

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom Peace and Freedom Update

Spring 2005

90th Birthday Edition



Joan and Molly's big adventure at The Hague!

Brighton members Molly Beirne and Joan Walton join others at WILPF's 90th Birthday celebrations in The Hague in April.

It started at Waterloo which Joan had not seen for many years and I had not seen since the Eurostar service had been installed. Initially I was only interested in finding a coffee bar which seemed to be somewhere other than where it used to be. In the nick of time, just before Joan lost faith in her "group leader," I found it!

Both of us were eagerly looking forward to meeting fellow WILPFERS from other countries who were gathering in The Hague to celebrate WILPF's 90th Birthday. First of all we needed to meet up with the other members of the UK delegation, Sheila Triggs, Glen Lee and Pat Pleasance. This we achieved and so departed on what was to be Joan's first experience going through the Tunnel. The scary part was changing trains at Brussels for The Hague – thank goodness Sheila had some experience of this and she led us on a quick march (or run!) to the correct departure platform and we made it just in time.

On Saturday we met our Dutch hosts, introductions were made and friendships renewed with other international members, a truly heart-warming experience.

A presentation and workshop preceded a discussion on how to put the teeth into the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 which Sections have been working to create awareness of, strengthen and implement. For example Samira Khory, WILPF International Vice President, from Lebanon, talked about the need to increase understanding in Lebanon on how to actively implement the resolution.

Samira invited WILPF members to come to Lebanon to monitor the election, to be held before the end of May, as an excellent way to put the words of 1325 into action.

A further session was dedicated to discussing the International Criminal Court. (ICC) Martha Jean Baker, of the UK section chaired the session, in which two staff from the Coalition for the International Criminal Court, Anne Offermans from the Centre for Justice and Reconciliation and A.T. Kraan from the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs spoke. They described the current activities of the ICC, the struggle to get a permanent building, and the gender diversity in staffing of the ICC. Martha looks closer at the developments on page 3.

In the evening we went by tram to a Women's Centre in a suburb of The Hague where we all enjoyed a meal together. The Centre was located in a very interesting co-operative housing project; we would have liked to learn more about this but there was no opportunity at the time and Joan is hoping to receive more info later. During the evening there was a small slot for members to say a few words about why they had joined WILPF and I took the chance to mention our dear old friend Ilse Singer who had started Brighton WILPF and who inspired me to join.

Continued on page 3....



**Happy
Birthday
at
The
Hague**

President's Notes

Where will you be on July 2nd? A bunch of WILPFers will be part of the **Make Poverty History** rally and demonstration in Edinburgh on that day. Not everything happens in London; you can join us at our table in the Campaigns Zone on the Meadow. Contact us for latest details.

WILPF is a member organisation of this broad international campaign to tell the leaders of the G8 rich countries when they meet in Scotland, that we want **Trade Justice, More and Better Aid and the Cancellation of the Debts of the Poorest Countries**. We shall be distributing our own women-focused leaflet on these issues.

Civil society – to use the current jargon- has used the General Election to say to our presidential-style government: '*Start listening to our concerns*'. Make Poverty History is a chance to demand that they listen to our views about the way the world is run.

Our 90th birthday year is proving a busy one. In May WILPF took responsibility for organising the important annual tour of London embassies to discuss the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty currently now being discussed at the UN.

Some of us were able to visit our birthplace, The Hague, in April. At seminars on women and peace building, the work of the new International Criminal Court and the UN Secretary General's planned changes to the United Nations some very well-informed women showed us how we can use and challenge international systems.

We shall be bringing these ideas to you at our Autumn Seminar on **Getting Women into Decision Making: peace building and economic justice**, in London in late October/early November. Our new **Secretary General, Susi Snyder** who has high-level experience of working with decision makers is coming over from Geneva. So start thinking about which of your friends you can bring to this event. We can probably find you a bed if you need to stay overnight.

On the subject of influencing friends, enclosed with this Update is a revised WILPF membership leaflet. It outlines our campaigns and our international programme. Keep it in your bag or pocket ready to give to your friends. Contact us for more copies.

A couple of recently joined WILPFers are planning to organise meetings of their contacts to interest them in our work. Maybe that's something you might do. It could be quite informal, or linked with a fund-raising event. Contact us for ideas and an active member to join your meeting.

We shall soon be in touch with details of a **WILPF Connect Day** on a Saturday in September in London, it is intended primarily to help recently joined members get informed about our work

Yours in peace, **Sheila Triggs – President 2005 Pictured Left**

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The International Criminal Court (ICC) and Crimes Against Women

WILPF celebrated its 90th birthday in The Hague with a seminar organised by the Dutch Section and well attended by members from many sections, mostly from Europe. The afternoon session of the seminar focused on the new International Criminal Court (ICC). This important new international institution is groundbreaking for several reasons.

The Statute establishing the court codifies for the first time specific gender crimes as Crimes against Humanity (CAH) and War Crimes. These crimes include rape, forced pregnancy, sexual slavery, trafficking, enforced prostitution, enforced pregnancy and many other crimes that disproportionately affect women but could not specifically be seen as gender crimes.

The court is a hybrid of different legal systems in the world. Unlike the situation in the UK where a criminal court can only find someone guilty or not and mete out a punishment, the ICC can also order payments like a court in the UK could do if a civil action were won. The ICC also maintains a special unit for the protection of victims, who can take part in the proceedings, and witnesses. The court also maintains, by its Statute, a trust fund for the payment of reparations where ordered.

The Statute mandates that there should be a fair representation of women and men among the judges (there are now 7 women out of 18 judges) and that gender be a general factor considered in hiring. Some judges must have expertise in gender crimes and other issues affecting women and children, particularly violence.

The ICC represents the first permanent and independent court able to try crimes of this kind. International lawyers and others have often criticised the Nuremberg Tribunal as "victor's justice" and there have been similar criticisms leveled at the Yugoslav and Rwanda tribunals. It recently completed a Relationship Agreement with the UN which provides for cooperation on human rights and other issues but also enshrines the independence of the court.

The court has an independent prosecutor who answers to no one but the ICC itself. The court has jurisdiction when the acts being

investigated took place in a state that has ratified the ICC or when the actors come from a state that has ratified the Statute. It can also have jurisdiction where a state voluntarily accepts jurisdiction for a particular situation or where the Security Council refers the case. A case or situation can be brought before the court in a number of different ways.

The prosecutor's office can initiate an investigation on its own initiative. A member of the public can bring a situation to the attention of the prosecutor for possible investigation. Any country can refer a possible case to the ICC. Or, as recently happened in the case of Darfur, the Security Council can refer a situation to the ICC. It currently has 99 countries, states parties that have ratified the Statute and accepted the jurisdiction of the court. They form the Assembly of States Parties (ASP) which is the governing body of the ICC deciding things like the budget and electing the judges, prosecutor and other officers of the court.

The court which is located in The Hague also has jurisdiction over Genocide and ultimately the Crime of Aggression (yet to be defined).

Martha Jean Baker

A **BIG** thank you to all those who have recently sent in their subscriptions for 2005. These were due in January and you will all be aware of the importance of your contributions.

If you still have not renewed PLEASE do seriously consider sending in your subscription as soon as you possibly can because it is now over five months since they were due. **IT'S NOT TOO LATE.**

If you are unable to pay and wish to remain a member please at least signal to us that you intend to renew your membership.

WILPF cannot be effective without members so please do give this your consideration.

For obvious financial reasons we regret that cannot continue to support lapsed members after the end of June.

Thank you – Membership Secretary, c/o 3 Kingswood Avenue, Leicester, LE3 0UL

Replacement forms – www.ukwilpf.qn.apc.org



Joan and Molly's Big Adventure at The Hague – continued.....



Scheveningen – but no handmaidens...(?)...

The Sunday morning session was particularly inspiring. Susi Snyder (WILPF General Secretary), Edith Ballantine and Krishna Patel introduced a discussion to prepare a draft response to United Nations General Secretary Kofi Annan's Report to the General Assembly, *"In Larger Freedom Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All."*

Fears were expressed that the status, at the UN, of non-governmental organisations might be diluted by a suggestion that more joint submissions should be agreed. Wider discussions on the draft response were scheduled to take place between WILPF members by e-mail as the document had to be submitted within a week. I had the warm

feeling that this was what WILPF was all about and I urge everyone to read the final document on the WILPF International website www.wilpf.int.ch *In Larger Freedom* is available at <http://www.un.org/largerfreedom/>

At the end of this session we returned to the centre and visited the Mauritshuis museum where there was a small exhibition of Vermeer and Rembrandt paintings among other treasures. It was a great thrill to see the originals of famous paintings, such as *The Girl with a Pearl Earring* and many others. Then after browsing around the nearby places of interest we decided to take a tram ride to Scheveningen – a seaside resort about 10/15 minutes from The Hague. It had a wide sandy beach, lined with many restaurants on the promenade side and one even had an area of sofas, divans and soft chairs where people could just relax – I was looking for handmaidens (?) holding bunches of grapes for the loungers to nibble!

A truly memorable occasion, worthy of a very special 90th birthday and a really BIG ADVENTURE.



As Tony Blair leads his party into a third term, WILPF must be prepared to watch and influence the discussion about Nuclear Power. Some would have us believe that there is substantial support for Nuclear Power as an alternative form of clean, renewable energy. WILPF believes Nuclear Power is NOT AN OPTION!

If we are to contribute to this debate we must be well informed and timely with our input. To assist us I have produced a Briefing Sheet, enclosed with this edition, drawn directly from WILPF research presented on www.reachingcriticalwill.org PLEASE take time to read it if you want to increase your knowledge in this area of WILPF's concern.

Lorraine Mirham

DREAMS, VISIONS: NEEDS or RIGHTS?

The American poet Eve Merriam wrote *"I dream of giving birth to a child who will ask 'Mother, what was war?'"* War is one of the forms of violence experienced by women. The violence endured by women manifests itself in different ways sometimes associated with war and sometimes with injustice delivered in other ways.

The violence of poverty in poor countries means that people but particularly women and girls do not receive education or adequate medical care. These women must surely dream: of having clean water available, if not on tap in their homes at least within easy access; of an unpolluted environment; of work which brings sufficient income to provide for families; of access to medical care. They want to grow food in land that has not been polluted by factory effluent or oil leaks. They want employment that will bring a fair income and working hours that will allow them to care for children. They do not want to be forced to become migrant workers leaving their families to be looked after by other women; nor do they wish to be forced into prostitution in order to feed and educate their children.

Access to clean water is essential for all of us. But Maud Barlow of the Council for Canadians and co-author a book "Blue gold" in a background document for the World Water Forum two years ago wrote:

"The world is running out of fresh water. Humanity is polluting, diverting, and depleting the finite wellspring of life at a startling rate. Our per capita use of water is doubling every 20 years, at more than twice the human population growth. A legacy of factory farming, flood irrigation, the construction of massive dams, toxic dumping, wetland and forest deconstruction and urban and industrial pollution has damaged the earth's surface water so badly that we are now mining the underground water reserves far faster than nature can replenish them."

"The global water crisis looms as one of the greatest threats ever to the survival of our planet."

Others have said that future wars will be fought about water.

A 2003 report on progress towards reaching the Millennium Development Goals stated that:

"Some 1.2 billion people, or 18 per cent of the world's population, lack access to safe drinking water, and over 2.4 billion people (40 per cent of the world's people) lack access to adequate sanitation. More than 2.2 million people in developing countries, most of them children, die each year from diseases associated with lack of access to safe drinking water, inadequate sanitation and poor hygiene."

Eight Millennium Development Goals were set in 2000 by the member states of the UN. These were about poverty reduction, education, gender equality, child mortality, maternal health, disease, environmental sustainability and development.

Access to water and sanitation comes under the heading of environmental sustainability. 2015 was set as the target date for progress on these goals. Whether targets will be achieved or not is uncertain but in any case the targets for water and sanitation were only to halve the proportion of people without basic facilities leaving many to wait much longer for the ultimate goals to be achieved. In 2003 it was estimated that access to safe drinking for all in Africa would not be attainable till 2050 unless the amount of investment was increased.

Where will the investment money come from?

Contrasting visions of water as a Human need or a human right were put forward in March 2003.

A **"Long term vision for Life and Environment in century"** had been prepared for the third triennial meeting of ministers, representatives of the World Bank, the

United Nations, CEOs from some of world's largest water-related corporations and NGOs at the World Water Council's third World Water Forum in The Hague in March 2003. The model projected in this Vision Statement was one which would put water management and control of water resources into the hands of the private sector. It would give priority over water use to large scale agricultural projects rather than to traditional use by indigenous and peasant communities.

This model was rejected by Civil Society groups who put forward an alternative **"Civil Society World Water Vision for Action"** which was

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also taken to The Hague. Quoting from this:

"Water belongs to the earth and all species for all time. It is an inalienable human right and a public trust to be protected and nurtured by all peoples, communities and nations, and the bodies that represent them at the local, state and international level. Based on these principles we make the claims: Water is not a commodity and must not be left to the whims of the market because no person has the right to profit from it. Water must not therefore be commodified, privatised, traded or exported for commercial gain. ... "Every human being has the right to clean water ..."

The signatories to this statement believe that the money to implement this vision could come from a tax on international currency speculation and a reduction and redirection of military spending. This alternative vision was rejected at the March 2003 world Water Forum where it was stated that water is a **human need** but not a **human right**. It will be taken to the fourth forum in Mexico City in 2006. At the World social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil in January this year civil society groups again claimed that water is a **human right**.

Is water a human right or a human need? When the Charter of Human Rights was written in 1984, a future shortage of water was not foreseen and there is no mention of water but article 3 states that everyone has the right to life.

Margaret Turner



What are you doing?

The Executive Committee receive Branch reports but do not always hear about what individual members, not attached to a Branch, are working on for WILPF.

Please let us know.

**New Membership
Leaflet enclosed. For
Quantities email**

ukwilpf@hotmail.com

~~or call Lorraine~~

~~0130 2867527~~

WEAR A WHITE WILPF TEE SHIRT TO THE G8 IN

SCOTLAND – Send cheque and chest size to: Molly Beirne, 34 Millcroft, Brighton, East Sussex, BN1 5HB. £7.50 each or £9 inc. post and packing.

Not joined the
UK WILPF
e-group
yet?

Email:
ukwilpf@hotmail.com to
request details of how to
get up to date information

Thanks to Edel Havin Beukes, Co-convenor of the International, Environment working group, for letting P&F reproduce this line drawing. It was presented to Edel, for the Norwegian WILPF Section, by artist Hans Norman Dahl. The image, usually larger, shows a woman sitting on nuclear weapons and the men who peddle them. The image has been used recently to illustrate a book about Depleted Uranium, written by The Norwegian Section with Eva Fidjestoel who gained her degree in nuclear physics some years ago in Oslo.

Another Kind of Security

A stalemated Conference in New York is currently reviewing The Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT). As well as aiming to control the spread of nuclear weapons, 189 countries have signed up to 'an unequivocal undertaking ... to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals.'

Many activists from some 1,780 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) went to New York for the NPT. There were 100 Mayors for Peace, led by the mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, with 8 million signatures, calling for 'general and complete nuclear disarmament' under Article VI of the NPT.

This year in London WILPF organised the annual tradition of visiting embassies to discuss the NPT, and it was a very interesting and worthwhile experience. The idea was to visit the 5 Nuclear Weapons States (NWS) signatory to the NPT, including our own Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), the three acknowledged NWS who have *not* signed the NPT: India, Pakistan and Israel. Additionally we visited the embassies of most of the New Agenda Coalition (NAC), countries dedicated to furthering the disarmament pillar of the NPT.

Although we were anxious beforehand about the level of our knowledge, we soon discovered that we were not meeting government decision-makers, and in several cases not even representatives with particular expertise on the NPT. Although the FCO produced three well informed people, and talked with us for nearly an hour.

The value of what we were doing was to challenge the nuclear weapons states when they told us that *their* weapons were at the absolute minimum necessary for deterrence, that they could not disarm first, that terrorists and rogue states, not the nuclear weapons democracies, were the only dangers, that upgrading nuclear weapons is not proliferation. We also heard the concerns of the NAC states.

But most important – *we* made it clear to *them* that there are well-informed individuals in civil society who did not just elect a government every few years but who are prepared to take it upon themselves to challenge the mind-set of the militarised nation state.

This made me start thinking about my own perspective on human security, as a woman, an internationalist and an activist for peace. This focus is not on national frontiers and obscenely expensive ways of killing people, it is on the millions of people in the world living on less than a dollar a day: people who do not have the security of adequate food, clean water and sanitation and maternal health; people who are not secure from armed conflicts, or from HIV/AIDS.

The world community through the United Nations *has* looked at human security in these terms and set itself the Millennium Development Goals (MDG): eight targets with deadlines to address these issues. The wealth is available in the world – where is the international will? It is being squandered on the pursuit of power by military means, robbing the poor of their security. We are in line to fail to meet the MDGs; that's why WILPF is part of the Make Poverty History Campaign.

Sheila Triggs

Coming UP...Autumn Seminar: Getting Women into Decision Making: peace building and economic justice. Date, venue and other details will be posted on www.ukwilpf.gn.apc.org Last week Oct/First Week Nov – both Saturdays free!!!

**Two Minute Interview –
Mary Alys out-going International Representative, UK Section**

For the last five years Mary Alys has been a member of the International Executive Committee. The role has now been taken on by Martha Jean Baker. We wanted to snatch a couple of minutes with Mary to find out how the experience affected her views about WILPF as the only international women's organisation with peace as its focus.

P&F: Mary, how has the role of International Representative shaped the way you see WILPF?

Mary: "I had already been a WILPF member since the early 1980s when I was particularly involved in issues around nuclear disarmament. The international work of WILPF seemed very remote although I read about it from time to time in Peace & Freedom News. So when I went to my first international Executive Committee it was amazing meeting all these women who shared my values and learning how the organisation worked.

"However what has proved to have had the greatest impact on me was to see how WILPF's aims and principles, whilst held in common by these women from around the world, translated into action driven by differing perspectives, based on the situations in which they find themselves. So, what for one Section might be an over-riding priority, may not feature at all in another Sections' work. Hence the wide-ranging programme.

"Meeting all the representatives from different Sections and hearing the often dangerous or difficult circumstances in which they carry on WILPF work has been a privilege. It really put the Section's work into perspective. What we often forget, as we get embroiled in the range of campaigns and activities that result from our government's activities, is that we, as one of many Sections worldwide, need to be part of the support for the lobbying work being done at the UN in Geneva and New York and contribute to this. We sometimes lose sight of this.

"As an international organisation we are respected and influential but the international organisation can only have credibility if it represents and is supported by women in the Sections. So in my time as International Representative I have tried to ensure our activities join in clearly to the international programme and that there is greater awareness amongst the membership of that international work.

"Now that we are in the age of the internet it is much easier for our Section to see ourselves as part of an international organisation. The excellent websites maintained on disarmament and 1325 make this work of WILPF at the UN much more accessible."

P&F: OK – so what would you say is our key challenge as a Section?

Mary: "Whilst holding WILPF's original aims central to our work, we must evolve and develop so that we can meet the new challenges of the 21st century and bring with us the many women out there who have yet to discover WILPF."

Verity Nelson