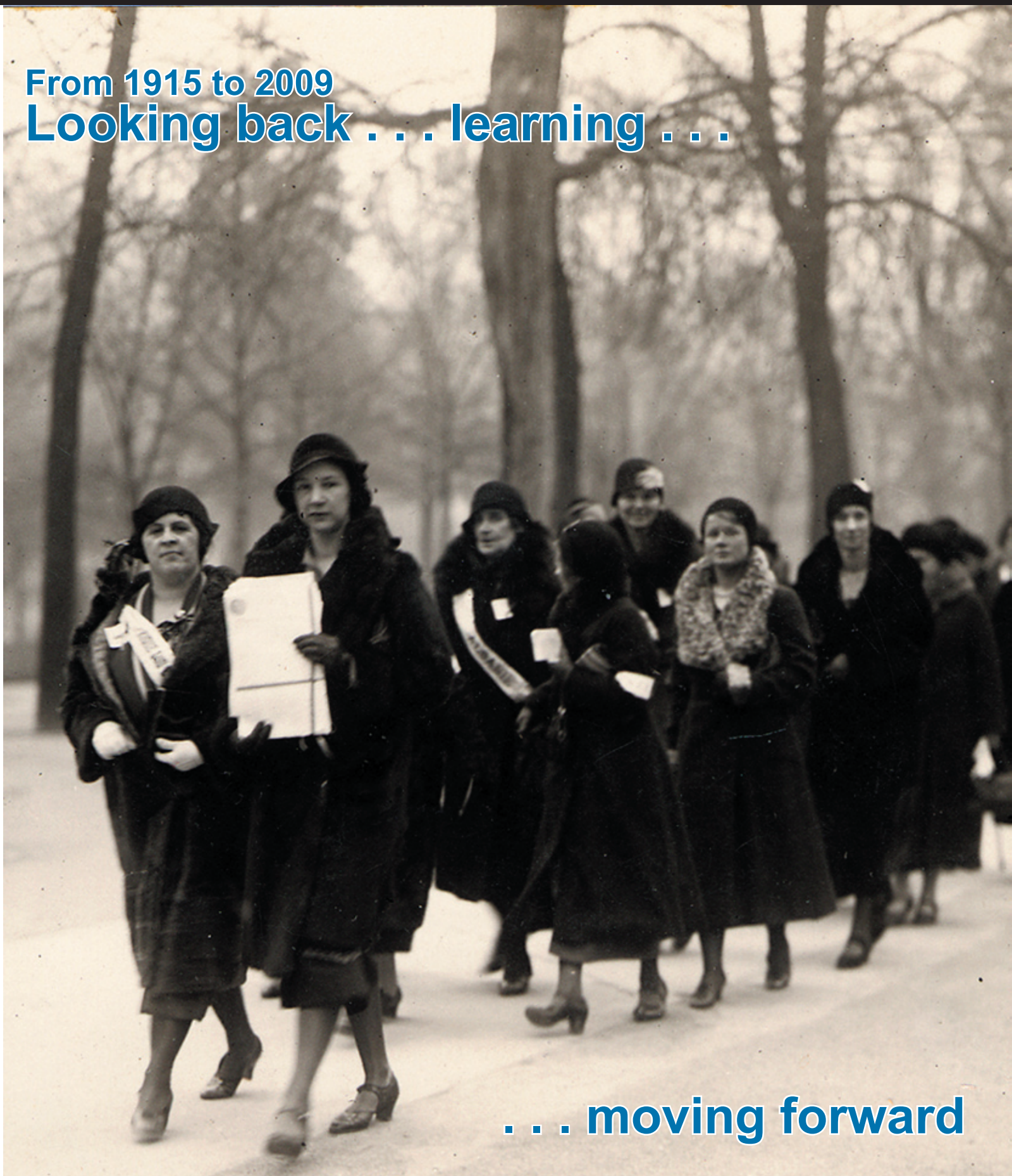




International Peace Update

Women's International League
for Peace and Freedom

From 1915 to 2009
Looking back . . . learning . . .



. . . moving forward

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Cover photo:

Records of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom,
Swarthmore College Peace Collection

WILPF – moving towards the future

Susi Snyder, Secretary General

The history of WILPF gives us a significant and profound platform from which we can leap to the future. We continue to recognize the inextricable link between justice, equality and security. We continue to hold our unique place in the world by bringing analyses to advocacy and highlighting the interconnectivity of our planet.

Our work focuses on addressing the perceptions of threat and challenging the use of resources so that we can create the conditions for a world where conflict can exist without force or the threat of force. WILPF continues to call for a world where war is unthinkable and security is not through militarized means.

WILPF raised the issue of collective non militarized security at the demonstrations against NATO (p. 6), we highlighted the need to address one of the root causes of armed conflict at the Durban Review Conference (p. 8), we also recognised that unfettered resource extraction inevitably leads to war – and emphasise the role women must play to bring that to an end (p.14). Since 1922 we continue to work for an end to the military and economic conflicts in the Middle East (pp. 7, 12-13).

Preparations are already underway for WILPF's 100th anniversary, as a way to connect and

revitalise WILPF. Our 100th anniversary, 28 April 2015, will be commemorated in the Hague, where the first meeting of the organisation that became WILPF took place. At the last international board meeting, each board member (one from each section) agreed to develop a work plan to bring us to that 100th anniversary

This is an excellent project for members to get involved in as the work plans will be presented at the next International Board meeting (January 2010). The secretariat, to promote local events highlighting WILPF's anniversary, developed and circulated to each section an exhibition of WILPF's history. As an organisation that has worked tirelessly for almost a century, we must now look ahead and see what WILPF will be after 100.

The world needs WILPF now more than ever, and WILPF needs its members to help build towards our 100th anniversary. Only by working together, with each member reaching out to engage new members, will we be able to succeed and achieve our vision.

It is only through our collective efforts that WILPF has survived this long; it is up to all of us to bring WILPF into the future and to realise the vision of our foremothers. We are few in number, but those few are powerful; if we become many we will be unstoppable.



Looking back, learning



WILPF takes petition with 6 million signatures to disarmament conference in Geneva in 1932.

Records of WILPF, Swarthmore College Peace Collection

WILPF had its birth in the April 1915 congress in the Hague that brought together more than 1,200 women to protest and stop the war in Europe and seek ways to build real and lasting peace and true freedom. We have learned that to achieve these aims we have to work for establishing a world economic and social order that is based on fulfilling the needs of the community and not on exploitation and private profit. It requires constant analysis, steadfastness and perseverance. Edith Ballantyne

From her vantage point of 23 years as secretary general and six years as international president, Edith Ballantyne distills this 'lesson learned' in the lead up to our 100th anniversary. She goes on to comment: 'What I find interesting is that in 1934, as the economic crisis deepened, WILPF recognized in its Constitution the need to work for a different economic and social order. It dropped reference to that as the cold war heightened but then re-introduced a softer version in 1982, I think today most WILPF members know that to get toward a lasting peace and real freedom the present world order has to be transformed. The question is how.' ►

Out of war, actions for peace: stories from Britain, Germany

See www.wilpf.int.ch/history/exhibition/EXHIBITION-final-web.htm for more on our 94-year history

At the start of the First World War, at a time of huge mobilisation and militarisation of civil society across Europe, there came together a group of women who questioned the decisions of male politicians to declare war. Despite the patriotic fervour and accusations of 'anti-nationalism' from the press, five British women travelled to Holland in February 1915 to meet with women from Holland, Belgium and Germany to make plans for an international meeting of women with



Chrystal Macmillan

two guiding principles: that international disputes should be settled by pacific means and that the parliamentary franchise should be extended to women. Chrystal Macmillan of Edinburgh returned to The Hague to assist the Dutch organisers and served as international secretary. At the end of April, most British women were unable to reach the Congress because the seas around Britain had been declared an active war zone by Germany and Great Britain. However British women met in London and sent messages of support to all the courageous women who had reached The Hague

from 12 countries. By September 1915, 157 women from England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales formed a committee to support the work of the International Committee. The First Yearly Report of the British Section gives details of the huge amount of work undertaken by committees, of publications, of weekly study meetings, of public events, conferences and debates as the membership grew to 2,458 women in 34 branches by October 1916.

Helen Kay

Having become redundant, the Association of Women's Right to Vote merged with the National Women's Committee for Lasting Peace in 1919 and became the German Section of WILPF. Groups were established in more than 80 cities, with some 2,000 members.

Anita Augsburg, the president, and Lida Heymann began publishing a monthly magazine, *Die Frau im Staat*, which documented



Anita Augsburg and Lida Heymann

the work of the groups including political lobbying efforts and ran essays on women's issues and proposals for peaceful conflict solutions. Heymann and Augsburg published the magazine for 15 years despite financial struggles until it was prohibited by the National Democrats in 1933. Gertrud Baer, appointed executive secretary in 1921, went on to play a crucial role in international WILPF.

Irmgard Heilberger

... moving forward

► After 100 years of struggling for life, the women's peace movement through numerous UN conferences has created a new formula for peaceful co-existence and conflict handling which has become generally accepted. CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for action, UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 and so on. All these resolutions and documents are talking about how to reach security, justice and sustainable peace, and they are now available and could be used by responsible politicians – women as well as men. But the implementation seems to take an unacceptably long time.

The challenge for WILPF in moving forward is to change the minds and hearts of all these – especially the powerful who still think that weapons, also weapons of mass destruction, are means to solve conflicts, who still think that the North can survive by exploiting the South, that the rich have the right to survive on the shoulders of the poor, that it is not a problem that women are carrying the main burden of poverty, who still think that there are next to no limits for exploiting the planet.

Aletta Jacobs said in her opening address in The Hague in 1915, 'Those of us who have convened this Congress ... have never called it a Peace Congress, but an International Congress of Women assembled to protest against war and to suggest steps which may lead to warfare being an impossibility.'

In moving forward WILPF still needs to suggest such steps, and WILPF still needs to bring the women's perspective. We also have the responsibility to spread the insight that we all live on the same vulnerable globe and that we will only have a future to deliver to coming generations if we take care of our planet. Dreams about heroism and world hegemony should after thousands of years be left for collective responsibility and love for life.

After around a hundred years of work for peace and our own survival we want to strengthen WILPF to be able to move forward – all 36 Sections and Groups waiting to become Sections. We have a strong case, and we are all over the world. ... Why shouldn't we be able to move forward with our case, a world without weapons of mass destruction, a world that solves conflicts with non-violent means, a world that recognizes women as a driving force for equality, justice and peace ... we are the driving force, let's move forward in the same direction!

Annelise Ebbe and Kerstin Grebäck, Presidents, WILPF

By the year 2015, WILPF's 100th anniversary, I hope with all my heart that we will be celebrating the end of military conflicts, militarized solutions and arms, and that WILPF, together with other global, national and community peace organizations, will have persuaded governments and those who favor violence, that the future of humanity requires promoting peace, understanding and connection in the world.

Amparo Guerrero (Colombia), Vice President

Here we are, 94 years later, struggling with the same forces that put profit before people and planet, that profit from war either financially, psychologically or politically, and that profit from women and people of colour being kept poor, down and out. But there are very clear action plans of exactly what we need to do to preserve our environment, to achieve equity between men and women, to make development sustainable, to end racism – that's what the UN conferences of the 90s produced: action plans, with clear goals.

Felicity Hill (Australia), Vice President

Having been involved in women's actions particularly in the Asia-Pacific region for demilitarization of current global militarized security system and policies that critically undermine the very lives, livelihoods and human rights of the vulnerable, I feel deep admiration for the long history of WILPF women who from the inception of the organization almost a century ago have addressed the root causes of war, and in turn militarism, and I see hopes in our global solidarity for a demilitarized world. I hope, too, for us to continue the work with even more focus on a gender analysis that keenly examines the power structure and the inequality in which we all live and calls for a just world for all.

Kozue Akibayashi (Japan), Vice President

Albania 1997
Argentina 1997
Australia 1915
Austria 1915
Belarus 2003
Belgium 1918
Bolivia 1988
Brazil 1945-49
Bulgaria 1918
Bosnia 1988
Burundi 2000
Canada 1915
Chile 1970
Colombia 1967
Costa Rica 1982
Croatia 1988
Czecho-Slovakia 1920
***Democratic Republic of Congo** 2007
Denmark 1915
El Salvador
Egypt 1937
Finland 1919
France 1915
French Polynesia 1997
Germany 1915
Ghana 1970
Greece 1920
Haiti 1932
Hungary 1915
India 1915
Ireland 1915
Israel 1952
Italy 1915
Jamaica 1979
Japan 1920
Korea 1997
Lebanon 1961
Maritius 1979
Mexico 1919
Nepal 1915
New Zealand 1918
***Nigeria** 1952
Norway 1915
Palestine 1988
Panama 1991
Paraguay 1991
Peru 1988
Philippines 1991
Poland 1918
Portugal 1997
Russian Federation 1994
***Rwanda** 2006
Sierra Leone 1997
Sri Lanka 1979
Sweden 1915
Switzerland 1915
Tunisa 1931
UK 1915
Ukraine 1920
USA 1915
Uruguay 1918
Venezuela 1994
Yugoslavia 1920

* = group, **bold** = current 5

Save the UN Charter!

Edith Ballantyne

In 2005, the then UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, proposed a United Nations reform package under the title, *In Larger Freedom: Development, Security and Human Rights for All* (General Assembly Document A/59/2005). The proposals were the result of reviews of the outcomes of the world conferences held during the 1990s and on studies by high level panels on a variety of issues of concerns to the world community.

Mr. Annan presented the package first to the UN Commission on Human Rights in March 2005 meeting in Geneva, probably because a major area of the reforms proposed concerned the way human rights were to be dealt with in the United Nations in the future. He stressed the urgency of proceeding with the reforms and hoped the entire package would be adopted by the General Assembly before the end of the year.

The government delegations present expressed appreciation for the importance given to human rights promotion and protection in the reform proposals, but a majority of them were clearly sceptical and I believe even suspicious of the motives behind them. They were going to take time to study and consult. In the end, the package was not accepted, dropping, for example, the reforms concerning disarmament, the Security Council, and the Trusteeship Council.

Many months of arm twisting resulted finally in agreement on replacing the Commission on Human Rights by a Human Rights Council, a major proposal pushed primarily by the United States and other, mostly western countries. However, the shape and scope of the Council finally agreed to were a compromise that satisfied neither the U.S. nor some other countries, because it did not change the balance of power in the Council that continued to favour the countries of the 'south'. The U.S. did not pose its candidature for election to the Council, although it closely follows its work and exerts influence from behind the scenes.

Next year, the Council will review and evaluate its work and functioning with a view to further reforms and the hope of some to bring it closer to the original reform proposals. This may be one reason the U.S. wants to be elected a member to 'improve the Council from within'.

One of the innovations introduced was the Universal Periodic Review under which each UN Member State is scrutinized every four years for the extent to which it respects, promotes and protects human rights in accordance with the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. The U.S. and other, mostly western, States are very critical of the process, and have expressed their dissatisfaction with the results so far.

It is pity that the Periodic Review is limited to scrutinizing the UN Member States' behaviour in observing their obligations in regard to human rights, and at that, primarily civil and political rights, downplaying economic, social and cultural rights. But human rights in the framework of the Universal Declaration do not exist in a vacuum. They are part and parcel of how the United Nations Charter is respected and developed in the interests of the world community, of human beings individually and collectively.

States should be scrutinized for their behaviour in regard to respecting and upholding the United Nations Charter, to which they commit themselves when becoming a Member of the United Nations. The UN Charter is a remarkable document, but unless upheld and defended it will be meaningless and the institution of the United Nations will not serve the purpose for which it was created, primarily to maintain international peace and promote economic and social progress for all peoples. Member States have violated provisions of the Charter with impunity.

When the UN itself violates the Charter by signing an accord with NATO, a military alliance that serves the military interests of only certain UN Member States then we must say NO and get our governments, Members of the UN, to live up to their commitments to the UN and its Charter.



Brigitte Obermayer, Munich WILPF president; Heidi Meinzolt, EU-coordinate, IB-member; Rita Mascis, member of Munich group; and Irmgard Heilberger, president of the German Section, demonstrate against armament lobbyists at the Munich Conference on Security Policy. Parallel to that event, peace women organize a seminar on alternatives to war.

No to NATO – No to War

WILPFers joined 250 organisations in Strasbourg, France, in April 2009 to protest NATO's aggressive military and nuclear policies. They participated as well in the counter-summit with a workshop on 'Why feminists say no to NATO' [see www.wloe.org]. Marlène Tuinaga of WILPF France reports that, contrary to a prior agreement, police on both sides of the Rhine (France and Germany) obstructed the proceedings. 'We, the peaceful demonstrators received tear gas shot at us from helicopters, but youngsters who tore down billboards and two houses were not bothered by police.'

NATO countries account for 75% of global military expenditures, and NATO serves as a vehicle for US-led use of force, bypassing the United Nations and the system of international law. For more on NATO and participating countries, See www.wilpf.int.ch/events/2009/nato.html.

Changing threat perceptions in the Middle East

International Women's Day Statement to the Conference on Disarmament Geneva 5 March 2009

We, women from many parts the world, take this opportunity to address the Conference on Disarmament, through a proxy, as we have done since 1984, and report on our seminar Getting To Peace in the Middle East – Changing Threat Perceptions, held here in the Palais on 4 March 2009.

[It was] a seminar held to stimulate discussion and bring in new ideas about this important disarmament and security issue. We are fully aware that the Conference on Disarmament cannot function in a vacuum, and that successful negotiations depend not only on the good will and concerted efforts of its members, but to a large extent on the state of relations among nations and their governments.

This year the seminar was held in two parts – the first, a panel discussion focused on increasing understanding about the culture of fear that is pervasive in the Middle East. Panelists noted that weapons are used to kill people and destroy infrastructure, creating this culture of fear, violence, and instability. No state can hope to attain security for itself if it entails lowering or undermining the security – real or perceived – of other States. Disarmament is a tool to enhance security for everyone.

Also highlighted was the need to recognize and address threat perceptions. The understanding that current approaches to resolving security challenges may address a certain perception of threat, but when taken in a globalised context and a comprehensive understanding of everyone's threat perceptions, they are often not particularly credible. **Weapons of mass destruction are not a credible way to deal with threats to human rights, human dignity, or to promote shared security; on the contrary they increase vulnerabilities on many fronts – environmental, economic and the adherence to the international rule of law.**

The goal of a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction has been repeatedly affirmed by all states in the region, as well as the international community at the highest political levels. In preparation for the 2010 nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty Review Conference, many states have raised the issue of the status of implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. It has also been said that this resolution cannot be implemented without, at least, concurrent discussions on the Middle East peace process. Threat perceptions have a particular importance in connection with nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and in furthering these processes.

The consolidation of peace in the area requires concurrent progress along three parallel tracks. Two of

these are self-evident: the political track, including the Arab Peace Initiative and deals with intentions, and the disarmament track, including the 1995 nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty Review Conference Resolution and deals with capabilities, with confidence-building measures all the way through.

However, neither of these two tracks is enough by itself. Peace agreements are essential, but taken in isolation they permit the persistence of fears that unduly large military establishments could again become grave threats. Disarmament agreements are essential, but in isolation they could co-exist with rhetorical antagonism and could even be mere covers for a renewal of hostilities. Only when taken together do these two tracks reinforce and validate each other.

Even that, however, is not enough. **There must be a third track along which the governments of the region demonstrate their ability to cope with their internal problems and satisfy the needs and hopes of their peoples.** Without this third track, other states will not be confident that a particular country will remain true to its commitments. In an area that has known so many decades of wars and bitter enmities, confidence that a new situation has come to stay can build only slowly, through the passage of time and the demonstrated ability to solve the problems that history has bequeathed. It will be impossible to maintain and implement this third track – towards shared human security – without the full and active engagement of civil society, and particularly women.



Additionally, the broader issue of women's participation in decision-making bodies must be continually raised. To celebrate International Women's Day without attempting to increase the representation and participation of women in decision-making forums in line with UN Security Council Resolution 1325 undermines larger efforts to promote gender equality and shared human security.

Furthermore, increased dialogue with and participation of NGOs in these efforts will facilitate a much broader, more comprehensive understanding of security, one that can form the basis of a windfall of new security agreements and treaties. The stalemate in moving disarmament forward must be broken now. We value all those of you who are helping in this endeavor and salute your efforts.

Submitted by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom on behalf of the participants at the 2009 International Women's Day Disarmament Seminar, NGO Strategy Session. For full text, including reference to the Arab Peace Initiative and the role of civil society in the region and outside the region in informing themselves and others about the Initiative, see www.wilpf.int.ch.

Durban Review Conference **United Against Racism!**

Civil Society Forum in Geneva 17-19 April 2009

In spite of manifold efforts to block it, to defame it, to characterize it as a 'masquerade' and whatever else, the NGO Forum for the Durban Review Conference opened with an inspiring film on women's creativity in post-apartheid South Africa. This gave a beautiful introduction to the spirit of the NGO Forum held in Durban, South Africa, in 2001, with nearly 20,000 participants – quite a contrast to Geneva in 2009, with only 400 participants.

Speakers warned against racist tendencies. Professor Doudou Diene from Senegal, former UN Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, voiced alarm that today academics can debate that Black people are 'intellectually inferior' to those of the White 'race', a long discredited concept said to have been revived recently by a Nobel laureate in medicine. He noted that all forms of racism are on the rise globally and deplored the lack of political will to confront it. As well, he called attention to the rise of Islamophobia and urged legislation against the incitement of racism and hatred that leads to violence.

Edna Poland from Brazil, a member of the Expert Group on the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (DDPA), praised the very positive results of Durban 2001. Unfortunately, they had been practically set aside by the tragic events of September 11th, immediately following the conference. "We are now struggling within a very limited space", she said, and further barriers are being put up to even narrow this space. Those who are promoting racism accuse others of being racists.

She characterised the confrontational nature of the preparatory process for this UN Review Conference, as a kind of "guerrilla war" between the European group (including the U.S. and Israel) and the Muslim world plus Africa and some parts of Asia. As example, she cited the Europeans' efforts to denounce every call for legislation to prohibit incitement of racial hatred as an infringement on 'freedom of expression'.

Women with such different perspectives as Malaak Shabazz, daughter of Malcolm X and Dr. Betty Shabazz, and that of Senator Anne Mary Lizin, honorary president of the Belgian Senate, closed the evening event expressing their profound wishes that the forthcoming UN Review Conference should be successful and should build on the landmark provided by the 2001 Durban Conference. Ms. Shabazz expressed her strong desire that the U.S. government, whose president she had helped to elect, should participate, in vain. The U.S. (which had walked out of the 2001 conference) in 2009 decided to boycott it.

At Saturday's opening session human rights activist Mireille Fanon Mendes, Frantz Fanon's daughter, urged cutting through false and distorted notions. There are states that produce racist laws under the cover of denouncing racism, she said. This is incompatible with the UN Charter and humanitarian law.

Professor Yash Tandon, a Ugandan citizen of Indian origin, referred to his book *Reflections and Foresight on Development and Globalisation: Daring to think different* (South Centre, Geneva 2009), in which he describes all colonial settler regimes as racist and in total opposition to the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It would mean trivialising the meaning of the colonial settler regime in Israel if one only reflected on it with reference to the influence of a 'Zionist lobby' in the U.S. It was, he said, to be referred to within the anti-colonial revolutionary process that again was to be understood within the framework delivered by the French Revolution and its ideas of basic human rights. Such a moral framework, if taken seriously, would make settler colonialism that has always been directed against indigenous populations morally unacceptable. It was clear that the situation of the Palestinian people and that of reparations for colonial exploitation and enslavement of entire populations were for him burning and related issues.

Karl Flecker of the Canadian Labour Union Congress reflected on the social and economic issues linked to the question of racism. Nimalka Fernando from Sri Lanka, president of the International Movement against all Forms of Discrimination and Racism, described worsening of the very exploitative labour conditions in the South. Discussions throughout the weekend included the expression of strong concerns about increasing acts of xenophobia against migrant workers and their families as well as against asylum seekers. The incitement to hatred based on religious beliefs, in particular the serious increase in Islamophobia, was condemned as was anti-Semitism.

A well-attended workshop on the Plight of the Palestine People provided first-hand information on the situation in Gaza from Charles Dedon (former director of Geneva Civil Defense) and Dr. Saad Elnounoun (French expert in human health), representing an international civil defence organisation.

The "Independent Jewish Voices" from Canada were among those participating in the NGO Forum who felt strongly about the need to express their solidarity with the Palestinian people. They also expressed their opposition to 'Zionist and pro-Israeli groups coming to Geneva on April 20th, working to derail this crucially important conference in the name of observing the holocaust'. These Canadian Jews were not the only ones who felt 'alarmed by the escalating use of intimidation and fear tactics by some prominent Jewish organisations to distract attention from Israel's flagrant violations of international humanitarian law'.

Ramsey Clark, former U.S. attorney general, spoke at the final session of the conference, which had been organized by a group of NGOs including World Against Racism Network, with active participation by Krishna Ahoopatel and Edith Ballantyne of WILPF.

From report by Irene Eckert, German WILPF, with contributions by Maria Jomaa, Geneva intern

The global financial crisis

In what sort of future are we investing?

Reuters invited Sam Cook, director of the PeaceWomen project of WILPF, to write a blog post in honour of International Women's Day on 8 March 2009.

Sam Cook

With the global financial crisis seemingly in every headline and a looming economic meltdown foremost on everyone's minds, the observance of International Women's Day on March 8 may not seem of immediate relevance.

But it is.

Clara Zetkin, who is credited with first putting forward the idea of an international women's day in 1910, would likely have a lot to say about where we are today. She and other committed socialists of the women's and the peace movements in the U.S. and Europe whose work inspired this Women's Day would probably not be entirely surprised at what the dominant economic and political power ideologies of the last century have delivered.

Of course International Women's Day has grown beyond its working class roots in the early 1900's. Alongside the women's movement, we see now that global corporations and governments actively claim support of the day and its celebrations. The official website of International Women's Day claims this fact as a positive achievement. But, as someone who considers herself part of the peace and women's movements, this causes me no small measure of discomfort and adds to my mixed emotions about the day.

It is not that I don't appreciate the power and significance of an international day of observance of work for women's empowerment and gender equality. It is not that I think we have no need of attention to these issues. It is not that I feel that all the important achievements are the ones behind us – as the bumper sticker pinned above my desk reads: I'll be a post-femi-

nist in post-patriarchy. No, I believe that International Women's Day is an important reminder of the work that still needs to be done and it is certainly a powerful moment of solidarity across time and space.

It is fortifying to work with a sense of common cause with women from places as diverse as the cities of Latin America, the hamlets of Europe, the suburbs of North America and the villages and sprawling urban centres across Africa. It is inspiring to know that this work on a wide range of issues – from



equal pay for equal work; to access to reproductive health services; and ending violence against women – is building on the work of generations of women before us. These are all reasons that make International Women's Day a day worth celebrating. But they are also the reasons that I want to reclaim the day. Reclaim it back from the hands of empty ritual and rhetoric and from those that treat it like another public relations opportunity.

I'm not saying that governments and corporations don't do 'good things' or that they don't invest in gender equality and women's empowerment. But, when one looks at the bigger picture – including that revealed by this global finan-

cial crisis – those efforts seem less laudable. As with so many things, it is hard to get the true picture and see where priorities lie until you do the comparisons and look at the numbers.

As taxpayers in the U.S. are aghast at upwards of \$700 billion dollars going to 'bail out' the financial system, little is said of the fact that this figure is also the approximate annual military budget of the U.S. Global military spending currently exceeds \$1,204 billion dollars annually at 2006 prices. The combined budgets of the United Nations entities working on women's issues amounts to approximately 0.005 percent of that.

The World Bank estimates the cost of interventions to promote gender equality under Millennium Development Goal 3 (universal access to education) to be \$7-\$13 per capita. The world's military expenditure in 2006? \$184 per capita.

This is the financial crisis. That investing in weapons and war and creating human insecurity is prioritized over investing in peace, development and gender equality. This is what we should be questioning and working to change as we stand together on International Women's Day. And if the governments and corporations of the world really want to show their support for this day, then ending militarism would be a good place to start.

Military spending toolkit

WILPF's project Reaching Critical Will has created a military spending toolkit, which includes facts, figures, talking points, questions you could ask sympathetic members of Parliament or Congress to ask the government, suggestions for researching your government's military spending, and a draft letter to government officials requesting their consideration of military spending, development assistance, and reporting to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the United Nations Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures. This kit is available for download at www.reachingcriticalwill.org/resources/MilSpendKit.pdf

Ray Acheson

During the first part of the CD's 2009 session, the UN Institute for Disarmament Research chaired a series of informal meetings with a diverse group of CD delegates and civil society representatives, leading to some recommendations on how to get the Conference on Disarmament back on track. It also addressed the awkward situation of WILPF's being forced to present its statement (p. 7) by way of an intermediary.

Canadian Ambassador Marius Grinius introduced a related paper called 'Getting the Conference on Disarmament Back to Substantive Work: Food for Thought,' which he hopes will 'promote understanding and dialogue among CD members, and help the CD find its way progressively and positively through the current impasse and to a resumption of its substantive work.' Some excerpts are included below.

Relevance of the CD

The paper notes that while 'barren periods of the kind currently being experienced by the CD are not unprecedented in the security arena,' some Permanent Missions in Geneva argue the CD is losing its value and may be 'acting as an obstacle to the emergence of alternative efforts toward nuclear disarmament goals.'

Many, however, consider the CD's past successes indicative of its future potential – though the paper notes that since the CD's establishment, several dis-

armament treaties have been negotiated outside of it. The paper asks if it would be possible to remove any of the current crop of issues from the CD for negotiation elsewhere, but assumes that the nuclear weapon states would 'almost certainly not participate'. In terms of current membership, the paper argues that while many states call for expansion of the CD, very few accuse the CD of being unbalanced – though if an Arms Trade Treaty is to be negotiated in the Conference, 'it could be claimed that this forum does not include among its Members the most affected states.'

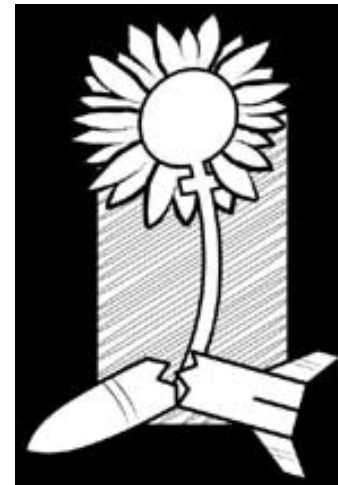
Engagement with civil society

The paper describes the annual reading by the CD president of a statement from the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom rather than by a member of that organization as 'patronizing and demeaning to women and to the Conference itself.' It argues, 'the issue has become symbolic of the need for a broad change in policy toward greater civil society participation.'

The paper also questions if the 2004 decision, that NGOs be allowed to deliver presentations once a year after a programme of work has been adopted, is still tenable given that a programme has still not been adopted, and questions the rationale for the CD being more exclusive than the Non Proliferation Treaty, Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention,

and Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons meetings.

The paper recommends the six presidents or appointed 'friend' determine the formality of the level of engagement with civil society; determine the regularity of engagement; decide whether the International Women's Day address is to be treated separately from the practice of broader engagement with NGOs; and settle on a formula for receiving statements from NGOs.



Four core issues

The paper also asks if a 'less complex question' than the current four core issues should be taken up in the CD to build confidence in its ability to work, though it says 'no issue in recent years has been articulated as a CD proposal.' [The issues are the Fissile Materials Cut-off Treaty, Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, Negative Security Assurances, and Nuclear Disarmament.] Regarding the issue of a fissile materials cut-off treaty specifically, the paper asserts, 'It cannot be taken for granted that a fissile material mandate that includes the negotiation of a verification mechanism will be sufficient on its own to break the deadlock,' as other members 'can be expected' to link progress on the fissile materials issue to progress on another issue – which, the paper assesses, could be used to prolong the stalemate.

Decade of deadlock ends!

The Conference on Disarmament (CD), based in Geneva, Switzerland, is mandated to negotiate multilateral disarmament treaties. On 29 May, 2009, for the first time in over a decade, consensus agreement was reached to begin negotiating a new treaty on fissile materials. This came just one day after WILPF organized an historic NGO panel presentation to the CD. Total and universal disarmament has been one of WILPF's goals since its inception in 1915. WILPF has played an integral role as a non-governmental organization (NGO) in the Special Sessions on Disarmament, in the Non Proliferation Treaty conferences, and in the Conference on Disarmament.