



E-Newsletter December 2006

Here is our second e-newsletter. We hope you find it useful and would be very grateful if you could forward it to anyone in your Section and beyond, who would be interested and/or could use the information to further WILPF's aims. Thank you for your encouraging words about our logo and the first newsletter.

NEWS FROM NORWAY

Edel Havin Beukes

WILPF-Norway is one of the organisations in the umbrella Forum for Environment and Development (ForUM). ForUM has different working groups and we are represented on the board and in the working groups on Energy and Climate and on Water. We are also trying to reactivate a working group on Peace, Environment and Development.

ForUM is preparing for the Commission for Sustainable Development, the CSD-15, in New York, April 30th - May 11th 2007 and so are we in WILPF. As energy is on the CSD-agenda, we here in Norway are preparing a booklet on nuclear energy. We are also preparing a booklet on water problems. If they are well received we will try to have them translated into English. We are looking for good articles and references both on water and on nuclear energy for our booklets. Please send materials to me if you have any good ones edel@beukes.net

The article that Mary Ziesak, from the Australian section, has written in this newsletter is an important reminder of all the damage and problems the production of nuclear energy and nuclear weapons lead to. Dr. Sushma Pankule from the Indian section, who is a biologist, has written an excellent overview of what the climate problems are about. We in WILPF have to be active in the various discussions about Nuclear and Climate matters.

"The Nuclear Brothers" try to revive nuclear power plants as the relevant energy choice for the world and declare that nuclear energy is clean and cheap; have no health and environmental problems, no climate gas emissions and no security risks. These myths are easy to counteract and must be exposed.

Norway is rich in energy resources such as oil, gas, waterfalls and also thorium. Some people here are trying to get support for a thorium - based prototype nuclear reactor instead of uranium based. This is not a solution to the climate situation and energy shortage as they claim it is.

The Bergen branch of WILPF-Norway is promoting the booklet on Uranium weapons written by Eva Fidjestøl. They are in the process of revising and translating it into English*. Uranium weapons are made from leftover uranium from the production process of nuclear energy and nuclear weapons. Eva can be reached at esofidje@online.no

I propose that, in our next newsletter, we could have short articles on why nuclear power is no solution and especially to the climate problems we face.

*The UK Section would like to speak with any Section in WILPF who would be interested in helping to fundraise specifically, to assist the translation and production of the book about Uranium Weapons. Contact Lorraine Mirham – lorraine@mirham.orangeworld.co.uk

NEWS FROM THE AUSTRALIAN SECTION

Mary Zeisak

Environment Awareness Group – Australian Report 6/12/06

"Our greenhouse emissions continue to rise, the condition of vital waterways is deteriorating and the decline of important indicator species, including many frogs and fish, is reaching alarming levels. Biodiversity in

Australia is in a serious state and climate change is making things more precarious for more species." This is a quote from the Australian Conservation Foundation President!

WILPF Australia is involved in an awareness raising campaign to end uranium mining, uranium exports and the introduction of nuclear power in Australia. We have written letters and submissions and taken part in consultations with Government Groups; and with other groups, held seminars and protested on the streets. A recent special Committee to investigate the future electricity requirements of Australia has come out on the side of nuclear powered electricity for our future. They have declared it clean and green! The Committee was composed of Commonwealth Government chosen members. (Australia has over 30% of the known uranium deposits on Earth)

We are also campaigning against nuclear waste dumps generally. Apart from the contamination to soils and subterranean water reservoirs, the fact that they will be built on our Indigenous Peoples lands is also causing much anguish. Two Indigenous groups have succeeded in stopping a nuclear waste dump being built on their tribal lands.

The WILPF Australian Section is a leading group involved a massive campaign against the Talisman Sabre 2007. These "war games" exercises of army, navy and air force, are to take place in a pristine coastal area of Queensland at Shoalwater Bay, and over Great Barrier Reef Marine Park from May to July 2007. Included in this areas are RAMSAR** declared wetlands.

Twelve thousand Australian soldiers and nearly 14,000 US troops and sailors will take place in bombarding our shores and fragile landscape, storming our beaches, gunning down 'terrorists' in the newly built urban guerilla warfare training centre, testing their latest laser guided missiles and 'smart' bombs in some of the most pristine wilderness on this planet. There will be - live aerial bombing, ship to shore naval firings, underwater depth charges exploded in areas where turtles and dugong breed, nuclear subs using high level sonar frequency which zaps the hearing of sea life and mammals, nuclear aircraft carriers inside the so-called Great Barrier Reef marine national park!

Australia signed a treaty with the US Donald Rumsfeld in 2004 which allows the US Military to do almost whatever they wish on Australian soil. Unfortunately, we can't stop TS07, but what we do will raise awareness in regard to these issues in the Australian population and possibly go some way to changing the government, and hopefully environmental policies, at National Elections in 2007.

** RAMSAR - The Convention on Wetlands, signed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971, is an intergovernmental treaty which provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. There are presently 153 Contracting Parties to the Convention, with 1634 wetland sites, totaling 145.6 million hectares, designated for inclusion in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance. See the resources are for more information.

SCIENCE FROM THE INDIAN SECTION

Sushma Pankule

Sushma has produced a helpful explanation of the Global Warming – the so-called Greenhouse Effect, which is essential reading for those of us who need reminding of the, relatively straightforward, science of its cause and effect.

Outside the laboratory you can experience an endothermic process when applying a cold pack to an injury. In this case ammonium chloride (NH₄Cl) dissolves in water. Temperature changes from 24.5 degrees C to 18.1 degrees C result when 10g of NH₄Cl are added to 100ml of water. Energy, in the form of heat, is taken from the immediate surroundings (water) causing the salt solution to become cooler.

Fossil fuels, derived from coal and petroleum, provide the energy we use to power our industries, heat and light our homes and workplaces, and run our cars. As these fuels are burned they produce carbon dioxide and water, releasing over 50 billion tons of carbon dioxide into our atmosphere each year.

The concentration of carbon dioxide has been monitored by scientists since 1958. Analysis of the air trapped in a core sample of snow from Antarctica provides data on carbon dioxide levels for the past 160,000 years. The results of this study show that as the carbon dioxide increased, the global temperature increased as well. The levels of carbon dioxide remained reasonably constant from the last ice age, 100,000 years ago, until the industrial revolution. Since the concentration of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere has risen 15% to an all-time high.

Carbon dioxide is a minor component in our atmosphere and is not usually considered to be a pollutant. The concern expressed by scientists arises from the dramatic increase occurring in the earth's atmosphere.

Without the influence of man in the environment, the exchange of carbon dioxide between plants and animals would be relatively balanced. Our continued use of fossil fuels has led to an increase of 7.4% in carbon dioxide between 1900 and 1970 and an additional 3.5% increase during the 1980s.

In addition to the larger consumption of fossil fuels, there are still other factors that increase carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere. Rain forests are being destroyed by cutting and burning to make room for increased population and agricultural needs. Carbon dioxide is added to the atmosphere during the burning, and the loss of trees diminishes the uptake of Carbon dioxide by plants.

About half of all the carbon dioxide released into our atmosphere each year the remains there, thus increasing its concentration. The other half is absorbed by plants during photosynthesis or is dissolved in the ocean to form hydrogen carbonates and carbonates.

Carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, such as methane and water act to warm our atmosphere by trapping heat near the surface of the earth. Solar radiation strikes the earth and warms the surface. The warmed surface then reradiates this energy as heat. The greenhouse gases absorb some of this heat energy from the surface, which warms our atmosphere. A similar principle is illustrated in a greenhouse where sunlight comes through the glass yet heat cannot escape. The air in the greenhouse warms, producing a climate considerably different than in nature. In the atmosphere these greenhouse gases are acting to warm our air and produce changes in our climate.

Long-term effects of global warming are still a matter of speculation and debate. One consideration is whether the polar ice caps would melt; this would cause a rise in sea level and lead to major flooding on the coasts of our continents. Further effects could include shifts in rainfall patterns, producing droughts and extreme seasonal changes in such a major agricultural regions as California.

To reverse these trends will require major efforts in the following areas:

- The development of new energy sources to cut our dependence on fossil fuels
- An end to deforestation worldwide
- Intense efforts to improve conservation

On an individual basis each of us can play a significant role. For example, the simple conversion of a 100-watt incandescent light bulb to a compact fluorescent bulb can reduce the electrical consumption for than light 20% , and the bulb can last 10 times longer. Recycling, switching to more fuel-efficient cars and energy efficient appliances, heaters and air conditioners all would result in decreased energy consumption and less carbon dioxide being released into our atmosphere.

WATER FOCUS FROM THE US SECTION

Regina Birchem

The US WILPF web site has a great section on their Save the Water campaign. This summary indicates the scope of the project:

"Water is the earth's most precious resource. Access to safe and affordable water is a human right. Local, democratic control of water is essential for food security and peace. Everywhere accelerating privatization threatens public control over access to water while scarcity looms from overuse and pollution. WILPF's campaign starts with developing water literacy and awareness that the protection and use of water is a community issue. WILPF-fostered local water research and planning groups empower communities to take responsibility for their own water quality and availability. The campaign seeks to be a catalyst for a national mobilization to "take back the water" and move this vital resource for all life into the Public Trust." **Find out more here** - <http://wilpf.org/campaigns/water/default.htm>

RESOURCES

[Free downloads of ECRR Chernobyl book](#)

In March this year the European Committee on Radiation Risk published a collection of reports from Belarus, the Ukraine and Russia, and across Europe, showing a wide range of diseases increasing in frequency and severity since the Chernobyl disaster. The picture it presents is dramatically different from claims that there are no discernible health effects apart from the deaths of a few firemen and up to 2000 mostly curable thyroid cancers. In the crazed view of some nuclear apologists, all the illness is due to social disruption, alcohol and radiophobia.

The ECRR committee have announced that they are concerned to make their book, with its important evidence of the true costs of nuclear pollution, available to the widest possible readership. A pdf is on the ECRR web site <http://www.euradcom.org/publications/chernobylinformation.htm> and can be downloaded free of charge.

As the International Commission on Radiological Protection moves towards publishing new Recommendations which totally ignore Chernobyl, we urge you to read the ECRR book and tell other people about its new availability. We understand that printed copies can still be bought through the ECRR site <http://www.euradcom.org/>

Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

Information about the Ramsar convention on wetlands is very well detailed at this official website produced in Spanish and English <http://www.ramsar.org/>

IF YOU HAVE RESOURCES TO SHARE, PLEASE TELL US. PUBLICATION REVIEW – Depleted Uranium and WILPF Lorraine Mirham, UK Section

The International Women's Day Seminar of 2006 was co-convened by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and Femmes Africa Solidarité; with a focus on the issue of uranium – from depleted uranium (DU) to Fissile Materials. I came across the Seminar Report, compiled by WILPF, from this event. Some of you will have read it already, others not.

Containing crucial background information, the report defines uranium, its development into fissile material, the definition of depleted uranium, its uses, and its negative health effects. Possible ways forward were investigated. The importance of negotiating a Fissile Materials Treaty in the Conference on Disarmament was elaborated; the possibility of a treaty banning the use of depleted uranium as a weapon, and grassroots movements to enact change also explored.

Participants from forty countries representing NGOs and governments attended that seminar. The report is testimony to the immense knowledge and experience available within and to WILPF. I urge women to refresh their memory, read it for the first time and above all share its findings. You will find "**International Women's Day Disarmament Seminar – Uranium**" if you follow this link: <http://www.wilpf.int.ch/publications/IWD2006.pdf>

Please note – if you wish to follow any of the links but are reading this pdf version, you may find it easier to use the 'Text Select' tool (you will find this on the toolbar of the Acrobat Reader used to view the document) and copy the link and paste it in to your browser. If you have any difficulty at all, please email Lorraine Mirham and she will forward you the relevant links by email.

REMEMBER TO SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS AND IDEAS TO:

Lorraine Mirham

Please note my new email address: lorraine@mirham.orangehome.co.uk

We will aim to have the next e-newsletter to you in January. I will advise you of the deadline for material.

Thank you

E-News produced by Lorraine Mirham and Edel Havin Beukes