – continues to be active today.
- 1931 Jane Adams is awarded a share in the Nobel Peace Prize and gives the money to the *WILPF* which has become today an organization with over 50,000 members in at least forty countries.
- 1932 In preparation for the *World Disarmament Conference*, women collect 9 million signatures on a petition urging steps to achieve global disarmament.
- 1933 The *Women's Co-operative Guild* introduces the white poppy as an alternative to the traditional red poppy. The white poppy is still promoted today by pacifists to remember all the victims of war and stand as a symbol for the hope of ending war.
- 1938 Virginia Woolf publishes her famous work, *Three Guineas*, which argues that war is rooted in patriarchy and states that, while women are not inherently peaceful, they are more likely to reject war. Her argument is based on the view that women are outsiders: “As a woman, I have no country. As a woman I want no country. As a woman my country is the whole world.”

- 1946 Emily Balch, the founder of the *WILPF*, is awarded a share in the Nobel Peace Prize. She saw the promotion of internationalism as key to establishing peace.
- 1953 An international exchange of children's drawings is arranged by American women to protest against nuclear war.
- 1959 The *European Movement of Women against Nuclear Armament* organizes a conference on women's responsibilities in the nuclear age.
- 1961 *Women Strike for Peace* in the US is established and organizes a one day, nation-wide strike on November 1, in which 50,000 women leave their homes and workplaces to protest against nuclear testing and the arms race. The *WSP* plays a key role in the establishment of the 1963 Limited Test Ban Treaty.
Women in Canada establish the *Voice of Women* which organizes actions against nuclear weapons and later brings Vietnamese and American women together to protest the Vietnam War.
- 1965 Long time social activist and pacifist Dorothy Day lobbies the Vatican and joins other women in a ten-day fast calling on the Catholic Church to endorse nonviolence as a fundamental tenet of Catholic life and denounce nuclear arms, both as a weapon of war and a deterrent.
- 1969 Women in New York destroy draft files as protest against the Vietnam War.
- 1975 The *International Women's Day Conference*, held in Mexico City, launches a petition calling for the UN to organize a world disarmament conference.
- 1976 *Women for Peace* march in Northern Ireland.
- 1977 Mairead Corrigan and Betty Williams share the Nobel Peace Prize for peace work in Northern Ireland. Their politicization occurred after three children were killed after being hit by a car whose driver, an IRA member, had been shot by British forces (Williams witnessed their death, while Corrigan was their aunt). They started *Women for Peace* (which became *Community for Peace People*) and organized a march to the graves of children attended by 10,000 Protestant and Catholic women. Disrupted by the IRA, the next week the march was held again with 35,000 participants.
The *Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo* begin their 3 decade struggle against the Argentinian regime with a half hour march around the plaza on Thursday, April 30. The founders met while trying to find their children who had "disappeared" during the 1976-1983 Dirty War.
- 1978 Women march against the neutron bomb in all Nordic countries; 3000 demonstrate in Stockholm and Gothenburg.
Eighty women from different countries meet in Vienna to formulate a message on disarmament for the United Nations and one thousand women from all over the world gather in New York at the UN's First Special Session on Disarmament.
Women Strike for Peace organizes demonstrations in San Francisco (2000), Hollywood Bowl (14,000), and New York (15,000), at which hundreds of Japanese women affected by Hiroshima and Nagasaki attend.
- 1980 Eight hundred women attend the *Conference on Women and Life*, which ultimately leads to the *Women's Pentagon Action* in November during which two thousand women encircle

the Pentagon, drawing out the connections between war, poverty, ecological devastation and the oppression of women.
One hundred thousand West German women and 500,000 Scandinavian women sign a petition calling for an end to the arms race.
Helen Caldicott establishes the *Women's Party for Survival* in the US.

- 1981
Scandinavian women march for peace from Copenhagen to Paris.
Five thousand women attend *Japanese Women's Peace March*. Some of the speakers at the rally include Shibokusa women, who have established a permanent peace camp at the base of Mount Fuji to protest the militarization of their ancestral lands which has been ongoing since the late 1930s.
Greenham Common and *Molesworth Peace* camps are set up in Britain.
German Women for Peace organize many protests, including one where women march to a NATO airbase and release balloons into the air with the message "We hope you will never be reached by nuclear fallout".
The founding conference of the *Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign*, led by Randall Forsberg, is held in Washington.
The *Conference of Women in Europe in Action for Peace* is held in Amsterdam.
- 1982
Thirty thousand women encircle the American military base at *Greenham Common* (a later action united 40,000 women).
WILPF launch their "Stop the Arms Race" campaign for 1 million signatures in the US.
Four thousand women participate in *Women's Pentagon Action* to encircle the Pentagon.
Mothers for Peace arrange for a group of Soviet and American women to make a joint tour of Britain.
On May 24, *International Women's Day for Disarmament*, women engage in 100 actions in Iceland, Germany, Spain, Italy, Austria, Nigeria, Australia, and Britain.
Three hundred women participate in the *Scandinavian Women's Peace March* from Stockholm to Minsk.
Alva Myrdal shares the Nobel Peace Prize for her work as a disarmament negotiator in Geneva.
Petra Kelly, founder of the *German Green Party*, is awarded the Right Livelihood Award (also known as the Alternative Nobel Prize) in 1982 for her activism integrating ecological concerns with disarmament, social justice and human rights.
- 1983
One hundred and two women's peace camps are established throughout Great Britain and similar initiatives are made in Sicily, Holland, Denmark, West Germany, Australia, and the US (Seneca, Puget Sound, Savannah River, northern Wisconsin, Minnesota, San Francisco Bay, New York City, and Nevada) at sites which include American bases and weapons production plants.
On May 24, 1 million women are involved in 700 actions worldwide. Women stage a peace march from Berlin to Geneva.
Greenham Common women take President Reagan to court in New York.
American women who travel to Nicaragua to witness the effects of the Contra war form *MADRE*, which has today become an international women's human rights organization.
- 1984
The *WILPF* launches a worldwide signature campaign for a comprehensive test ban treaty.
Danish women set up a peace camp at NATO command center.
Five hundred women set up a second camp in Australia.
An *International Women's Peace Camp* is established in Stockholm.
Two international conferences for women against war are held in Washington and Paris.

- 1985 The Nobel Peace Prize is given to the *Physicians for Social Responsibility*, headed by Helen Caldicott.
Women march for peace through Central America.
International conferences for women and peace are held in Geneva, Nairobi (UN - *Decade for Women Conference*), Brussels, and Halifax.
Women in politics establish the *World Parliamentarians for Peace*.
Women's Peace Camp is set up opposite the UN during US and Soviet arms negotiations.
British women set up a regular monthly camp at Aldermaston where the British government is building Trident nuclear weapons.
A 24 hour strike is undertaken by Icelandic women demanding that men stop waging war.
- 1986 *Women for Peace in Europe* begin a letter and signature campaign in Eastern and Western Europe.
Four thousand women in Finland state that they will not bear children unless their governments close nuclear power stations by 1990.
Two thousand women in the Netherlands demonstrate against nuclear testing.
A group of women from Victoria, BC found the *Ragin' Grannies* to protest against militarism, racism, environmental degradation and corporate greed. The "grannies", with their trademark outrageous hats and satirical songs, have spread across Canada and the US.
- 1987 Very soon after the *intifada* began, a number of Israeli-Palestinian women's dialogue groups are formed.
- 1988 Israeli women found *Women in Black* to protest against their country's continued occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. This has become an international peace network with thousands of members worldwide in perhaps as many as 30 countries.
Women for a Meaningful Summit from the US and SU urge the immediate signing of START, a nuclear arms control agreement.
- 1989 Russian women form the *Committee of Soviet Mothers* to support the young men conscripted into the Red Army and expose military abuse. The women also worked closely with Chechnyan women.
- 1991 *International Women's Gulf Peace Initiative* is launched.
Women in Black begin weekly vigils in Belgrade to protest the Serbian regime's policies of nationalist aggression.
Aung San Suu Kyi wins the Nobel Peace Prize for her years of nonviolent resistance to the military regime governing Burma. She is unable to accept the award in person as she will not be allowed re-entrance if she leaves Burma.
- 1992 Rigoberta Menchu wins the Nobel Peace Prize for her campaign for human rights, particularly for indigenous peoples, and a peaceful, non-confrontational end to Guatemala's 30-year old civil war (despite the brutal murder of her mother, father and brother).
- 1993 Iraqi-born Zainab Salbi founds Women for Women International, a group dedicated to helping female victims of war rebuild their lives.
- 1994 An occasional women's peace camp is established outside the Menwith Hill military site, which is a field station in the United States' missile defense program in a protest against the

militarization of space.

- 1995 Three hundred local peace groups in Columbia form *La Ruta Pacifica* to oppose the civil war in their country which has caused 20-30,000 civilian deaths per year. The women travel to every corner of the country to lend solidarity to women and exchange strategies for peace. One of their statements is “wo parimos hijos ni hijas para la guerra” or “we won’t give birth for war”.
- 1996 Amy Goodman begins hosting a weekday radio show, *Democracy Now!*, with a strong focus on peace issues. Goodman won several awards for her reporting on the Indonesian massacre in East Timor on November 12, 1991. Goodman witnessed the massacre and was beaten by the Indonesian Army.
Women Against Military Madness hold weekly non-violent vigils outside the headquarters of Alliant Techsystems, a Minnesota-based weapons manufacturer which provides cluster bombs, landmines, depleted uranium munitions, rocket motors for nuclear missiles and 1.5 billion bullets a year for the US Department of Defense.
- 1997 Jody Williams and the *International Campaign to Ban Landmines* win the Nobel Peace Prize for getting 121 nations to sign the treaty in Ottawa. As of 2015, 162 nations have ratified, although the US, Russia, China, India, Pakistan and Burma are among the 35 countries that have refused.
- 1999 Serb women organize open protests to demand that the government stop sending their husbands and sons over the nearby border into war-torn Kosovo.
- 2000 *The Coalition for Women for Peace* is formed in Israel to call for an end to the occupation and the creation of a just peace.
- 2002 *Code Pink: Women for Peace* is founded by about 100 women to protest the United States’ impending invasion of Iraq. They maintained a vigil in front of the White House for 4 years. One of the leaders, Medea Benjamin, an economist long active in justice issues, is arrested for scaling the White House fence. She has travelled to Iraq with military families who have lost relatives and has raised money to assist Iraqi civilians. *Code Pink* now has branches in the UK, Ireland, Canada, Brazil, Germany, Iran, Fiji and Australia.
- 2003 Shirin Ebadi, the first female judge in Iran, wins the Nobel Peace Prize for her work in promoting human rights and democracy in Iran.
MARWOPNET is awarded the UN prize in the field of human rights. This is a joint peace initiative involving women from Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea, which was established in 2000 to bring an end to a war that had devastated all three countries and led to thousands of children being forced to become soldiers. The women played a key role in bringing the leaders of all three countries to the negotiating table. They challenged the rebel groups and governments, gave a voice to the women suffering from the violence, fought the media’s propaganda campaigns and participated in the 2003 peace talks.
Grandmothers Against the War form in New York City to oppose the US war in Iraq. In one action, 18 women are arrested for trying to enlist at a recruitment office.
- 2004 Wanjari Maathai, the founder of the *Kenyan Green Belt Movement*, becomes the first environmentalist to win the Nobel Peace Prize. She emphasizes the connections between environmental destruction, particularly the problems of deforestation and desertification,

and human conflict. So far, her movement has planted more than 30 million trees throughout Kenya and Africa.

- 2005 Cindy Sheehan, who lost her son in Iraq, is a founding member of *Gold Star Families for Peace*. In August, she establishes a peace camp outside of George W. Bush's Texas ranch to protest the war in Iraq.
The *East Asia-US-Puerto Rico Women's Network against Militarism* holds its fifth international meeting to examine the effects on local populations of American military bases. The network highlights the problem of militarized prostitution and works for "the demilitarization of cultures and national identities".
- 2006 Anna Politkovskaya wins the International Journalism Award for her tireless reporting on human rights abuses in Russia's war in Chechnya. Her stories document a brutal war where thousands of civilians have been tortured, abducted and killed by Russian and Chechnyan forces. She is murdered in October in an elevator outside her apartment in what many consider to be a contract killing.
Israeli and Palestinian women hold a month of protests calling for an end to the Israeli occupation.
Code Pink brings a delegation of Iraqi women to the US as part of their "Women Say No to War" Campaign.
- 2007 On April 28, members of RAWA (*Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan*) demonstrate in Islamabad to denounce the coming to power of fundamentalist groups in 1992. Their protest at the UN Headquarters is also directed at the willingness of Western governments to accept known human rights abusers in the Karzai government. RAWA was formed in 1977 and much of their work is done underground in both Afghanistan and refugee camps in Pakistan. Several of their leaders have been assassinated during their struggles against the Soviet occupation, the Taliban and the Northern Alliance.
Yanar Mohammed, the President of the *Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq*, receives the Eleanor Roosevelt Global Women's Rights award for her work confronting violence against Iraqi women which has worsened significantly since the US invasion.
Italian women from Vicenza lead a movement to oppose the construction of a new US military base in their town.
The *Aldermaston Women's Peace Camp* celebrates its 22nd birthday. Since 1985, British women have held a monthly camp to protest British nuclear weapons. Their current focus is on the UK government's modernization plans for their nuclear program.
Code Pink begins a campaign to protest against Canada's refusal to allow two American anti-war activists, Medea Benjamin, co-founder of *Code Pink*, and Ann Wright, retired US army colonel and former diplomat, who quit in opposition to the Iraq War, over the border.
Natalya Estemirova wins the first Anna Politkovskaya Award, presented by the human rights group, *Reach All Women in War*, which supports women activists in war zones. Estemirova is assassinated in July 2009 for her work drawing attention to civilian atrocities in Chechnya.
- 2008 The *Coalition of Women for Peace and Justice* call on Kenyan women to wear white clothes and surround the hotel where crisis talks are being held to end the violence which erupted after the presidential elections.
In April, 14 members of *Women of Zimbabwe Arise*, are arrested after demonstrating against the government's use of violence against civilians.

1000 Grandmothers, a group organized in 1996, hold a fast for three days to draw attention to the School of the Americas, an institution on a US Army base, which trains officers throughout Latin America on military tactics, including torture techniques.

- 2009 *Code Pink's* Medea Benjamin leads a 60-person mostly female delegation to Gaza to mark International Women's Day and draw attention to the suffering of the Palestinians. Women's activist groups in Kenya call for a seven-day sex ban to shock the male political class into resolving their feuds. Leymah Gbowee wins the Kennedy Peace Prize for her work with the women of Liberia to end the civil war. *Raging Grannies* lead demonstrators against a military trade show in Ottawa.
- 2010 In observance of the 10th anniversary of United Nations Resolution 1325, which calls for women's participation in peacebuilding initiatives in conflict zones, women's activists meet with senior UN leaders in 25 countries, including Afghanistan, Iraq, Haiti, Liberia, Pakistan, and Somalia, to push for increased action to protect women and build peace.
- 2011 In March, Iman Al Obeidi, a Libyan law student, publicly challenges her country's stigma surrounding rape and her government's brutality by telling the international media that she had been raped by President Gaddafi's troops. She is immediately taken into custody by the authorities, but manages to flee the country after she is released. Women in Benghazi and Tobruk march in support of Al Obeidi to draw further attention to the regime's use of rape as a strategy to suppress opposition. In May, Nobel Peace Laureates Jody Williams, Shirin Ebadi and Mairead Maguire host over 120 women from around the world in Montebello, Quebec to discuss strategies to address sexual violence in conflict. The Laureates then go to Ottawa to urge Canadian parliamentarians to take the lead to end rape in war. Jean Grump is arrested, spending her 84th birthday in jail, after trespassing at an American National Security Complex to protest against nuclear weapons. She has been an activist for most of her life and spent more than four years in prison in the 1980s after she poured blood on a missile hatch on a US air force base. The Nobel Peace Prize is shared by three women: Liberians Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Leymah Gbowee and Yemeni Tawakkol Karman for their work in promoting peace and women's rights through nonviolence. Ellen Johnson became the first female president of Liberia and contributed to bringing peace to the war-torn country. Gbowee bridged religious and ethnic divides to unite women into becoming a powerful voice for peace in the region. Karman, a long-time human rights worker in her country, was arrested in January, which triggered protests for democracy by hundreds of thousands of Yemenis.
- 2012 Women Nobel Peace Prize winners launch the *International Campaign to Stop Rape and Gender Violence in Conflict*, seeking to create a powerful and coordinated effort for change. In June, Aung San Suu Kyi finally accepts her Nobel Peace Prize 21 years late for her nonviolent struggle to bring democracy and peace to Burma. Sima Simar wins the 2012 Right Livelihood Award, often called the alternative Nobel Peace Prize, for her work in Afghanistan. Samar risked her life during the Taliban era (and still does today) to help the poor and marginalized, particularly women and girls. She currently operates more than 100 schools and 15 clinics and hospitals. Four Canadian aboriginal women -- Nina Wilson, Sheelah Mclean, Sylvia McAdam, and Jessica Gordon -- launch *Idle No More*, a grassroots movement dedicated to drawing attention to the conditions of First Nations communities, the government's violation of

treaty rights, and promote a more just and environmentally sustainable vision for Canada. The movement quickly draws international support.

- 2013 Fifteen year old Malala Yousufzai wins the Sakharov Prize for her advocacy of educating girls as a path to peace. Malala becomes a worldwide symbol of hope and strength after surviving an assassination attack by members of the Taliban in Pakistan. Following their 2012 visit to Pakistan, a *Code Pink* delegation travels to Yemen to meet with victims of US drone strikes. Yemen and Pakistan have been particularly targeted by American drones; according to Stanford University Law School, between 2004-2012 over 2500 people in Pakistan have been killed by drone attacks, including an estimate of 474-881 civilians, with 176 being children.
- 2014 In January, prominent Syrian nonviolent activist Kefah ali Deeb calls for the equal participation of women in peace talks, noting that 80% of the over 9 million Syrians needing aid are women and children. On International Women's Day in Moscow, Russian feminists gather in an antiwar protest supporting Ukrainian women and a resolution to the violence. The activists are attacked by onlookers. Professor Miriam Coronel-Ferrer becomes the first women to affix her signature as a chief mediator in a comprehensive peace agreement; she helped negotiate an end to the four decades of civil war between the Filipino government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. Malala Yousufzai becomes the youngest person to receive the Nobel Peace Prize for her work in opposing extremism and advocating the right to education.
- 2015 Syrian peace activist Majid Izzat al-Chourbaji is awarded the US State Department's International Women of Courage Award. As the Arab Spring spilled over into Syria, she led peaceful protests calling for the release of political prisoners. After being forced to flee to Lebanon with her three children, she has organized support for the many other Syrian women who have also fled their country to escape the ongoing civil war. Thirty women from 15 countries defy both the North and South Korean governments and cross the demilitarized zone along their border to promote peace and reconciliation. To commemorate the 100th anniversary of the founding of the *Women's International League for Peace and Freedom*, which was launched after 1300 women travelled to the Hague to protest WWI, the *WILPF* launches the *Women's Power to Stop War* campaign to unite female peacemakers from around the world.