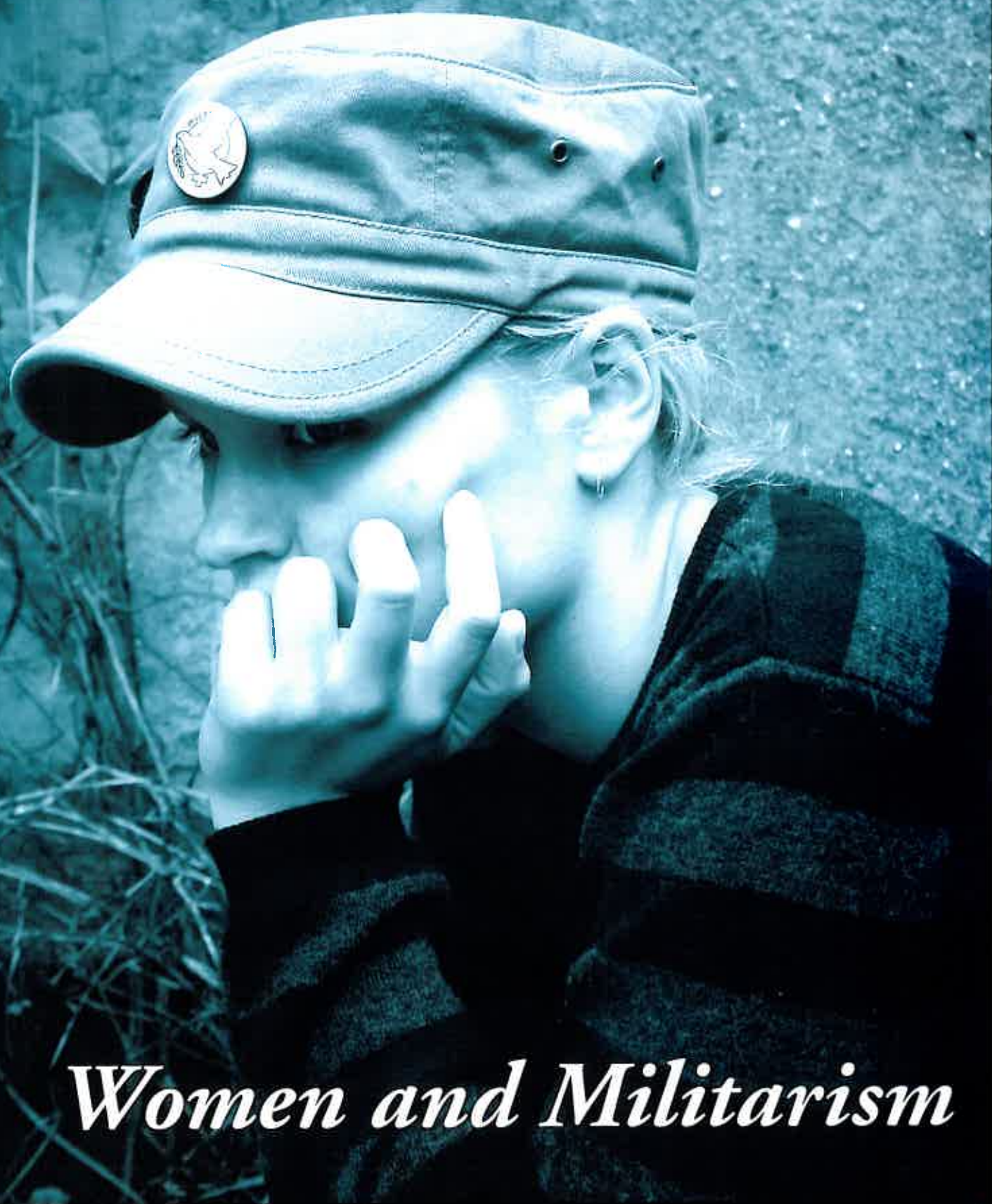




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1, rue de Varembe
Case Postale 28
1211 Geneva 20
Switzerland

Tel: 41 22 919 7080
Fax: 41 22 919 7081
Email: info@wilpf.ch
Webpage: www.wilpf.int.ch

Editor: Annelise Ebbe
Editorial board: Regina Birchem,
Susi Snyder
Design and layout: Jacob Bruun
Subscriptions: Lee Weingarten

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Universal Disarmament is Still a Claim

Susi Snyder, WILPF Secretary General

Disarm, as defined by Merriam Webster's online dictionary is "to deprive of means, reason, or disposition to be hostile". The International Congress of Women that gathered in the Hague 90 years ago recognized the destructive influence of private arms manufacturers and urged universal disarmament. They stated:

"The International Congress of Women, advocating universal disarmament and realizing that it can only be secured by international agreement, urges, as a step to this end, that all countries should, by such an international agreement, take over the manufacture of arms and munitions of war and should control all international traffic in the same. It sees in the private profits accruing from the great armament factories a powerful hindrance to the abolition of war."

WILPF has a long history of calling for total and universal disarmament. Not arms control or arms reduction, but disarmament. This is reflected quite well by a resolution passed at the WILPF Congress in 1921, where WILPF: "Recommends to the National Sections that they emphatically and continuously insist upon the original meaning of the term "disarmament" in its literal sense, thus preventing the use of the term as a camouflage for "reduction of armaments", which latter would simply continue the danger of war on a relatively smaller scale."

General Lee Butler said, "the risks entailed by nuclear weapons are far too great to leave the prospects of their elimination solely within the province of governments." While governments did not make progress towards reducing their reliance on suicidal, ecocidal and genocidal weapons, during the seventh Review of the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty (see A Phoenix of Hope), WILPF, and the networks we move in, did achieve a modicum of success: 40,000 people took to the streets of New York demanding nuclear abolition; unprecedented international media attention was brought to the Review Conference due to the work of NGO networks. Also, resolutions were passed in the Belgian Parliament calling for the removal of NATO nuclear weapons from Belgium.

We will continue to work towards nuclear abolition. We can do this by continuing to recruit our Mayors to join the Mayors for Peace, Vision 2020 campaign (see An van Sabben's article), we can join colleagues in the Abolition 2000 network to rid Europe of NATO nukes, and we can remind the world that nuclear power powers the bomb by holding events across the planet on the 20th anniversary of Chernobyl (26 April, 2006).

At the international level, WILPF will continue to build on our outstanding Model Nuclear Inventory, hopefully elevating it to the level of the Small Arms Survey or Landmines Monitor. We will continue the Reaching Critical Will project and promote transparency in international peace and security discussions. We will continue working with diplomats and governmental officials at all levels to bring about the legal, political and technical conditions needed.



A Phoenix of Hope

Rhianna Tyson, WILPF UN Office

F. Scott Fitzgerald once wrote, "The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function. One should, for example, be able to see that things are hopeless and yet be determined to make them otherwise."

After a month of the deplorable diplomacy, lack of leadership and dominance of narrow national interests that crippled the Seventh Review Conference of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, it is more difficult than ever to heed Fitzgerald's advice. But, as UNIDIR Director Patricia Lewis so eloquently stated, "It is imperative

that we remain optimistic. In times of despair, it is easier to become cynical... but it is hope that will get us through to the next stage, when the political climate is a bit more conducive to progress on the disarmament and non-proliferation front."

It will not be easy to retain our hope. The failure of this Review Conference has shaken the world's faith in the Treaty to an unprecedented degree. The promise of the 1995 indefinite extension – that of "permanence with accountability" – now seems hollow. Many are wondering how, during such a crisis of nuclear proliferation and a growing threat

of actual use of nuclear weapons, the Review Conference of the NPT could have failed.

And fail it did. While a few pieces of paper labelled "Final Document" were produced and agreed upon, this document does not contain an iota of substantive recommendations or actions to strengthen the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

It failed due to the intransigence of a few States, which effectively sabotaged the Conference and allowed it to be bogged down in procedural quibbles. These States, namely Iran, Egypt and the United States, allowed the Conference to fail – or perhaps, more accurately,

willed it to fail – precisely because they have lost their faith in the Treaty to ensure their own security.

Let's look at the Treaty for a minute, and remember why States subscribe to it. The US favors the NPT because it is a legal instrument to prevent the acquisition of nuclear weapons by those which do not already possess them. Egypt remains a party to it based on the belief that it constitutes a norm by which it will be possible to rein Israel in to the non-proliferation family, thus freeing the Middle East from the nuclear weapons that currently plague it. Iran's reasons are probably similar to that of Egypt's, though they also hope to use the NPT as a way by which to obtain security assurances against the use of nuclear weapons.

Under the NPT, as under any effective global mechanism, States receive benefits and achieve certain objectives in exchange for certain behaviors. All States, then, are accountable to others for their actions. With such lamentable erosion of the Treaty, some States are now thinking that they can achieve their same objectives through other means, which may lack any of the accountability of a multilateral treaty.

The US has been working hard these past few years to set up a system of unverifiable, non-universal, plurilateral agreements and frameworks which help to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, including the Proliferation Security Initiative, Security Council resolution 1540, and the G8 Partnership, among others. These initiatives may

prove to be very effective tools in curbing the spread of nuclear weapons – and all without the promise of nuclear disarmament in return.

Ten years after the 1995 Review Conference's package of decisions and resolution on the Middle East, Israel remains outside of the NPT family, its nuclear weapons continually threatening its neighbors in the region. Egypt sees no reason why it should accept stricter controls on its nuclear energy program while the nuclear facilities of Israel remain unchecked and un-secured.

For Iran, it has been clear that the US – and the other Nuclear Weapon States, for that matter – have no intention of providing binding security assurances to the Non-Nuclear Weapon States parties to the Treaty. The denial of Iran's objectives are thus prompting it to seek security elsewhere – perhaps through acquisition of its own nuclear weapons, which the Nuclear Weapon States themselves revere as the ultimate source of security. The vast majority of States, however, still believe that the NPT provides the best road to security. With over 50 working papers put forth at this Conference, there are many issues, which do enjoy widespread support. The near-consensus in so many areas only exacerbates the anger and resentment over the time, resources and opportunity wasted at this Conference. Some States parties, including Malaysia, Chile and New Zealand, utilized the last day of the Conference to express their outrage and disappointment with the failed Conference.

Canada's Ambassador Meyer, usually a perfect reflection of Canada's patient, bridge-building role, did not attempt to hide his personal outrage and frustration in delivering Canada's closing statement, in which he summed up the failure of the Conference thus: "We have let the pursuit of short-term, parochial interests override the collective long-term interest in sustaining this Treaty's authority and integrity. We have seen precious time that might have been devoted to exchanges on substance and the development of common ground squandered by procedural brinkmanship... We have been hampered, frankly, by a lack of imagination and will to break with the status quo and adopt new ways of conducting our business." The General Assembly (GA) Hall was dead silent as Iran prattled off a list of eight examples demonstrating "the abysmal record, achieved unilaterally by the United States in the short span of five years (that) testifies to a mentality which seeks solutions solely through demonstration of power." The failure of the Review Conference, said Iran, was clearly the fault of the US, which, they insisted, "tried to create smoke-screens in this Conference to deflect attention from its abysmal record." (The US, interestingly enough, did not exercise its right of reply in response to the Iranian statement. Failure to reply to such harsh criticism is an unusual choice by a government at the United Nations, especially when it allows such a statement to constitute the last substantive words of a high-profile Conference.)

Mayors for Peace Campaign 2005

Having read the several appeals of the mayor of Hiroshima, Mr. Akiba, to the mayors all over the world for support of the 'American Mayors Resolution 2004', I decided to attempt to get the mayor of Helmond, my hometown, to take an interest in the campaign.

I approached a number of people for support among others a woman who is town-counsellor and a member of the 'Refugee Group Helmond'. We wrote a letter to the mayor, supported by signatures of inhabitants of Helmond.

For gathering these we mobilized members of groups and persons whom we expected to be interested. All supported us.

Our next step was to send a letter to inform the mayor about the campaign. The list of signatures was attached. In response, the mayor invited us for a meeting at the town hall. To counter a negative advice of a civil servant, we asserted that the nuclear danger surpasses party politics, as is clear from the fact that the mayors (who belong to three different political parties) of our three biggest cities, Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague, support Mr. Akiba's campaign. The meeting was concluded with the mayor's promise that he would study the additional information, which we presented to him, and he would discuss the issue with his aldermen.

Two weeks later, we were officially informed by letter from the town hall that the mayor, as mayor, had given his formal support to Akiba's campaign with the consent of his aldermen.

*An van Sabben,
WILPF The Netherlands*

▶ With each stalled day, the prospects of an effective outcome grew more and more dim. NGOs struggled to retain their hope in the sea of disappointment. On the penultimate day, refusing to be bogged down in the cynicism and despair of this Conference, some NGOs had decided to present to the delegates, as they entered the GA hall to close the Conference, with a giant sunflower each, a symbolic reminder of the global desire and will for nuclear abolition. (Due to the security set-up of the GA, NGOs were prevented from actually handing them to the delegates, and so we were left holding these symbols of disarmament ourselves.

Unfortunately, the UN Security decided there was no room in the GA for even such symbolic optimism. A squad of security guards burst into the observer gallery, marching up and down the rows, and literally ripped the sunflowers out of the hands, laps and briefcases of the NGO representatives.

You can take the sunflowers out of the peace activists' hands, but you can't wipe out all the seeds of hope that these flowers symbolize. As Ambassador Meyer said, "If there is a silver lining in the otherwise dark cloud of this Review Conference, it lies in the hope that our leaders and citizens will be so concerned by its failure that they mobilize behind prompt remedial action."

NGOs and their governmental partners are wasting no time in strategizing creative ways to tackle the core challenges of the non-proliferation and disarmament regime. At an Abolition 2000 press

conference on May 26, Alyn Ware, the Coordinator of the Parliamentary Network for Nuclear Disarmament, asserted that, "negotiations should happen through the NPT or through the Conference on Disarmament. They're not. So now we're consulting with governments to look at alternative paths..." He continued to discuss some of the successes of "alternative" processes, including the 1996 International Court of Justice's Advisory Opinion, the strengthening of existing Nuclear Weapon Free Zones and the creation of new ones, and the slew of GA resolutions which consistently call for the implementation of disarmament obligations through the negotiation of a Nuclear Weapons Convention. "We're not giving up just because of the lack of progress through the NPT," Ware said. "We believe nuclear disarmament is a political, moral and legal responsibility- and a practical possibility- and we're going to make sure that happens."

As we watch the cinders of the failed NPT Review Conference smolder out, a new hope is growing. Out of its ashes will rise a renewed plan for eliminating the nuclear threat, propelled by the raw tenacity and moral urgency of civil society. Even as the men with guns rip the flowers from our hands, or as the men in suits push us, through their inaction, ever more closer to the edge of annihilation, the majority of the world's people will continue the fight for freedom from fear, inching all the more closely to reaching a critical mass of political will for nuclear disarmament.

Beijing + 10



From 26 February to 11 March 2005 thirty-five women from six WILPF sections, WILPF International and the WILPF United Nations Office converged on UN Headquarters in New York to participate in Beijing +10. Below, you will find five reflections from WILPF delegates on their participation in the Beijing +10 process.

WILPF's Journey to Beijing and Beyond

Robin Lloyd, WILPF US

For many women, Beijing is more than a city in China. It is an event, a momentous experience that introduced us to global feminism.

In 1995, I arrived at the Fourth UN Conference on Women in Beijing with 230 other women (and 10 men) on The Peace Train, a three-week journey across Eastern Europe, Russia and the Great Steppes of China organized by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. We stopped to meet women and talk with women's groups along the way, and brought their messages to the conference.

I videotaped the trip and the conference: 40 hours of tape condensed into one hour of video. The resulting documentary focuses on four areas: militarism/disarmament, fundamentalism, food security, and trafficking in women. I recently screened it for women in New York City and was struck by the fact that the issues we identified as areas of concern then are even more problematical for women today.

I was in New York to attend the ten-year review conference on the Beijing Platform for Action, a two

week session at the UN which revisits what progress has been made by member nations. WEDO, the Women's Environment and Development Organization, had issued a report, "Beijing Betrayed", detailing how governments have failed to take the outcome document of the 1995 conference seriously. "Governments worldwide have adopted a piecemeal and incremental approach to implementation that cannot achieve the economic, social and political transformation underlying the promises and vision of Beijing", it states.



Beijing

The trends that have created an environment hostile to the advancement of women's rights, the report says, are growing militarization, the dominance of neo-liberal economic frameworks and market-driven policies, and rising fundamentalist movements. Given this reality, a strategy developed by women's groups and coordinated by the Center for Women's Global Leadership was to urge that, instead of opening the

Beijing document to renegotiation, a simple Declaration be issued, reaffirming the Beijing Declaration; and that the precious time together be spent in "serious examination of progress on and obstacles to women's rights in the context of the larger global forces, and on looking at the resources and interventions needed for progress".

The Bush administration did its best to torpedo this agenda. At the

very beginning of the meeting came its announced refusal to join the consensus that had formed in support of the draft statement issued by the Bureau of the Commission of the Status of Women. It proposed an amendment stating, "We... reaffirm that the Beijing Platform and the outcome of the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly (Beijing+5)...do not create new international human rights and do not include the right to abortion."

When you consider that abortion is state policy in China, a frequently used sex selective process in India, and a woman's right in the US, this controversial statement was not going to fly.

In a remarkable show of solidarity, countries across all regions resisted US pressure to break consensus. Finally, the US backed down. The head of the US delegation to the UN's Commission on the Status of Women, Ellen Sauerbrey, told reporters that the delegation would withdraw its proposed amendment. She said she was "pleased that other countries agreed" with the US position and the amendment was therefore not needed.

"They are declaring victory and going home, as in Vietnam," said Charlotte Bunch, executive director of the Center for Women's Global Leadership. "The reality is that they heard loud and clear the voices of 6,000 women here saying 'No', echoing millions of other women worldwide."

I was able to attend only the first few days of the conference. Some 35 WILPF women converged from different parts of the US and the world to monitor what was going on and to try to figure out how to "lobby" at the UN. We know that

the UN is not just a debating society, as it is often described: it is a contested space, where key decisions are made that impact women globally. Feminists, we believe, need to be engaged in the issues discussed there ...

... The most critical comments on the status of global feminism came from an Indian feminist, Devaki Jain. "Since 9/11," she said, "we have seen a resurgence of masculinity. Discrimination against women is universal. We need to rebuild the feminist movement." Looking back at the vitality of the women's movement that led to the first international women's conference in Mexico in 1975, she was disappointed by the lack of progress. "I deplore that we come here to the UN to do a report card. We have become like accountants. The UN used to be an international space, despite its bureaucracy. Now it is being taunted and molested by you know which government. It is losing its dignity; it is a dominated space."

In closing she asked, "How do we revitalize the international feminist movement? The feminist movement should look at the forces that are destroying what we built, and try to rebuild it again. We should design a retaking of the UN by showing the universality of Human Rights."

In a period of high danger, real or perceived, nearly 3000 hardy attendees spent up to two weeks at Beijing+10 at the UN. The NGO community collaborated with UN specialists and government leaders or collided with them over integrating the Beijing Platform for Action into the Millennium Goals. The heady atmosphere of the original Beijing Conference ten years ago gave way to debate and feistiness, involving 35 WILPFers, in this grand scope of participation.

At the "Rising up in Response: Women's Rights in Times of Conflict" panel African women leaders testified to their own lives of escape and reported on others. "They, the soldiers" one said, "come in the night to the hut and force me to sleep with ten men. They are supposed to protect the communities." Almost daily, the UN issues news releases on rape in conflicts, post-conflicts and, yes, disasters. At another panel, I met several on-the-ground and social workers and academics from NGOs in Kathmandu in the far North to Colombo in the far South. They were scathing about gender-based violence and practical in policy and action proposals, especially for monitoring.

Security Council Resolution 1325 energized the Beijing and Millennium processes in March and the interweaving of gender-mainstreaming in all documents and practices.

Jean Vertheim, WILPF US, UN Representative

... One of the biggest questions I came away with is why are we still equating war and the condoning of war with patriotism and religious zeal and economic gain? War and global economic treaties enrich a very few at the expense of the many. Those many happen to be women and children who get caught in the cross fire of war and suffer in displaced person's camps, whether internally or externally. They are beaten, raped and even murdered in the name of religion or territory or economic gain. Security is a global issue – all peoples need to be secure – have econo-

mic freedom, land tenure, jobs, education, justice, access to health care, etc. Governments the world over are gambling with the lives of their people. The law of force does not supercede the force of law. War is not gender sensitive. At the peace table those who do the most harm, militias and armies and war leaders, tend to get the spoils of war – and women and children are left to more violence and economic hardship. It seems to be an endless circle.

Corin Kagan, WILPF US

Reflections Post-Beijing +10

Amparo Elisa Guerrero,
WILPF Colombia

Our two weeks at Beijing +10 in New York confirmed that women united have the strength to change the world. It was gratifying to see that so many women have learned to organize collectively and have obtained more tools to confront the power relationships that have kept us marginalized during most of the world's history.

But we have worries as well. It is troublesome witnessing the United Nations (UN) become less and less effective as an organization that can truly influence local, national and global realities. We have great concern that, despite the fact that it has condemned Colombia's human rights situation and insisted on numerous changes, its demands have had little or no effect. The UN's mandates have done practically nothing to lessen Colombia's human rights violations; to create in Colombia an efficient and humanitarian system for the thousands who are displaced; to reform our judicial system or to require that our nation adopt laws reflecting the needs of our people. Perhaps because of its own internal crises, i.e., the "food for

oil" scandal in Iraq, sexual abuse by the peacekeepers in the Congo, its inability to stop genocide in Rwanda and Sudan, the UN lacks the will, prestige or influence to exert pressure on Colombia. The UN must do more to urge the Colombian State to adhere to its agreements as a member of that body and to demonstrate an intention to reduce the number of human rights violations, to stimulate and maintain a dialogue with the different armed groups, to implement resolution 1325 and include women in the process of building peace, and to make the many reforms that we as a nation deserve.

For women in the world, especially Colombian women, the UN must undergo a profound and serious reform. In particular, the UN must develop a new concept of human security consistent with the Millennium Goals. Eradicating poverty, battling AIDS, protecting the environment, all links of the same chain, must be part of this definition, together with universal education, gender perspective and eliminating all

forms of violence against women. It is also imperative that women of the world, and especially those of us in organizations like WILPF, develop strategies so that all women participate in this reform, as we did in creating the International Criminal Court and in insisting on the inclusion of gender perspective in its operations. We also need to fight against United States' ultra-conservative leadership, which is eroding human rights in the name of combating terrorism and violating national sovereignty under the pretext of "spreading democracy". We must support the UN system and its independence against the United States' attempt to make it another US colony. We must be part of this change and supply our energy, leadership and vision. There is still much work to do. The UN has been and can continue to be the force of hope for women and the people of the world.

This article was written with the assistance of Nancy Lee Garabedian

Women, Peace, and Security in a Militarized Context

WILPF New York Office

During the first week of the Commission on the Status of Women, WILPF hosted an event on “Women, Peace and Security in a Militarized Context” with co-sponsoring groups Canadian Voice of Women for Peace, Global Action to Prevent War (GAPW), Kayan – Feminist Organization (Haifa, Israel), and Isha L’Isha – Haifa Feminist Center. Speakers included Jennifer Nordstrom, coordinator of GAPW; Rhianna Tyson, project manager of WILPF’s Reaching Critical Will project; Palestinian attorney Sawsan Zaher of Kayan; and Israeli attorney Dana Myrtenbaum of Isha L’Isha, with Merav Datan of WILPF as moderator. The purpose of the discussion was to look at issues relating to women, peace and security in terms of both the direct impact of armed conflict as well as the indirect effects of militarism on societies generally. The event brought together women who focus on human rights and humanitarian aspects of peace and security work with women who focus on demilitarization and disarmament. Speakers and audience participants explored notions of international and national approaches to security through military capability, as opposed to human security, individual and communal security, and women’s approaches to personal security in unsafe environments. They observed that

demilitarization and disarmament work, which seeks to address the root causes of conflict and weapons proliferation, is often carried out by women in very male-dominated fora and can benefit greatly from a gender analysis. Similarly, efforts in the area of women, peace and security can be enhanced by a better understanding of militarism and its causes and effects. These approaches complement each other and both are a direct challenge to military notions of security.

On the regional and local levels, the discussion explored the social and economic effects of militarism on women in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The impact of Israel’s defense budget, 80 percent of its overall budget, has a disproportionate impact on the Arab minority within Israel, 60 percent of whom live in poverty. Within this minority, those most directly affected by cuts in the welfare budget (often in the name of security) are mainly women. Women are also absent from security decision-making within Israel. The lack of transparency and accountability on security matters is illustrated by the “democratic black hole” of nuclear weapons in a society where the public does not even know who decides on the development and plans for use of nuclear weapons.

Women from other conflict areas spoke about the effects of armed conflict and militarism specifically on women and children. In northern Uganda the ongoing violent conflict has included systematically cutting off women’s lips, and children have been forced to live on the streets, seeking shelter and being exposed to prostitution. A speaker from Zambia observed that conflicts in Africa could be stopped if there was courage to make a decision to appeal to the West to leave the continent and its vast wealth of natural resources alone, and not to flood both or all sides to a conflict with weapons. In Taiwan democratization efforts are directly challenged by the danger of a regional missile race, even though most people do not want war.

WILPF has a Working Group on Demilitarization and Disarmament in order to develop and promote a holistic approach to demilitarization and disarmament efforts, with attention to decolonization aspects and regional perspectives as well as global disarmament of all types of weapons systems. It is hoped that by sharing information and coordinating efforts within WILPF and with other groups, we will gain a better understanding of demilitarization and disarmament and our work will be more effective.



Women, Non-violence, and a Patriarchal Culture of War

*Annelise Ebbe,
WILPF International Vice-President*

On the 6th of April 1930 Gandhi and his followers reached the sea. More and more people had followed Gandhi on this march. The idea was to wander southward along the coast, try to gather support in the villages, make speeches and get known by the press in India as well as in England. The march ended in Dandi 385 kilometers to the south. On the 6th of April in the morning they went to the sea. Gandhi picked up a handful of salt, and the others did the same. Then they took some salt water into buckets and let it evaporate in the sun. In the following days they established stalls and sold the salt in small bags.

The monopoly was broken, they had broken the law, an empire cracked. But the process is long and difficult. We have not finished it yet.

In that light people and organizations in many countries decided to reclaim Gandhi.

In India they followed in Gandhi's footprints. Others arranged symbolic Salt Marches and handed over bags of salt to the members of their parliament together with a Salt March Manifesto.

What is claimed in this manifesto is the right to water, air, sea, life and Earth. And an active and non-violent

resistance to the global economic agenda is manifested.

In the Danish WILPF section Ellen Hørup (1871-1953) worked for Gandhi for a couple of years in the late 20ies.

For years she was very enthusiastic but got more critical little by little. Not towards the non-violence or the civil disobedience strategy, but towards his view of women. In 1936 she wrote, "I read what he says about the women, and what he says to them when they ask for advice. Gandhi admires them highly. He has called them out from their isolation (...) But Gandhi still has the mind of a man ..."

Women and Military

When Ellen Hørup talked about Gandhi having the mind of a man, she meant that even though he admired women and was aware of education as one of the most essential sources to women's full and equal participation, he was not aware of the suppression of women by the male members of their family, and he never realized that this suppression is part of a pattern.

The Security Council Resolution 1325 talks about equality and equal rights at all negotiation tables and in all decision making. But it also stresses that women "account for the vast majority of those adversely affected by armed conflict".

It is the same deep rooted pattern which caused the suppression of Indian women by their male family members, which also causes this fact – quoted from 1325. And there is a direct line from the violence that women suffer from during war and armed conflict to the domestic violence in a society.

One of my important research findings at the university some years ago on what happened to women during war and conflict was that violence against women, all kinds of violence, is connected to the view of and the status of women in society.

Patriarchy is not only characterized by a hierarchic, pyramidal structure of power but also by an aggressiveness in the conception of the role, whether it is a man or a woman who is bearer of it. Patriarchy is not only a structure, which favours men or traditional masculine conduct, it is also a culture of war. The pattern is in us.

Many governments have interpreted the implementation of 1325 as a requirement for more women in the military. However, the military is identical to intensified patriarchy and synonymous with a culture of war. The more conflicts and wars in the world the more the military culture is characterized by absolute obedience, destructive and violent conduct, and contempt for life. These are all ideals, which are connected to a macho picture, virility, and even masculinity. Critical conduct, diplomacy and non-violent conflict resolutions are considered as less brave and sometimes even contrast masculinity. When you take up arms you throw away feelings. Too much compassion and even humanity will make a bad soldier.

Frightening examples from the torture scenarios in the Abu Ghraib prison and also from the Danish Camp Eden in the southern part of Iraq give us the hint that women are not bringing non-violent conflict resolution, diplomacy, humanity, let alone compassion into the military. Women soldiers are swallowed up by and integrated into the patriarchal culture of war.

And this culture is not only manifesting itself in wars and conflicts. In our everyday reality we find people who are using a language and a vocabulary indicating this culture of war. Many people talk about sports in a way very close to the way they talk about war and the battlefield.

And so-called serious and gender conscious male writers are talking about sexuality as if sexual intercourse more than anything else is similar to a battlefield.

Words from the world of war are merging into the world of play and sports. But not only the words are merging. The attitude follows and little by little also the conduct, which means pure and aggressive competition rather than non-violent and positive cooperation and play, building on a more holistic view of the human being and the world.

A Danish writer Adam Holm expresses it like this: "If boys are living in the middle of an Armageddon or if they are far from every belligerence does not matter, they play war everywhere, and this play in its most violent mode of expression forms essential part of (...) the understanding of their sex ..."

Boys are carrying the patriarchal culture of war from their earliest childhood. And in spite of the fact that many of them, actually most of them, put the plastic gun and every other gun on the shelf, they have it in their inner universe as a force, a patriarchal force.

One of our obligations and responsibilities as women and/or feminists for a culture of peace is to talk about this, to grab the challenge, to be aware of the pattern and to work against it, to teach other women, girls, men and not least boys around us that we can all build a better world together without this patriarchal culture of war.



Education for a Sustainable Future

*Regina Birchem,
WILPF International President*

Marta Benavides, WILPF, El Salvador, and her friends set up a small museum in a vacant room on the first floor of the Mayor's office in Santa Ana, the second largest city of El Salvador. The museum was sponsored by WILPF and SIGLO XXIII. The exhibition consisted of mundane items of daily life of ordinary people in El Salvador and the world. The items were placed in colorful ways as art pieces in juxtaposition to surprise the viewer, instigate questions, and suggest linkages about human beings and the natural and social environment, justice, freedom, gender, recycling, non-violence and peace. The items were things we routinely use, or have at home and show what it means to live ecologically and culturally aware.

The museum was called AHA!!! Museum of Popular Cultures and Arts. The idea entering the exhibit was "Huh???" The exit sign was "Aha!!!! Uhummm!" This was a creative approach to education for a sustainable future!

Decade for Education for Sustainable Development

In recognition of the importance of education for a sustainable future in peace and harmony with nature, the United Nations has declared a decade of Education for Sustainable Development 2005-2015. There will not be livable future unless we change our fundamental economic, political and social arrangements. We have to get from "Huh?" to "Aha!" – from ignorance and entrenched consumerism to awareness and ecologically centered policies.

Among the 21 Rio Principles agreed upon at the 1992 Earth Summit are:

People are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature.

Development must not undermine the needs of future generations. Environmental issues are best handled with the full participation of all concerned citizens.

Sustainable development requires a scientific understanding of the problems.

The full participation of women is essential; the creativity, ideals and courage of youth and the knowledge of indigenous peoples are needed. Wars are inherently destructive of sustainable development. Peace, development and a sustainable environment are interdependent and indivisible.

Enormous resources and effort have been put into environmental education, especially since the Earth Summit in 1992. The hope is that in the long term this will bring about social change. Yet economic globalization, consumption, depletion of resources, unhealthy living conditions have persisted and in many places worsened. And daily experience demonstrates that we have not dealt with the reality of global warming, disrupted ecosystems, and the tragic loss of biodiversity. Part of the reason may lie in the kind of education delivered. Chet Bowers argues "that environmental education in its present form is often provided in a way that does not challenge the dominant ways of thinking that evolved in the modern era of uncontrolled industrialism and has continued in the depersonalized individualism of the information age." (World Youth Report 2003, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs) The Great Law of the Hau de no sau nee (Six Nations Iroquois Confederation) says that in every generation we have to consider the impact on the seventh generation!

A letter to WILPF from Marta Benavides, WILPF International Vice-President

Very dear sisters, salud.

I write to you at a time when we are celebrating Monsignor Romero, who was murdered in El Salvador 25 years ago. Hundreds of people from all over the world have come to be with us. It is quite appropriate to have had you in mind at this time for his theme is peace – that is what his life was and is all about.

You see, he was archbishop during the time of the war in the '80's and he was murdered for daring to speak clearly of all the manifestations of peace.

He called poverty war, inequality war, hunger war, exclusion war, injustice war, lack of employment war, violence war, and militarism war.

Today, we are living in the same conditions, not only in my country but also around the world. Violence is rampant. Even “natural” disasters are very much the result of the actions of human beings.

In my country, just yesterday, we saw in the news that our government is promoting the creation of a regional military force to combat gangs, and recommends that our neighboring country's military force, Honduras, intervene on our soil for that purpose. And, right now the US is returning people from my country who are arrested in the US to El Salvador, calling them gangs, creating a very difficult situation for them and for our peoples here in El Salvador. Here people are living under the Super Iron Fist Law. Anyone suspected to be a gang member, and for which the best proof is having a tattoo, is arrested. In just one month 20,000 youth were captured arbitrarily, and finally, more than 18,000 were released, just as “security measures”. Even those kept are not proven to be guilty.

We live the misery of poverty and the fear of what is being called terrorism. Our country is the only one in the continent of the Americas that has troops in Iraq. My country within the Americas is the most violent and the second most ecologically deteriorated to the point of becoming a desert, according to the UN Economic Commission on Latin America.

In the US, starting on April 5, more than a thousand volunteers start to patrol the south US border to hunt for the so called “illegals” – many of them are my own Salvadorian sisters and brothers looking for a way to send money home. This is where the violence and terror comes from – and supported by the law.

We witness today millions of people dying of hunger, of HIV/AIDS, of human-provoked natural disasters, of the crisis created by the warming of the earth, of a biodiversity under attack for the purpose of making more profit, of youth without the security of an education, or even if they have it, no security of a decent job.

I see WILPF being a light in the world, helping to bring people in the process of manifesting peace in all its dimensions, having a presence of peace at the personal, local, national, regional and global level.

I see that WILPF has to make and take the time to discern what that means and how we can carry this way of being in today's world in the time in which we live.

What does it mean to be an organization that is international? (Are we saying international, or also internationalism, and what does this mean for our actions?) A “league”? What is the function of such an entity?

For peace: what is peace today in the various levels that we have outlined? And what is freedom in today's globalised world, in the context of neo-liberalism, and food and job insecurity? How is freedom supported in peace, and how does freedom support peace?

I think that this is the time to figure this out, as we are almost 100 years old, and as we face today's world and a diminishing number of members. I urge us to do so.

Love, Marta

An Impressing



*Krishna Ahoja-Patel,
IEC member, WILPF India*

It was at the famous Peace Research Center, in Ahmedabad, that WILPF International sponsored a series of training workshops to promote the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, the first in 2001. The second workshop, in 2002, resulted in the formation of the first WILPF core group in Nagpur (Maharashtra). The third and fourth workshops in 2003 and 2004 generated considerable enthusiasm in the

NGO communities both in Gujarat and Maharashtra and brought together a number of important women's organizations. The most recent workshop in the series was organized for two days on 28 and 29 January 2005 under the title of "Culture Of Peace: Women's Perspectives". Its objective was to train the trainers on methodologies and techniques of conflict resolution and post conflict healing from the trauma of violence and wars.

On 28th January, a series of sessions concentrated on different articles of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and their significance on learning tolerance to eradicate tensions among different communities with the basic aim of creating a peaceful environment in society. Professor Sadhna Vora, the inspiration behind the Peace Research Center for over two decades,



Section in *Rapid* Development

emphasized the urgent need to make Gender and Peace as a part of the regular university curriculum. She has been subsequently nominated as the national President of WILPF India. Dr Pushpa Moriani, who is now the president of the Gujarat Regional Branch and who has done considerable research in Hindi is a specialist on gender issues. She reminded the audience of the achievements of women during the last three decades and the need to connect these results with the peace movement. The participants also learnt about the 28th WILPF Congress and discussed briefly the interconnections between women, water and peace, particularly the paper presented by Nilima Sanyal and Sushma Pankhule from Nagpur describing the conditions of privatization of water and the difficulties women face to acquire safe water. Dr. Nilima Sanyal is now elected as the President of the Maharashtra Regional Branch. Dr. Sushma Pankhule, the past President to whom the credit goes for building the original core group, continues to be a member of the Executive Committee.

On 29th January 2005 the participants learnt about the highlights of the history of WILPF and its relationships with Gandhi in the 1930s and other connections with the university created by Gandhi. It was in 1931 when Gandhi was returning from London after a historic roundtable conference that he came to know WILPF in Geneva. No other organization came forward to organize a political meeting on his experiences of the British rule and how the people of India were fighting to bring an end to colonialism in India. The meeting took place at lunchtime in Victoria Hall in Geneva attended by some 2000 persons spilling over in the side streets. Some letters written by Gandhi also show that he was acquainted with WILPF in Vienna. His speech, which underlined the role of women in maintaining and contributing to peace, has been translated in English, French, Hindi and Gujarati and other languages. A book published in English and other Indian languages a few years ago has collected his writings on the contribution of women in the history of Indian independence.

The Action Plan adopted by WILPF India includes an all India Conference on the implementation of the Security Council Resolution 1325 in 2006, introduction of Gender and Peace Project in the university curriculum, networking with international NGOs on linkages of the Beijing +10 issues and Millennium Development Goals and finalizing program for the national section after consultations with the Gujarat and Maharashtra regional branches. The next conference of the national section is provisionally planned in Nagpur where WILPF initiatives were taken in 2001 and where the first seminar on globalization, disarmament and peace was organized, inspiring 60 people to join WILPF on the spot. The new Gujarat regional branch has begun a fundraising drive for its projects. WILPF India would like to appeal to WILPF International and other national sections to assist its program and projects by comments and financial support to sustain its ability to survive its nascent problems.

Letter from the Swiss Section



Dear WILPFers all over the globe,

In Göteborg you celebrated with us the re-founding of the Swiss WILPF section. Now we would like to let you know about the developments that have been taking place since then in our small country.

On International Women's Day, a group of women from a number of NGOs handed over to the Swiss government more than 7000 postcards requesting concrete measures to be taken towards the full implementation of UN Resolution 1325. As this petition had been launched before we re-founded the Swiss section, we were involved only as supporters of the campaign, rather than as part of the organizing team. Hopefully this will be different in future!

As you can see, we are not yet in a position to report on any big accomplished deeds! After re-founding our section last summer, we started out working on the basis that we would want to present some attractive, concrete projects in order to win more members. We therefore established contacts with the WILPF section in Lebanon as well as with a women's shelter in Switzerland. However, we soon realized that by putting our emphasis on the development of these projects, we had neglected an important aspect of our work, namely to strengthen and solidify our own group and infrastructure. We are now busy making up for these neglects. Having already written a brochure documenting the history of the Swiss WILPF section, we are now in the process of creating a web site and a flyer for our section.

The next event that we are organizing is a public lecture-cum-discussion on the issue of trafficking in women in Switzerland. Two authors of a recently published book on the issue will present their research and talk about this important topic. At the annual meeting of our section on May 28, Philomena De Agrella spoke to us about her work with the UN and, of course, we will be celebrating the 90th birthday of WILPF! Everybody in the vicinity is cordially invited to join us for these events!

Finally, we would like to report on a rather bleak chapter in current Swiss politics. The Parliament is presently debating a new asylum legislation. Since April 2004, asylum seekers whose applications have been deemed unworthy of being processed no longer receive any social benefits. Now there are even plans to widen the scope of this law and to deny social benefits also to all those asylum seekers whose applications have been rejected. What is more, the right for a basic minimal support ensuring survival in our country – the so-called “Nothilfe” which is guaranteed in our constitution – is to be abolished. Various NGOs, church organizations, human rights activists, and politicians worthy of the name, are fighting this fierce attack on the humanitarian tradition of our country. As you can see, there is plenty of work to do even here in our small, well-sheltered country. We remain, however, fully aware of the fact that most of you have to work under much harder and much more difficult conditions. We feel strongly and warmly connected with all of you, and we wish you and ourselves,

A lot of power and stamina in our continuing endeavors for peace!

Toni Mächtlinger, for the Swiss section
Translated by Danièle Klapproth

ctions

Reality and fairytale - a Journey to Lebanon

*Annelise Ebbe,
WILPF International Vice-President*

In the last week of January I was in Lebanon. In one way I felt that the visit brought me very close to Lebanese reality and everyday life, in another way this was a fairytale, the meeting with wonderful WILPFers of many ages, the staying in the country, the smelling of the odours and scents, the tasting of the food, the breathing of the city atmosphere and the landscapes etc. etc. Such excitement ...

At the Officers' meeting in October 2004 we talked about "loving and tender care" for the sections. I am

not quite sure what that means. But I know for sure that I want to meet the sections on their own field, meet members who will never go to international meetings, talk and care about special conditions and difficulties.

In my capacity as a Vice-President the Lebanese section was the first I visited. I don't know how much loving and tender care I was able to give, but I do know how much loving and tender care I got.

From the bottom of my heart I will thank the section for a very warm and really eventful visit to Lebanon. I felt overwhelmed from the very beginning. So much was

done to make me feel well and welcome and to widen my horizon as to the cultural and political history of Lebanon, the importance of Lebanon in the region, the political everyday life, the immense suppression of the Palestinian refugees, and the tough everyday life for so many. They presented a cornucopia at all imaginable levels.

It wouldn't be fair to mention names, so many contributed. However I have to mention that I felt honoured to visit the President of the Lebanese section, Sid Anissa Najjar. Thank you so much to all of you.

Disarmament Intern 2005

Disarmament Intern in Geneva 2005

*Susi Snyder,
WILPF Secretary General*

Philomena De Agrella is the WILPF 2005 Disarmament Intern from Canada. She has a diverse background in her education and work experience. Miss De Agrella has a B.Sc. in Biology and Chemistry. She has worked for the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade on

Indigenous Issues and their rights at the United Nations. In Brussels, she worked at the European Commission in both the Directorate Generals of External Relations and Education and Culture. At the United Nations in New York, she represented youth and women on the Canadian Delegation for the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-9). In India, she worked for the

Canadian International Development Agency regarding rural women and micro credits. Miss De Agrella also recently spent a year working as a language instructor in the Republic of Korea. Her interests span a broad spectrum of issues, which include gender, human and indigenous rights, the environment, health and medicine, nuclear disarmament and the small arms trade.

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) is the oldest women's peace organization in the world. It was founded in April 1915, in the Hague, the Netherlands, by some 1300 women from Europe and North America, from countries at war against each other and neutral ones, who came together in a Congress of Women to protest the killing and destruction of the war then raging in Europe. WILPF is an international non governmental organization (NGO) with National Sections in 37 countries, covering all continents. Its International Secretariat is based in Geneva and maintains a New York UN office. Its aims and principles are:

- to bring together women of different political beliefs and philosophies who are united in their determination to study, make known and help abolish the causes and the legitimization of war;
- to work toward world peace; total and universal disarmament; the abolition of violence and coercion in the settlement of conflict and its replacement in every case by negotiation and conciliation;
- to support the civil society to democratize the United Nations system;
- to support the continuous development and implementation of international and humanitarian law;
- to promote political and social equality and economic equity;
- to contribute toward co-operation among all people;
- to enhance environmentally sustainable development.

