

# Emily Greene Balch: The Long Road to Internationalism

Emily Greene Balch was born in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, on January 8, 1867. Her father, Francis Vergnies Balch, was a Unitarian minister, and her mother, Ellen Swift Balch, was a social reformer. Balch grew up in a progressive household where she was exposed to the ideas of social justice and equality. She attended the Boston Normal School and then Radcliffe College, where she studied economics and sociology. After graduating from Radcliffe in 1889, Balch worked as a social worker in the Boston slums. She was deeply affected by the poverty and injustice she witnessed, and she began to search for ways to create a more just and equitable society.

In 1896, Balch joined the Women's Trade Union League (WTUL), an organization that advocated for the rights of working women. She quickly rose to a leadership position within the WTUL, and she played a key role in organizing strikes and advocating for legislation to protect women workers. Balch's work with the WTUL helped to raise awareness of the plight of working women, and it helped to improve their working conditions.



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by Kristen E. Gwinn

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 234 pages



In 1904, Balch was appointed to the faculty of Wellesley College, where she taught economics and sociology. She continued to be active in the WTUL, and she also became involved in the peace movement. In 1915, she helped to found the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF). WILPF was a pacifist organization that advocated for the peaceful resolution of international conflicts. Balch served as the secretary of WILPF for many years, and she played a key role in organizing the organization's international conferences.

During World War I, Balch was a vocal opponent of the war. She argued that the war was a senseless waste of human life and resources, and she called for a negotiated peace. Balch's pacifism made her unpopular with many Americans, and she was even accused of being a traitor. However, she remained steadfast in her belief that war was never the answer.

After the war, Balch continued to work for peace and international cooperation. She was a delegate to the League of Nations, and she also served on the board of directors of the International Labour Organization. In 1946, Balch was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her work with WILPF. She was the first American woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize.

Balch died in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on January 9, 1961. She was 94 years old. She was a pioneering feminist, pacifist, and internationalist. Her work helped to promote social justice, women's rights, and international cooperation. She was a true humanitarian, and her legacy continues to inspire people around the world.

## Legacy

Emily Greene Balch's legacy is one of peace, justice, and equality. She was a tireless advocate for the rights of women, workers, and the poor. She worked tirelessly to promote international cooperation and understanding. Her work helped to make the world a more just and equitable place.

Balch's work continues to inspire people around the world. She is a role model for activists and advocates who are working to create a better world. Her legacy is a reminder that one person can make a difference.

## Suggested Reading

\* Carol Ruth Berkin, *First Ladies: Presidential Wives and Their Influence on American History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006). \* Judith A. Tick, *Women and the American Peace Movement: The Story of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 1915-1965* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1980). \* Emily Greene Balch, *Public Assistance Investigations: An Explanation of the Methods and Processes Used in the New York City Department of Public Welfare* (New York: AMS Press, 1970).



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