
Early Endeavors to Establish a (Soviet) Russian WILPF Section, 1915-1925

A Little Known Episode in Feminist Transnational Peace History

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Abstract: In this empirically researched paper I investigate transnational – specifically Russian, European and American – documentation of women peace activists, roughly from 1915 to the mid-1920s. After addressing the historiographic absence of known Soviet Russian female or male pacifists, I then examine the course of World War I mobilization of transnational women peace activists, particularly the women’s peace conferences in The Hague in 1915 and in Zurich in 1919. In the third part I focus on specific interwar networking attempts by individuals and the WILPF as a whole, to initiate a Russian section. In short, this paper looks at why an organized Soviet Russian feminist peace movement failed to be established.

“It is as revolutionists that Russian women are famous.”(Madeleine Doty, 1918, p. IX)

Although Lev Tolstoy’s epic late nineteenth-century historical novel *War and Peace* belongs to the greatest and most well-known works of anti-war world literature, one is, paradoxically, hard pressed to find academic studies on Soviet Russian pacifism or antiwar activists. Indeed, the most common themes taken up by scholars of Soviet Russia focus on antitheses of peace: terrorism, revolutionary violence, wars, pogroms, famine, and the Gulag. It would seem that everyday

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Soviet citizens spent the first half of the twentieth century promoting or coping with multiple armed conflicts and social unrest¹.

I am aware in fact of only two works explicitly devoted to the Soviet Russian peace activists and/or advocates: a short edited volume of letters written by Soviet conscientious objectors published by the late peace historian Peter Brock², and a peace anthology co-edited by peace historians Charles Chatfield and Ruzanna Illiukhina³. Brock addresses men resisting wartime enlistment based on their religious conviction, led by Tolstoy's follower Vladimir Chertkov (with slight references, too, to other leading pacifist figures such as writer Maxim Gorky and aristocratic anarchist Petr Kropotkin), and Chatfield and Illiukhina excerpt documents and statements that demonstrate Western (including Russian) pacifist traditions, from Aristophanes to the twelfth-century Russian Chronicles to the French diplomat and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aristide Briand (1926). The only Soviet woman whose work is included is Aleksandra Kollontai (1872-1952), with a sentimentally entitled and brief passage ("An Epitaph for Hope") that concerns her opposition to World War I. That Kollontai, a leading feminist and the first Soviet female ambassador, was shortlisted for the Nobel Peace prize in 1946 is left unmentioned⁴. (In 1947 and 1948 Kollontai was again nominated, but not shortlisted⁵.) Indeed, not one Russian or Soviet citizen received a Nobel Peace prize (established in 1901), until the physicist turned dissident Andrei Sakharov did – in absentia – late in 1975⁶.

¹ See among many, L. Siegelbaum-A. Sokolov (eds.), *Stalinism as a Way of Life. A Narrative in Documents*, Yale University Press, New Haven 2000 (A Russian version was printed in Moscow simultaneously), and O. Figes, *The Whisperers, Private Life in Stalin's Russia*, Penguin Books, London 2007.

² Testimonies of Conscience sent from the Soviet Union to the War Resisters' International, 1923-1929 edited by Peter Brock, (privately published), Toronto 1997.

³ *Peace/Mir. An Anthology of Historic Alternatives to War*, edited by Charles Chatfield and Ruzanna Illiukhina, Syracuse University Press, Syracuse 1994 (A Russian version was printed in Moscow simultaneously); Cfr. *Patsifizm v istorii idei i dvizheniia mira* (Pacifism in the history of ideas and the peace movement), edited by A. O. Chubar'ian, Moscow 1998, which includes a couple of chapters by Russian scholars on the global peace movement.

⁴ Nobel Prize Institute in Oslo, Nomination files, 1946. The main reason she ranked so highly were her recent practical attempts, operating out of Sweden, to negotiate a peace between the Soviet Union and Finland, especially in the winter of 1940 (see Frøydis Eleonora Veseth, *Women and the Nobel Peace Prize Laureates and Nominees from 1901 to 1951*, Hovedoppgave Vår 2000, pp. 107-110). The prize that year went to two Americans: Internationalist WILPF co-founder, former Wellesley Professor of Economics Emily Greene Balch (the third woman ever to be awarded the prize), and John Mott, president of the Young Men's Christian Association.

⁵ The only three Russian citizens who were officially nominated for the prize prior to Kollontai were all minor personalities.

⁶ The fact that the Norwegian parliament, responsible for selecting Nobel Peace Prize laureates, mirrored – and mirrors still – the realpolitik of the complicated East-West dialogue is often ignored in the discourse about Nobel Peace prize nominations and laureates.

Similarly, whereas a number of recent studies have done a fine job of (re)discovering women's movements in Russia⁷, there are no studies remotely comparable to those investigating North American and European *feminist peace* activism⁸. Furthermore, missing from the multiple histories of the early decades of the first organized transnational feminist women's peace movement, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), is virtually any mention of WILPF's outreach to Soviet women⁹. Not surprisingly, most of these histories were written during the Cold War and most often from an Anglophone perspective, which until recently also ignored to a large extent the roles of key and long-term continental European activists¹⁰. As Kenneth Cmiel (1999, p. 1232) correctly notes, "Historians generally remain trained to and limited by the nation." Yet even the recent transnational publication by Annika Wilmers (2008), *Pazifismus in der internationalen Frauenbewegung (1914-1920)* (Pacifism in the International Women's Movement), which is the first to carefully examine German, French, Austrian and Belgian feminists and WILPF members, fails to mention any connection to Russian pacifists in the same movements. The story of Soviet Russian feminist pacifists has yet to be told.

This essay addresses and begins to fill in this gap by examining initial WILPF efforts – by individual members and by the organization as a whole – to encourage the establishment of a Soviet Russian WILPF section and the Russian responses that they receive. It concerns roughly therefore an East-West dialogue from World War I to the mid-1920s. My approach is from a transnational historical perspective; one, that is, that takes a critical stance towards the centrality of the nation-state – the peace movement is after all a global project – or towards what David Thelen

⁷ See Richard Stites, *The Women's Liberation Movement in Russia. Feminism, Nihilism, and Bolshevism, 1860-1930*. Princeton University Press, Princeton 1978; Linda Harriet Edmondson, *Feminism in Russia, 1900-1917*, Heinemann Educational Books, London 1984; Bianka Pietrow-Ennker, *Rußlands "neue Menschen": die Entwicklung der Frauenbewegung von den Anfängen bis zur Oktoberrevolution*. Campus Verlag, Frankfurt am Main et al. 1999; Natalia Pushkareva. *Russkaja zhenshchina: istorija I sovremennost'. Materialy k bibliografii 1800-2002* (Russian Women. Past and Present. Research. Bibliography) Moscow 2002; Rochelle Goldberg Ruthchild, *Equality & Revolution. Women's Rights in the Russian Empire, 1905-1917*, University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh 2010.

⁸ See Gertrude Bussey and Margaret Tims, WILPF. 1915-1965. A record of 50 years' work, George Allen & Unwin, London 1965; Harriet Hyman Alonso, *Peace as a Women's Issue. A History of the U.S. Movement for World Peace and Women's Rights*, Syracuse University Press, Syracuse 1993; Linda K. Schott, *Reconstructing Women's Thoughts. The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Before World War II*, Stanford University Press, Stanford 1997; Susanne Hertrampf, "Zum Wohle der Menschheit". *Feministisches Denken und Engagement Internationaler Aktivistinnen, 1945-1975*, Centaurus Verlag, Herbolzheim 2006.

⁹ In Leila Rupp's outstanding *Worlds of Women: The Making of an International Women's Movement*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1997, there are merely two references to Russian outreach (pp. 31, 113).

¹⁰ See "Women's Studies International Forum" 32 (2008), special issue: *Circling the globe. International feminism reconsidered, 1920 to 1975*, as well as the justified critique in Maria Grazia Suriano, *Donne, pace, non-violenza fra le due guerre mondiali. La Women's International League for Peace and Freedom e l'impegno per il disarmo e l'educazione*, PhD diss Università di Bologna, 2007.

(1999, p. 966) calls a “nation-centered tradition of historical practice.” Although directly related to international or global history, transnational history as used here puts emphasis on cross-border or bilateral aspects of internationalism. My focus is not WILPF’s entire international landscape but its members (or potential members) in Europe (including Russia) and North America.

Structural Contexts: Nationalism, Internationalism, Transnationalism and Pacifism

One uniqueness of WILPF – as compared to other older international women’s organizations of the time, such as the International Council of Women and the International Woman’s Suffrage Association – is that these feminist pacifists began right from the beginning (during World War I) to redefine “internationalism.” They demonstrated this by *consciously* prioritizing and showing solidarity with a global sisterhood, whereas members of the above-mentioned organized “international global sisterhood” for the most part chose “patriotism” (chauvinist nationalism) first. One of the earliest examples is the heated exchange in March 1915 between German suffragist-feminist Lida Gustava Heymann (and her colleagues) and Gertrude Bäumer, who headed the *Bund Deutscher Frauenvereine* (BDF/Federation of German Women’s Associations), an umbrella organization of the German women’s movement. Bäumer almost unilaterally as well as publicly threatened to expulse all BDF members such as Heymann who participated in April 1915 in the Women’s International (Peace) Congress at The Hague (which led to WILPF’s founding)¹¹.

Notwithstanding any personal antagonisms between feminists and feminist-pacifists, there were significant structural contexts in play in this conflict. First, many early WILPF members had come to the organization via the women’s equal rights movements (e.g. for equal work and pay, education, the right to vote). These rights were fought for in the framework of sovereign national states. In other words, nationality for them was explicitly (if not always consciously) tied to the question of citizenship and suffrage, or that sense of civically belonging to a bounded territorial state. The “international” side of these women’s movements signified largely a support network for individual (Western) national organizations: i.e., for information gathering and exchanging of ideas and tactics. The early WILPF members by contrast advocated peace and women’s suffrage on an equal basis and thus continued to promote women’s international solidarity even during the war. Women such as Heymann and Anita Augspurg in Germany, Jane Addams and Emily Greene Balch in the United States, Aletta Jacobs and Rosa Manus in the

¹¹ Helene Lange Collection, Landesarchiv Berlin, B235-01, M 2753-55: Gertrud Bäumer, *Zum internationalen Frauenkongreß im Haag* (Regarding the International Women’s Congress in The Hague), in “Deutsche Tageszeitung”, 29 March 1915 and the response from Lida Gustava Heymann, Frida Perlen and Elise v. Schlumberger to Gertrud Bäumer of 29 March 1915, who criticized Bäumer’s position on The Hague Congress as well as her authoritarian handling of the conflict. Cf. Jennifer Anne Davy, *Pacifist Thought and Gender Ideology in the Political Biographies of Women Peace Activists in Germany, 1899-1970, Introduction*, in “Women’s History” 13 n. 3 (Autumn 2001), pp. 34-45.

Netherlands, Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence, Chrystal Macmillan and Helena Swanwick in Great Britain, Rosika Schwimmer, Olga Misař, Leopoldine Kulka and Yella Hertzka in Austria-Hungary advocated transnational female solidarity against national chauvinism. Did (Soviet) Russian feminists as well, in theory as well as in practice?

A second structural issue related to the definition of peace. Until World War I, most peace and antiwar advocates accepted the use of violence in the case of self-defense or in the case of certain (often revolutionary) conditions to resolve (often class) conflict. Leading WILPF pacifists by contrast distinguished themselves by rejecting armed or military violence altogether. As Balch wrote in 1920, “Our organization stands as strongly against violence in connection with social and economic difference and changes as in war itself”¹². Could (Soviet) Russian feminist pacifists accept this definition of peace and of a peace culture?

Taken together, the tensions between both the new definition of internationalism and the unrelenting pull of nationalism, on the one hand, and so-called absolute pacifism versus defensive, revolutionary or “patriotic pacifism”¹³, on the other, paradoxically both propelled and hindered WILPF’s successes. That is, whereas WILPF was an alternative, defiant and inclusive cross-border project from its very beginnings – e.g. on the level of its humanitarian goals, its institutionalization (with its international headquarters in Geneva), its international membership – it was also constrained by direct and perhaps even more strongly indirect and exclusive nationalist and militarist leanings and ambivalences as to the use of force within its very ranks. My investigation suggests that the tension surrounding these key factors in the case of a Soviet Russian WILPF section hindered its establishment.

The rest of this article proceeds as follows: I first briefly contextualize the course of the initial mobilization of transnational feminist peace activists, particularly the establishment of their International Committee of Women for Permanent Peace (ICWPP), which dates to the above-mentioned women’s peace congress in The Hague in 1915. At its second conference in Zurich, in May 1919, this International Committee evolved into the still-existing WILPF (an acronym I will use to identify the movement with, even before 1919). Although no Russian women were present at either congress, outreach to include their participation was specifically undertaken. I then shortly explore the Russian feminist movement, including their pre-World War I interests in and sympathies towards universal peace, which were equivalent to their European and North American feminist counterparts. Finally, I present chronologically several attempts by WILPF’s international leadership and by a few Russians themselves – from World War I to WILPF’s Fourth International Conference, in Washington, D.C. (1924) – to set up a Soviet Russian section.

¹² Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom Papers 1915-1978, Microfilming Corporation of America (hereafter WILPF), reel 82, Balch to Kal’manovich (undated, ca. May 1920).

¹³ See Sandi E. Cooper, *Patriotic Pacifism: Waging War on War in Europe, 1815-1914*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1991.

My argument builds on other research that reconsiders the pre-1930 process of the East-West dialogue, as engaged in by transnational political movements and actors, especially the women's movement, and particularly the work several recent feminist historians have done to break down once taken-for-granted distinctive ideological class barriers and find therein cross-class cooperation¹⁴. My main archival sources are the Jane Addams, WILPF and Raisa Lomonosova Papers¹⁵.

World War I and the Mobilization of a Feminist Women's Peace Movement

The outbreak of the war in late July 1914 mobilized a group of women, especially those among the internationally organized so-called bourgeois women's movements, to enter the public sphere of international relations and devise ways of stopping the war or at least preventing its further development. This new women's peace movement was transnational (reaching out across borders, defying nation-state centrism) and distinctly transatlantic at its beginnings. For instance, two of its leaders – Austrian-Hungarian feminist pacifist Rosika Schwimmer (1877-1948)¹⁶ and British feminist pacifist Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence (1867-1954)¹⁷ – representing women from opposing belligerent countries, crossed the Atlantic in September 1914 and began lecture tours, at times jointly, across the then still officially neutral United States. Their main audiences were members of the US organized women's groups. Not least through their forceful and inspirational lecturing, thousands of white, mostly middle- and upper-class American women representing a variety of women's and feminist groups came to Washington, D.C. in January 1915 and founded the Women's Peace Party.

Similar stirrings, if more marginal and on a smaller level, occurred among feminists turned also pacifists in war-torn Europe. Unlike the established male-led pacifist movement, which more or less folded once the war broke out – as their publications were banned and leaders had to flee, enlist, or face arrest – female

¹⁴ See Ruthchild 2010 and Marilyn J. Boxer, *Rethinking the Socialist Construction and International Career of the Concept "Bourgeois feminism"*, in "American Historical Review", 112, nr. 1 (February 2007), pp. 131-158.

¹⁵ This study is part of a broader monograph I am working on regarding transnational women peace activists, 1900-1950, sponsored by the Austrian Research Fund (FWF, Project n. V34-G14).

¹⁶ Rosika Schwimmer was the founder of the Hungarian feminist movement in 1897, active in the German progressive suffrage movement by the early 1900s, and had travelled to Moscow during the antisemitic and blood-libel Beilis trial in 1914. In 1921 she immigrated to the United States, and although denied citizenship in 1928, she remained there for the rest of her life. For more on Schwimmer, see Laurie R. Cohen. *Rosika Schwimmer*, edited by Nigel J. Young, Vol. 4, *The Oxford International Encyclopedia of Peace*, Oxford University Press, Oxford et al. 2010, pp. 18-20; Beth Wenger, *Rosika Schwimmer, Jewish Women's Archive*, <<http://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/schwimmer-rosika>> (retrieved 14 September 2011).

¹⁷ Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence was a member of the British United Suffragists, and the editor and owner (until mid-August 1914) of *Votes for Women!*, whereupon she became an active pacifist as well suffragist. See Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence, *My Part in a Changing World*, Victor Gollancz, London 1938.

pacifists experienced a more tolerant political environment. That is, according to the current sex/gender norm, women were perceived first of all as mothers (or mothers-in-waiting) and therefore peaceful “by nature”; they were assigned the “natural” roles of caregivers and non-combatants. According to Danish Judge Jesper Simonsen (1915, p. 3), for example, “a woman accepts the thought of peace spontaneously, because it is in harmony with something central in her nature. [...] It is therefore not by chance that *Down With Your Arms* has been written by a woman [Baroness Bertha von Suttner].” In the light of this norm, middle- and upper-class women could, with limited risk of imprisonment or expulsion, rally against the war, and thus by default take the lead in the peace movement. (Their more socialist-leaning sisters – e.g. Clara Zetkin, Rosa Luxemburg, Emma Goldman – on the other hand, actually experienced arrest, imprisonment and exile¹⁸).

These women’s actions were still closely watched by the police and thus restrained: for example, meeting agendas had to be coordinated with the police, who showed up to observe¹⁹; obtaining travel visas was most difficult; and their feminist newspapers or journals had to go through state censors. Lida Gustava Heymann (1868-1943), co-founder of the ICWPP/WILPF and the *Bayrischer Verein für Frauenstimmrecht* (Bavarian Society for Women’s Suffrage) was prevented from leaving Germany in December 1915 and briefly expelled in 1917 from residing in Munich (her close colleague Anita Augspurg, while similarly harassed by the police, was not however expelled²⁰); in late 1915, Anna Shabanova (1848-1932)²¹, the head of the Women’s Peace Society in Petrograd (*Russkaia liga mira*), by order of the police had to close it down²².

Two significant transnational women’s antiwar meetings took place in the spring of 1915²³. First, in March, socialists Zetkin, Luxemburg, Kollontai and another 22 women from France, Great Britain, Italy, Poland, Russia and

¹⁸ See, for example, Bruna Bianchi, *Negazione dei diritti civili, deportazione ed esilio negli scritti e nei discorsi pubblici di Emma Goldman (1917-1934)*, in “DEP. Deportate Esuli Profughe” , n. 8, 2008.

¹⁹ ÖStA (Austrian State Archives), AVA, Innenministerium, Präsidiale, Signatur 22, Box 2051 (1915), Protocol 11017 (Police report on feminist-pacifists Jane Addams, Aletta Jacobs, and Mien van Wulfften Palthe-Broese’s sojourn in Vienna, dated 26 May 1915); Protocol 11799 (Police report on the meeting in Vienna at a Women’s Club on 26 May 1915, reporting on The Hague Congress).

²⁰ Susanne Kinnebrock, *Anita Augspurg (1857-1943). Feministin und Pazifistin zwischen Journalismus und Politik. Eine kommunikationshistorische Biographie*, Centaurus, Herbolzheim 2005, pp. 388-389, 407-408, 412.

²¹ Anna Shabanova, born into a modest gentry family in province of Smolensk (in western Russia), was a practicing doctor. In 1895 she co-founded the most important pre-1905 Russian women’s organization, the Russian Women’s Mutual Philanthropy Society (*Rossiskoe zhenskoe vzaimnoblagozhitelnoe obshchestvo*) and remained its president until the mid 1920s.

²² *The Jane Addams Papers*, edited by Mary Lynn McCree Bryan, University Microfilms International, Ann Arbor 1984 (hereafter JAPM), reel 9, letter from Chrystal Macmillan to Jane Addams, dated 17 December 1915.

²³ A third, secret antiwar conference in Zimmerwald, Switzerland in September 1915 also took place, with one female participant, Henriette Roland-Holst of the Netherlands. (See Henriette Roland-Holst-van der Schalk. *Aus Sowjetrußland*, trans., Vienna 1924.)

Switzerland met in Berne and articulated their opposition to World War I in a peace resolution. Kollontai, reminiscing about her antimilitarist stance, wrote (quoted in *Peace/Mir* 1994, p. 123): “To me the war was an abomination, a madness, a crime, and from the first moment onwards – more out of impulse than reflection – I inwardly rejected it and could never reconcile myself with it up to this very moment.” Second, female pacifists and suffragists met in April in The Hague. Over 130 delegates gathered – including 43 U.S. Women’s Peace Party members – among over 1000 (mostly Dutch) participants. Representatives came from Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United States. The women in The Hague, as stated in their Congress report (1915, p. 34), “protested against the madness and horror of war, involving as it does a reckless sacrifice of human life,” and set out both to stop the war by continuous mediation for a just (thus permanent) peace settlement, which would include the direct input of women at the peace negotiations table, and to act politically, by officially meeting decision-makers of belligerent and neutral countries.

The socialist and the bourgeois anti-war activists were well aware of one another. Zetkin, for example, considered participating in The Hague Congress as well, but then changed her mind: According to her (quoted in Badia 1994, p. 144), the conference appeared to be “the work of good people but lousy political musicians”. Similarly, the early WILPF women were attentive – if at a distance – to the actions of the socialist women. In their newsletter (“News-Sheet”) of 1 October 1915, for example, they offered support to Zetkin, who had been imprisoned for distributing *their* Peace Manifesto.

Strikingly, no French or Serbian women, but three British women, and no representatives at all of the colored communities of the globe attended The Hague congress. The absence of Russian feminist-pacifists was also marked. Anna Shabanova, the most demonstrably pacifist among the Russian feminist leadership, had merely telegraphed greetings on behalf of Russian women pacifists²⁴. Why then did no Russians attend?

Early Signs of Russian Feminist Women’s Pacifist Sympathies

The early twentieth-century Russian women’s movement had its basis in the collective efforts of mid nineteenth-century individual upper-class women to seek higher education and employment. Indeed, nearly all the well-known Russian feminist pioneers were either educated in elite women’s colleges (such as the Smolny Institute²⁵) or in universities abroad, primarily Zurich (until 1873, when Tsar Alexander II forbade Russian women to study there). By the 1890s, educated

²⁴ Expressions of sympathy were also received from Argentina, “British India,” Bulgaria, Finland, France, Portugal, Romania, Switzerland and South Africa.

²⁵ Between 1764, when it opened, and 1864, an average of 70 women graduated annually from Smolny (Stites 1997, p. 4). By contrast, the new four-year private (and more middle-class) Bestuzhev Women’s Courses, begun in 1878, educated 99 women in its first year and over 900 thereafter (*ibid.*, p. 83).

and professional Russian women had organized charity organizations, largely for women (e.g. providing student stipends) and attended and reported on the large international women's movements' congresses – such as in Berlin (1896, 1904), Brussels (1897), London (1899) and Rome (1914). The conference themes that seemed to impress these Russian women most were women's equality and independence (in education and pay and, for some, women's suffrage) as well as temperance (anti-alcohol) campaigns²⁶.

Russian women, especially starting in 1899, the year of the First International Peace Conference at The Hague, initiated and presided over by Tsar Nicholas II and his foreign minister, also became interested in peace themes. In 1899, Anna Shabanova indeed founded a women's peace league²⁷. She attributed her inspiration to the transnational efforts and writings of British pacifist journalist William T. Stead (who had lobbied the Tsar personally in 1899), German pacifist-feminist leader Margarethe Leonora Selenka²⁸, and the founder of the Austrian-Hungarian Peace Society, Bertha von Suttner, whose 1889 antiwar novel *Die Waffen nieder! (Lay Down Your Arms! Doloj oruzhie)* was quickly translated into Russian and praised by Leo Tolstoy (to the extent that he expressed the hope that it would catalyze the peace movement the way Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* had sparked the anti-slavery movement)²⁹.

Shabanova's feminist colleague Anna Kal'manovich³⁰ was also inclined to the ideals of the peace movement. As she reported (Kal'manovich 1904, pp. 6-7), Suttner was one of the stars of the women's 1904 congress in Berlin. Another Russian feminist leader who sympathized with the anti-war cause was Maria Pokrovskaiia (1852-1922), who founded the Russian Women's Progressive Party in

²⁶ See, for example, E.A. Chebysheva-Dmitrieva, *Rol zhenshchin v borbe s alkogolizmom* (Women's role in the campaign against alcoholism), in: "Mir bozhii" (June 1897); Lidiia Davydova, *Na zhenskome mezhdunarodnom kongresse* (At the Women's international Congress) in "Mir bozhii" (July-August 1899). Daydova was most impressed with the German women's presence and abilities (as compared to the native English-speaking delegates).

²⁷ See a detailed report of the initial meeting in "Zhenskoe delo" (A woman's affair) 6 (1899), pp. 69-89. The Vice-chair of the Shabanova's League was Ms. F.M. Kaufman, and other officials included A.P. Filosofova, O.N. Eremeeva, M.M. Lebedkina, and O.A. Shapir. Support for the League came from many parts of Western Russia, and among those abroad who congratulated Shabanova for its founding were feminist-pacifists Anita Augspurg, Auguste Fickert and May Wright Sewall.

²⁸ See Ute Kätzel, *A Radical Women's Rights and Peace Activist: Margarethe Lenore Selenka, Initiator of the First Worldwide Women's Peace Demonstration in 1899*, in "Journal of Women's History", 13, n. 3 (Autumn 2001), pp. 46-69.

²⁹ See Laurie R. Cohen, *Aussteiger. Arthur und Bertha von Suttner's entscheidende Jahre im russischen Kaukasus, 1876-1885*, in „Gerade weil Sie eine Frau sind...“ *Erkundungen über Bertha von Suttner, die unbekannte Friedensnobelpreisträgerin*, edited by Laurie R. Cohen, Braumüller Verlag, Vienna 2005, pp. 15-54, here p. 47; Suttner's novel was reissued numerous times in Russia and several versions are still available in state libraries in Moscow and Petersburg.

³⁰ Anna Kal'manovich (dates unknown) was an active Jewish feminist in Saratov (thus outside Russia's so-called Jewish Pale of Settlement), founding member of the All-Russian Union for Women's Equality (*Vserosiskii soiuz ravnopraviiia zhenshchin*) and wife of the Jewish radical lawyer Samuil Eremeevich Kal'manovich, famous for his defense of revolutionaries. During the anti-Semitic pogroms in Saratov in October of 1905, she and her children fled to Finland (her husband fled to St. Petersburg).

1905. Her journal, "*Zhenskii vestnik*" (Women's messenger), according to Linda Edmonson (1984, p. 30), "like most of the international women's movement (and like much of the liberal and socialist intelligentsia in Russia and abroad till outbreak of WWI) was vigorously anti-militaristic and preached peace and harmony between nations"³¹. And M. Ostrovskaia (1914, pp. 11-14) spoke of the "horrible catastrophe" affecting all of Europe. But by late 1914 these attitudes appear to have changed. In its December's issue (reprinted in the 1 January 1915 issue of "*Jus Suffragii*"), for example, the "Women's messenger" had retreated to propagating women's support of the Russian war effort.

No documents have yet been located (to my knowledge) which convincingly explain the reasons for the absence of a Russian delegation to The Hague. What Shabanova actually wrote to the congress's Dutch organizers in April 1915 was that most women in Russia were very busy and thus simply could not leave their country³². Perhaps, but two other possible explanations might be considered: 1) Given the current militarist climate, they have been afraid to apply for passports (or were their passport applications were refused, as they were to most feminist-pacifist British women and to French Gabrielle Duchêne³³, a problem Russian women experienced in attempting to attend pre-war international conferences); 2) Russian feminist historian Rochelle Ruthchild (2010, p. 214) writes (without providing evidence) that the Russian feminists "shunned" the congress. That is, they were perhaps like some French suffragist-pacifists, who were opposed to meeting representatives of their nations' current "enemies," and whom French Nobel Peace Prize laureate Paul Henri Benjamin d'Etournelles de Constant (1909) applauded ("*Jus Suffragii*" 9, n. 12 [1 September 1915]):

You refused to go to The Hague to speak of peace while the war was raging in Belgium and the North of France. You considered that your place was not – any more than it was mine – to be present at a conference where it is inadmissible that the belligerents take part in theoretical discussions while their compatriots, their sons [...] are killing each other. [...] Your feminist point of view is the same as the French pacifist point of view. And feminism and pacifism are for us the same thing.

A third reason might be simply that the Russian women pacifists prioritized suffrage over unconditional non-violence. Indeed, neither of the two main public feminist manifestations in the revolutionary (and anti-war) year of 1917 celebrated "peace." On 23 February women marched to celebrate International Women's Day, and on 15 March over 40,000 women marched in Petrograd, led by rights activists Vera Figner (1852-1942)³⁴ and Poliksena Shishkina-Iavein (1875-1947)³⁵, to demand the vote.

³¹ Cf. "*Jus Suffragii*", 1 November 1914, with a text from Pokrovskaia: "It is you [women] who must lead humanity out of this vicious circle of brute force and destruction. To love peace and to hate oppression is inborn in you. 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' and 'Lay Down Your Arms' are two of the most perfect expressions of true womanly genius. Women alone will succeed in finally doing away with the evils of war and oppression."

³² WILPF, reel 82, Chabanoff (sic) to Madame, letter dated April 1915.

³³ See Carle 2004, p. 295.

³⁴ Vera Figner had been a medical student at Zurich University and member of a socialist women's study group there (*Fritschi*), before rejecting her studies to join the social revolutionary movement in

In any case, whereas directly after The Hague Congress numerous British, French and other pacifist feminists actively joined this new transnational women's peace project, Russian women, despite subsequent outreach, did not. What happened?

Wartime Attempts to Unite: Initiatives from the West and from Russia

In the course of a WILPF resolution passed in The Hague, whereby small transnational peace women delegations would travel to state capitals throughout Europe and hold official talks with prime and/or foreign ministers, a three days-and-nights rail journey to Petrograd in June 1915 was undertaken³⁶. The delegation of four included (American) Emily Greene Balch, (Scottish) Chrystal Macmillan, (Dutch) Cor Ramondt-Hirschman and (Swedish) Baroness Ellen Palmstierna. With the support of the U.S. and British Embassies³⁷, and of Shabanova and Shishkina-Iavein, the delegation managed to talk to Russian Foreign Minister Sergei D. Sazanov for about an hour. (Sazanov blamed Germany for having begun the war and lied about Russia having no interest in the Dardanelles.) The women also met with historian and liberal Constitutional Democrat Pavel Miliukov (1859-1943)³⁸, whose wife was women's rights activist Anna Miliukova (1861-1935)³⁹. The four WILPFers stayed in Russia a full two weeks, in the hope of an audience with the Tsar, who ultimately declined to meet them. Balch noted her general enthusiasm about her Petrograd visit to WILPF's international president Jane Addams: "Great

Russia. She became a member of the radical *Narodnaia volia* (People's will), some of whose members carried out political assassinations, including the one killing Tsar Alexander II (1881). In 1883 Figner was imprisoned and sentenced to death, but then this sentence was commuted to 20 years of solitary confinement. Released in 1904, she left Russia in 1907 and lived in exile until 1917. See *Five Sisters. Women against the Tsar*, edited and trans. by Barbara Alpern Engel and Clifford N. Rosenthal, Allen & Unwin, Boston 1975, pp. 3-58.

³⁵ Poliksena Shishkina-Iavein, who married one of her professors, Georgii Iulievich Iavein (1863-1920), became the first woman gynecologist in Russia and was chair of the League for Women's Equality (*Liga ravnopraviiia zhenshchin*, 1907) in 1910, which by 1915 had over 1,200 members (See Irina Yukina, *Poliksena Shishkina-Iavein*, in *A Biographical Dictionary of Women's Movements and Feminisms. Central, Eastern, and South Eastern Europe, 19th and 20th Centuries*, edited by Francisca de Haan, Krassimira Daskalova and Anna Loutfi, CEU Press, Budapest and New York 2006, pp. 510-513.)

³⁶ "Zhenskii vestnik" (Women's messenger), October 1915, p. 164; cf. Emily Greene Balch, *At the Northern Capitals*, in *Women at The Hague. The International Peace Congress of 1915*, edited by Jane Addams, Alice Hamilton and Emily Balch, with an introduction by Mary Jo Deegan, Humanity Books, New York 2003, pp. 93-98.

³⁷ Washington D.C. Women's Peace Party member Kate Barrett had met the Russian First Secretary in D.C. in January 1915, and he expressed appreciation and a willingness to cooperate (JAPM reel 8, Barrett to Addams, 29 January 1915); cf. WILPF, reel 82, Chabanov (sic) to Madame, 1 October 1915.

³⁸ Cf. Pavel Miliukov's essay of 1911 on arms limitation, in: *Peace/Mir* 1994, pp. 94-98.

³⁹ In April 1917, Anna Miliukova became the first president of the post-February Revolution Russian National Council of Women, followed by Shishkina-Iavein. After the Bolsheviks took power, Miliukova moved to London and chaired the Russian Red Cross Relief Committee.

deal more that is interesting that I should like to tell you, but I have not the time to write it, nor you to read it”⁴⁰.

The delegation appears to have left with an understanding that a Russian WILPF section would soon emerge. For instance, there are records of British feminist-pacifist Emily Hobhouse (1860-1926), who initially worked at WILPF’s Amsterdam headquarters, communicating and encouraging Russian women’s participation. And in October 1915, Anna Shabanova (quoted in Ruthchild 2010, p. 215) published her regret that the war had destroyed the feeling of an international sisterhood, a “peaceful, united sphere (where) women of different nationalities considered themselves sisters, ideological comrades, inspired by one idea about the welfare of all women throughout the world”. Hobhouse pressed Shabanova to inform Amsterdam, for example, which Russian women had been chosen to “represent your country on our International Committee”⁴¹. Shabanova finally responded on 21 November 1915: “It is prohibited [in Russia] to deliberate on questions of peace, since all our efforts must be geared towards defeating our enemies and relieving our wounded. [...] Thus I am currently unable to enlist members for your Committee”⁴².

Yet this did not put a stop to wartime correspondence. Shabanova, for example, wrote to Aletta Jacobs about a Russian colleague in Amsterdam, Sophie Evdokimoff, who might serve as a go-between associate. Chrystal Macmillan’s attempts to contact Evdokimoff, however, failed (Evdokimoff appears in the meantime to have moved to Geneva)⁴³. And in May 1916, Anna Kal’manovich thanked Balch for having received the 1915 Congress report, explaining that “it is a great relief in these sad times to read such a humane text, which offers hope for future fraternity, and especially, sisterhood”⁴⁴. (A subsequent letter from Kal’manovich to Jacobs in mid July 1916 reports on the difficulty of getting communications through the censorship⁴⁵.) That Kal’manovich was one of the most likely Russian feminist pacifists to maintain this stance during the war reflects perhaps her greater ability to distance herself from Russian nationalism. Already in December 1908, during the First All-Russian Women’s Congress, she proclaimed (quoted in Ruthchild 2010, p. 124), “There are patriots for the fatherland, I am a patriot for women”.

Curiously, it was not after 21 March 1917, when a Russian delegation of women had successfully petitioned the Provisional Government’s Prince L’vov for women’s suffrage (Kal’manovich was one of their speakers), but rather on 17 June 1917, in honor of the first meeting of the First All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Soldiers’ and Workers’ Deputies that the WILPF international leadership sent an official letter (each) to Kal’manovich, Shabanova, and Shishkina-Iavein:

⁴⁰ JAPM, reel 8, letter dated 3 July 1915.

⁴¹ WILPF, reel 82 [n.d.]

⁴² *Ibid.*, Shabanova to Hobhouse, 21 November 1915 (transl. from the French).

⁴³ *Ibid.*, (letters dated 21 November and 15 December 1915).

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, Kal’manovich, Petrograd to (Balch?), dated 30 April /13 May 1916 (in French).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, Kal’manovich to Jacobs, 12/25 July 1916.

We sincerely hope that the women of Russia now are free to form a national branch of (WILPF) because we strongly feel it a lack in our international work that our clever energetic sisters in Russia are not yet named amongst the progressive-minded women of the world⁴⁶.

No response is recorded. Yet as serious planning got underway for a follow-up March 1918 (in Berne) Women's Peace Congress, Shishkina-Iavein was included on the draft program of speakers⁴⁷. Due however to the continuation of the war and visa complications for those involved, this congress had to be postponed. A much smaller group of women met, without the participation of any Russians (or Americans), from 15 to 19 April. New York WILPF member, lawyer and journalist Madeleine Zabrisky Doty, who had just visited Russia, was one of the Americans pushing for Russian participation at the next congress⁴⁸. And yet, when the second official WILPF congress finally did take place, in Zurich in May 1919, it did so without Russian representation.

Still, Russian feminist pacifists were *symbolically* present. Balch, who in late 1919 became the first Secretary-General of the Geneva International WILPF Headquarters, proudly chose to exhibit three photos in her office: of Jane Addams, WILPF's international president; Jeanette Rankin⁴⁹; and a group photo of WILPF's visit with Shishkina-Iavein in June 1915⁵⁰. But WILPF's international leadership had to strike a fine balance between somewhat pro-Soviet and decidedly anti-Soviet sentiments within their nation-state rank-and-file; Swedish members, for example, who were involved in Russian refugee support, lodged a protest against Soviet Russia's inclusion⁵¹.

Postwar Attempts to Establish a Russian Section, 1920-1924

WILPF's international leadership continued to pursue their interest in engaging Soviet women pacifists and/or creating a Soviet WILPF section. Analogous pro and anti sentiments towards the West were found on the Soviet side as well. What follows are the several examples I found relating to these ventures.

My first example is a March 1920 initiative, conceived by Lida Gustava Heymann, who proposed to the International Executive Committee that WILPF send a three-person "Commission on Enquiry to Russia and Ukraine"⁵². Yella

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, The same letter was also sent to one Marie de Wachtine, whom I have been unable to identify.

⁴⁷ JAPM, reel 11, Edith Phelps to Jane Addams, letter dated 20 March 1918, with the proposed program.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, Letter to Jane Addams, 1 December 1918. Doty was a founding WILPF member and its third international General Secretary (1924-26) as well as long-term editor of WILPF's journal "Pax International."

⁴⁹ Rankin was the first American woman elected to the House of Representatives and had voted in April 1917 against the U.S. joining the war effort.

⁵⁰ JAPM, reel 12, Balch to Addams, 30 September 1919. Balch also mentions a young "charming" Russian woman was on her newsletter staff.

⁵¹ WILPF, reel 1, November 1919 exchange of communication between the Swedish branch and Emily Greene Balch.

⁵² JAPM, reel 12, Balch to Addams, 25 March 1920.

Hertzka of Vienna, along with six others, supported the proposal⁵³. But London WILPF leader Helena Swanick opposed, listing other “firsthand reports,” such that “we really have a good deal of evidence upon which to form an opinion”⁵⁴. Curiously, each of the four reports Swanick referred to were written by men (and thus may indicate the limitations of some individual’s “female solidarity” vis-à-vis “the Russian question”; Swanick also ignored pacifist Helen Crawford’s travel to Moscow in 1920 and her reporting thereof⁵⁵). International WILPF President Jane Addams was “inclined to say amen to Mrs. Swanick’s [position]”⁵⁶, and Heymann’s proposal did not carry. Thus no commission, which may well have sought to solidify feminist links to the peace movement, was set up.

One month later, Anna Kal’manovich got back in touch with WILPF, having found refuge in Finland. She explained she was “a pacifist always working for peace and freedom” and could she not obtain a copy of WILPF’s 1919 Congress Report?⁵⁷ Emily Balch responded positively, writing that “it is always particularly pleasant to be in touch with friends from a distance and not at least from Russia”⁵⁸. That, however, appears to be the last communication between WILPF and Anna Kal’manovich. According to Ruthchild (2010, p. 251), a pamphlet by her husband published in Moscow in 1927 “refers to her as deceased”.

Raisa Lomonosova, Jane Addams and Aleksandra Kollontai

A more active series of attempts began in 1921 and lasted four years, coordinated by a new intermediary between Soviet Russian peace women and WILPF: the educated cosmopolitan Raisa Lomonosova (1888-1973). In 1918, after having lived close to a year in New York with her husband, Iurii Lomonosov (1876-1952), a Russian diplomatic attaché, the couple visited Jane Addams at her Chicago Hull-House settlement. There, Lomonosova ended up making lasting friendships, including with some American WILPF members⁵⁹. In fall 1919 the couple returned to Soviet Russia. Iurij Lomonosov was first appointed Chair of the Committee of Public Works (Komgosor) and then chair to the Presidium of the

⁵³ *Ibid.*, Hertzka to Balch, 26 March 1920. Hertzka by this time had become very involved in actions that would encourage Soviet Russia to more quickly return Austrian POWs.

⁵⁴ WILPF, reel 1, Swanick to Balch, 3 April 1920.

⁵⁵ See Jill Liddington, *The long road to Greenham: Feminism and anti-militarism in Britain since 1820*, Virago, London 1989, p. 131.

⁵⁶ JAPM, reel 12, Addams to Balch, 30 April 1920.

⁵⁷ WILPF, reel 82. Kal’manovich to Balch, 14 April 1920. She also promised to make a financial contribution as soon as she sorted out her financial problems.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, Balch to Kal’manovich, undated. Balch also at this time relayed names of Finnish WILPF members.

⁵⁹ University of Leeds, Leeds Russian Archive, George V Lomonosoff, Raissa N Lomonosoff, George Lomonosoff Collections (hereafter Lomonosova Papers) for Raisa Lomonosova’s correspondence (1918-1950), for example, with Jane Addams, with New York’s Henry Street Settlement founder and pacifist Lillian Wald, with socialist-leaning antimilitarist Caroline Urie, and with Hull-House supporter and pacifist Esther Loeb Kohn.

All-Union Council of the National Economy (VSNKh). As a result of his job, the couple often resided in Germany during these years, until 1927, when they both immigrated to England (Raisa Lomonosova became a British citizen in 1938)⁶⁰.

Lomonosova's political interests and experiences in Russia, the United States and Europe provided her with a unique perspective on how to present Soviet Russian cooperation to the transnational women's peace movement and vice versa. Furthermore the American leadership knew and trusted her. Then, in 1921, Lomonosova, living in Germany, joined WILPF⁶¹. Once it was settled that the 3rd WILPF Congress should be in Vienna, Austria, that year, Jane Addams and others who planned to attend encouraged Lomonosova to meet them at the congress, or afterwards, at WILPF's summer school in Salzburg⁶². But Lomonosova, in Carlsbad, declined because of (unexplained) health reasons⁶³. However, she invited them to accompany *her* to Soviet Russia, for a two-three week visit after their stay in Salzburg. Jane Addams, however, refused:

Alice Hamilton and I were quite desolated that your letter came so late that it made the Russian journey impossible for us. I think there is nothing in all the world that I would rather do at this moment and I shall always regret that it was impossible to make it⁶⁴.

Thus Addams refused because of the late timing, a reason that will often be used. Encouragement towards Russian feminist pacifists to join WILPF continued, in the framework of the International Labour Organisation's World Peace Congress at The Hague in December 1922. The idea behind the congress was to promote a renegotiation of the World War I Peace Treaties and the League of Nations. WILPF members excitedly organized their own full-day session entitled "A New Peace". Their leaflet stated:

The peace treaties have failed. They were based on Greed and Revenge. It is this basis that must be changed. We need a new Peace. Many women all over the world have felt this very deeply. They have waited and suffered. Now they have to decide to Confer and speak out⁶⁵.

They hoped to reach out particularly to citizens of Russia, Poland and the Baltic States. Raisa Lomonosova was asked to organize a Russian feminist delegation. Jane Addams wrote to her personally:

I hope very much you can come to our meeting at The Hague on 7th December. We are most anxious indeed to have Russia represented and if you could bring or send a delegation of Russian women I should feel enormously indebted to you. The women are all most distressed

⁶⁰ For more background on Raisa Lomonosova, see Hugh A. Aplin, *Catalogue of the G V Lomonosoff, R N Lomonosoff and George Lomonosoff Collections*, Leeds University Press, Leeds 1988, pp. xxi-xxvi.

⁶¹ Georg Lomonosoff was also supportive of peace initiatives. See his letter to Emily Greene Balch dated 15 February 1921, wherein he explains that "the Soviet Government is continuously repeating that Russia wants to live in peace with the rest of the world" (WILPF, reel 82).

⁶² Lomonosova Papers, Dr. Alice Hamilton to Lomonosova of 27 October 1920; 20 July 1921.

⁶³ JAPM, reel 13, Lomonosova to Hamilton, 23 July 1921.

⁶⁴ Lomonosova Papers, Addams to Lomonosova, July 1921.

⁶⁵ Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Fannie Andrew Papers, Folder 366: Notices, Bulletins, 1919-1924 (orthography as in the original).

that Russia has never been represented at our Congresses (1915, 1919, 1921) and just now it seems most important⁶⁶.

But Lomonosova neither organized a delegation nor attended. She sent a telegram to Addams explaining that the November letter arrived on 1 December, and that although she had “wired Moscow immediately for permission (to) attend conference”⁶⁷, that permission apparently never came. Two other Soviet women – Aleksandra Kollontai and Sophia Smidovich⁶⁸ – did attend the Congress, but only after the feminist portion of it had finished. (The Soviet delegation proposed an international 24-hour general strike in case war was declared, but this was rejected in favor of a general resolution condemning war.)

As Addams later reported to WILPF’s International Executive Committee, “we tried very hard to have them [Soviet Russian women] come to The Hague and everything went wrong, partly from their side. I think that they suspected us of being bourgeoisie”⁶⁹.

The Fourth WILPF Congress (1924)

Upon becoming aware in November 1923 of the decision to hold the 4th WILPF congress in May 1924 in Washington, D.C., Lomonosova immediately wrote Addams in order to re-initiate US-Soviet Russian feminist-pacifist relations, which she stressed, were based on her fear of a new European war. Having Russian pacifist women is important, because

We [Russians] are still not affiliated with the WILPF and many of us are rather suspicious of bourgeois meetings. Europe is again on the eve of big wars and we all have to unite, no matter how we differ in our opinions on politics, economics, religion, etc. to lessen the peril of utter destruction of this planet of ours, or being more exact humanity and its labour⁷⁰.

About the same time, Lomonosova wrote to Olga Davidovna Kameneva (1881-1941), wife of Politburo member Lev Kamenev and sister of Leon Trotsky. Kameneva headed VOKS (*Vsesoiuznoe Obshchestvo Kul’turnoi Sviazi s Zagranitseii*/All-Union Society for Cultural Ties Abroad). For over a year, she had been in touch with Lomonosova about her professional interest in “tell[ing] people the truth about Russia”⁷¹.

Lomonosova now asked Kameneva for material and organizational assistance in sending Soviet women to the Washington Congress. She did not argue, as she had to Addams, that they should go in order to prevent a new European war. Rather, according to Lomonosova, Soviet women’s presence could “influence the U.S.

⁶⁶ Lomonosova Papers, letter dated November 16, 1922.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, n.d.

⁶⁸ A long-time Bolshevik in Moscow, Sofia Smidovich was head of the Soviet Central Committee’s Central Women’s Department (*Zhenotdel*) from 1922 to 1924. While a feminist, I have found nothing that would suggest Smidovich was also a pacifist.

⁶⁹ JAPM, reel 16. Addams to Woods, 9 January 1924.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, Lomonosova to Addams, 30 November 1923.

⁷¹ Lomonosova Papers, Kameneva to Lomonosova of 9 April 1922, 8 August 1922 and 6 December 1922.

elections in November 1924. [...] WILPF delegates know [President] Harding”⁷². Lomonosova suggested Aleksandra Kollontai as most able and willing to represent the Soviet Union. Indeed, Kollontai was already familiar to American feminists and feminist-pacifists⁷³.

On 23 November 1923, Lomonosova wrote to Kollontai, encouraging her to attend the conference. Her reason, however, differed both from the one she gave Addams and the one she gave Kameneva. She told Kollontai that *feminism* needed her support: “Your presence there would have special significance – as the first woman ambassador. [...] American women are interested and proud of every gain the feministic (sic) movement of the world achieves”⁷⁴.

In January 1924, Addams wrote to Lomonosova about the Washington Congress and specifically promoted Kollontai’s participation:

I met Madam Kollontai in Norway and was able to tell her of our great disappointment that she did not get to The Hague until after our Congress was over. I admire her very much and would be delighted if she or any of the other Russian women who are Pacifists could come as representing a new Russian section⁷⁵.

And she added: “I am afraid (however) that it is impossible for us to get visas for anyone who is a communist. The Immigration law is quite definite, as you know, in regards to that”. In February, Kollontai finally responded to *tovarish* (comrade) Lomonosova, thanking her for the information on the “women’s passifistic (sic) congress” and agreeing that it would be “politically good to attend”⁷⁶.

Based on this response alone, it would appear that Kollontai had little knowledge of and hardly profound interest in the women’s peace movement. But when Lomonosova relayed to Addams Kollontai’s response, she wrote:

I just received a letter from Mrs. Kollontay [sic] telling that it will not be difficult to organize a Russian section because Russian women are mostly anti-militaristic. We have suffered too much from war and we need all our energy for peaceful reconstruction work. [...] Mrs. Kollontay asked me to send you her best greetings and wishes for the wonderful work you are accomplishing for the peace of humanity⁷⁷.

As to possible visa problems, Lomonosova assured Addams that several prominent communists had visited the United States in 1923 without difficulties.

⁷² Lomonosova Papers, Lomonosova to Kameneva, 17 November 1923. In 1929 Kameneva was relieved of her position and arrested in 1935. She was subsequently sent to Gorki’ (exile) and then rearrested in 1937 and executed on September 11, 1941. Her two sons by Lev Kamenev were executed in 1938 and 1939 respectively. On VOKS, see among others: Michael David-Fox, *From Illusory ‘Society’ to Intellectual ‘Public’: VOKS, International Travel and Party: Intelligentsia Relations in the Interwar Period*, in “Contemporary European History” 11 n. 1 (2002), pp. 7-32.

⁷³ See first hand account of Louise Bryant, *Six Months in Russia. An Observer’s Account of Russia Before and During the Proletarian Dictatorship*, Philadelphia 1918; Bessie Beatty, *The Red Heart of Russia*, The Century Co., New York 1918; and Doty 1918; cf. Raissa Lomonosova, *Women in Soviet Russia*, in “Life and Labor” (October 1919), pp. 247-50.

⁷⁴ Lomonosova Papers, Lomonosova to Kollontai, 23 November 1923.

⁷⁵ JAPM, reel 16. Addams to Lomonosova, 9 January 1924.

⁷⁶ Lomonosova Papers, Kollontai to Lomonosova, 8 February 1924.

⁷⁷ JAPM, reel 16, Lomonosoff to Addams, 15 February 1924.

Finally, returning to her initial fear of a new war, Lomonosova added: “There will be no peace in Europe and Asia until Russia and Germany are treated in a fair and friendly spirit.” Addams responded positively to Lomonosova’s letter, expressing her pleasure at the idea of a “Russian branch” headed by Kollontai⁷⁸.

But as the Congress approached, Kollontai unexpectedly telegraphed Lomonosova that she would be unable to attend. She suggested that perhaps “two delegates from the women’s section of the Russian Trade Unions could come”⁷⁹. Not surprisingly, the WILPF Executive Committee had concerns whether such women were pacifists in the organization’s sense. Thus they sent a telegram saying that the timing was too late, “although every one agrees on the importance of securing cooperation with Russian pacifists”⁸⁰. And so the fourth WILPF Congress also passed without any Russian participation.

Bypassed in this written record, however, is the U.S. national scene and the District-of-Columbia’s anti-communist climate in 1924. That is, as word leaked about the mere *possibility* of Soviet Russian attendance, Congress presented a resolution to investigate the status of “WILPF on the charge that it may be connected with Soviet Russia”⁸¹. WILPF was put on the defensive, as can be observed in Balch’s defensive statement to a D.C. WILPF member – the same Balch who earlier had so favored Russian participation in WILPF:

As to our being Russian tools, etc., nothing could be madder. We have no Russian Section, no Russian membership, no Russian connection. There was one lady who lived a long while in this country who became an associate member while living in Switzerland later. I know of no single other Russian in our lists⁸².

U.S. media slanders against WILPF’s US section as being a “Bolshevist” organization continued through the year, straining the effectiveness of their actions.

European WILPF Executives and Soviet Russia, 1925-1927

In contrast to their US counterparts who were constantly on the “Red scare” defensive, some European WILPF leadership had more regional and/or national leeway in advocating for a Soviet Russian section. In March 1925, for example, Yella Hertzka, an Austrian International Executive member, suggested that the next WILPF congress should be held in Moscow. She argued firmly that “there is nothing more important than the establishment of a relationship with Russia”⁸³. And added: “I’m sure the idea will seem somewhat crazy (*etwas verrückt*), but so was my suggestion previously of having it in the United States, a thought which soon appeared quite natural”. Hertzka was surely backed by her German WILPF colleague Helene Stöcker, who in June 1923 had established a German Society of

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, Addams to Lomonosoff, 5 March 1924; cf. *ibid.*, Amy Woods to Lomonosoff, 7 March 1924.

⁷⁹ Lomonosova Papers, Kollontai to Lomonosova, 23 April 1924.

⁸⁰ JAPM reel 44. Minutes of Executive Committee, April 25-29, May 8, 1924.

⁸¹ JAPM reel 16, Carrie Chapman Catt to Addams, 27 May 1924.

⁸² *Ibid.*, Balch to Alice Lloyd, 15 (?) May 1924. It is clear who Balch referred to.

⁸³ WILPF reel 55, Hertzka to Vilma Glücklich, 6 March 1925.

Friends of New Russia (*Gesellschaft der Freunde des neuen Russland*)⁸⁴. But the 1926 WILPF Congress was held instead in Dublin.

A year later there was a suggestion at the Executive meeting in Liège to approach the Russian Tolstoyans as well as women from various Soviet Union republics: “We cannot any longer do without cooperation with these splendid women in our WIL. We cooperate with women in Greece, Bulgaria, and Finland, even though they are not what we call thorough pacifists”⁸⁵. No action appears to have been taken, however.

Conclusion: Nationalist and Militarist Proclivities Despite Themselves

As I hope to have shown in this quick survey, attempts by transnational peace women – whether Russian, American or European – to include Russian and Soviet Russian pacifists in WILPF were made, but failed for three main reasons:

1) *Nationalism and internationalism*: The European and American peace women I found who were most interested in reaching out to Russian women were convinced transnationalists. But during World War I, it appeared impossible for Russian women, physically and mentally, to overcome nation-centric tendencies and to join a transnational feminist pacifist movement; after the War, “red scares” in the West and “capitalist war scares” in the East contributed to the polarizing atmosphere. Peace activist Russians had to obtain permission from the Kremlin to attend conferences abroad, and the U.S. government could prohibit “communists” from entering. Likewise, all visitors to Russia, as VOKS documents demonstrate, were monitored⁸⁶. Effective international relations among WILPF supporters were extremely difficult.

2) *Ideology and exile*: Due to the dislocations of the world war and then civil wars, the “bourgeois” Russian feminist pacifist leadership for the most part either left their homeland forever or remained there without demonstrably being able (or willing) to take up peace activism. Without Shabanova, Shishkina-Iavein, and Kal’manovich, the fragile 1915 women’s peace movement appears to have disappeared, and only Kollontai (and to a lesser extent, the eventually in-exile-living Raisa Lomonosova) somehow succeeded as the next or new Soviet generation.

Furthermore, the women in the East and West were unable to overcome an ideologically imposed *distrust* (socialist vs. bourgeois or capitalist), which extended well beyond the short-term animosity expressed by many American women, for example, towards German women after 1918 (such as the hate mail Jane Addams received for publishing an appeal for aid by German women

⁸⁴ Cf. Helene Stöcker. *Als Antimilitaristin in Russland*, in „Die Neue Generation“ Berlin 10 n. 11 (1923), p. 197, and Helene Stöcker, *Zum 10.Jahrestag der russischen Sowjetrepubliken*, in “Das Neue Russland”, 4, n. 9-10 (1927), pp. 28-29.

⁸⁵ JAPM, reel 44, Executive meeting at Liège, March 12-18, 1927.

⁸⁶ See Matthias Heeke, *Reisen zu den Sowjets. Der ausländische Tourismus im Rußland, 1921-1941* (Travel to the Soviets. Foreign Tourism in Russia), LIT, Münster 2003.

following the end of the war⁸⁷). Kollontai and other feminist Marxist internationalists who remained active, were suspicious, if not hostile towards American and European “bourgeois” feminists and their “passiv-ism,” just as a large part of the rank-and-file American WILPF members were suspicious if not hostile towards anything deemed “Bolshevik”. The main postwar issues that engaged Western feminist-pacifists immediately after the war vis-à-vis Russia were the liberation of German and Austrian-Hungarian POWs, especially in Siberia, and famine relief (e.g. Save the Children Fund). This type of “relief work” was quickly abandoned by WILPF⁸⁸. Active interwar European WILPF members may have been more sympathetic to the fledgling Soviet state, but they were too weak to overcome respective “East” and “West” resistance.

3) *Principle of non-violence*: Leading (Soviet) Russian feminists as a consequence perhaps of wars and revolutions in their country were apparently unwilling to, if not uninterested in committing to the unconditional non-violent principle supported by the vast majority of WILPF members. The Russian peace movement, aside from Anna Shabanova’s little known League, mainly comprised (male) Tolstoyans.

Finally, it is simply *difficult to find historical documentation* on (Soviet) Russian women peace activists in this period. I continue to imagine that a group or groups existed, still waiting to be discovered.

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⁸⁷ JAPM, reel 11, Women’s Committee, Council of National Defence to Addams, 15 November 1918.

⁸⁸ See WILPF Swedish Executive Board member Naima Sahlborn’s letter to Raisa Lomonosova asking her for her help in relief work (Lomonosova Papers, letter dated 19 October 1921); cf. JAPM, reel 12, with a famine appeal to Jane Addams from Raisa Lomonosova’s husband in Moscow on behalf of the “Russian intelligentsia to the American people,” letter dated 20 March 1920.

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