

# International Peace Update



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## 50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: A Cause for Celebration or for Despair?

Bruna Nota

With 10 December, the 50th birthday of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) approaching, I want to share with you my reflections on the Declaration's meaning and on its universal application.

In a speech in Boston last month, Betty Burkes, the USWILPF Section President, expressed regret that the Declaration of Human Rights was at all necessary. We, humans, are probably the only beings on earth that do not know instinctively that we have a right to live our lives fully, without fear of persecution, aggression and deprivation. We need a Universal



Declaration of Human Rights to tell us that we have the inherent right to share peacefully and respectfully in the bounty and beauty of our world.

It is even more deplorable that, as we prepare to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Declaration, we are so far from respecting its contents. The 1993 World Conference on Human Rights reaffirmed that: "Human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated". There is no category of people that can enjoy human rights while denying them to others. If one person's rights are violated, all humanity suffers.

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The aims and principles of WILPF are to bring together women of different political and philosophical convictions united in their determination to study, make known and help abolish the causes and the concept of war; to work toward world peace and for total and universal disarmament, the abolition of violence and coercion in the settlement of conflicts and the substitution in each case of negotiation and conciliation, the strengthening of the United Nations and its Specialized Agencies, the strengthening of the institution of international law; and to strive for political and social equality, economic equity, cooperation among all people and for development within a sustainable environment.

Conscious that under systems of exploitation and oppression these aims cannot be attained, and that a real and lasting peace and true freedom cannot exist, WILPF's duty is to facilitate by non-violent means the social transformation to permit the inauguration of systems under which social and political equality and economic equity for all are attained without discrimination on the basis of sex, race, religion, or on any other grounds whatsoever.

WILPF sees as its ultimate goal the establishment of an international economic order founded on meeting the needs of all peoples and not on profit and privilege.

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Your articles are welcome. Deadlines: January 10, March 10, May 10, July 10, September 10, November 10. Opinions expressed in signed articles are not necessarily endorsed by WILPF.

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Moreover, there is no hierarchy of rights. To see how all rights are indivisible, interdependent and interrelated, let us examine briefly just a few articles of the Universal Declaration:

**Art. 3:** *Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person. No one shall be held in slavery or servitude.*

**Art. 22:** *Everyone is entitled to the realization of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity.*

**Art. 23:** *Everyone has the right to work.*

**Art. 25:** *Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services.*

**Art. 26:** *Everyone has the right to education.*

Any one of the 30 articles in the Declaration relates to all the others. Each one helps to clarify specific situations and circumstances, but the infringement of any one undermines the integrity and the rights of the person. Let us examine a number of questions, taking Article 3 as a reference point.

#### Wars and preparation for war

How can anyone talk of 'just wars' when in any war, life, liberty and security of the person are trampled on, prisoners are held in slavery and servitude? How can war and preparation for war be seen as enhancing or enforcing security when even the most basic security disappears in conditions of war? To ensure respect of human rights we must ensure that war, and preparation for war, including the production, sale and accumulation of instruments of war are abolished, as all preparation for war is preparation for the abuse of human rights.

#### Violence against women

Most, if not all, societies still condone or at least remain silent in many situations when violence is perpetrated against women. Physical, economic and psychological violence is a serious threat to life, liberty and security of women. How can anyone condone the imprisonment of women in their homes, in cases where they are held in virtual slavery and servitude with every possibility that their lives and security are at risk? The sexual exploitation of women and girls is an infringement of their human rights.

#### Basic human needs

The right to life, liberty and security are severely threatened when there is lack of food, shelter, health care and education. A large portion of the world's population is denied these rights while corporations are granted the status of 'persons' and are given the same rights as humans! The protection of the corporations' supposed rights is taking precedence over the rights of people with more and more evident catastrophic consequences.



### Working conditions

How can anyone justify working conditions that do not provide for living wages, and impose conditions of work that threaten the liberty, security and life of the person? Again, the right of shareholders to receive high profits from their investments is given precedence over the right of people to earn decent wages, in a safe workplace where their dignity is respected.

### Protection of minorities

Why, even when nations have signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, are minorities (racial, sexual, religious) not protected? Their security, even their life, is too often at risk.

### No reason for despair

We have briefly seen how the infringement of any one article of the Declaration carries the weight of transgressing fundamental human rights. Should we then say that the 50th anniversary of the Declaration is cause not for celebration but for regret and even despair? I do not think so. I believe that one of the main reasons human rights are routinely violated is because we take a minimalist and legalistic approach to the interpretation of the Declaration. We have disassociated it from our common humanity. The fact that the nations have agreed on a Magna Carta of human rights is progress. The fact that we are refining the meanings of these clauses is progress. Consciousness always precedes action, and the enhanced consciousness of the ideal we are striving for motivates us towards the actions that will see the letter and the spirit of the Declaration enacted. One of the essential elements is an increased knowledge and participation of all the citizens in civic affairs. But a dynamic and vibrant democratic citizenry is the best (maybe the only) antidote to abuses of power, be they by governments or by corporations or by other citizens.

Only by the active and caring involvement of the citizens will the rights to life, liberty and security of persons and communities be protected and enhanced. Active and caring involvement means assuming the responsibilities that are associated with our rights. Our responsibilities, individually and as a community, require us to adopt practices that ensure the health of the earth, air, water and all its inhabitants. They require us to ensure a just sharing of all resources, through the availability of education, food, shelter, sanitation, health care. Our responsibilities demand that we take great care to ensure that our governments are elected fairly, that they are accountable to us to carry out the mandate we give them. This mandate includes the full respect of all human rights, the provision of the human-based (rather than military) security in which we can care for each other in trusting and responsible communities.

As Gregg Easterbrook writes: "Regardless of whether our mettle is natural or supernatural, purpose is something people can make by leading moral lives and helping carry one another's burdens. Here is a logic of meaning that seems inescapable. If it is true that a divinity gave us being, it is incumbent on people to treat one another lovingly and with justice, earning that divinity's good will. Or, if it is true that no divinity exists, then it is incumbent on people to treat one another lovingly and with justice, honouring the life force they all share. In either case, the human promise is the same." (1)

1) From an article adapted from "Beside Still Waters: Searching for Meaning in an Age of Doubt" by Gregg Easterbrook and printed in the Globe and Mail, Oct. 24, 1998 page D5.

*Bruna Nota is WILPF's  
International President*

## What About Economic, Social & Cultural Rights?

The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) opened its 19th session at the Palais des Nations in Geneva by hearing remarks from the United Nation's High-Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson; the Chairman, Philip Alston, and a series of statements from NGO's charging violations of ESCR in the countries whose reports would be discussed by the panel from the 16th of November to 4th December. The nations examined were Israel, Cyprus, Switzerland, Germany and Canada. On the 30th of November, the Committee held a day-long general discussion on the right to education.

Mary Robinson said that the Committee played "a unique leading role in promoting human rights" and had pioneered a number of marking methods of great use for other committees and commissions in the field. She further stated that during a recent visit to China, she had committed her office to helping that

country to ratify the International Covenant on ESCR.

In his opening speech, Mr. Alston spoke briefly on the relationship between poverty and the absence of ESCR in the report of UNDP on "overcoming poverty". He also cited as an encouraging development an acknowledgment by Amnesty International that it would begin to pay attention to ESCR. Meanwhile, he criticized the USA, for its continuing exhibition of a highly public disregard for ESCR whenever these came up in various international contexts. He further said that this policy is extremely dangerous as the USA has great influence with other governments.

At the time this IPU is going to press, WILPF is closely following the examination of the countries in question and will soon inform Sections on the discussed subjects, raised concerns and the final conclusions of CESCR.



# Who Cares About the Butterflies?

Cecilia Zarate-Laun

I want to demonstrate at a micro level the devastating consequences the globalization process has for countries outside the centres of economic decision-making.

The Colombian Pacific Coast is generically known as the Choco, although it touches four provinces: Choco, Cauca Valley, Cauca and Narino. It lies between Colombia's borders with Panama on the North and with Ecuador on the South. On the East it is bounded by the western side of the Andes mountain range. The Pacific Coast stretches 1,300 km in length. Of a population of 900,000, 40% live in urban centres and the rest in small communities dispersed along the rivers and the Coast. Ninety percent are Afro-Colombians, 5% indigenous (the Embera, Catio, Tule and Cuna nations) and 5% mestizos.

The region of Choco has the highest concentration of endemic species in the world. This makes it one of the richest reserves of biodiversity on the planet. The Choco is cut off from the rest of Colombia by the Western Andes range and by the impenetrability of its territory. This isolation has helped to protect its biodiversity with tropical rainforests, swamps and rivers covering 80% of the area. The Choco contains 7,000 to 8,000 species of plants, many of them not botanically classified yet, and at least 600 species of birds, more than are found in all of North America. Forty-seven percent of the reptile population is endemic and just in the region of Anchicaya alone there have been reported 525 species of butterflies, 37% of them endemic.

For the past 500 years the Choco has been used as a dispensary from which natural resources are taken away, always to integrate them into the mercantilist international system. The Spanish invaded the Choco at the beginning of the 16th Century. From the mountain ridges of Darien—a region in the Choco—Balboa “discovered” the Pacific Ocean. Soon the Choco became one of the traditional sources of gold for the Spanish Crown. Before the mining in the Choco, platinum was an element unknown to humanity. In 1740 the first samples were sent to Spain.

The manpower provided by the indigenous people diminished, as the population declined to one-tenth of its size before the Spanish Conquest due to mistreatment and epidemics of smallpox, measles and typhoid. The Spanish Crown decided in the middle of the 16th Century to introduce black slaves from Guinea, the Congo, Sudan and Angola to provide the labour needed for continuing the pillage of natural resources. Soon, the slaves also rebelled, fleeing from the mines and forming settlements in inaccessible areas called “palenques”. These former slaves, called “cimarrones”, kept attacking production and harming the economic interests of the European colonizers. In the 19th Century independence was won from Spain and the Vice-royalty of New Granada became the Republic of Colombia. Ownership changed hands because the aristocratic creoles (descendants of Spaniards born in America) wanted to take power and control of the national territory. The structures of the mining economy continued. Slavery was abolished in Colombia on 1 January 1852.

The Afro-Colombian communities lived in urban and rural centres along the river banks, surviving by agriculture, fishing and small-scale mining. They developed a deep sense of community, kinship and oral tradition, keeping alive generation after generation, almost untouched, the traditions of their African ancestors to today. The indigenous communities are less visible in small settlements located in clearings in the forests. They also hunt, fish and grow crops or harvest plants from the jungle.

Recently the Pacific Coast has been the object of an ambitious plan of development by the Colombian government called “Plan Pacifico”. The objective is very simple: to exploit the vast natural resources of the Choco (gold, platinum, uranium, oil, precious woods etc.) to obtain wealth to pay Colombia's foreign debt. The plan seeks to open and modernize the productive system for the world markets. In other words, to implement globalization.

The Pacific Plan includes the construction of at least 11 roads, most of them to permit more access to the Pacific from the Andean region, and to improve North-South communication. The most conspicuous example is the finishing of the Panamerican Highway, completing the 108 km of the famous Darien gap which remains unbuilt between Panama and Colombia. This highway represents the ultimate dream of the promoters of NAFTA, neo-liberalism and free trade, because it will unite the Americas from Alaska to Chile. The Darien gap is one of the most fragile and important ecological reserves in the world because its



swamps and rivers have kept a great variety of plants and animals and provides important evidence for the study of biological links between North and South America. All these highways will guarantee to big capital the permanent flow of goods and natural resources throughout the Americas.

The Plan also calls for pipelines, hydroelectric projects, ports, a complex railroad system and the spectacular project of the construction of an inter-oceanic canal to connect Colombia's Pacific and Atlantic coasts. A naval base in the Bay of Malaga will serve to protect projects from civilian or guerrilla protests. All these plans include mining and deforestation on a commercial scale. Although the Plan Pacifico has an ecological component and speaks of "sustainable development", the region is being prepared for the opening of markets recommended by the IMF and international banking.

**Implementing the Plan Pacifico**  
Since February of 1997, the civilian population of the Choco has been intimidated, kidnapped and threatened by groups which identify themselves as paramilitary or "self-defense" groups. They force the people to get out, leaving behind their lands, crops and cattle. As a method of intimidation, persons taken at random are executed in front of their community. Pax Christi International cited the case of the small settlement of Vijao, where the youth Marino Lopez was decapitated and dismembered to terrorize the population and cause them to leave. Simultaneously the area was bombarded by the Armed Forces of Colombia.

Once abandoned, the small towns are occupied by the army and paramilitaries, who have no attachment to the land,

creating a concentration of land in the hands of owners whose identity remains unknown to the public. The refugees, mainly women and children, live in camps. (For more information see the web site of the Colombia Support Network for Letters from a CSN volunteer at [www.igc.apc.org/csn](http://www.igc.apc.org/csn)).

### Consequences of globalization

There are several consequences of globalization which affect people at individual level. Let us look at the Choco refugees, for example.

(1) The people are required or forced to participate in the market economy. The Choco refugees who were self-sufficient now have to sell their labour in the over-crowded labor market or become prostitutes or beggars.

(2) Globalization creates a "mutation" in people who begin to believe that if one does not participate in the market economy—that is if one does not have money or a Visa card—one is not a human being.

(3) Little by little globalization transforms humanity into a collection of passive consumers alienated by television, captivated by sports as a business, computer slaves, buyers of useless electric products.

(4) With globalization, economic power becomes stronger than political power, or the economic power of the minorities is converted into political power serving their interests. Democracy is lost because decisions are centralized in the board rooms of corporations. Ironically, the much criticized 'central planning' of former socialist countries becomes a reality of western democracies.

(5) Globalizing the economy is carried out not to serve the needs of the majority, but to serve the conspicuous

consumption of a minority. In other words, goods are produced only to obtain profit and not to serve humanity.

(6) Globalization in its anxiety to sell degrades humanity; it converts human activities which have great dignity into objects to be bought and sold. For example, the story tellers of the Choco will no longer tell stories true to their oral tradition but rather tell them to obtain money. The subsistence economy has ended and the storyteller needs money to buy Coca-Cola. The children of the Choco will grow up with Mickey Mouse as entertainment instead of the legends of their elders.

Thus, little by little we arrive at the final objective of globalization: to convert us all into consumers where fraternity, solidarity and human compassion are unknown.

The struggle to regain the soul of humanity, the preservation of nature and of the beautiful, brightly-coloured butterflies of the Choco is carried out in the jungles and shanty towns of Colombia today. □

*Cecilia Zarate-Laun is a member of LIMPAL Colombia and a co-founder of the Colombia Support Network with headquarters in Madison, Wisconsin [csn@igc.apc.org](mailto:csn@igc.apc.org)*





## ILO Tripartite Meeting of Export Processing Zones-Operating Countries

Olga Magdalena Carrillo

From 28 September to 2 October 1998, WILPF had the opportunity to participate as an observer in the tripartite meeting of export processing zones operating countries.

The ILO headquarters in Geneva had on this occasion the presence of an NGO, WILPF, which differentiated itself by having the faces and thoughts of women workers. This demonstrates that within our organization there is a process of growing democratization. The experience enriched WILPF at the international level and showed one of its objectives: to have peace with social justice.

Thanks to the Initiative of our Secretary General, Barbara Lochbihler, Olga Carrillo, representing the Costa Rican section, traveled to Geneva for this meeting. The principal proposals which were presented for consideration and discussion were:

- The need to formulate a new ILO convention reflecting today's realities faced by three-fourths of developing countries which follow the export processing zone development model. This new convention would especially regulate the intensification of labour, a brutal form of exploitation used to extract more earnings at the expense of women, and which each day changes our industrial working class into one more commodity, taking away its humanity.
- The need to ratify, by those countries who have not already done so, ILO conventions No. 156, 168 and 173.
- The realization of a thorough study on occupational health with a meth-

odology which takes into account gender, the organization of work inside companies, length of the working day and the intensity of work.

In my view, the meeting was characterized by the ILO's conservative approach which the trade union representatives also adopted. The exceptions were Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic and Sri Lanka. The trade union representatives seemed to be more interested in showing off their diplomatic skills than in defending the working class. In spite of this, WILPF was able to mark its presence and the trade union representatives from Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic and Sri Lanka defended our proposals. Because of that, the discussion on women workers lasted a whole afternoon and half of the following morning.

At this meeting, we were only able to give recommendations. Nevertheless, the fact that the final documents cover over-time and labour intensity shows advancement, particularly for women workers who daily confront globalization in their work in the processing zones.

It is in our interest, on the one hand, that all WILPF sections in export processing zones-operating countries reach out to women working in these zones, and on the other, that they support the proposals we made in Geneva in their countries and in the local ILO offices. Now, more than ever, we must be influential in solving the problems faced by women workers, and open spaces for the poorest among the poor, to make WILPF alive and in solidarity, not only in words but also in deeds.

We underline the importance that WILPF continue to make proposals in international fora which reflect class and gender, and which truly reflect the actions and beliefs of our sections and our countries. □

*(Translated from Spanish)*

*Olga Magdalena Carrillo is a member of LIMPAL Costa Rica and of its Committee on Women Workers.*

**Prior to WILPF's 1999 IEC meeting in Costa Rica, there will be a three-day seminar (29-31 July) focusing on the conditions of women workers in export processing zones (EPZ), with a particular focus on Latin America.**



## GA discusses Globalization and New Agenda on Nuclear Weapons

This 53rd UN General Assembly began with a high level ministerial dialogue on globalization. As spelt out in the General Assembly resolution of last year, this dialogue is the first of a series of planned annual meetings to be conducted "in response to the imperatives of mutual interests and benefits, genuine interdependence, shared responsibility and the partnership for achieving sustained economic growth and sustainable development in accordance with relevant resolutions of the GA and recent UN conferences, as well as for improving the international economic environment that is conducive to such development."

Criticism of the IMF and the World Bank was loud. Countries from the South have asserted for decades that global economic policy should be dealt with by all countries inside the United Nations, not by groupings like the G7 or in the Bretton Woods Institutions. A major question discussed in the panels and plenaries was about the issue of financing development between now and the year 2001. The other controversial question was about reform of the international financial system which is in crisis. The UN Office will be preparing a special report on the North South dialogue as it is so relevant to our work on globalization. Please contact us if you would like a copy.

Although the General Assembly is not over as we go to print, the six Committees are winding up their work and will be ready to take their resolutions to the plenary of the whole. Of particular interest to WILPF members is the fabulous result in the First Committee (disarmament and security).

The New Agenda Coalition vote saw 12 out of 16 NATO countries abstain instead of voting against. The split in NATO over nuclear doctrine has begun thanks to the hard work of NGOs who pushed Japan, Australia, Austria, Norway, Denmark, Argentina, Germany and the Netherlands to abstain instead of obediently voting against this disarmament resolution. The YES votes from countries in which we have sections: Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Ireland, Sierra Leone and the Philippines was also really heartening.

Other resolutions passed by this committee had to do with a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone in the Middle East, the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space and the Nuclear Testing in South Asia.

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### Tentative dates of UN Meetings in 1999

end January-	Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, New York.
8-12 February	Intergovernmental Working Group of Experts on the Human Rights of Migrants, Geneva.
March	Committee on the Status of Women, New York.
15-19 March	Preparatory Meeting for World Conference on Racism, Geneva.
22 March - 30 April	55th Session of the Commission on Human Rights, Geneva.
April	Commission on Sustainable Development, New York.
26 April-14 May	Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights, Geneva.
May	NPT PrepCom, New York.

1999 is the UN International Year of Aging

## Conference on Nuclear Weapons and Security Needs

Michel Ducommun and Noriko Tada

The conference, organized by WILPF, was held in Vienna on 10 - 12 October 1998 and was attended by women and men from Austria, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Japan, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland and Switzerland. The seminar focused on "nuclear radiation and health", "European security", the "Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)", the "International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)", and the "Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO)". The discussions were lively and actions were proposed for "making a difference".



From left: Barbara Lochbihler, Freda Meissner-Blau, Rosalie Bertell and Silvi Sterr.

The conference opened with a public meeting with speeches by Dr. Rosalie Bertell on "Health, Nuclear Power and IAEA," and by Ms. Freda Meissner-Blau on "Neutrality and Nuclear-Freedom in an Endangered World."

Dr. Bertell gave statistics about nuclear radiation and health. She informed the public that the US National Academy of Science predicted in 1990 that one in 400 will die of cancer if he/she received 1 milliseverts (mSv) radiation exposure per year. For the US population of 260 million, this is 650,000 "extra" cancer deaths. The permissible dose per year in the US and Canada (and most other countries) is 5mSv per year. There are many health effects which the regulators accept. Health effects are recognized by the International Commission on Radiological Protection (ICRP), but are not considered detrimental: loss of cells, damage to blood vessels, secondary tissue damage, fibrosis with reduction in organ function, visual impairment (cataract), diminished fertility, decrease in glandular secretions, neurological effects and vascular reactions.

Ms. Freda Meissner-Blau, candidate for presidency 1989, founding member of the Green Party, Austria, talked about the gap between rich and poor, economic breakdowns and ecological damage as the future dangers to human societies. She referred to different wars and disputes to show that armies are not able to solve conflicts today and will certainly not be able to do so in the future. She also talked about NATO and its policy on nuclear weapons and its out-of-area actions. She criticized the eastward expansion of NATO and the consequences it has for the economies of the new NATO members. The final part was on the importance and the danger of abolishing neutrality. She used the example of Austria to show how neutrality is slowly and quietly diminished even though it is firmly anchored in the constitution.

On the second day, the seminar was addressed by Mr. Jaroslaw Pietrusiewicz, diplomat at the Polish Mission to the OSCE (Poland is the OSCE chair until 1999), Ms. Claudia Krieglsteiner from

the Vienna Peace Bureau, and Ms. Györgyi Bezdán from Alba Kör, Hungary.

The proposed OSCE Charter on European Security was discussed by Mr. Pietrusiewicz. He described the histories and the ongoing debate about such a charter. The OSCE takes a comprehensive view of security, and OSCE bodies and institutions take a co-operative approach to a wide range of security-related issues including arms control, preventive diplomacy, confidence- and security-building measures, human rights, election monitoring and economic security. The relationship with NATO is the basis of information exchange. Conference participants strongly encouraged the OSCE to work in the field of conflict prevention without NATO support, and recommended that the OSCE make its success stories known to the public.

Ms. Claudia Krieglsteiner spoke about 'European Policy, Peace Policy and Neutrality'. Her main focus was on the security policy of the European Union



(EU) as a building block of the organization's posture. In her speech she spoke about the ongoing militarization of the EU. Her arguments were based on different treaties of the EU, which contain important facts about the connections between the EU and the Western European Union (WEU). She showed how treaties state the role of WEU in working out decisions on security policies and actions of the EU. She further explained the important role of neutral states to take part in the security discussions of the EU, and the importance of opposing a new military blockbuilding in Europe, which would play the role of a world police together with the USA. "It is important for the peace movements to do something against this militarisation of the EU and the attacks on neutrality", she stated at the end of her speech.

Ms. Bezdan from Hungary shared her thoughts on "NATO expansion in Eastern Europe." The massive media campaign has resulted in a referendum approving the government's decision to join NATO. There is pressure for integration, because the multinational corporations need to create large units, expanding to Eastern Europe to secure markets. According to official estimations, NATO membership would lead to a 45% increase in Hungarian defense spending.

On the final conference day, participants visited the IAEA, the CTBTO, and the OSCE. After the visits, we shared information and discussed strategies for our further actions. The lively discussions and debates during the three days of meetings, the speeches made, and the visits to the different institutions led to interesting proposals for actions:

- writing letters to foreign ministers of the countries which were represented

by the participants; to the OSCE; to representatives on Freedom-of-the-Media; to OSCE Chairman-In-Office from Poland; to Norway, as it will take on the 1999 OSCE Chairmanship.

- WILPF Sections which were not able to attend the Conference were encouraged to write similar letters to their governments.

The following is a summary of the content of the letters and represents the actions decided by the participants:

Although the Conference recognizes that the OSCE is mainly an intergovernmental body, the NGO's views and suggestions on security issues and expertise in peace are not taken adequately into account.

To get more involved, the Conference recommends that the OSCE should organize regular briefings for NGOs about the status of the security debate. Furthermore, the Conference recommends to the OSCE to create a mechanism for NGO's to submit their comments on security matters.

On the gender question, the participants on one hand welcome the appointment of two gender focal points; on the other hand, they criticize the exclusion and invisibility of women in peace and security decision-making. Thus, the Conference urges OSCE to develop a system wide plan to improve this fact.

Environmental aspects of security were another subject discussed at the seminar. In the opinion of the participants, the OSCE should give more attention and develop concrete actions regarding those aspects.

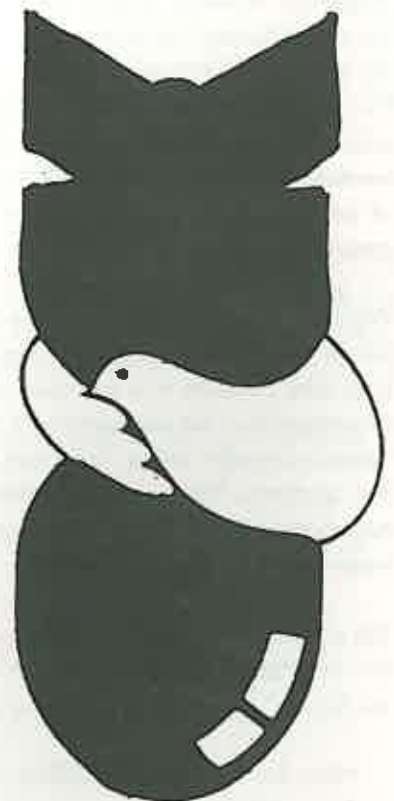
Finally, the Conference participants expressed concern over the low level of awareness in the general public of

the OSCE. In particular, the success stories of conflict prevention work should be presented to the mass media. The participants urged the OSCE to enlarge and improve its media work.

The participants also decided to write letters to the Austrian and Swiss Heads of State stressing the importance of maintaining neutrality, and urging neutral States to play a role in building future security structures and to contribute to disarmament, conflict-solving and confidence-building.

This article gives only a short overview of the Conference. The WILPF International Office is preparing a report which will include all speeches, summaries of the discussions and decisions. It will be available by the end of 1998. □

*Michel Ducommun and Noriko Tada are Interns at the Geneva Office.*





## From Lebanon

Our International Executive Committee member, Siba Fahoum, translated the entire WILPF paper on globalization into Arabic. The paper has raised considerable interest and many have been encouraged by it to write articles and specific aspects of globalization. She is translating into English one of the articles on globalization from the perspective of Islam.

The section has contacted other groups and political parties and together launched a media protest against the poor social and cultural programmes offered to the population.

We are working closely with other groups to monitor the activities of TNCs in our country. Together we expose those companies and their activities that threaten our sovereignty, our environment and our economy.

There is deep concern over the very dangerous military alliance between Israel and Turkey. It is directed against the neighbouring Arab countries. The first action has been Turkey's mobilization and massing of its army on the border with Syria, accusing the latter of providing a haven and training ground for the Kurds.

We are very glad about WILPF's position in favour of lifting sanctions against Iraq. Siba Fahoum is a member of a committee that has just launched a signature campaign calling for a halt to the sanctions. The aim is to collect a million signatures. The petition has already collected close to 150,000.

We continue to struggle for peace, justice and human rights here and in the world.

*Noha Beainie, International Executive Committee member.*

## News from Chile

The Chilean WILPF section designed a work programme which we think responds to the realities, not only of Chile, but of Latin America as a whole:

*7 November:* A get-together with women's groups for the purpose of fundraising, informing about WILPF, and recruiting new members.

*28 November:* A Group session with psychologist to discuss problems generated by violence in the family and society.

*Date to be announced* for a Round Table, moderated by the economist

Andrés Andrade, to discuss globalization and its projections in all areas.

In addition to this, our section is very active regarding the grave accusations against the dictator Augusto Pinochet which he is trying to get rid off. As WILPF and democratic women, we ask for international solidarity, we believe that violations of human rights are not limited by borders. Pinochet must be judged and sanctioned because he represents all dictators who have stained this world with blood. We thank you all for the solidarity which you have given us.

*Elkana Reyes, Lucía Ceroni, Viviana Donoso*

## Possibilities of Women in Russia: Declared and Real

*(The following excerpts from a statement to the meeting of the OSCE on Implementation on Human Dimension Issues, Warsaw, 26.10 to 6.11, 1998, by Valentina Icherevatenko show what the Russian section is facing.)*

Article 19, item 3 of the Russian Constitution proclaimed equality of rights and possibilities of women and men of Russia. I shall speak not about the words of the constitution but about reality.

1. The phenomenon which may be called "Feminization of Poverty" is observed in Russia in the last years. Its main realities:

- 70% of the unemployed in Russia are women.
- On the labour market women are concentrated in the lower paid sectors: light industry 99%, education 95%, health care 75%. At the same time, highly paid and prestigious sectors of the labour market are occupied by men.
- The permanent growth of the salary gap between women and men for the same quality of labour is taking place: women's salary is on average 1.5-2 times less than that of men.

2. Lack of protection for women in Russia is evident from the fact that the State

prefers to solve its financial problems sacrificing first of all the interests of women:

- The social financial assistance payments for children and for single mothers are not paid in many regions of Russia—in some cases during two years.
- In December 1997 the lower chamber of Russian parliament—the Duma excluded from the state budget allocations for the program "Planning of the Family."
- Some schemes of the presently accomplished Pension Reform in Russia have a certain impact of decreasing women's pension to 40% from that of men's; the reason is that according to these reforms the years of nursery of a baby from birth to 3 years are now excluded from the general period of labour.

3. Lack of protection of women in Russia shows itself also in the absence of state mechanisms of preventing family violence. (According to data given to Parliamentary Hearings in 1996, 14 thousands women in Russia annually perish because of domestic violence, not to mention larger figures of violence which did not result in death but evidently had a heavy physical and psychological impact).

*(continued on page 12)*



## Human Wrongs, Human Rights Report on the Seminar held by WILPF-UK

Participants in this informative and inspirational event, held to mark the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, were provided with a detailed insight into the workings of the UN Human Rights machinery.

The seminar, held on 24th October in London, was chaired by Baroness Gould who was the Leader of the Council of Europe Delegation to the UN Conference on Women in 1995 in Beijing. Suzanne Long, the Human Rights Secretary of the UN Association, Sonja Wölte and Tania Connaughton Espino, WILPF Human Rights Interns in 1997 and 1998, respectively, spoke about different aspects of the UN Human Rights Machinery.

Baroness Gould spoke of the progress made by the UN in relation to women's rights. She went on to outline their current position in the UK concerning poverty and employment, violence against women and power, sharing with us some alarming statistics. She called for a change in the way courts deal with child prostitutes, urging prosecution of the abusers not their child victims. Finally the case was put for the need for gender analysis in all policies. Principles must become practice.

Suzanne Long explained in detail the Human Rights structures at the UN and the work of UNA in exerting gentle, continuous pressure to influence its workings. She dismissed the call for "reform" of the UN, urging rather its "development". The UN needs to grow new mechanisms and drop old ones. In fact new Human Rights systems have developed. Special Rapporteurs have been appointed to visit countries and the UN has become involved in field work, for example monitoring elections and post-conflict situations.

A Human Rights High Commissioner has been appointed and an International Criminal Court for War Crimes set up. A Human Rights Defenders Declaration is to be adopted on December 10th 1998 by the General Assembly to give support to individuals and groups defending human rights. Finally, human rights are being mainstreamed across all other UN committees.

Sonja Wölte looked at the UN's human rights work from a gender perspective, reminding us that it was only in 1993 that the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights officially recognized that women's rights are human rights. It affirmed that they are "an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights." However, the women-specific UN instruments—the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)—had weaknesses. For example, there are a high number of reservations to CEDAW, allowing States to declare that specific provisions do not apply to them, and reports from many states are long overdue.

Tania Connaughton Espino spoke of her experiences at this year's Commission on Human Rights (CHR) and the interventions made by WILPF, one of which included the potential effects of the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI). She stressed the importance of emphasizing to governments that women's human rights be discussed throughout the agenda of the Commission. The UK's recent voting positions were highlighted and we were left wondering how this fails to be newsworthy in our national press.

Workshops followed in the afternoon, allowing us to try to put the inspiration gained into formulating some practical ideas for continuing our work on human rights. The most immediate outcome on WILPF-UK's agenda will be to become involved at appropriate stages with our government's report to the CEDAW Committee due in June 1999. □

Mary Alys, member of WILPF-UK

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More information on the seminar can be obtained from the section: Balcombe House, Teapot Lane, Baltonsborough, Somerset BA6 8QE.

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C'est avec grande plaisir que nous annonçons la parution d'un supplément au bulletin *Paix et liberté*, publié par la Ligue internationale de femmes pour la paix et la liberté - section française.

Ce supplément contient les traductions en français de quelques articles parus dans *International Peace Update*.

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# Clean Clothes Campaign

Hildegunde Dick

Hardly a T-shirt, skirt or sweater we buy and wear is made in home-based factories. Companies, such as Nike, H&M, C&A, Adidas etc., outsource their production to countries in Central America, Asia and Eastern Europe. The daily wage of workers in El Salvador is less than US\$ 5.00 and in Bangladesh about US\$ 0.5. Mainly women are working in export processing zones from 12 to 16 hours a day, six and sometimes seven days a week, or until they have met the quota of pieces set. They are paid according to their daily output.

The Clean Clothes Campaign started in 1990 in the Netherlands. Up to now, platforms from ten European countries work on the common aim to improve the working conditions in the garment industries worldwide. The campaigns are coalitions of consumer organizations, trade unions, researchers, solidarity groups, third world shops and other activists. They

inform consumers about the conditions in which their garments and sports wear are produced and pressure retailers to take responsibility for these conditions. The main demand is that they should accept a code of good conduct which includes eight issues: employment is freely chosen, there is no discrimination in employment, child labour is not used, freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining are respected, living wages are paid, hours of work are not excessive, working conditions are decent, an employment relationship is established. Companies should also accept a system of independent monitoring.

Due to the pressure of the campaigns in Europe and in the US, companies have begun to establish internal codes of conduct. These self-imposed codes provide better working conditions. The dynamics show that companies are concerned about their

image, but scarcely agree to impose control from the outside.

The campaigns co-operate with organizations all over the world, especially garment workers organizations (including sweatshop workers, home workers and undocumented migrant workers).

Recently the Austrian platform Clean Clothes Campaign/Austria joined the European campaign. One of the leading organizations is the NGO Frauensolidarität, which organized in October 1998 an international forum on working conditions in the garment industries. Trade unionists of three continents and other experts participated. Also at this time, a postcard-action started addressing Nike and Adidas and the Minister of Economics in Austria, demanding their commitment to the code of labour practices. Within the first three weeks, 10.000 postcards were sent to the companies. The mailing-action is still going on. This lively expression of interest will be helpful for negotiations, which will be the next step of the Campaign.

For more information visit: <http://www.cleanclothes.org>. □

Hildegunde Dick works with Frauensolidarität (Solidarity Among Women), an Austrian NGO, that prepares a magazine in German with a focus on women in the Global South. For more information contact:

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(continued from page 10)

And at the same time the State Duma delays for more than four years an urgently needed Law on "Prevention of Violence in the Family." Also, in Russia, shelters for women and children who undergo domestic violence are periodically absent.

4. The level of maternal mortality in Russia is 8-10 times higher than in Western countries, with a frightening number of abortions—officially 2,600,000 in 1996. Until now, Russia has not created its own industry of contraceptives and the price of imported contraceptives is much higher than most Russian women can afford. Hence, health-damaging abortions become the only form of contraception women can use. From this point of view, the above mentioned cut from State

budget on the financing of the "Planing of the Family" program was a real blow to Russian women.

5. The described State politics towards women of Russian become possible because of the following:

- Women are insufficiently represented at the levels of state decision-making
- An insufficient number of women in public organization at different levels which would be capable of protecting the interests of women;
- Solutions of the Fourth World Women's Conference in Beijing (1995) and of the Russian Post-Beijing National Platform of Action on developing Women's Participation in the society were left unrealized and not implemented. □



# Human Rights and Peace Teaching

Monique Prindezis

The Centre on Human Rights and Peace Teaching (CIFEDHOP), organizes each year in Geneva an International Training Session for educators in the field of human rights education. From 5-11 July 1998, CIFEDHOP held its 16th annual session.

The seven-day sessions provide a foundation for developing human rights and peace teaching in all environments and at all levels. It is a unique experience where educators, facilitators, researchers, NGO representatives, and governmental and non-governmental experts have the opportunity to meet, share their experience, and discuss the development of teaching methodologies which respect fundamental human freedoms.

The 1998 session's objectives were to enable participants to acquire: knowledge and understanding of the legal and educational aspects of human rights conventions and texts; an understanding of democratic education and the non-violent resolution of conflicts; and skills to enable them to share these insights with others.

In total, the session was composed of some 40 hours of discussions on philosophical, legal and educational aspects of human rights and multiculturalism; visits to international organizations; and workshops to illustrate the contents and methodologies. In addition, there were optional intercultural evening sessions, in particular the "Forum" which allowed participants to display and discuss their own activities in the field of human rights and peace education.

The event was divided into linguistic sections (this year, French and English) which held separate sessions on the same theme. The two groups met and mingled in the opening session at the United Nations, the visits to the UN and the Red Cross Museum, the evening intercultural activities, and all breaks and meals.

The opening debate at the United Nations set the tone for this session, with the participation of Wole Soyinka, Nobel Prize for Literature and until recently exiled Nigerian dissident. Mr. Soyinka shared his views and experience on the oppression of cultural minorities. In his speech, marked by both dismay at the present global situation and hope for the future, he underlined that the greatest challenge of our time is to eliminate racism and eradicate inequality between human beings as well as in the structures which support them. Throughout the remainder of the week, a number of round tables continued this discussion, highlighting, for example, the respect of cultural diversity in social and scholastic integration, and the realities of learning how to live together.

To assist participants in understanding the issues and the environment, a number of international human rights texts were examined; for example, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child amongst others. Case studies helped participants dwell further upon these texts and to look at the methods of operation of the organisms that monitor them.

The workshops were aimed at helping participants to transfer the information they gained from the discussions to their own classroom setting through experience with interactive methods for learning and applying human rights, assistance in developing appropriate teaching strategies, and presentation of a variety of teaching methods and materials. The learnings were multiple in that the workshops not only allowed participants to see different pedagogical methods and materials, it also allowed them to experience the multicultural aspects first-hand within their working groups.

This multiculturalism was evident throughout the conference: the 16th session was attended by 65 participants from 42 countries. To facilitate the experience, participants were assisted during the entire session by CIFEDHOP's pedagogical team of some 15 persons from ten countries. This team is composed of educators specialized in pedagogical, social, legal, and political sciences, and who have experience in all forms of education.

For further information on CIFEDHOP and its activities, please contact us at  
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1207 Geneva.  
Telephone: +41-22-7364422,  
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*Monique Prindezis is Director of  
CIFEDHOP*



## HIROSHIMA WITNESS FOR PEACE The Testimony of A-bomb Survivor Suzuko Numata

When the A-bomb Exhibition at the Smithsonian Institute was cancelled in 1995, we strongly felt that Japan should take the initiative in testifying to the terrible effects of A-bombing. We decided to translate into English a non-fiction work with historical perspectives on Ms. Suzuko Numata (75), A-bomb survivor, by Mr. Chikahiro Hiroiwa who is a newspaper reporter.

Our translation was published on July 18, 1998 under the title of Hiroshima Witness for Peace: The Testimony of A-bomb Survivor Suzuko Numata. It lays bare the tragedy and cruelty of war and atom bombs by relating the experiences of Ms. Numata who has devoted half of her life as A-bomb witness to building a peaceful world.

The synopsis of the book is as follows:

Suzuko Numata lost her leg in the explosion of the atomic bomb in Hiroshima at the age of twenty-two. Later she overcame her sufferings in mind and body, and became a school teacher. At the age of fifty-seven she joined the Ten Feet of Film Campaign, which made documentary films of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and showed them in Europe and the United States. With this trip as a turning point, she became an A-bomb witness testifying to the catastrophe inherent in the existence of nuclear weapons.

While telling her A-bomb experiences to young people coming to Hiroshima, Suzuko noticed that they sympathized with her experiences. What she expected of them, however, was that they would make efforts to build a peace-

ful world and a bright future based on her experiences of horrors of war and the inhumaneness of nuclear arms.

At the same time, she herself felt a compulsion to know why Japan fought the war and why she in ignorance cooperated in that war. This led her to study the causes of armed conflict. She visited overseas battlefields and cultivated friendships with the local people, becoming enlightened in the process. She then took a firm stand on advocating peace in the world. She has been traveling widely carrying her message.

We hope that our book will help build a nuclear-free world.

*Tadatashi Saito*  
Representative of Translators  
Professor of English at Japan Women's University

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**WILPF Women**

I would like to express myself in all your different languages to make you understand my real and deep feelings.

Today, as on many other days, I was thinking about our last Congress in Baltimore, and some tears ran down my cheeks. I thought of the flowered ring of women on the Goucher lawn, when we were all together singing and spreading flowers and bread around. So should be the world: a big round of sisterly souls sharing blossoms, bread and love.

I thought of many sisters who never more will be with us, but whose love and tenderness I will never forget, like Maya from Israel. I thought about Yvonne and Rose; I don't imagine a Congress without their songs. I remember my dear sisters from Bulgaria, Venetta, and Eugenia from Costa Rica with whom I established links of friendship, or my warm and sweet Hanan from Palestine, etc., etc. At this moment I feel very rich; I have the most wonderful treasure of the world: you all. I cannot feel alone when I have sisters all over the world, from Nepal to New York. That makes me strong,

sure and happy. I send for each flowers from the Chilean spring and all my love.  
*Lucia Ceroni, WILPF-Chile*

**But it Ain't Broke! (In response to "What About MILPF?")**

I joined WILPF because it was a peace organisation without boundaries. To me then, the women I identified with WILPF were old and terrifying in their political expertise. They acted out of an acceptance of their full human status and expected others to do the same. The organization neither encouraged nor discouraged male members. If men joined, they needed to accept the name and the affirmative discrimination given women. Hasn't this worked well for eight decades? Has WILPF ever been in danger of becoming MILPF?

The organisation has always affirmed women but does not privilege them. The sheer genius of the founding members was their ability and cour-

age to step outside their own paradigm to lay down a plan for an open, inclusive, flexible organization where women do have "time and space to formulate ideas and express them." The effects of this have been rippling out from 1915 ever since WILPF is free and loose in the world - don't fix it.  
*Hellen Cooke, Canberra.*



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## The Hague Appeal for Peace

In May 1999, one hundred years after the first International Peace Conference held in Den Haag on the proposal of Tzar Nicholas II, thousands of women and men from the world over will gather there again to issue a resounding call for world peace.

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), along with many other organizations, is planning activities for this major peace conference. It certainly is not the first time that women contribute to such events. But did you know that a hundred years ago one woman set out to win others to join in a unanimous demand for peace?

It was a remarkable peace action for the 1899 Hague peace conference and the actor was Margarethe Selenka, born in 1860 in Hamburg, Germany and married to Emil Selenka, a zoologist from Munich.

Margarethe Selenka traveled with her husband whose research projects took him to many parts of the world. She often made scientific investigations on her own, where she would observe the destiny of women. The contacts she made became very helpful to her peace activities.

Margarethe Selenka had great expectations for the peace conference proposed by Nicholas II, and she immediately began to organize support of women the world over for the conference by signing petitions, sending telegrams and letters to be presented there.

Her first step was to put forward a resolution on peace to be debated at

the General Assembly of the "League of German Women's Associations" in Hamburg, Germany, on 5 October 1898. The resolution was adopted. In March 1899 Margarethe Selenka founded the "Munich Committee for Manifestations for the Peace Conference". This committee's task was to raise public interest for the Peace Conference by organizing meetings and demonstrations.

With the slogan 'power of justice against power of violence' Margarethe Selenka aimed to encourage women from as many countries as possible to collect signatures and to hold demonstrations. During the three days before the opening of the Hague Peace Conference.

Her efforts resulted in meetings in many countries on 15 May 1899. Altogether 565 demonstrations were held with hundreds of thousands attending. It was the first worldwide simultaneous peace action in the history of humanity!

The appeal for peace was aimed at the men attending the first Hague Peace Conference, and on 22 May Margarethe Selenka handed the resolutions and messages from the women to the Conference.

The success of these events is even more impressive when one considers the criticism the women were exposed to in press articles filled with mockery and derision. In this manner a Munich newspaper, for example, wrote about the 'peace sisters who think they can judge things such as war and politics about which they know nothing'. Strong opposition against the peace action also came from women. Mainly

arguments from Hermine Diemer are known today. She railed in a 25-page essay filled with war vocabulary and racist expressions against Margarethe Selenka's actions for peace. Hermine Diemer considered it a betrayal to have visions beyond national borders. "War naturally is not peace. Peace means standstill forever", she stated. "The preservation of peace will never be women's business, I think; this we have to leave to the men". Her opinion was to let women preserve the inner peace; raising children and teaching them to love their fatherland.

Such reactions did not stop Margarethe Selenka committing herself to further peace actions. "We need to build a purposeful, serious and systematically organized women's peace movement". To achieve this goal she founded another organization, the 'Central Agency for Efforts to finish the Boer war in which England attacked the Buren people in South of Africa in 1899. Before the outbreak of the first World War, Margarethe Selenka tried to convince the Tzar to refrain from going to war.

Although little is known and written about the life of Margarethe Selenka, we know that she committed herself to humanity and peace until her death in 1923.

If you want to join in the activities for the 1999 Hague Appeal events, please contact the WILPF office in Geneva. We need 'Margarethe Selenkas' who want to act for peace and support the Hague Appeal for Peace 1999! □

*Michel Ducommun, WILPF Intern in social work.*