

Listen to Women

Irmgard Heilberger (WILPF) and Barbara Lochbihler (Editors)

Listen to Women *For a Change*

15 Years after the Beijing Conference on Women –
15 Years after the Peacetrain: Balances and Outlooks



Imprint

Listen to Women - For a Change
15 Years after the Beijing Conference on Women –
15 Years after the Peacetrain: Balances and Outlooks

Editors

Greens/EFA in the European Parliament
Barbara Lochbihler, MdEP
Rue Wiertz 60
1047 Brussels
Belgium
www.barbara-lochbihler.de
barbara.lochbihler@europarl.europa.eu

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) – German Section
Haus der Demokratie
Greifswalder Straße 4
10405 Berlin
Germany
www.wilpf.de
heilberger@wilpf.de

The title of this publication was inspired by Kay Camp, the former international president of WILPF. To mark the International Women's Year 1975, Kay Camp created a book called "Listen to Women for a Change". It featured 50 women working for peace and social justice.

Editorial

Kristin Gebhardt, Wolf-Dieter Vogel, Ali Al-Nasani

Editorial Board

Linda Bell, Felicity Hill, Irmgard Heilberger and Barbara Lochbihler as participants of the Peace Train 1995

Translation

Ken Heigh (www.candu.de), Raphael Kreusch, Susanne Münn, Elif Camyar, Bernhard Clasen (www.clasen.net), Sichel Pachal

Graphic and Art Design

Marco dos Santos Pina
Diplom-Designer
www.santospina.com

Copyright by the authors

October 2010
ISBN

Irmgard Heilberger (WILPF) and Barbara Lochbihler (Editors)

Listen to Women *For a Change*

15 Years after the Beijing Conference on Women –
15 Years after the Peacetrain: Balances and Outlooks

Contents

Barbara Lochbihler

A Forward-Looking Retrospective	
Fifteen years after the World Conference on Women in Beijing	7

Sam Cook

Women, Peace, Security	
UN Security Council Resolution 1325	14

Felicity Hill

Reaching Critical Will	
Nuclear Disarmament on the Political Agenda	26

Rebecca Harms

The Ongoing Disaster	
The Ukrainian Energy Policy	36

Irmgard Heilberger

From Helsinki to Beijing	
Fifteen Years after the Women's Peace Train	42

Eva-Britt Svensson

Needed: Female Leadership on Security Issues	
Armament and Gender Equality	54

Pinar Selek

Against the Wall of Masculinity	
The Feminist Movement in Turkey	63

Sevdije Ahmeti	
Beyond Nationalism	
Ten years after the Balkan Wars	72
Cornelia Suhan	
Rape as a Weapon of War	
Photos from the Democratic Republic of Congo	82
Svetlana Gannushkina	
Questionable Traditions	
National Minorities and Human Rights	88
Livia Járóka	
Hereditary deprivation and the ghettoisation of poverty	
Situation of Roma in Eastern Europe	96
Krishna Ahojapatel	
Glass Barriers	
The Fight for Gender Equality	108
Barbara Unmüßig	
Poverty Remains Feminine	
Gender (In)justice and Poverty	118
Jean Lambert	
Care Assistant, Not Nurse	
Women Migrants in the European Union	128

Barbara Lochbihler

A Forward-Looking Retrospective

Fifteen years after the World Conference on Women in Beijing, the struggle for women's rights remains on the agenda

One and a half decades ago, in September 1995, Beijing hosted the Fourth UN World Conference on Women. Some days earlier, representatives of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) had met in the Chinese capital. Taken together, both these events attracted approximately 45,000 participants from all regions of the world, making Beijing the largest women's meeting ever. Even the highly interventionist Chinese government could not do much against such a concentration of well-prepared feminist power, history, life experience and politics.

The conference was organised around three main topics: equality, development and peace. The discussions were lively, demands were formulated, and some political issues that had not yet been solved at home – because they could only be understood and tackled on an international level – were addressed in official UN documents. A platform for action was adopted and thanks to the networking and sharing of experiences of all those various women and organisations, this fascinating event turned out to be the starting point for many activities and movements. But how do women today discuss yesterday's demands and issues? This publication is going to provide an answer to this question.

In the 1990s, I worked as Secretary General of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) in Geneva. WILPF is the oldest women's organisation with consultative status at the United Nations. As a result, I had the opportunity to be involved in several preparatory meetings, such as the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna and the 1995 World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen. What is more, WILPF celebrated its 80th birthday in 1995 and organised a congress in Helsinki on this occasion.

In the course of all these events, WILPF not only furthered the political debate on women and peace, but also develop extraordinary forms of action. With some spirit of adventure, and reflecting on the founding history of WILPF – indeed, some of our international founding mothers had risked their lives to get to The Hague during the First World War in order to participate in the 1915 Peace Conference – we launched the idea of a Peace Train.

Obviously, the Peace Train was not only to bring 200 women from Helsinki to Beijing in an environmentally friendly manner. Having a train to ourselves also allowed us to define our own route and schedule; and meet women and feminists on our way to discuss prevailing peace issues with them. Given our limited financial means, this was a logistic tour de force. We had to contact uncountable administrative offices, deal with numerous visa authorities and overcome many other obstacles. Within the train, the debates were no less animated and varied. The article by Irmgard Heilberger, director of the German section of WILPF, provides some more details on these discussions.

International politics of the mid 1990s was characterised by extreme transitions, uncertainties and hopes. There were the radical social transformations in Eastern Europe, the collapse of the Soviet Union, numerous conflicts in Southern countries that had grown used to adhering to one of the disappearing blocks, the wars in the former Yugoslavia, and the genocide in Rwanda. At the same time, subjects such as poverty, underdevelopment, exclusion, discrimination, rearmament and the waste of resources played an important role. Economic analysts, by contrast, glorified the advantages of uncontrolled markets, including the global financial markets – even though the problems that the free market left unsolved were more than obvious. Old ideological paradigms, such as the hope that liberty movements in the South would succeed in bringing about social change, started to falter. And the call for justice, alternative paths and new forms of resistance against exploitation and dependence revived international debates within the UN family as much as in civil society organisations and movements.

Of course these transformations also had an impact on the agenda and discussions of the women's movement. Suddenly, several organisations that had helped shape international conferences on women and peace – such as associations from socialist countries or groups having emerged from liberation movements – disappeared. Thanks to highly professional lobbying and increased public awareness, however, the struggle against violence against women not only in the

private sector, but also in conflict regions and in post-conflict societies were put back on the official agenda. Since then, this impressive process has continued to deepen, as will be shown by American Sam Cook in her article on Security Council Resolution 1325 and its follow-up.

Many of the discussions and encounters that took place around the Peace Train have profoundly influenced me. The women we listened to in Russia, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey and Kazakhstan did not only describe the problems they were confronted with, but they also made clear what they were expecting from politicians and the international civil society. We spoke with women in conflict regions, such as Yugoslavia and Turkey, and carried their calls for peaceful solutions and criminal prosecutions to Beijing. In their articles, Sevdije Ahmeti and Pinar Selek describe the current situation in Kosovo and Turkey respectively, with Selek mainly focusing on the unsolved Kurdish conflict, and the role played by Kurdish women in the latter.

Svetlana Gannushkina, in turn, dedicates her article to the enforcement of minorities' rights in her native Russia and elsewhere. Needless to say that – in the same way as 15 years ago – most of these problems can no longer be solved on a national level; instead we have to adopt regional and international approaches. Against this background, Jean Lambert from Great Britain is going to discuss in an article on migration the possible responsibilities of actors such as the European Union in fighting exclusion and discrimination. Lívía Járóka from Hungary will comment on the situation of the Sinti and Roma in Europe.

Looking back on the Beijing conference, however, a question suggests itself: have we been able to reach the objectives that we defined at the time? To answer this question, several of these objectives will be discussed in this publication. Felicity Hill from Australia, for instance, looks into the issue of conventional and nuclear disarmament policies, and Rebecca Harms from Germany analyses energy policies in Ukraine.

In my function of Secretary General of Amnesty International Germany (1999-2009) as well as my current role as member of the European Parliament for the German Green Party. I have continuously been confronted with problems that we had already discussed in the Peace Train. My conclusion today is the same as 15 years ago: overcoming poverty and exclusion remains the fundamental challenge in our struggle for human rights and sustainable peace.

This is why, during my first year at the European Parliament, I have been focusing on some key equality issues. For instance, the prosecution of war criminals in eastern Congo has played an important role. The same holds for the review conference organised in June 2010 of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in Kampala, Uganda, at the end of which 'war of aggression' was officially included as a crime in the Court's statutes. Violence against women and girls continues to represent one of the most dreadful phenomena of our time, and violence against the latter should urgently be placed on the European agenda. At present, I am especially concerned with the many forced deportations of Roma families to Kosovo, as a result of which numerous Roma girls are scarcely able to go to school. What is more, my work in the Iran delegation of the European Parliament has me regularly dealing with the Iranian government's efforts to reform its family law to the disadvantage of women and girls.

As opposed to the 1990s, present-day international politics are increasingly oriented towards a multipolar world order. China, which continues to treat its internal affairs in a determinedly authoritarian manner, has turned into an economic global power. Its influence on other regions of the world as much as within regional and international organisations is tremendous. Indeed, it goes far beyond issues of economic cooperation – it concerns peace and security policies, as well as climate protection. Meanwhile, ever-stronger regional powers such as Brazil and India are trying to consolidate regional cooperation and introduce new ideas and coalitions into multilateral bodies. The leading world power, the United States of America, is being confronted with great economic difficulties at home. Moreover, it still has to deal with the legacy of the Bush government, which lost a large part of its international credibility and influence by turning away from multilateralism, running Guantanamo, and waging a war in Iraq that violates international law.

On the European continent, Russia has asserted itself as the dominant regional power, even though its international weight has decreased. Since the Treaty of Lisbon entered into force in 2009, the European Union has tried to enhance its internal coordination and economic governance, mainly to avoid a possible collapse as a result of the euro and the world economic crises. Also, the EU continues to work on a common foreign and security policy, which has continuously failed because of strong national self-interests. Finally, the EU does not exclude military interventions as part of its security policy.

In other words, the world's political constellations have changed. The core demands voiced by the women's movement, by contrast, have remained the same. First, inter- and intrastate military conflicts should be avoided by negotiations, the protection of human rights, the strengthening of international law and public debates about the often superficial motives for war. Second, women should – instead of being considered mere victims of war – be actively involved in decision making and negotiation processes, such as called for in an article by Eva-Britt Svensson from Sweden. And third, the fight for conventional and nuclear disarmament, and the struggle against the waste of resources that is directly linked to any re-armament effort, should at last be fought with the necessary sobriety and motivation. The idea, launched by US President Barack Obama, of a world free of nuclear weapons can not hide the fact that this is still not the case.

The UN Millennium Goal to cut the number of people living in absolute poverty in half will probably not be met. In their articles, Krishna Ahojapatel from India and Barbara Unmüßig from Germany both discuss this issue in more detail, predominantly focusing on poverty among women. It is shameful that the age-old objective of ending poverty has been reduced to cutting poverty, and it is even more shameful that this goal – despite years of trying – has still not been reached.

The International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, published by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations, reports that the number of people suffering from starvation or malnutrition has reached one billion. Meanwhile, the neoliberal world economy, which was triumphantly celebrated in the 1990s, has continued to diminish the power of the nation state. It has not been able to, however, guarantee that enough food is produced, that it is fairly distributed and that vital resources are secured. Finally, millions of people are being forced to leave their homeland due to economic hardship, climate change and wars.

As a result, there is little reason for the many, often decentralised feminist peace organisations to cease their efforts or withdraw their demands. It is as crucial as it was in 1915, when the Women's League was founded, to highlight the link between equality, development and peace. Indeed, peace is more than the mere absence of war. To say it in the words of the American reformer, Nobel laureate and the first president of WILPF, Jane Addams: "There is no peace without bread, and no peace without justice."

Throughout my career, I have met victims of human rights violations, experts and politicians who have been working on some of the above-mentioned topics and looking for unprecedented solutions. When the idea of the present publication was born, it was immediately clear that these women had to be won over for the project. They agreed. I would like to sincerely thank all of them for sharing their knowledge and helping reinforce the commitment for women's rights and human rights in general.

I have enjoyed remembering the Peace Train discussions, and it was equally pleasant to develop the idea of the book with my fellow passengers, Linda Bell from the USA, Felicity Hill from Australia, and Irmgard Heilberger from Germany. Linda, Felicity, Irmgard – thank you for your decade's long solidarity and your commitment to the international women's movement!



© private

Sam Cook was the Director of the PeaceWomen Project of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) from 2005 until the end of 2009 where she worked to monitor and advocate for Security Council Resolution 1325 and related commitments. A lawyer from South Africa, she has worked as an activist and academic on issues of violence against women and social justice. She is currently the Communications and Research Director at the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission. She has published articles in South African and international law journals and has been a contributing author to several books and NGO publications.

Sam Cook

Women, Peace, Security

The UN-Security Council Resolution 1325 strengthens women in their fight against violence in war and postwar societies

The 15 years since the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 have seen advances in many of the areas reflected in the conference outcome documents: the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.¹ Arguably some of the most visible advances – at least from a policy perspective – are those in relation to Critical Area of Concern E of the Beijing Platform for Action: “Women and Armed Conflict.”²

In fact, the years of advocacy by civil society in both the lead up to Beijing and during its aftermath resulted in what has become one of the most “famous” policy documents dealing with this topic. By a unanimous vote, United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, was adopted on 31 October 2000.³ Much has been said and written on how this resolution came to be and certainly its historical roots and its ground-breaking nature must not be forgotten.⁴ It marked the beginning of an era in which the paramount international security body could no longer simply ignore the contributions and security concerns of half of the world’s population. But, with the advent of the tenth anniversary of this historic resolution in October 2010, the question that has been posed time and again, but still must be asked, is: “What difference has it made?”

¹ See Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace, Beijing, 15 September 1995, A/CONF.177/20 (1995) and A/CONF.177/20/Add.1 (1995) (BpFA) available at www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/

² See Critical Area of Concern E and associated Strategic Objectives at www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/armed.htm For a review of the BpFA see the 10 year and 15 year review information available at: www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/Review/ and www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing15/index.html and the NGO reviews at www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/globalcenter/policy/b10/index.html and www.beijing15.org/.

³ S.C. Res. 1325, U.N. Doc. S/RES/1325 (Oct. 31, 2000).

⁴ For a history of the resolution and general resources see PeaceWomen Project, About Women, Peace and Security at www.peacewomen.org/themes_page.php?id=1&adhoc=92 and information on the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security at www.womenpeacesecurity.org/about/.

This question can be unpacked and answered in a multitude of ways and from many perspectives. The resolution has certainly sparked much activity and, after early concerted efforts at awareness raising, has gained a popularity that is unprecedented for a document emanating from the staid and conservative institution that is the UN Security Council.⁵ Many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) beyond those that originally advocated for the resolution⁶ now work on ‘1325 issues’, UN entities and governments have ‘1325 strategies’ and policy plans⁷ and many in the women’s movement now see the UN Security Council as a more accessible site for struggle.⁸ There are reports, conferences, websites and more – all in some way or other promoting this resolution on women, peace and security that is known as ‘1325’.

The number ‘1325’ has become shorthand for something more and has been imbued with meaning that goes beyond indicating the fact that the resolution happened to be number “one thousand three hundred and twenty-five” in the line of resolutions passed by the Security Council.⁹ Whether the meaning behind the numbers is common to all who deploy them is debatable. There is much to be said, for example, about the co-opting of 1325 by those whose broader agenda seems antithetical to peace and true human security – use of the resolution to encourage the greater participation of women in the military and thus the greater militarization of society is particularly disturbing.¹⁰ Nonetheless, the 10th Anniversary of SCR 1325 is a useful moment to look at other more positive impacts. What progress has been made in these 10 years?

⁵ Organizations such as the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom led the way in these efforts – establishing the information and advocacy hub that is peacewomen.org and coordinating the translation of the resolution into local languages (it is now available in 100 languages). See the PeaceWomen Project archives for evidence of the information, plans, activities and events now centered around SCR 1325 – at peacewomen.org.

⁶ See the history of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security at www.womenpeaceandsecurity.org/about/ and a sampling of the organizations doing women, peace and security work at: www.peacewomen.org/portal_organizations.php

⁷ See for example the national action plans collected by UN INSTRAW at www.peacewomen.org/pages/about-women-peace-and-security/national-action-plans-naps and related resources at www.peacewomen.org/pages/about-women-peace-and-security/national-action-plans-naps.

⁸ See for example, Nobel Women’s Initiative, Nobel Laureates call for action on Burma: A UN Security Council Commission of Inquiry August 11, 2009, available at www.peacewomen.org/portal_initiative_initiative.php?id=89 and Women’s Initiatives for Gender Justice calls for Implementation of Security Council Resolutions (July 2009) available at: Women’s Initiatives and partners in the DRC call for implementation of Security Council Resolutions.

⁹ For information on the Security Council see www.un.org/Docs/sc/.

¹⁰ For more on these concerns, see for example, Sam Cook Taking Back the Agenda PeaceWomen E-News Issue 113, November 2009 at www.peacewomen.org/publications_ews_issue.php?id=19.

Prevention, Participation, Protection

Even within the explicit terms of SCR 1325, this is no easy question to answer. Its broad and somewhat vague language, often criticized for failing to outline concrete obligations, has also allowed for expansive interpretation and broad application of the resolution by advocates. One of the key positive aspects of the resolution is, in fact, the breadth of issues that it encompasses. SCR 1325 affords recognition to the valuable role and contribution of women in conflict prevention and the peace processes.¹¹ It recognizes the necessity to include women in decision-making at all levels and it highlights and calls for action on the need to address the particular and often disproportionate impact of conflict on women.¹² Each of these three aspects – that have come to be known as the three “P’s,” of prevention, participation and protection – are multifaceted and complex.

Participation covers such issues as the appointment of women to decision-making positions in the United Nations itself, but also includes ensuring the involvement of women as negotiators in peace processes. It goes beyond considering representation in numbers by looking at whether barriers are removed so as to allow women to engage in these roles in substantive and meaningful ways. Protection is not just protecting women from being used and targeted through sexual violence, it also includes protecting women’s human rights in such contexts as post-conflict security sector reform. Conflict prevention covers the inclusion of gender-sensitive indicators in conflict early-warning systems. But it is also about ensuring an end to impunity for human-rights violators in order to prevent the simmering and boiling over of resentments and injustice into further conflict. Considering the many activities within even this small sampling of issues, the enormity and complexity of the task of measuring progress is revealed.¹³

¹¹ See SCR 1325 Preambular paragraphs and Operative Paragraph (OP) 1 and provisions related to conflict prevention in the PeaceWomen Project Security Council Monitor: www.peacewomen.org/security_council_monitor/resolution-watch/theme/conflict-prevention.

¹² See SCR 1325 Preambular paragraphs and OP 2 and provisions related to participation in the PeaceWomen Project Security Council Monitor: www.peacewomen.org/security_council_monitor/resolution-watch/theme/participation. See SCR 1325 Preambular paragraphs and OP 6 and 9 and provisions related to protection in the PeaceWomen Project Security Council Monitor: www.peacewomen.org/security_council_monitor/resolution-watch/theme/protection and

¹³ For example, it is no easy feat to research all peace talks and agreements conducted under the auspices of the UN since 2000 to see whether the passage of 1325 resulted in more women serving as negotiators. Figuring out which of the myriad post-conflict planning processes conducted since 2000 included a gender perspective seems daunting.

There have been clear areas of progress since October 2000.¹⁴ For example: there are now gender advisers in most peace support operations;¹⁵ planning for activities such as disarmament and security-reform increasingly takes gender concerns into account;¹⁶ the Security Council's mission-mandate resolutions; and the Secretary-General's reports on country situations contain enhanced language on concerns such as sexual violence and women's participation;¹⁷ many states have domesticated SCR 1325 through the development of national action plans and strategies for implementing it; and, perhaps most notably, the Security Council has issued three further resolutions on women, peace and security.¹⁸

However, it seems beyond the scope of this chapter to provide a measure of the impact in relation to all aspects of the resolution. That is not to say there is no information available, as there is a plethora of reports and analysis published by NGOs, national governments and the UN on many of the issues covered by the resolution.¹⁹ The problem of measuring impact goes beyond the many issues and the resulting volume of information that must be processed. On a more intrinsic level, the difficulty in answering the question of 1325's impact points to characteristics of the resolution that go beyond its breadth in scope.

Fragile Mechanism against Sexual Violence

The characteristic perhaps most criticised over the years since 1325's passage is that it contains no mechanism or means by which systematic monitoring and reporting on implementation can take place. The Security Council has fiercely resisted efforts to establish such a mechanism.²⁰ Furthermore, UN inter-agency efforts to plan, coordinate and track '1325 activities' have been largely unsuc-

¹⁴ See for example, NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, SCR 1325 Five Years On Report From Global to Local: Making Peace Work for Women, October 2005 at www.womenpeacesecurity.org/media/pdf-NGOWG_5_Years_On_Report_EN.pdf and the general resources available on www.peacewomen.org.

¹⁵ See the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations Gender Resources at www.peacekeepingbestpractices.unlb.org/pbps/Pages/Public/viewprimarydoc.aspx?docid=449

¹⁶ On Security Sector Reform, see The Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) Gender and Security Sector Reform Training and Resource Package 2009 available at www.dcaf.ch/publications/kms/publications_all.cfm?

¹⁷ See the PeaceWomen Project Security Council Monitor at www.peacewomen.org/security_council_monitor/

¹⁸ S.C. Res. 1820, U.N. Doc. S/RES/1820 (Jun 19, 2008), S.C. Res. 1888, U.N. Doc. S/RES/1888 (Sept 30, 2009), S.C. Res. 1889, U.N. Doc. S/RES/1889 (Oct. 5, 2009).

¹⁹ See www.peacewomen.org.

²⁰ The Open Debates held each October to mark the resolution have time and again seen calls for a Security Council monitoring mechanism. The NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security has continued to advocate for this.

cessful – arguably because of a lack of a strong, well-resourced women’s entity at the UN.²¹ At the most basic level, there are no agreed indicators or benchmarks against which progress can be measured. As a result, a built-in system of accountability for failures in implementation is lacking. And there are many areas in which the rate and means of implementation seems woefully inadequate. Women remain excluded from and are marginalized in formal peacemaking and peacebuilding processes.²² Post-conflict law reform continues to violate women’s human rights²³ and sexual violence remains rampant.²⁴ However, here too the lack of a systematic approach precludes accountability and correction of these failures.²⁵ Progress in establishing such a system is a key marker of progress towards moving the 1325 agenda forward.

Ironically, much of the progress around accountability and measuring its implementation has come as a result of focused work on addressing sexual and gender-based violence in conflict. Ironic for women’s groups that advocated for 1325, because the resolution was categorically not “about making war safe for women”. The efforts to ensure recognition of the valuable role of women in peace processes and their role in conflict prevention, while important in themselves, were also about moving beyond a notion of women as mere victims.

In the initial years following 1325’s adoption, there was an almost tangible fear of once more slipping into a reductionist victimhood framework; however, over the last decade, testimonies of women continued to flow from truth commissions and special tribunals, from the pages of reports of credible human rights organizations and even from accounts by the mainstream media. What these stories made clear was that the very visible and horrifying impact of war on women in the form of sexual violence was not simply going to disappear by virtue of an insistence on the importance of seeing women as agents of change.

²¹ See the various advocacy letters of the NGO Working Group at www.women-peacesecurity.org/advocacy/letters/ and the GEAR Campaign at www.gearcampaign.org/ on efforts to reform the UN’s gender equality architecture that have been ongoing since Beijing and have been most intense since the 2006 session of the Commission on the Status of Women. The inadequate implementation of SCR 1325 has been used as an argument for the establishment of a new entity.

²² See UNIFEM Women’s Participation in Peace Negotiations: Connections between Presence and Influence, April 2009 available at, www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/Themes/unifem_handout_women_in_peace_processes_brief_april_20_2009.pdf

²³ See for example information on Afghan Women’s Network at www.afghanwomensnetwork.org/ and Human Rights Watch, Afghanistan: Don’t Sell Out Women’s Rights in DC Talks, May 10, 2010 available at www.hrw.org/en/news/2010/05/10/afghanistan-don-t-sell-out-women-s-rights-dc-talks.

²⁴ See for example the news reports on sexual violence from across the world at www.peacewomen.org/news_library.php.

²⁵ For a discussion of issues of accountability by this author see [insert ref to NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, Issue Brief: Accountability for Implementing Security Council Resolution 1325, at [insert url]

It is undeniable that the larger goal is to ensure women's effective and full participation in peace and security issues,²⁶ however, seeing women are either victims or agents creates a false dichotomy. Many women who are powerful agents of change have also experienced sexual violence. That does not itself define them as mere victims. Violence and participation are inextricably linked – sexual violence is both a cause and consequence of low levels of women's participation in decision making and in day-to-day life. Sexual violence does more than discourage political engagement, it prevents access to markets, water-points and schools and holds women and communities hostage. Including women and gender equality concerns in high-level decision-making is critical if we are to eliminate such violence.

The Key Role of the UN Security Council

But this is not an easy sequential or separable exercise. First, women's participation is not just a high-level concept, it requires the inclusion of women in discussions and decisions about their own security. It is also necessary to urgently and immediately act to prevent and respond to sexual violence as it is happens – both as a human rights issue and as a peace and security concern. The Security Council is a key actor in this response. It is mandated to maintain international peace and security and to act against countries waging war through illegal methods (such as using sexual violence) and its resolutions mandate the role of peacekeeping missions.²⁷

Despite many calls for action and despite obligations in SCR 1325 and in international humanitarian and human-rights laws, the Security Council response to sexual violence in conflict over the decade was wholly inadequate. It did little to prevent or to sanction against the use of sexual violence as a method of war. Part of the problem was a lack of information the Council was given on sexual violence in conflict – a problem that is traceable to the absence of a system to monitor 1325 implementation.²⁸ As a result, peacekeeping missions were not given explicit protection mandates; high rates of violence were not considered in discussions on arms embargoes; and sanctions and resources could not be

²⁶ These issues have previously been discussed and appear in Sam Cook, Security Council Resolution 1820: On Militarism, Flashlights, Raincoats, And Rooms With Doors—A Political Perspective On Where It Came From And What It Adds, *Emory International Law Review* 126 Vol 23, No. 1, (2009); in Sam Cook, New Resolution Tackles Sexual Violence in Conflict, 68 *Peace and Freedom*, Fall 2008, at 8; and in Sam Cook, Security Council Resolution 1820: A Move to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, *PeaceWomen E-News*, June 2008, at www.peacewomen.org/news/1325News/Issue102.pdf.

²⁷ U.N. Charter art. 24, para. 1 and art. 39.

²⁸ See Cook, *op cit* note 26.

properly allocated to address security concerns. Added to this was a resistance by some Security Council members to see sexual violence as a matter of international peace and security and thus a matter for its consideration.²⁹

This impasse was broken in 2008 – perhaps because of the visibility at that time of the devastating and horrific violence committed against women in the Democratic Republic of the Congo over the last decade. The discrepancies between the information in the media and the absence of adequate information and action within the Security Council was glaringly apparent. Whatever the direct cause, it was at this time that politicians acted to move the ongoing advocacy efforts to reform the Security Council’s response to sexual violence forward.³⁰

Resolution 1820, 1888 and 1889 – Three Steps Ahead

The resultant Security Council Resolution 1820³¹ on women, peace and security is significant in many respects: it is a recognition that addressing sexual violence in conflict is integral to the maintenance of international peace and security and therefore within the purview of the Security Council;³² it provides for specific action – for example in the context of sanctions against those committing sexual violence;³³ and it requires concrete protection and prevention measures.³⁴

SCR 1820 is, of course, not a perfect response to sexual violence in conflict – it is a negotiated text, many issues were left out that must be taken up elsewhere in the UN system, and it is only as strong as its subsequent implementation.³⁵

²⁹ See Cook, *op cit* note 26.

³⁰ Many NGOs were engaged in such efforts over the years but the attention to the issue at a Wilton Park Conference hosted by the UK government and the subsequent commitment of the US Ambassador to the United Nations to the issue is credited by many as the reason for progress.

³¹ Security Council Resolution 1820 (2008) on women, peace and security was unanimously adopted by the Council on 19 June 2008 and through a procedural provision also co-sponsored by nearly 50 other UN member States. See UN: Finally, a Step Toward Confronting Rape in War: Security Council Takes Action to Identify and Help End Sexual Violence, HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH, June 18, 2008, <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2008/06/18/un-finally-step-toward-confronting-rape-war>.

³² See Cook, *op cit* note 26 and cites therein including Security Council, Letter dated 16 June 2008 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, Annex, Women Targeted or Affected by Armed Conflict: What Role for Military Peacekeepers? (Summary of Wilton Park Conference, May 27–29, 2008), 3, U.N. Doc. S/2008/402 (June 18, 2008).

³³ See SCR 1820 and resources at www.peacewomen.org/themes_theme.php?id=16&subtheme=true

³⁴ For a more detailed analysis of the provisions of SCR 1820 see *ibid*.

³⁵ These include issues such as resource commitments and the provision of comprehensive services to survivors. For a discussion of the potential of SCR 1820 see Elisabeth Roesch, Gender-based Violence Advocacy Officer International Rescue Committee, What Difference Can Resolution 1820 Make For Women Now?, July 2009 in *Peace-Women E-News Issue 109*, July 2009.

However, it was a turning point for progress on the broader women, peace and security agenda in SCR 1325 – despite its focus on sexual violence. It contains the building blocks for a system of ongoing monitoring and reporting that includes the development of benchmarks for measuring progress on the prevention of sexual violence.³⁶ The Secretary-General’s report a year later, despite being disappointing on many levels, also contained promising recommendations relating to information collection and analysis and to UN system coordination and leadership.³⁷

Several of these were taken up in SCR 1888 adopted in September 2009.³⁸ This third women, peace and security resolution contains important provisions for coordination and leadership (in the form of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General for sexual violence in conflict).³⁹ Also included were tools to build accountability – including provision for systematic reporting of sexual violence by UN peacekeepers and other parts of the UN’s human-rights system that will hopefully also result in more systematic prevention and response efforts.⁴⁰

³⁶ It explicitly requests the Secretary-General to include information and recommendations on the protection of women and girls in his country-specific reports to the Council. It also requested a report on the implementation of SCR 1820, information on the use of sexual violence (including prevalence and trends), strategies to prevent such violence and benchmarks for measuring progress. Furthermore, it requests the Secretary-General’s report on plans for improving the flow of information on sexual violence – a request that will hopefully then contribute to an improved response.

³⁷ The Secretary General, Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1820, U.N. Doc. S/2009/362 (15 July 2009). For a review of this report see Sam Cook, Resolution 1820 – A Review of the Report of the Secretary General in PeaceWomen E-News Issue 109, July 2009.

³⁸ S.C. Res. 1888, U.N. Doc. S/Res/1888 (Sept. 30, 2009).

³⁹ The appointment by the Secretary General of a Special Representative for Sexual Violence in Conflict in early 2010 also came out of SCR 1888 and is an important step forward in high-level leadership on the women, peace and security agenda more broadly. It is hoped that this mandate will be discharged in a manner that addresses the root causes of conflict and takes account of all aspects of the women, peace and security agenda. For the views of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security on this appointment see NGOWG Press Release, 1 February 2010, New UN Champion for Women in Conflict, available at: www.womenpeacesecurity.org/media/pdf-PressRelease-SRSG-Jan2010.pdf (last accessed 8 June 2010).

⁴⁰ For a review of SCR 1888 see Kristina Mader, Security Council Adopts Resolution 1888 on Women, Peace and Security – 30 September 2009 in PeaceWomen E-News Issue 111, September 2009.

From "1325" to the Fight against Sexual Violence

Perhaps the most promising possibility in advancing accountability was the somewhat unexpected adoption of the fourth resolution – SCR 1889 – on the occasion of 1325's 9th Anniversary.⁴¹ This deals with key failures to address women's interests and concerns in post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding.⁴² A crucial provision – and one whose outcome is eagerly anticipated – is its request for a set of global indicators to track implementation of SCR 1325 and to serve as a basis for reporting on 1325 implementation.⁴³

After several years in which consideration of 1325's implementation was reduced to almost routine 'Anniversary Advocacy' each October, the eighth and ninth years of the resolution's existence saw noteworthy progress.⁴⁴ The focus on sexual violence in conflict, which reached its peak in 2008, has ultimately resulted in significant policy advances across the women, peace and security agenda. This despite the ostensible focus of two of the three additional resolutions on sexual violence in conflict. The very fact of their adoption seems to have cleared the bottleneck, provided momentum and revitalized advocacy efforts. Despite their explicit focus, SCR 1820 and 1888 both recognize the links between sexual violence and women's participation in ways that break down the very limiting dichotomy of victimhood and agency seen in the early years of SCR 1325 advocacy.⁴⁵ The fears of a return to a reductionist agenda provoked by this focus resulted in much debate and a far more nuanced, complex and deeper understanding of both sexual violence and participation and how these relate to peacebuilding and conflict prevention. On a more concrete level, the additional resolutions each contributed towards a more systematic approach to monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda.

⁴¹ S.C. Res. 1889, U.N. Doc. S/Res/1889 (Oct. 5, 2009).

⁴² For a discussion of the key provisions of SCR 1889 see PeaceWomen Project 1889 resources at www.peacewomen.org/themes_theme.php?id=63&subtheme=true.

⁴³ See Para 17 of SCR 1889.

⁴⁴ For reviews of the Anniversaries of Resolution 1325 see PeaceWomen E-News Issues and resources at http://www.peacewomen.org/themes_theme.php?id=15&subtheme=true

⁴⁵ The Resolution recognizes the importance of women's participation and reaffirms their role in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in post-conflict peacebuilding as well as the importance of their full participation in peace and security matters. The link between sexual violence and women's participation is recognized in the preambular paragraph where the Security Council notes that it is: *Deeply concerned also about the persistent obstacles and challenges to women's participation and full involvement in the prevention and resolution of conflict as a result of violence, intimidation and discrimination, which erode women's capacity and legitimacy to participate in post-conflict public life, and acknowledging the negative impact this has on durable peace, security and reconciliation, including post-conflict peacebuilding.*

The inclusion of participation is also included to some extent in the operative parts of the resolution in requiring the inclusion of the views of women of affected communities in developing protection measures. See Paras 3, 10 and in peacebuilding and formal peace processes – see Paras 11 and 12.

Having a multitude of resolutions on women, peace and security (and thus many more numbers to cite) initially seemed to cause some confusion – how else to refer to women, peace and security and all the years of gathered meaning if not with the number ‘1325’? However, ‘1325’ remains an important framework for women, peace and security, and having three more somewhat cumbersome numbers to deal with has also forced advocates to move away from the shorthand and to more explicitly articulate their agenda. And in this way, the focus on sexual violence almost ten years after the passage of SCR 1325 has ultimately provided feminist peace activists with the opportunity to demand accountability and to reclaim the agenda for peace.



© private

Felicity Hill is a member of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) from Australia who travelled on the Peace Train in 1995. After working as WILPF's disarmament intern in 1996, she was the director of WILPF's United Nations Office in New York until 2002. During that time she worked in the NGO coalition that pushed for the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 and created the Reaching Critical Will and the Peace-Women projects. In these projects, she focused on enhancing NGO preparation and participation in security and disarmament forums. She now works as a policy adviser to the Australian Greens Senator, Scott Ludlam.

Felicity Hill

Reaching Critical Will

Nuclear disarmament still must be an important aim on the political agenda.
women are affected in a special way from nuclear arms race

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) had already been working for thirty years when nuclear weapons were first tested and used in 1945 – the same year the United Nations was formed. WILPF women have been part of the anti-nuclear struggle since it began and we continue to be very active on the local and national levels. We have also been active at the United Nations through our ReachingCriticalWill.org project that, since 2000, has been working to increase the preparation and participation of non-governmental organisations in UN meetings on nuclear weapons.

The 1995 Peace Train occurred just after France conducted a series of nuclear tests in the Pacific: an event which caused a global outcry and a welcome resurgence of the anti-nuclear movement. During our journey our schedule was directly impacted because the Chinese were testing nuclear weapons in Tibet. To avoid our protest, the Chinese government orchestrated the delay of our train in the Ukraine until after the tests were completed.

Due in part to these events, there were many activities organised by non-governmental organisations at the Beijing Forum to protest and to spread information about nuclear weapons issues. This was not unusual as the theme of all UN Women's Conferences have been "equality, development and peace" which led to nuclear weapons being discussed by both governments and NGOs. While it is less detailed on the peace issue than previous outcome documents from UN women's conferences, the Beijing Platform for Action does include a call for an end to nuclear testing and recognises the active role that women have taken in working for nuclear disarmament.

Fifteen years after the Peace Train and the Beijing conference, some of the questions we can ask are: How far have we come since 1995 in achieving progress towards nuclear disarmament? What needs to be done to implement the very first UN resolution to eliminate nuclear weapons? Why do women care?

This article will try to answer some of these questions and reflect on the efforts made by WILPF from 1995-2010 to rid the world of nuclear weapons.

Nuclear Weapons: Sadistic, Inhumane, Illegal and Undemocratic

For six and a half decades many, many people, including WILPF women, have expended their time, energy, money and effort seeking to implement what governments of the world already resolved to do in the very first UN resolution in 1945: get rid of nuclear weapons. Why?

The 23,000 weapons that exist today, with several thousand ready to launch within minutes of warning, are arguably the most hideous weapons ever created. They alone can destroy all life on earth in an afternoon. These weapons violate moral and religious codes and principles of law throughout the world because of their destructive potential and indiscriminate nature. This has made thinkable the violent destruction of all states and societies.

Different to other weapons, nuclear weapons perfect sadism in that they do not explode to kill once. Rather, nuclear weapons are intentionally designed to affect the genetic material of future generations, killing, contaminating and mutating again and again and again. The radiation from nuclear weapons, nuclear energy and uranium mining is uniquely hazardous, persistent and indiscriminate. It damages our most precious legacy: the core human blueprint stored in our DNA and passed on to future generations.

Because they are indiscriminate and have intergenerational effects, the International Court of Justice declared in 1996 that nuclear weapons violate the international humanitarian laws of war that require warring parties to treat civilians and military personnel differently.

No country that has developed nuclear weapons can claim to be a democracy. Every major decision taken by those governments that developed nuclear weapons was done in the absence of even full cabinet knowledge, let alone approval

of the population. Due to the secrecy, clandestine research and human experimentation undertaken, nuclear weapons are intrinsically corrosive and corruptive of democratic rule within states. They also undermine democratic relations between states since they threaten our collective existence, and intensify mistrust precisely where building trust is most needed. Not distinguishing between borders, civilians, military, gender, race or class, the leaders who develop, test and prepare to use these weapons democratise only suffering and cancer.

Disarmament IS democracy; the vast majority of governments and peoples on this planet have registered loud and clear their preference that governments get on with nuclear disarmament negotiations and produce results through a Nuclear Weapons Convention.

As the Canberra Commission clearly stated, while these weapons remain and are valued in the security policies of those countries possessing them, others will want them. Abolition is the only solution.

How Far Have We Come since 1995?

The international security environment has not changed enough qualitatively from that in 1995 to eliminate the basis of the fears we had back then about nuclear weapons. While there were more nuclear weapons in existence in 1995, today's 23,000 in the arsenals of 9 countries (USA, Russia, UK, France, China, India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea) are more powerful. The doctrine of deterrence continues to hold sway, and the nuclear possessors stubbornly hold onto their arsenals, despite the legal treaty obligation that exists for them to disarm.

The 1970 nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) was designed to be a temporary treaty. Governments anticipated that within 25 years nuclear weapons would be eliminated. A review conference mechanism was built into the treaty to evaluate whether it was still required after 25 years, and this conference was held in 1995. Because nuclear weapons still existed in large numbers, governments decided to continue the treaty indefinitely.

WILPF women both love and hate the NPT. We love it because it is the only treaty that legally binds the nuclear weapon states to disarm. We hate it because it deems nuclear energy as an "inalienable right". In 1995, WILPF was opposed to

simply extending the Non-Proliferation Treaty because it legitimized the status quo; instead we called for the treaty to be extended for a period of 5 years only to provide a firmer deadline for disarmament action.

Impatient with the slow progress on disarmament, in 1998 a group of progressive states on nuclear weapons – Ireland, Mexico, South Africa, Sweden, New Zealand, Egypt and Brazil – got together and formed what was called the New Agenda Coalition. Their new approach and strategy was focused on building up to the 2000 NPT meeting by forging a new consensus and action plan. Their UN General Assembly resolutions were very controversial, but also very clever in that they used agreed language to make it very difficult for the nuclear weapon states to vote against.

NGOs were also impatient with the slow progress on disarmament, and recognising the need for more coordinated efforts on the part of NGOs. WILPF formed a new project to build towards the 2000 NPT Review Conference called Reaching Critical Will. This project provided a baseline of information and routinely provided speeches, documents and draft resolutions under discussion at the UN General Assembly, the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva and under the NPT. The project also provided a daily newsletter during the NPT conference to filter through the opinions and analyses of NGOs, and organised opportunities for NGOs to formulate coherent demands and strategies for realising them.

Thanks to the New Agenda Coalition and NGO efforts around the world, the 2000 NPT Review Conference was a success. A 13 point action plan was agreed on by all governments, including the nuclear weapon states, which if implemented, would bring about a nuclear weapons free world. Then George Bush took power in the United States and the disarmament agenda took a quantum leap backwards. Nothing was achieved during the Bush administration. The 2005 meeting of the NPT was a failure and illegal wars were waged on the pretext of non-existent weapons of mass destruction.

While President Obama raised hopes by including nuclear abolition in his presidential campaign as well as his Prague speech, and recent reduction agreements with Russia, the recently concluded 2010 meeting of the NPT states parties was only a mild success. While governments agreed to a final text, 73 out of the 122 paragraphs shamelessly promote nuclear energy, and the disarmament language is all aspirational and rather vague.

Since 1995, NGOs have increasingly focused their efforts on disarmament around the call for a Nuclear Weapons Convention. This, like the Biological Weapons Convention, Chemical Weapons Convention, Landmines Convention and Cluster Bombs Convention, would eliminate an entire category of weapons.

WILPF has joined with the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons or ICAN to promote the goal of a Nuclear Weapons Convention. Governments and officials are endorsing this campaign and our model treaty, which was drafted by experts and has become a UN document, is considered the starting point for negotiations and was referred to in the final outcome document of the NPT 2010 meeting. Recently both the Malaysian and Costa Rican governments have officially endorsed ICAN, and even Henry Kissinger and other major cold warriors are calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons.

Over the decades the disarmament movement has created and maintained a taboo against nuclear weapons and nuclear testing, and has helped to create some of the biggest demonstrations in history. We can count some real achievements, and there are others that are much harder to count because what has been prevented did not happen.

WILPF has actively taken up the role in reframing issues and norms; coordinating international actions; mobilizing public opinion to capture the attention of political decision-makers; publicizing and praising states that do the right thing; and protesting when governments violate rights and standards when they do not live up to norms, their own resolutions or rhetoric. All these actions are needed in a world of increasing nuclear danger.

Why Do Women Care about Nukes?

The democracy deficit around nuclear weapons includes gender questions given that women are chronically under-represented in all decision making forums on national and international peace and security issues, including nuclear weapons issues. In addition, women's bodies are more vulnerable than men's to ionising radiation arising from the production, testing and use of nuclear weapons.

However, nuclear weapons are not only physical objects, they are also political objects; their symbolic importance is key in national and international security debates, as well as in domestic politics. For example, when India exploded five

nuclear devices in May 1998, Hindu nationalist leader Balasaheb Thackeray explained, "We had to prove that we are not eunuchs." An Indian newspaper cartoon depicted Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee propping up his coalition government with a nuclear bomb and the caption read: "Made with Viagra".

Images such as these rely on the widespread metaphoric equation of political and military power with sexual potency and masculinity. Political actors incorporate sexual metaphors in their representations of nuclear weapons as a way to mobilize gendered associations and symbols in creating assent, excitement, support for, and identification with the weapons and their own political regime. In other words, the symbolic gendered dimensions of nuclear weapons are not trivial; they are an integral part of accomplishing domestic and political objectives.

There is now general recognition that there are significant gender dimensions to the possession of small arms and light weapons. It would be naïve to assume that this association suddenly becomes meaningless when we are talking about larger, more massively destructive weapons. And more naïve still to think that it doesn't matter.

What Is to Be Done?

The abolition movement will succeed by:

1. Lifting people's spirits and hope for a nuclear free world: The issue of nuclear apocalypse is really not funny, but to get serious about it, we need to make it meaningful and hopeful; humour can turn the horror of nuclear war into hope for preventing it. Knowledge might be power, but you win an argument when one side's case appears laughable. Humour and hope are essential to overcome psychic numbing and motivate action.
2. Knowing the difference between outputs and outcomes: With the technology we have today it is relatively easy to generate a really good looking leaflet or publication, and it often feels really good to organize a demonstration. Energy and resources go into these activities for good reason. A degree of duplication is inevitable, and tailoring information to our constituencies and localities is an important service; however, our activities need to be designed to have an outcome. That outcome might be to educate those outside our movement or

to effect policy change within our governments. While repetition and endurance is certainly part of effecting change, when we generate efforts that are not linked directly with an outcome, we are not being as effective as we might.

3. Becoming more interested in changing policy than hearing the sound of our own voices: Governments and policy makers need to be persuaded with arguments and facts. When engaging governments and decision makers, we don't have to become diplomats, but we have to try to think like them in order to address their policy or arguments and defeat them. Yes, its infuriating, illogical, and often a rather sad intellectual exercise, but when a diplomat or a decision-makers asks, "Why is it in my interests to get rid of nuclear weapons?" and a civil society lobbyist makes moral arguments, we are being ineffective. That's not what they're asking, and a moral argument is often not the best entry point into the discussion, but a wonderful way to round off a coherent set of arguments. If we can't listen and analyse how policy processes work, and how people within them are thinking, we are alone at Speaker's Corner, which might be satisfying and good therapy, but it's not directly making change.
4. Coordinating globally, acting globally: NGOs and civil society on nuclear disarmament are active the world over, but are not as well coordinated as they might be. There is competition among major groups for resources, but there are also language barriers and geographical distances. The Reaching Critical Will project of WILPF has stimulated communication and partnerships within civil society, and between NGOs and governments, but there remains an insufficiently coordinated approach.

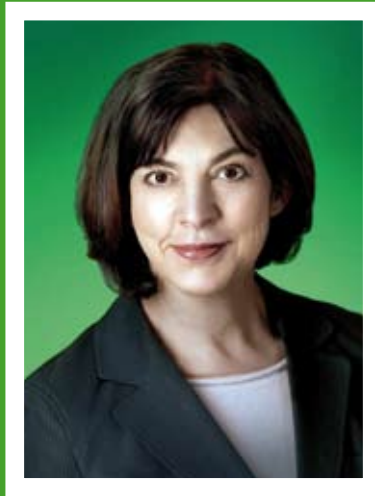
The existence of nuclear weapons creates a ripple effect, with the 9 states which emanate nuclear terror at the centre, we see an outer ring of 26 nuclear umbrella states and another of the 44 reactor states. I believe that NGOs should be coordinate along that ripple also. NGOs working in the 9 states which emanate nuclear terror should be in greater communication to share strategies, tactics and identify key upcoming opportunities and approaches that could be taken on the national level to effect the overall international situation. NGOs cannot exist in 2, so at least 7 of the 9 can participate in a discussion and that would inform the broader civil society and enhance the information flow and understanding of the global nuclear situation.

NGOs in the 26 umbrella states have a different entry point into the nuclear weapon debate and could affect the utility of nuclear weapon states doctrines and sense of the utility of nuclear weapons if they were able to convince their governments to take the essential step of reducing the role of nuclear weapons in security policies. The reactor states have more of a role to play, given the open acknowledgement of reactor technology leading to weapons, which Iran's nuclear energy programme is highlighting.

The Future Will Concede Us

The development and existence of nuclear weapon is an embarrassing lapse in human evolution; these are suicidal, genocidal and ecocidal weapons. Humanity will get over it. We will stop calling a balance of terror stability, we will stop entertaining absurd double speak notions such as security being obtainable through mutual insecurity. The theory of nuclear deterrence will be recognized for what it is: intimidation, threat and coercion. We will look back and laugh at the strange intellectual gymnastics that calls the capacity to blow the world up 6 times over rational or realism, when it's actually psychotic.

Future generations will look back on these times and they will wonder at the mystifications around killing and maiming, the investment made in weapons, mutilation and violence and, bewildered, they will ask: "Did those people really believe in those gods?" And future generations will say, "no, not all of them believed: some, and then more, and then more of them believed in peace, democracy and human security and that's why we're still here."



© private

Born in 1956, Rebecca Harms is the co-chairperson with Daniel Cohn-Bendit Chairman of the Greens/EFA parliamentary group in the European Parliament. The German parliamentarian has been involved for many years in the struggle against nuclear power and for a more efficient handling of energy. In 1977 the tree nursery worker and gardener was one of the founders of a citizen's group against the atomic repository in Gorleben. The debates about the utilization of nuclear power and the risks of this technology are still one of the main focus of her political work.

Rebecca Harms

The Ongoing Disaster

Between Chernobyl and Moscow: The Ukrainian Energy Policy Needs a Fundamental Change

On the morning of April 26, 1986, two explosions occurred in block 4 at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in Ukraine. The reactor was completely destroyed and the resulting fire kept burning in the ruins for ten days. In total, the amount of radioactivity sent into the atmosphere was two hundred times higher than that of the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki combined. A radioactive cloud drifted around the Earth. Many regions in Europe were highly contaminated and the fallout could be measured everywhere in the world.

The catastrophe's impact, however, is still most clearly noticeable in Belarus, Ukraine and Russia. Millions of people are affected there. The maximum credible accident (MCA) – that is the worst case scenario – at the very least accelerated the collapse of the Soviet Union. The lies and the lack of transparency during and long after the disaster towards the general population; towards firefighters, doctors and nurses; but also towards the Red Army, whose soldiers provided the largest part of immediate aid work, contradicted the intentions and objectives of Glasnost and Perestroika.

Two hundred and thirty-seven members of the emergency forces suffered from acute radiation sickness, with 28 of them dying in 1986 and a further 19 between 1987 and 2004. The number of permanently disabled people (and their children), resulting from the accident at Chernobyl, increased from 200 in 1991 to more than 91,000 in 2001. Approximately seven million people in Ukraine are entitled to special allowances, pensions and preferential medical care because they have been recognised as victims of Chernobyl.

The participants of the Women's Peace Train, who visited Ukraine in 1995 on their way from Helsinki to Beijing, were also confronted with the brutal consequences of the Chernobyl meltdown. Nine years after the accident, numerous Ukrainian women reported on the radioactive contamination of their environment to the train's participants. Nearly 25 years have passed, yet people are still dying because of the disaster.

An Accident that Will Reverberate for Many Years

The long-term consequences of the accident remain undetermined. Exposure to ionizing radiation can cause cancer in almost every organ of the body. The time between the intake of radiation and the onset of cancer can be as many as 50 to 60 years or more. By 2005, in Belarus, Ukraine and Russia about 4,000 cases of thyroid cancer were detected among people who were not yet 18 years old at the time of the accident.

The total number of deaths resulting from the Chernobyl disaster will never be fully known. For the 20th anniversary of the meltdown, in 2006, I commissioned the TORCH report (The Other Report on Chernobyl). Together with a group of scientists, Dr. Ian Fairlie made a new impact assessment on the consequences. For this work, he only evaluated studies that have gone through a peer review, thus verified by independent experts. Fairlie shows that due to the Chernobyl accident, people all over the European continent are still becoming ill or dying. The studies evaluated by him show that the disaster will lead to between 30,000 and 60,000 further cases of cancer deaths. Simultaneous to the TORCH report, two further studies on the subject were published. All three studies – independent of one another – concluded that hundreds of thousands of people will become ill and tens of thousands will die.

No Homeland, No History

The full extent of the disaster, however, can not be captured with these numbers. It is insufficient to demonstrate the consequences of the Chernobyl catastrophe simply with additional cases of death. About 350,000 people were evacuated from the most contaminated areas of Ukraine. But today there are still thousands living in areas where the evacuation was ordered. In those areas,

people are exposed to extremely high radiation doses. At the same time, health care has not become better, but worse. And those who were evacuated live with painful losses: loss of home, loss of their own history, loss of livelihood – all consequences of a disaster that cannot be measured. It is a life full of fear for the future for families where, despite the evacuation, critically ill members often have to be looked after. How can that ever be quantified?

Although several thousand people are still engaged in cleaning up in the zone, there is little progress. There are hundreds of intermediate storage facilities for radioactive waste in the zone. The temporary sarcophagus, built shortly after the disaster, and covers the remains of the damaged reactor 4 is leaking and no longer stable. The "Shelter Implementation Plan" provided 500 million euros to Ukraine from international sources. Among other things, a 100 meter high arch construction is to be built as a new protective cover with this money. In his description of the situation of Chernobyl 20 years after the disaster, the British nuclear expert, John Large, concluded that it would be over-ambitious and almost impossible to decontaminate the evacuation zone completely. However, if we waited for the natural decay of the radioactive contamination, the zone would have to be isolated and controlled for the next 100 to 300 years.

Ukrainian experts assume that by 2015 the cost following the Chernobyl accident will amount to more than 165 billion dollars from the Ukrainian state treasury – a huge amount compared to the country's GDP. For example, in 1996 Ukraine spent 15 per cent of its total state budget on the consequences of the disaster. In later years it was still around five per cent.

Despite these huge expenses, medical care is insufficient. On the contrary, many Chernobyl victims are not treated or supported at all or barely adequately. Today, almost a quarter of a century after the disaster, the clean-up has not even been completed at the former nuclear power plant despite international financial and logistical assistance. And this is true even though a whole army of soldiers and workers has already fought against the effects of radioactivity, some with high tech tools, others with a shovel and wheelbarrow. The end of this work is not in sight. Every day thousands still go on shift in the zone and the power plant.

Nuclear and Coal versus Efficient and Renewable Energy

The Ukrainian population has been traumatised by the disaster and its serious consequences. The rejection of the use of nuclear power is stronger than almost anywhere else. No surprise! Unfortunately, this is not at all reflected in the government's energy policy or in the planning of the energy industry in the country. The disaster has not led to a reduction in the production of nuclear power.

Even reactor 3 at Chernobyl was started up again in fall 1987, 16 months after the disaster. The reactor control station shared a wall with the sarcophagus. Reactor 3 was not decommissioned until 2000. Currently, 15 nuclear reactors are operating in Ukraine and supplying about 47 per cent of its electricity.

After the Orange Revolution of 2004, which led to a stronger western orientation in the country, the government even strived for massive expansion of nuclear energy. Twenty-two new reactors were to be built by 2030. That this strategy could not yet be put into practice is due to a lack of funding as well as a also lack of infrastructure and expertise. The focus of the energy strategy of the former government under Yulia Tymoshenko lay on reducing dependence on Russian energy imports.

Until 1991, Ukraine as part of the Soviet Union was supplied with oil and gas from Siberia at extremely low prices. This led to energy intensive industries being built in the country and to an enormous waste of energy. After Ukraine's independence, gas prices have risen but are still well below world market prices. Both the Ukrainian economy and consumers are heavily dependent on cheap Russian gas and oil imports.

Unsuccessfully Efforts to Become Independent

Russia knows how to exploit this dependence politically, as became particularly evident in the various gas crises between 2007 and 2009. During those years of financial difficulties, Russia repeatedly shut off the gas supply to Ukraine in January, thus putting pressure on the country's government. Since Ukraine is not only a large customer, but also the most important transit country for Russian gas supplies to Europe, the gas dispute between the two states also caused supply shortfalls in some EU countries.

A second pillar for energy independence from Russia is the replacement of gas by domestic coal. This is economically quite understandable, as coal is an abundant raw material in Ukraine, but using coal for energy results in rising greenhouse gas emissions and other problems for humans and the environment.

The desire to free themselves from the strong dependence on Russia has always been understandable; however, the paths that have been chosen so far bring neither security nor sustainability. At the same time, Ukraine has great potential to reduce energy consumption and to use renewable sources. Despite some improvements in recent years, the energy intensity, i.e. the level of energy consumption, is extremely high compared to its gross domestic product. This is due to the high proportion of energy intensive industries, but is also caused by inefficient industrial processes, high transmission losses and the high power and gas consumption of the population. It is always shocking to see that, despite the gigantic consumption of energy in whatever form, people freeze every winter and houses, water pipes and other infrastructure are destroyed by frost. Investment in more efficient industrial processes, new network infrastructure, better insulated houses and economical and efficient power consumption would be of enormous benefits for consumers, the economy and the environment as well as creating more energy independence.

The Ukraine is large in size, relatively sparsely populated and climatically diverse. There is enormous potential for energy from wind, sun, water, biomass and geothermal energy. The Institute for Renewable Energy in Kiev estimates the potential for the production of energy from alternative sources to be approximately two to three times higher than that of the actual production in 2008. To date, the share of renewable energies in the final energy consumption counts for a meagre 3.5 per cent - of which half is supplied by hydro power and the other half by biomass. Out of the potential of about 16,000 megawatts of installed wind power capacity, there is currently only 89 megawatts being produced in twelve wind parks.

But conditions in this area appear to be slowly improving. In 2008, a law for a “feed-in” tariff to promote renewable energy was adopted (similar to the German Renewable Energy Law – Erneuerbare-Energien-Gesetz EEG). How quickly this industry will grow in the Ukraine in the future depends not least on the political development of the country. So far the strong nuclear lobby has managed to defend the old centralised power structure and thus prevents the development of alternative forms of energy.



© private

Irmgard Heilberger, born in 1953, is the Director of the German Section of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and represents the organization at many international congresses. She lives in Augsburg, Germany and works as a special education teacher in schools for the mentally disabled, especial multiply disabled and learning disabled people in Bavaria. Since 1983 she has been an activist for the peace movement and in 1995 she became a member of the WILPF and participated in the Peace Train from Helsinki to Peking. In 1999 she left the German Green Party because of their decision at the party congress in Bielefeld in favour of the military intervention in Kosovo. She worked on the Theatre of the Oppressed and the Legislative Theatre with Augusto Boal and the social therapy with Charles Rojzman (Clown-Theatre).

Irmgard Heilberger

From Helsinki to Beijing

Fifteen years ago, the women's Peace Train set out for the UN World Conference on Women in China's Capital; however, many of the meetings goals have still not been implemented

The 26th Congress of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) took place in early August 1995 in Helsinki under the theme "Building a Secure and Sustainable World Society". As the Fourth UN World Conference on Women was scheduled for only little later, from the 6th to 12th of September the idea arose of having a "Women's Peace Train" go from Helsinki to the Chinese capital to celebrate the League's 80th birthday.

With the Women's Peace Train, we aimed to draw attention to women's peace policies and to call attention to the voices of women from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, as they had negligible representation at the preparatory meeting for the Beijing summit.

Despite all predictions to the contrary, the League's secretary general at the time, Barbara Lochbihler, and her team succeeded in overcoming all organisational challenges and cross-boarder formalities.

"We intentionally selected a route for the Peace Train that took us to different countries and cultures: through potential areas of conflict; through countries that were shaken by the shock of the transition to free market economy; through regions that are destabilized," said Ms. Lochbihler.¹

¹ In: "Begegnungen Frauen in Ost und West, Mit dem Frauenfriedenszug unterwegs von Helsinki nach Peking" Brochure, Ed. "Regenbogen" Bayern e.V. München+IFFF S.1

A Summer School on Wheels

Two hundred and forty women between 18 and 87 years old from 42 countries then travelled from Helsinki through St. Petersburg, Kiev, Bucharest, Sofia, Istanbul, Odessa and Almaty to Beijing, a planned stop in the Uyghur city of Urumqi was quickly cancelled by the Chinese government.

In those seven cities, meetings were held with representatives of various non-governmental organisations, which in turn increased the awareness of problems of Eastern European women. We also organised numerous workshops during the train journey, to prepare ourselves for the UN conference and to deepen mutual relations between all travellers. Even the old WILPF tradition of a summer school for young and recently interested women was continued under the name “rolling school”.

In St. Petersburg the women met soldiers’ mothers from Russia and Chechnya. In Kiev they were received by the Ukrainian Parliament and the Ministry of Defence, where many women deplored the radioactive contamination of the environment following the accident at the nuclear power plant in Chernobyl. In Bucharest, apparent poverty stood in stark contrast to the prepared buffet in the pompous palace of former Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceauşescu. In Sofia problems of Roma were reported. Representatives of the “Women in Black” arrived from Belgrade to describe the post-war situation in the former Yugoslavia and the rise in domestic violence. Feminists in Istanbul described their difficult daily life and the complex human rights situation. In Odessa, Ukraine, the women were invited to a ballet and in Almaty to a Uyghur concert. The encounter with women of the anti-nuclear movement was shocking: they reported on the dramatic health effects of living a life between nuclear test bases at Semey in Kazakhstan and Lop Nor in China.

With reinforced commitment, the participants brought all the experiences of the Peace Train to the Beijing Conference. Almost thirty thousand women participated in the forum of non-governmental organisations (NGOs). WILPF contributed to the worldwide network of women’s grassroots organisations by offering room for lively discussions and shattering reports from war zones in the peace tent.

The women called for wide-reaching disarmament and a reduction of military budgets by half; for equal participation in leadership positions; women-run centres for conflict management in crisis regions; democratisation of the UN Security Council; recognition of peace building and peace work; as well as for the prosecution of war crimes and an intense fight against poverty.

Against Catholic and Islamic Fundamentalists

Finally, the largest UN document to date on the matter of women was adopted – the 150 page Platform for Action.² At the beginning, 40 per cent of the text was tagged with brackets. Despite fierce lobbying by fundamentalist religious countries (e.g. Iran and the Vatican), for the first time the right of sexual self-determination of women was acknowledged in a UN document. Women’s rights were enshrined as universal human rights. These were violence against women in general and specifically rape during wars – the latter declared as a war crime liable to prosecution. The document also stated comprehensive and detailed facts about discrimination against women.

Women’s organisations were able to successfully ward off attempts by Islamic states and the Vatican to undermine human rights in regards to cultural characteristics, traditions and religion (early marriage, sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation, punishment of abortion); however, they did not succeed in including the concept of “sexual orientation”, which was against the discrimination of lesbians and gays.

Under the “Women and Armed Conflicts” theme, from the league’s point of view the Platform for Action also fell short of the UN Conference on Women in Nairobi in 1985. Women have primarily been recognized as victims of wars. Their constructive role in conflict management and war prevention was hardly noticed; and the demands for disarmament, military conversion and the prohibition of weapons of mass destruction only vaguely addressed. The NGO women were disappointed that most of the governments were not willing to provide any additional financial support for establishing the Platform for Action or to determine dates for the implementation of individual actions.

That taking part in the Peace Train was perceived as greatly enriching the participants lives becomes obvious in the films made and words written during the journey or created afterward.³ Both the encounters and friendships developed on the train, as well as information and impressions gathered in workshop and the NGO Forum in Beijing, formed a complex picture of cultural and national differences. But across borders, many were united by the knowledge that all women were affected in one way or another by unjust patriarchal conditions. One of the participants thus declared: “My nationality is to be a woman”.

After the trip, the WILPF women were almost surprised to realise that in the “exhilaration” of this team-spirit, they had forgotten to organise a meeting of WILPF women among the many workshops on the train. Two of the future presidents of the league (Bruna Nota and Krishna Ahojapatel) joined the WILPF during the Peace Train. The resulting network which arose from there continues to have an impact today, such as in this book.

United Nations: Women are Actors of Peace

In political terms, the women have currently – 15 years later – obtained further victories on paper: equality of women became the third Millennium Development Goal and on October 13, 2000 the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1325, which recognises women as actors of peace. For us, since this time our interpretation says that every government, every forum and any decision which comes about without the active participation of women is illegal. The resolution calls for involvement of women in national and international peace negotiations. It contains the obligation of states to protect women and girls as well as to introduce a gender perspective and appropriate training sessions in all areas of conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peace building.

UN Resolution 1820, adopted on June 19, 2008, declares all forms of sexual violence – such as rape – as war crimes or crimes against humanity and urges Member States to prosecute the perpetrators. It allows the UN Security Council to issue sanctions if sexual violence occurs during armed conflicts. UN Resolution 1888, adopted on September 30, 2009, introduces a special representative and an annual report on Resolution 1820. In addition, the resolution again calls for law enforcement, the protection of victims as well as women’s participation

³ Angelica Dullinger: Peace Train 1995, From Helsinki to Beijing, ISBN 3-978-1889409-49-8, Ladybug Press, Sonora; Videos: Peace – Train to Beijing, by Green Valley Media, Burlington Carnets de Route, Le Train De La Paix 95, de Vanja Baumberger, 1996 Planisphère Productions & V.Baumberger

in the military and police. UN Resolution 1889, of October 5 of the same year, puts in concrete terms previous resolutions and calls for the establishment of precise dates for the fulfilment of certain requirements by the Member States.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon explained in his statement on the occasion of the International Women's Day 2010: "There are many examples of progress, thanks in large part to the resolute efforts of civil society organizations. Most girls now receive an education, particularly at primary level, and more women are now more likely to run businesses or participate in government. A growing number of countries have legislation that supports sexual and reproductive health and promotes gender equality."⁴

But Ban Ki-Moon also recognises that, "Nonetheless, much work remains. Maternal mortality remains unacceptably high, too few women have access to family planning, and violence against women remains a cause for global shame ... Gender stereotyping and discrimination remain common in all cultures and communities. Early and forced marriage, so-called 'honor killing', sexual abuse and trafficking of young women and girls are disturbingly prevalent and, in some areas, on the rise. Whether looking through the lens of poverty, or in times of disaster, we see that women still bear the greatest burden."

Unfortunately, the Beijing goals on social justice, equality, development and peace have still not been reached. The German government, for example, has for years been refusing to establish an action plan and for that matter has also dispersed the responsibilities among various ministries. Women continue to carry the bulk of unpaid family and care work and are paid less than men. They are largely excluded from decisions of the world economy and extremely under-represented in top hierarchy levels, but bear the consequences of the decisions of power holders in form of poverty and social exclusion. This is aggravated by the fact that, in times of dwindling resources, governments invest in programs to stimulate the economy, but as a consequence the coffers are empty for social and financial support for unemployed women.

The fact that nowadays women are heads of state does not hide the fact that the goal of political participation and empowerment of women at hierarchical levels, as requested in Beijing and by Resolution 1325, has scarcely been implemented. At the annual conference "Beijing plus 15" in March 2010 (Commission on the Status of Women - CSW) in a joint statement participants from international

⁴ Ban Ki-moon's statement: www.un.org/en/events/women/iwd/2010/sg_message.shtml

NGOs complained that rulers of states considered the platform for action only as a technical instrument and the matter had been depoliticised. In addition, the options for civil society to engage in the revision process are extremely limited through organisational and spatial restrictions. They end with the crushing verdict: “The presence of such a huge gathering of women has been used instrumentally to legitimise an empty Declaration.”⁵

The War against Women Continues

During the last 15 years the United Nations, NGOs and many governments have broached the issue of the struggle against violence and in particular sexual violence against women. The protection of women and punishment of the perpetrators have been regulated in some countries by law; however, as in other areas the implementation lacks in many places. During a conference on violence against women in Brussels, which was organised by Green Party MEP Barbara Lochbihler on the occasion of the International Women’s Day in March 2010, the human rights activist Jeannine Mukanirwa from the eastern Congo reported: “In some places we do not even have a prison: the offender is sentenced and released right away.”

“We are determined to ... take positive steps to ensure peace for the advancement of women and, recognizing the leading role that women have played in the peace movement, work actively towards general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control, and support negotiations on the conclusion, without delay, of a universal and multilaterally and effectively verifiable comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty” it was stated in the final Beijing Declaration of 1995.

According to Sipri, a peace research institute,⁶ global arms exports rose by 45 per cent between 1998 and 2008. In 2007 alone, one trillion 339 billion U.S. dollars were spent on weapons worldwide. At the same time, Germany has doubled the amount of its arms exports in the last five years. The war in Afghanistan costs one billion U.S. dollars every day, the supposed protection of the population and especially of women is abandoned at any time for the benefit of the soldiers, the civilian population is threatened by the terror of aerial war.

⁵ www.wunrn.com/news/2010/03_10/03_15_10/031510_beijing_files/Beijing%20+%2015%20Review-CSW%2054-Civil%20Society%20Statement.pdf

⁶ www.sipri.org

The U.S. and Russia will not abandon nuclear weapons, even if some obsolete weapons are scrapped. Because of the use of weapons containing depleted uranium, some regions in Iraq are regarded as to be uninhabitable; children are born with birth defects.

Article 134 of the Platform for Action still sounds completely illusory today: “The equal access and full participation of women in power structures and their full involvement in all efforts for the prevention and resolution of conflicts are essential for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security... If women are to play an equal part in securing and maintaining peace, they must be empowered politically and economically and represented adequately at all levels of decision-making.”⁷

Gender Codex in NATO

Of all things, NATO – with its patriarchal command structure – wants to empower women in peace and security and implement Resolution 1325 and achieve a women’s quota of 3 to 18 per cent in each of its armies. NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen declared this on January 27, 2010 in a speech to the EU Commission. He praised the strict gender code of conduct of NATO, the positive influence of female soldiers in protecting the public and their own troops as well as the effectiveness and the acceptance of their deployment. He even admitted that deploying more female military officers does not automatically ensure peace and calls for the cooperation with other stakeholders.

But what does reality look like when 26 NATO countries and partners allegedly waging war for women’s rights and against burqas in Afghanistan? According to a report by the WOMANKIND Worldwide organisation, 87 per cent of the women surveyed in Afghanistan in February 2008 complained about domestic violence, half of them of a sexual nature. According to them, 60 per cent of marriages are forced; and despite a new legal ban, 57 per cent of brides are under 16 years old. Eighty-eight per cent of women are illiterate, only 5 per cent of girls attend secondary school and one of nine mothers die in childbirth making the mortality rate of mothers at birth the highest in the world next to Sierra Leone. According to the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), the number of civilians casualties in the country rose by 40 per cent in 2008 and by further 14 per cent in 2009 to 2412.

“This International Congress of Women opposes the assumption that women can be protected under the conditions of modern warfare.”⁸ warned those women assembled at the founding congress of the WILPF in Den Haag in 1915. What Mr. Rasmussen does not understand is the fact that the threat scenarios of NATO and their combat missions, which are actually not confirmed by international law, threaten the security of the world and that the civil-military cooperation praised by him was rejected by various NGOs because they see their personal safety at risk.

WILPF refuses any exploitation of 1325 for military purposes as well as war propaganda and rejects gender components of NATO and the EU, consisting of the integration of women into military structures. We demand that the number of women working in leading positions of the UN, in international conflict resolution bodies and missions, as well as in governments involved in the resolution of conflicts must be increased without delay. Local women’s organisations must mandatorily be involved. The necessary funds for implementing the Platform for Action 95 and for the above-mentioned resolutions should be provided; action plans should also set binding timelines and clear responsibilities.

The pacifist and Nobel Peace laureate of 1905, Bertha von Suttner, called in her last letter to German women: “So dear sisters, get to work and be patient! (...) I do not mean to say that we could not do well with the thing” – she meant money – “but what is most important is: perseverance, perseverance and perseverance again!”⁹ The results of the 15-year process following Beijing is above all a lesson that the women’s rights set out there are not worth the paper on which they were written when we women do not permanently sue persistently, loudly and in strong networks for the fulfilment of this vision.

⁸ www.ub.gu.se/kvinn/portaler/fred/samarbete/pdf/program_1915.pdf

⁹ in: Sabine Hering, Cornelia Wenzel (Hg.) *Frauen riefen, aber man hörte sie nicht*, Quellenband, ISBN 3-926068-01-9, Kassel 1986, S. 29



© Private

A short stop on the way to China



© Private

The youngest and the oldest participant



© Private

Photo-Shooting in the Peacetrain



© Private

At the aim: the NGO-Congress in Beijing



© Jann Lipka

Since 2004 Eva-Britt Svensson from Sweden has been a Member of the European Parliament for the left-wing Vänsterpartiet. She is the Vice-Chairperson in the European United Left/Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL) and Vice-Chairman of the Committee on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities. The 64 year old parliamentarian is also active on campaigns against violence against women.

Eva-Britt Svensson

Needed: Women Leadership on Security Issues

Billions of euros are still being expended for armaments. In the fight for gender equality, this money could promote peaceful development

Security is traditionally regarded as military security, where the state has military capacity to defend itself or to attack other states. This view of security is found in a patriarchal and militaristic society; a society which is dominated by fear – fear of other enemy states and rogue states, which leads to rearmament; and also fear of the enemy within the state, which often results in surveillance of the country's own citizens. Militarism creates a need for dominance, which is manifested, for instance, through wars and direct military interventions, destabilization of other countries through proxy armies or foreign-sponsored coups. In a militaristic society masculinity is regarded as superior, so questions of peace and war are seen as men's domain. Women's views are neglected. But war has a tremendous effect on women. In modern wars, 'the front' is in the middle of the civilian society. In the many wars since World War II, civilians have accounted for 90 per cent of the casualties.

Beside the bomb attacks and the destruction of towns and villages, women are exposed to sexual violence, so the cause of war and conflict solutions are really a task for women to act upon. For a very long time, women's organizations have for a very long time protested against war and militarism, put forward proposals on disarmament, realistic and peaceful conflict solutions, and on allocating economic resources to social welfare instead of weapons. The women who gathered in The Hague in 1915 to protest against the ongoing war and who founded the Women's League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), were the first to call for a world institution that would provide continuous machinery to mediate arising conflicts and to prevent them from growing into war. After the war, the League

of Nations was founded, followed by the United Nations after World War II. A long struggle for influence and participation in conflict solutions from women's organizations have led to some progress.

The Year 2010 is a Milestone for Gender Equality

The year 2010 is an important year. Fifteen years ago the Beijing World Conference on Women adopted the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, a milestone in the advancement of women's rights; and 10 years ago the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security and in five years, in 2015, the Millennium Development Goals are supposed to be reached. The Beijing Declaration consolidated five decades of legal and policy advances for securing equality of women. Women from around the world helped define the agenda at the conference. Almost 30,000 non-governmental organization representatives attended the NGO forum. In the Platform security issues were also considered, in the section called Women and Armed Conflict. Among actions to be taken by governments a demand "to promote equal participation of women and equal opportunities for women to participate in all forums and peace activities at all levels, particularly at the decision-making level" can be found; and also "to consider establishing educational programmes for girls and boys to foster a culture of peace, focusing on conflict resolution by non-violent means and the promotion of tolerance."

Five years later, such thoughts were elaborated in Security Council Resolution 1325, which some women organizations – above all the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and WILPF – had worked hard to promote. For the first time, the Security Council had an open session where non-governmental organizations were allowed to participate and discuss the resolution. On 31 October 2000, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) unanimously adopted Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. This was the first time the Security Council addressed the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women; recognized the under-valued and under-utilized contributions women make to conflict prevention, peacekeeping, conflict resolution and peace-building; and stressed the importance of their equal and full participation as active agents in peace and security.

The Difficult Struggle for the Implementation of the Resolution 1325 Then came the tough struggle to implement the resolution. In order to implement it, every country was supposed to make a National Action Plan, but so far only 16 countries have done so. Not only countries, but also other organizations working in conflict areas and peace missions such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), UN peacekeeping forces and peace negotiation teams should have an action plan for implementing the resolution. The sad fact is that in one out of ten UN missions, when it comes to peace negotiations women have not been invited. No Bosnian women took part in the peace negotiations ending the war in Bosnia, although the whole world knew about the systematic rapes women had faced.

The example of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) seems to be typical: prior to the signing of the Peace Agreement between the Government of the DRC and the National Congress for the Defence of the People (French: Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple, CNDP), there were several negotiations held in Nairobi and Goma, sponsored and co-facilitated by the United Nations and the African Union. Groups of women's rights and peace activists who tried to attend the peace talks in Nairobi in 2008 were denied access to the building and excluded from the talks.

Later, between the 'Nairobi 1' and 'Nairobi 2' negotiation sessions, a group of Congolese women managed to get a brief, spontaneous meeting with the UN Special envoy, the former Nigerian president Obasanjo, at the airport of Goma. Despite these efforts, women were excluded from having access to the formal peace process, the negotiations, the principle delegations, and the draft texts under consideration, a direct contradiction of Resolution 1325.

Sexual Violence Goes On

The demand for all parties in armed conflicts to specially protect women and girls from sexual violence and rape and the obligation for all member states to proceed against perpetrators of sexual violence has not been implemented. On the contrary, rape and sexual violence has increased during the last decade. Sexual violence is a brutal reality in the war-torn Democratic Republic of Congo. According to NGOs, 100,000 women and children were raped in the region in 2008 alone. The ongoing crisis in eastern Congo is rooted both in this history of

predation and corruption, and the continuing aftermath of the 1994 genocide in neighbouring Rwanda. Today, the Congo continues to struggle with an explosive combination of conflicts at the local, regional and national levels.

But there is a clear lack of political will to prosecute these sexual crimes. Furthermore, Congolese military and civilian courts lack the capacity, credibility and political neutrality to judge such crimes effectively and fairly. To deal successfully with this scope of sexual violence, a consolidated approach needs to be developed involving both international and national judicial mechanisms.

In one year in Colombia, 2008, there were 21,000 victims of sexual violence, many at gunpoint and 16,000 of them involved children. Perpetrators of gender-based violence go unpunished in an astounding 97 per cent of cases in Colombia. About 3 million people are displaced, 80 per cent of them women and children. Many women identify sexual violence at gunpoint as the direct cause of displacement. These are a few examples of the situation today. And to make it worse, women are raped not only in direct conflict areas, but also in refuge camps such as in Darfur and this spring even in camps after the earthquake in Haiti.

Progressive Resolutions and Decisions in the UN

So here we are, 15 years after the Beijing conference and 10 years after Resolution 1325. Let us hope that the three follow-up-resolutions adopted in 2008 and 2009 will enhance the implementation of 1325. Resolution 1820 notes that rape and other forms of sexual violence can constitute a war crime or a crime against humanity and obliges member states to prosecute perpetrators. Resolution 1888 establishes a system of added protection and support to end sexual violence in war, including a team of experts who can be immediately deployed to conflict situations; and a new leader – a special representative – to bring the responses from various UN agencies's together. General Secretary Ban Ki Moon has appointed Margot Wallström, the former vice president of the EU commission, as the Special Representative.

In Resolution 1889, a timetable is added: the General Secretary is requested to submit a set of indicators for use at global level to track implementation of Resolution 1325 within six months and to submit a report to the Security Council of progress of the implementation and with recommendations on further

measures to be taken within 12 months. Furthermore, in September 2009 the General Assembly adopted a resolution to bring together UNIFEM, Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the UN Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI) and United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) into a new UN agency which will be led by an Under-Secretary General for Women.

Everything Depends on Political Will

Now when the right decisions, institutions, expert groups and special representatives are agreed upon, it depends on political will and economic resources if there is to be a fast progress on these issues. To make this possible, it is necessary that the European Union takes the lead by contributing plenty of funds and demanding other developed countries to do the same. After the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty, the European Union speaks with one voice, so member countries which earlier stood up for women and peace in the United Nations have to subordinate themselves to the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the European Council. This is a real challenge for women leaders in the European Union such as Catherine Ashton, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy; and Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanity Aid and Crisis Response. And of course it is a great challenge for those of us in FEMM, the EU parliament's Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality. If the German Chancellor Angela Merkel and the US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton would like to cooperate, we would have a powerful team with the strength to change things for the better.

Billions Daily for Armaments

Most important for achieving security and social welfare for women and children globally is the allocation of economic resources. As the Beijing Plan of Action expressed it: "Excessive military expenditures, including global military expenditures and arms trade or trafficking, and investments for arms production and acquisition have reduced the resources available for social development." A look at military spending around the world tells us what we taxpayers do pay and what we are missing. According to the Stockholm International Peace Re-

search Institute (SIPRI), the world's military expenditures for one year (2008) was US\$ 1,464 billion, which means US\$ 217 per capita or US\$ 4,000,000,000 per day. Rather a lot of money!

Think for a while what you could get instead of bunker buster bombs, stealth planes and millions of soldiers (and tens of thousands of killed people and raped women)! You could fund the United Nations' regular budget for 700 hundred years. And for funding the gender equality set out in the Millennium Development Goals, you would only need 20 per cent of the military spending. One indicator of gender equality is to reduce the gender gap in education at all levels. Getting gender parity in secondary education would cost US\$ 3 billion – the same sum as 9 days occupation of Iraq.

If you look at this comparison of cost and add the situation for women and girls in Iraq today, after seven years of US-occupation – loss of freedom to move outside the home and therefore a small chance to work or study, severe lack of clean water and electricity, and a very defective health care – I think you will admit that US\$ 7,476 billion spent on military occupation during seven years could have been spent in better ways.

Another example of how money could have been spent more effectively can be found in Afghanistan. The Swedish Afghanistan Committee has written a report on reconstruction aid compared to military costs for EU countries' contribution to the Afghanistan war in 2007. This single year, the 25 countries together spent €4,452,250,000 on military troops and equipment and €4,280,910 on reconstruction aid, only 19 per cent of the military cost. For the cost of one soldier in Afghanistan, €250,590, you could get 50 well educated Afghan teachers.

Disarmament now!

Since 1999, world military spending has increased by 44 per cent, from US\$ 847 billion to US\$ 1,464 billion. This is intolerable. There has been much discussion about the warlords of Afghanistan. Now it is high time to speak about the warlords of the United States and Europe, and force them to disarm. When the UN Conference on Disarmament (UNCD) – the sole multilateral negotiating

body on disarmament and the only body that all nuclear armed states belong to, including those countries within the Non Proliferation Treaty and those outside – to its first session of 2010, after 10 years deadlock they agreed on a programme of work. But there was a big disagreement: the states without nuclear weapons or with very few weapons proposed that negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty must also address existing stocks; but those who have a lot of fissile material (which can be used to make nuclear bombs) only wanted to forbid production of new material. In the end, this conference ended without notable results.

There were very few women among the delegates, but lots of women's NGOs and other NGOs followed the negotiations and tried to influence their own governments. Women's organizations have been in the forefront against nuclear weapons since the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Now women demand all the delegates of the UNCD to agree on a Fissile material Cut-off Treaty, the prevention of an arms race in outer space and a real start to nuclear disarmament. And of course women around the world expect women leaders like Hillary Clinton, Angela Merkel and Catherine Ashton to use their power for promoting such agreements.



© private

Pinar Selek graduated from the Sociology Department of Mimar Sinan University and later on finished her graduate studies in the same university. She studied and prepared a thesis on media and globalization. For her master's degree, she studied heterosexism as well as attending political economy lessons in France. She is currently working on doctorate in Political Science at Strasbourg University. She has published six books on the themes of exclusion of transvestites and transsexuals; the military structure in Turkey; and the history of the peace movement in Turkey. After being kept in prison for two and a half years due to her research on the Kurdish Question, she has continued her struggle for peace. She is one of the most important organizers of the actions of the women's movement as well as the founder and one of the leading activists of the Amargi Women's Cooperative. She is editor of the publishing board of the Amargi Feminist Review, the theoretical feminist review in Turkey. Selek's articles have been published in various newspapers and magazines throughout the world.

Pinar Selek

Against the Wall of Masculinity

How feminism is helping to overcome the logic of war in Turkey

The worldwide women's movement has always transcended national borders and acted internationally. Despite some difficulties of mutual understanding and different approaches, women have tried their best to keep in touch, and track each others' successes and experiences. This is why – in spite of all the complications – international meetings, congresses and platforms have been organised. The development in the telecommunication sector over the last 30 years has especially helped the international women's movement to carry out comprehensive analyses.

Women have grown stronger in many respects. Still, patriarchy continues to reproduce itself worldwide, using new and old methods, and interweaving with different machinery of domination. Economic and social conditions as much as gender identities are changing structure, and new mechanisms are being developed. The increasing success of conservative parties in almost all countries and regions over the past ten years is only one manifestation of this process.

It is ironic that the Christian right and the Islamic right are opponents in military-dominated politics, but agree on gender issues. In many US states, El Salvador and Poland abortion is banned – in Iran, women are stoned to death. Although in different forms, sexism thus continues to determine the way of life in many countries. The institutions of marriage and traditional values are gaining in importance, and where these established traditions survive, globalisation – and with it, neo-liberalism, neo-conservatism and militarism – strengthens the patriarchy. Poverty, discrimination, precarious living conditions, exploitation, unemployment and consumption are getting more feminine day by day.

Out of this melting pot, a new structure of social hierarchies is emerging. Militarism has conquered new machinery of domination all over the world, and the weight of unbridled authoritarianism is crushing us. We all know the picture from Iraq that shows a pile of corpses, a shapeless body, with all those heads and feet and legs and arms – does it not belong to our reality? The picture leaves us in deep despair. Silently and motionlessly, we are getting lost in a world of over-information and consumption.

The Fight for Independence: the Feminist Movement in Turkey

Turkey has a rich cultural heritage. The country's history is characterised by multiculturalism, in all its positive and negative aspects. Indeed, Turkey has gone through fierce conflicts as much as it has experienced fruitful exchange. The Turkish women's movement is a perfect example: it has repeatedly shown that there is room for progress, even in times of conflict. Still, since its existence, the movement has been exploited as a tool in the national struggle for power. In a country where, for thousands of years, women have been objectified, appropriated, exploited and understood as a mere symbol, it comes as no surprise that the feminist movement has had to endure numerous attacks and continuously fight for its independence.

The roots of Turkish feminism reach far back into history, but a real movement has only emerged over the last 25 years. Given the siege under which the 'feminist liberation' used to be placed, the women's movement has had to fight for its independence. As early as the Ottoman times, around the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, the first women's organisations and feminist journals appeared – actively supported by Armenian women and influenced by the nascent movements in Europe.

Following the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923, the first initiative to create a party was launched by women. Indeed, it was women who started to call for democratic rights, especially the right to vote. Moreover, they openly expressed that they did not want to put their destiny in the hands of men, and created the Women's People Party. However, as the leaders of the new Republic were sternly opposed to the party and any independent women's organisation, the party was banned and the cadre dissolved.

A short time later the Republican People's Party was founded and governed Turkey up to the 1950s. In order to strengthen the Republic, women were asked to work in social aid organisations. In 1938, women gained the right to vote, and the Republican People's Party – the only party at the time – sent its first women representatives to Parliament. Educated women wearing a miniskirt instead of a headscarf became the symbol of the new Republic. Women were supposed to actively take part in public life, but only if they didn't neglect their domestic duties. They could not create their own party, could not organise themselves independently, but were allowed to play their envisioned role on the public stage.

Turkish capitalism looks as if it had been planned by an engineer. Its principles and lifestyles are rooted in the country's old traditions. The 'modern citizen' is the result of a combination of old habits, unquestioned values and new assumptions. Women became more visible. They started to shoulder the responsibility of feeding their families, to live or to raise their children alone. Moreover, girls saw their role in the household change, and the number of girls with good school marks or a respectable job increased.

With time, families grew smaller, and the roles of 'the mother' and 'the father' underwent considerable change. The importance of the family decreased; in some regions, extramarital relationships were legitimised; and homosexuals could live their lives more openly. Women started to be more active in society. They stole 'the role' of men and opened up to the outside world. However, in places where the traditional structures had been kept in place, the widespread repression of women continued in the form of polygamy, honour killings and the pressure on women to keep their virginity until marriage.

These were the topics inscribed on the agenda of the newly founded women's associations. And even though concepts such as 'liberation', 'freedom' and 'patriarchy' were not yet part of their struggle, the rise of a Turkish left-wing movement in the 1960s acted as an important breeding ground for the re-emergence of a women's liberation movement. Liberation theories and political experience were intensively discussed and social contradictions were revealed. Millions of people went out on the streets, marking the beginning of a struggle that plunged the whole system into a crisis. It was in these years that the strong movement of workers, farmers and students started to call for women's liberation and gender equality. Nevertheless, a real feminist organisation only emerged in the 1980s.

Despite the Military Dictatorship, Women Decide to Go on the Offensive

In 1980, Turkey was shaken by a military coup. The army steamrolled its way across the country, affecting every aspect of everyday life in order to break the will of the society. Hundreds of people lost their lives, hundreds of thousands were arrested, tortured and mutilated – including numerous intellectuals and authors. Many Turks left the country. The dictatorship forbade everything: no talking, no reading, no discussions, no organisations. Still, many women whose husbands were imprisoned began to organise themselves independently, to fight for the democratisation of Turkey, and to discuss the problems that women were facing at the time.

This was the beginning of the feminist movement. And it was this movement which took the first political initiatives after the putsch: in 1985, five years after the coup, feminists organised the first street protests. Some were arrested and incarcerated, and many got attacked. Still, the women continued to fight against torture, taboos, and sexual and domestic violence. They stood up for the sexual rights of women. Several times, groups of women caused quite a stir when they decided to collectively initiate their divorce procedures. In a very short time, the movement and its struggle for women's independence and the right to organise themselves had a huge success. Indeed, the movement came as a surprise, and it proved difficult to stop these unusual women, fighting in an unusual fashion, with unusual means. In response to the feminists contents and demands, the authorities – followed by a patriarchal media and the left – reacted defensively. The stronger the movement grew, however, the more these hostile reactions turned into acceptance.

The Kurdish movement, which developed in the 1980s, succeeded on the one hand in mitigating the consequences of the coup; but on the other hand, it served as a justification to support the dictatorship. The confrontation of the militaristic state with an armed opposition provoked a war that today, 25 years later, has still not ended. From a relative point of view, however, one still has to admit that these years have seen a process of democratisation, and given birth to a political movement.

The feminist movement has played a socially important role and helped to democratise Turkey. While the Kurdish movement is a political organization, the women's movement is part of civil society. It is democratic, independent and decentralised. As a result, it consolidates many different ideas and perspectives. And despite significant contentions, it has succeeded in tackling numerous problems collectively. This is a unique achievement.

The Feminist Movement Takes Root in Civil Society

In every Turkish town has at least one and in larger cities there are several women's organisations. In Istanbul, for instance, most of the over 40 women's organisations call themselves 'feminist'. Moreover, when it comes to subjects such as gender-based violence or discrimination, organisations that have little or nothing to do with the feminist movement do not hesitate to join forces with the latter. Most of the time, they usually succeed in putting these issues on the public agenda and the agenda of the media.

The feminist movement has helped Kurdish women to draw public attention to the ethnic and sexual repression that the war has inflicted upon them. They have founded local organisations; started to question the role played by authorities, family and poverty; and won their own living space.

Despite all the damage caused by the war, it is obvious that a social revolution has begun in the region. Women's organisations act as a basis for a whole social movement, which allows them to directly impact the legislative process in Turkey. In the beginning of 2000, for instance, when the legislature announced their intention to amend the Civil Code, women launched a countrywide campaign and presented draft bills against discrimination within the family, in favour of the rights of employed women, and on inheritance law. Most demands were implemented. A short time later, when the penal code was reformed, women's organisations enjoyed a similar success. Through its continuous efforts, the feminist movement has become an inherent part of Turkey's democratisation process. The movement has grown stronger, and has become an important political and social actor in Turkey.

The success of the feminist movement has impacted many institutions. For instance, opposition organisations, labour unions, political parties and political initiatives have had to adapt their structures and take onboard parts of the feminist agenda. Almost all universities have established chairs of gender studies. Solidarity organisations are flourishing in all regions of Turkey. There are centres to discuss and exchange feminist ideas; the print runs of feminist journals number into the thousands; and feminist libraries, book shops and cinemas are opening their doors. The movement has largely improved its international integration, has benefited from the dynamics, and gained momentum through its various institutions, its solidarity, ideas and political mechanisms.

Through its tumultuous and painful history, through its difficult (mainly oppositional) debates and its struggle around the 'idealisation' of women, the feminist movement has acquitted itself of all theories. More than any other actor in the past twenty years, it has collaborated with other social organisations, especially the gay and lesbian movement. The strong linkages between the feminist and the gay and lesbian movement, which gained strength in the 1990s, has influenced the theoretical approach and the political perspectives on both sides. Today, many feminist groups fight against both sexism in general and heterosexism in particular. In turn, gay and lesbian organisations have adopted feminist perspectives, and feminists have become their closest allies. The feminist and anti-militaristic movements (the latter of which developed after the 1980s) have exerted mutual influence. And the same holds for the ecological, local and independent civil movements.

All these initiatives are in constant dialogue with each other and exert mutual solidarity. Going beyond parties and political organisations, the feminist movement acts as a basis for of a new, independent and dynamic organisation.

United Against the War?

The war, however, does not allow for the door of democracy to open. For 27 years, this war has inflicted suffering and destruction upon Turkey. It has proven difficult, in the noise of weapons and war cries, to listen to each other, to discuss and to break new, democratic grounds. Indeed, even though the war is only raging in the region of Kurdistan, its consequences are being felt all over the country. We can't stop it. The peace efforts are not sufficient.

The weight of war, globalization, poverty, conservatism and nationalism is crushing the country. Moreover – in the same way as the German chancellor Angela Merkel and the French president Nicolas Sarkozy – the governing 'Justice and Development Party' (JDP) praises globalization and, despite its Muslim origins, takes on US positions. Both these elements hinder the fight against war, nationalism, militarism, globalisation, and all those rules and authorities that suffocate us. The never-ending struggle is exhausting the movement and small successes are not enough to alleviate the great suffering.

Women are actively involved in the Turkish peace movement – which in general, does not operate efficiently. Due to social factions and policies determined by the needs of war, sexual violence against women has risen. Still, solidarity organisations in conflict regions have done an important job and gained considerable conflict resolution skills.

Nationalism and Exclusion

Besides the feminist organisations, there is no social association within the anti-war movement that would have endorsed any particular gender perspective. Moreover, the women's organisations don't consider themselves independent actors in the pacifist movement. It is true that Kurdish women have organised important peace activities, partly in collaboration with other organisations, but the Turkish women's movement still does not take militarism, which needs the patriarchy to function properly, seriously enough. Although the call for gender equality and the struggle against gender-motivated violence ties the movement together, it has not succeeded in forming a front against militarism so far – which is the reason for various nationalistic tendencies and exclusion.

There are different feminist approaches, both in Turkey and in Europe, and some groups do not pay sufficient attention to militarism, war and certain forms of discrimination. As a result, the women's movement is not always united and able to heal its wounds collectively. An efficient Turkish peace movement will not develop without a democratic feminism that involves all women who are active in ethnic or class organisations.

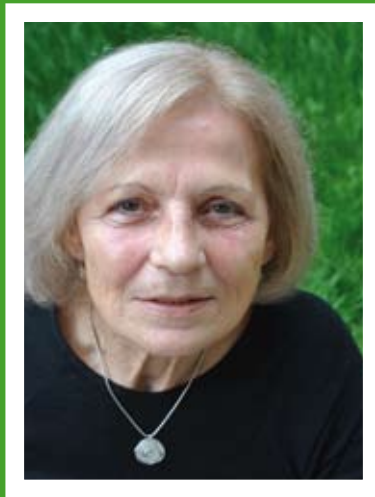
Feminist theory has not only revealed gender relations or the position of women in society, it also describes social forms of gender-specific hierarchy and domination, analyses mechanisms of violence, and provides a new liberation perspective. It shows that the different forms of domination feed and reinforce each other, that they combine and merge – even though, from an analytical point of view, they should be considered separate phenomena. One result of this merger is the war in Kurdistan. Indeed, the process leading to the conflict is clearly social and gender-related, in that the military allows for classes and ethnic groups to meet behind a wall of manliness. Militarism spreads in the form of patriarchal values, and public authority has its roots in social power. Militarism is made by men, which is the logical consequence of the dominance of masculine values and the role of the military apparatus that produces these values.

Feminism against the War

As long as the patriarchal system is not properly analysed, we will hardly be able to understand why militaristic values and issues dominate an ever-growing share of social life. In turn, this lack of understanding can have peace activities fail. In order to overcome war, we need feminism. A feminist analysis – one that demonstrates the linkage between patriarchy, nation and militarism; one that questions the current discourse; and one that demystifies war – is a good starting point to examine the phenomenon of violence as a whole. Feminists can fight at the forefront of this struggle.

In recent times, the Turkish women's movement has been searching for answers to important questions. How can we – while being conscious of our differences – create a space common to all? How can we – despite globalisation – develop democracy and pluralism? How can we – in the midst of exploitation, war and discrimination – create a world in which we can greet, invite, listen to, look at, see and learn from each other? Which feminism do we want? Recent feminist discussions offer important perspectives in our fight against the patriarchy itself, and against the forms of domination which are interwoven with it. They develop alternatives and aim at reaching a free society.

The feminist movement is overwhelmed by the gloomy stage of patriarchy, militarism and capitalism that characterises our time. We, therefore, want to collaborate with women outside our borders and to breathe the same air, because we believe that this will give us hope – hope which is needed to achieve our main objective: change the world.



© private

In 1989 Sevdije Ahmeti was the initiator of the women's movement for women's rights and democracy in Kosovo. She was a co-founder of the Centre for Protection of Women and Children in 1993 and participated at different international conferences and forums for human rights, organized a series of protests for peace, cooperated with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and documented war rape as war crimes against women. She is a winner of several international awards on human rights and has lectured internationally on human rights as the Oak Institute Fellow at the Colby College in Maine (USA). Sevdije Ahmeti has written many articles and analyses and is the author of several books including „Journal d'une femme du Kosovo 1998-99“ published in Paris.

Sevdije Ahmeti

Beyond Nationalism

Ten years after the Balkan Wars – the situation of women in the States of former Yugoslavia

Women have been particularly affected by the many problems in the Balkans: nationalism; regional post traumatic and post-war syndromes; suspicion of international organizations; uneven application of the reconstruction programmes; divisive peace accords; and the overall consequences of war are only part of the cost women have to pay. As well, they live with ethnic divisions, fear, hate, anger, poverty, economic instability, regional imbalances, semi-governmental situations¹ as well as ineffective and hostile governments.

Particularly painful and undermining the citizens' resolve is the fate of the thousands of missing persons and detainees. The fate of the prisoners held and the hostages in Serbia has not been positively resolved and, as guardians of the family state, this has directly affected women. Yet, if the fate of the missing persons is not resolved, women will not become peaceful as mothers, wives, daughters and sisters.

If these war crimes are not prosecuted or the process is long and stressful and if justice is not an authentic concern within the reconstruction efforts, any hopes for reconciliation and any political will to genuinely address other rights is impossible especially for the war rape victims. If this is the case, vengeance and hate could continue to be the only response in the Balkans even between women. For this reason, women's groups have organized along ethnic rather than regional lines, with the only exceptions being a few human rights groups and feminist activists which are keeping an ongoing networking relationship. The fear is that these latter groups could become easily marginalized.

¹ Long time parallel international and national governments in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo

Throughout the 90s there were wars, clashes and destruction over almost all of the former Yugoslavia. The last war was in Kosovo, when the international community had had enough and got involved in stopping the atrocities across the Balkans. What happened in Kosovo cannot be separated from all the other conflicts in the region, nor can we ignore the repeated errors committed by the international community. Yet no comparisons can be made between the countries because none of their civil societies, women's movements and women's organizations has had the same evolution. What is conspicuous is that throughout the region the international community has never really attempted to address the overall situation from a global view. Instead, it has acted more in crisis management mode: reacting case by case as countries exploded, essentially leaving the region with dubious military victories and with continual political instability, even though ten years have past since the Balkan Wars.

Many view the fragmentation of the Former Yugoslavia as detrimental to the region.² Wolfgang Petritsch, who lead – as the High Representative of Bosnia-Herzegovina – the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement, was concerned that the break up of what is left of Yugoslavia could undermine the efforts to reintegrate Bosnia's two entities; "We do not want new sovereign states in the region" he says, "because this is a concept of the past. The establishment of new states, as in the cases of Kosovo and Montenegro, should be avoided". It was a hasty and wrong approach; in the meantime, these two "pretending" states have become independent.

These political developments have left various sectors of civil society, especially women's efforts, dependent on the international community and its various agencies, donor driven agendas and initiatives and ethnically based support. Therefore, no matter how small and weakened the democratic forces in the civil society are, recognition of their efforts, support and nurture of their activism is key; at the forefront of the democratic forces are civil movements and women's NGOs.

Women and Civil Society – the Most Important Protagonists against Violence

In the Balkans the women's movement was and is still active. In various subjects, important conferences have been held on the political participation of women. A significant hope is that, in accordance with the Gender Task Force of The

² Search for Balkan Stability, Gabriel Partos, BCR No 129, 31 March 2000, Institute for War and Peace

Stability Pact³, the ad hoc women's coalition known as the Regional Women's Lobby⁴ was formed. It is important to emphasize that women in the Balkans from the regions of the former Yugoslavia – the old feminists and antiwar activists⁵ – were at the forefront of maintaining networks of groups that worked on violence against women. Antiwar feminists never stopped reaching out for each other during the war years.⁶

Women's activities ranged from humanitarian support to health education, from psychosocial support and legal projects, to computer literacy, English courses, income generation (very weak), eradication of illiteracy, voting and electoral education for upcoming national and local elections.

Most of the gender related programmes throughout the region are detailed and comprehensive. The NGOs, funders, and agencies have gender units' programmes and task forces, but women NGOs are persistently asked to partake in meetings that have very few action related goals. The absence of transparency in decision making processes and in policy formation is particularly problematic everywhere in the Balkans.

As effective participants for the promotion of a democratic electoral process, women's coalitions all over the Balkan states have monitored and successfully tried to influence elections during the last ten years. Otherwise most of the women have worked in the areas of violence against women in armed conflict, domestic violence, family law, legal aid, post-war trauma counselling, peace building activities, conflict resolution, advocacy and capacity building.

It is important to emphasize that the aims of women are based upon their previous experiences: their aim was and is to build upon their women's human rights work and to ensure that the region complies with international human

³ The demands of women include: working towards changing the monolithic male regimes; fighting against violence and hate propaganda; strategizing for free elections; stopping political terrorism; living without war politics; continuing to campaign for a 30 per cent quota system everywhere in the Balkans; promoting education for peace and reconciliation, solidarity and respect of others; promoting equal opportunities, among others.

⁴ It first started in Kosovo in October 2000, right after the Women's Human Rights Regional Conference. In October 2003, the most active women from different backgrounds (25 women of position and opposition parties, academics, journalists and women of NGOs) met and articulated their demands to both the national and international community that they are determined to be part of the Negotiating Team for the political Status of Kosovo; they made it clear that the time has come for women to be taken into account in any future decision related to both national and international policy.

⁵ Mainly women who participated at the Huairou NGO Forum of the International Women's Conference in Beijing 1995

⁶ Although for parts of these groups this was not a priority, but instead they concentrated on building links between groups, sharing information and practicing solidarity; in any case, they were a vibrant and committed minority with broad experience, clear commitment and a long experience in activism as well as in feminist analysis and women's human rights.

rights commitments. Activities are mainly centred on establishing data bases on women's human rights; monitoring constitutions; advocating for the implementation of national machinery for the protection and promotion of women's human rights; networking and strategising on gender mainstreaming; monitoring the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Criminal Court (ICC); and conducting research on identity politics and women's politics.

Some of the women's organizations have long experience in publishing, information sharing and documentation. These groups, which include long term activists, intellectuals and academics, are in a position to participate in regional networks.

Learning from the Experiences: The Last ten Years

Women in the Balkans need to ensure that the donor mechanisms respect the processes and balance the project driven organizations with support for longer term groups that contribute to the building of civil society. They need to assess the constraints of free expression they have experienced that effect the quality of relationships and the impact on their work; the effect of partnering and the extant to becoming dependant on international NGOs; the impact on the general population's ability to contribute to the creation of a women's movement in each country; and the influence of women on the government. Women need to address the lack of coordination between NGOs and the problem of duplication the work of international bodies. They also need to be understood and supported nationally.⁷ The NGO's view is that the lack of funds have also affected their level of involvement in addressing and advocating for a more gender responsive security sector structure – in particular at municipal and rural levels. The women's biggest problem is how to determine the appropriate future relations between donors, government and NGOs. There is always a misinterpretation that often produces animosity. Furthermore, their needs are to determine if the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), together with UNSC Resolutions 1325 and 1882 etc. have been implemented within the reconstruction programmes and provisions in each country in the region.

⁷ KIPRED has found from interviews that most of the women's NGOs view that cuts by donors have been mainly oriented towards gender related projects. This comes as an effect of the priorities made by different donors where gender related projects are given lesser priority in comparison to other priorities in development aid.

Solidarity between women in leadership is fragile. Solidarity to them is more a theory practiced for and on women in need; women chant for women's solidarity, but when it comes to individuals in reaching the peak they do not support each other; they split rather than join. Women's solidarity is only horizontal: vertical is envy. This is what happened to a great majority of those courageous women leaders during the past ten years of war. They split. They became history. This experience needs analysing in a global perspective.

Nevertheless, this vibrant group of Balkan women activists has worked through the pain and suffering of the 10 years of wars and isolation and 10 years of peace and reconstruction; they have been able to stay connected; they have collaborated across borders and practiced solidarity politics. This is a historical and political fact for feminist analysis throughout the chaos of patriarchal power struggles. In the middle of political instabilities, women have built effective coalitions and networks. Women intellectuals and activists have exercised vigilance in the face of nationalism, fascism and ethnic divisions while educating the world about justice and solidarity. They have claimed the right to political participation within their society and have partially achieved this goal.

Antiwar resisters and more mainstream women have worked towards political participation and the decision making processes, but few of them reinforce each other. Regardless of these problems, this ensures their inclusion as full citizens as women's concerns are political concerns that affect the whole society.

The vast majority of women's groups originated from the needs for personal and community survival. Women responded to war and crisis. Some women's groups work depends on how invested they are in their well-being in the community they live; their degree of contribution depends on how dependent they are on donor's agendas.

Violation as a Weapon of War: the Kosovo Case

During the war in Kosovo, women were systematically captured and brutally raped in rape camps and detention facilities. Using rape as a weapon of war, the offenders carried out a campaign of terror known as "ethnic cleansing". "It is estimated that more than 20,000 women and girls were victims of sexual violence during the war in Kosovo".⁸ Most rapes of women in Kosovo were gang

rapes and rape was associated with the use of drugs, cutting of breasts, genitals and faces and placing Serbian nationalist symbol tattoos on victims' bodies".⁹

"We shall probably never know exactly how many women were raped in Kosovo by the Yugoslav Army, Serb militia and Serbian paramilitaries. It is not easy to find which women need help. Shame and the fear of being ostracised by family and community means many women do not admit that they have been raped."¹⁰ Despite the prevalence of rape, "[it] remains the least condemned war crime; throughout history, the rape of hundreds of thousands of women and children in all regions of the world has been a bitter reality."¹¹ These crimes of organized rape cannot be forgotten – at the very least not by the victims.¹² Right after the war, in June 1999 the first groups of war raped women started to seek help at the Centre for Protection of Women and Children (CPWC).¹³

The Albanian society in Kosovo is traditional. Men are brought up and educated as breadwinners and protectors of the family. To touch a woman means to touch the honour of the family and directly provoke the men to react. The Serbs knew this well. They not only used rape as a weapon of war, but afterwards they burned the tracks of the crime by totally destroying the evidence through the operation 'scorched earth' and degrading women together with the family.

It is horrifying to hear the stories of some of the survivors. The great majority of them do not want to speak because they bare the burden of shame, something they will carry with them for the rest of their lives. The work of human rights activists has been to document the scope, degradation and crime, all forms of sexual abuse used as a weapon of ethnic cleansing, the programmed crime in advance, all in all the war on women and tradition. The activists' work has been to support victims and encourage them to testify before the ICTY.

⁹ 'No safe place' UNIFEM Commissioned assessment of violence against women in Kosovo Albanian Community, 2000

¹⁰ "The women of Kosovo" Lesley Abdela, Aug/Sept 1999 issue of Executive Woman Magazine.

¹¹ UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women.

¹² However, HRW (1995: 3 and 2000: 2) found that forced pregnancy was used to further humiliate the victims by taunting them and compelling them to carry the pregnancy to term. Rape serves to drive women and their communities out of the country; to break the morale of the victim's community; and as a form of interrogation. The perpetrators of these crimes are often soldiers, paramilitary groups, local police and civilians (Niarchos 1998: 656). Rape camps in private houses during the air strikes in Kosovo also fulfill a horrific part of military strategy where women were continually subjected to terrorism. Most importantly and often forgotten, the experience of rape causes severe emotional trauma and deprives women of their personal dignity and privacy within their family. Testimonies of rape victims from Kosovo as presented by HRW (2000: 2) highlight how the enemy forces used rape to terrorize and displace the victim's communities, to demoralize ethnic groups as well as provide enjoyment for soldiers.

¹³ The help was multi-faceted in offering shelter, clothes, food, health services, medicine and psychological services. But all of this was not enough; so ICTY investigators were immediately contacted in order to document the crime. In these terms, cooperation with HRW was very close, because anything reported alone would not have the value as reported by an independent international organization.

NGOs find themselves in an enormously stronger position to investigate, and document, and thus help to prosecute rape and other forms of sexual violence. Rape and sexual violence are now firmly established as specifically enumerated offences under international humanitarian law. Campaigns for witness protection and the inclusion of these victims into the Regulation on Invalids of War Compensation were organized nationally, regionally and internationally.

NGOs had a role to play in the investigation and documentation of rape in war as well as in the treatment of survivors. They also played a huge role in combating violence against women for the victims of domestic violence and human trafficking.

Women are Still Disadvantaged in Political Life

The “Women Can Do It” coalition together with the Kosovo Women’s Network¹⁴ were very vocal in organizing campaigns for women to vote and be elected. The campaigns for the second, third and subsequent sets of elections bore the same spirit in favour of an independent Kosovo, with the difference being that the people did not know who would lead them since the system used closed lists. Romantic patriotism continued to be developed in speeches, but the voters realized that words were not food and would not take the hunger away and in response, there was not a massive turnout for the elections. The programs of political parties were the same; just like they had been one year before and just like they would be one year after. The electorate was not presented with an action program, but myths based on personality. The response was abstention and a drop in participation from 90 per cent to less than 50 per cent.

The result of all this was self-satisfaction of the political elite, which was convenient because this situation retained the dependence on UNMIK, and ignorance of the people’s needs, as well as a failure to do something to change and assume responsibility for what was promised to the electorate.

The survey results show that, although there is a tendency towards positive developments regarding the role of Kosovo women in decision making, their status in the decision-making roles in political, economic and education fields is unfavourable compared to the proportions of the two genders in the society. Ex-

¹⁴ The Kosovo Women’s Network is an umbrella organization for 86 women NGO’s in Kosovo. The Kosovo Women’s Network drafted two reports on the implementation of UN Resolution 1325. It also plans during 2010 on supporting the Kosovo Agency on Gender Equality to draft a Kosovo Action Plan on implementing UN SC Resolution 1325.

tracted figures reveal the disadvantageous situation for women: out of 900 managerial posts in ten municipalities, the Kosovo Government, the parliament and in education, only 106 or 11.7 per cent of the senior positions are trusted to women.¹⁵

The status of women in decision making posts is far behind the expected. Men get ahead and women are not trusted, although guaranteed with the quota and well equipped with expertise. They are patronized by the leaders of their parties. Women's voices in governmental institutions remain low.¹⁶

¹⁵ Research results of Kosovo Agency for Gender Equality (AGE) in the year 2005

¹⁶ A few previous reports have indicated that the percentage of rural women participating in community meetings is less than 5 per cent, whereas for men it is around 95 per cent. This situation is still evident at the local and municipal levels in particular where leadership and decision making are continuously made by men. From its creation in 2008, the Assembly Commission on Internal Affairs and Security Issues has so far not raised any formal discussion on women and security. There have been no formal discussions within the Kosovo Assembly sessions on the level of monitoring and implementation of the provisions of the Kosovo Law on Gender Equality enacted in 2004. Women parliamentarians in the Kosovo Assembly Committee on Internal Affairs and Security Issues should cooperate more regularly with the women NGOs active on women and security issues. In particular the Kosovo Agency for Gender Equality (AGE), which is mandated by law to work and develop policies and strategies in close cooperation with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), should develop mechanisms for regular cooperation and communication with women NGOs, women parliamentarians and AGE. The Kosovo Women's Network, an umbrella organization for 86 women NGOs in Kosovo, should be invited to be part of the KSC structure and be offered the opportunity to participate in the drafting of the Kosovo Security Strategy.

North-Kivu, August 2008

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, Women are Daily Suffering Sexual Violence. The Photographer Cornelia Suhan Shows the Work of Help Organizations

Since the beginning of what was to become known as the African World War in 1998, women in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are suffering rape, slavery and murder. The war officially ended in 2003, but the violence continues despite a peace treaty in 1999 and the stationing of UN peace troops in the year 2000. The human rights council of the United Nations estimates that approximately 100,000 women were raped in 2008. In the fight over the valuable resources of the country, former rebellion troops as well as Congolese gangs are focusing their violence on women in order to destroy and banish entire villages.

The relief and human rights organization medica mondiale has been supporting the Congolese woman's rights organization Promotion et Appui aux Initiatives Féminines (PAIF) since 2004. PAIF has been caring for the women and girls in the East Congo for many years. On August 2008 the German photographer Cornelia Suhan went to Goma – a provincial capital in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo – to do a photo documentary on the work of PAIF for medica mondiale.



Girl in the Mugunga camp in Goma



Participant of an alphabetization course, which medica mondiale performs together with PAIF in the new project centre



Traumatized women and girls are taking advantage of the various offers of further education and to secure their future



Participants of an alphabetization course doing their homework



Information talk about financing and cultivation



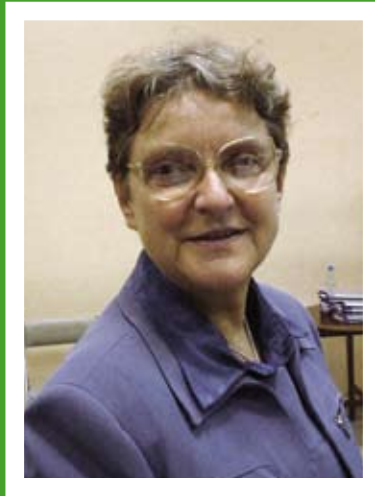
L. is supported by PAIF. She receives seed and livestock



The camp Mugunga is completely full, nearly 20,000 people live there. There are hardly any public water locations



Microcredit group in Birere, a poor part of town in Goma. Every three months the women meet with an advisor from PAIF



© Amnesty International

Svetlana Gannushkina, born in 1942 in Moscow, is a mathematician and has been a peace activist since the beginning of the Nagorno-Karabakh War in 1988 when she attended to war prisoners from Azerbaijan and Armenia. In 1990 she founded the "Committee of Civic Participation", which helped refugees and displaced persons. Three years later she participated in the creation of the Human Rights Centre 'Memorial', which today is among advisory centres all over Russia and won the 2009 Sakharov Prize from the European Parliament. In 2002 she became a member of the Council for the Promotion of Civil Society and Human Rights. Svetlana Gannushkina has already received many prizes for her work, amongst others the human rights award from Amnesty International Germany.

Svetlana Gannushkina

Questionable Traditions

The culture and beliefs of national minorities are important; however, compared to human rights they do come second

The rights of national minorities and their relation to human rights is rarely discussed. If it is done, the protection of minorities' rights is understood as a protection of personal rights; however, the problem also has another side, too. In this article I want to address why this other side is very important to me.

Today, we are witnessing very active migration all over the world. Western countries, whose population is declining, are taking in people from other regions. At present, crowds in Paris can hardly be distinguished from those in New York. Half of these people are dark-skinned, some are dressed in exotic ways – I like this and it fills me with joy. Whenever I return to Moscow from trips to Europe or America, I find the people I come across on underground escalators curiously uniform and boring.

Even though the influence of other cultures takes its time, it obviously brings benefits. The French writer Alexandre Dumas and the Russian poet Alexander Pushkin had African ancestors. But who is more French than Dumas, more Russian than Pushkin?

Nowadays migration is proceeding at a pace which integration cannot keep up with. The “new” citizens in countries differ significantly from the “old” citizens: their culture, their traditions and their whole value systems occasionally have far from a clear respect of human rights. The ones who have recently arrived follow their old cultural stereotypes. They constitute isolated groups within society.

Integration, Coexistence and Multicultural Formation

Of course, this raises some questions: is the integration of these groups into the receiving society the only way for them to develop? How can the coexistence of various cultures within a common economic, political and, most of all, social region be realised by common social institutions? Can modern society exist as one single multicultural formation? To be clear, I would be incredibly happy to answer this latter question with “yes”. But this “yes” raises new challenges and needs conscious and daily implementation throughout society. And it is exactly this work that is being done unsatisfactorily in Russia and also in the West.

What are the reactions to these new challenges? Which answers can we draw from the field of human rights? One contribution is surely the Council of Europe’s Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of February 1995 and which Russia signed in 1998. This convention is based upon the goal of achieving “greater unity between its members for the purpose of safeguarding and realising the ideals and principles which are their common heritage “. It states further, that “one of the methods by which that aim is to be pursued is the maintenance and further realisation of human rights and fundamental freedoms.” All parties commit themselves “to guarantee to persons belonging to national minorities the right of equality before the law and of equal protection of the law. In this respect, any discrimination based on belonging to a national minority shall be prohibited.” (Article 4).

States who have signed this convention undertake “to promote the conditions necessary for persons belonging to national minorities to maintain and develop their culture, and to preserve the essential elements of their identity, namely their religion, language, traditions and cultural heritage.” With this contract they undertake “to take appropriate measures to protect persons who may be subject to threats or acts of discrimination, hostility or violence as a result of their ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity.” (Article 5). At the same time, the convention calls for compliance with human rights by any persons belonging to a national minority and demands from those to “respect the national legislation and the rights of others, in particular those of persons belonging to the majority or to other national minorities.” (Article 20).

In today’s Russia, numerous violations against the rights of national minorities can be stated: increasing xenophobia; religious intolerance; inhumane treatment of Caucasians in Russian prisons; the fact that Russia does not even offer

minimum standards of the above mentioned framework convention to refugees from Afghanistan and Georgia; and the discrimination of Georgians who fled Abkhazia and who have been living in Russia for decades without legal status. However, all these problems have been widely discussed at conferences. Solely by mentioning them again, we will not solve these problems.

Isolation and Self-Isolation – a Contradictory Process

At this point, I want to get back to the problem of isolation and self-isolation of a minority from the large majority within a civil society. Living in a fast moving world, we need to acknowledge that the protection of minorities is just as important as a well-founded policy for the integration of these groups. If this does not happen, negative emotions and conflicts between different parts of society are inevitable. Examples of this are clearly visible in Russia, where the authorities do not only ignore the aggressive atmosphere within the population, but also utilize this atmosphere to manipulate them. Similar things, however, obviously also occur in Western countries.

France – the birthplace of human rights – is one of the few countries that has not signed the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. They consider it unnecessary. They even believed that the principles of equality, fraternity and liberty would be violated. French politicians continued to emphasise that all French citizens, regardless of their skin colour, their religion or their origin, are French. Colleagues of mine from French non-governmental organisations also tell me that.

It is no question: France has achieved a lot regarding the integration of children of various peoples. But this is exactly why the question has to be raised: for what reason did France take the unexpected decision to bar young Muslim women from wearing headscarves in public institutions? What is so dangerous about them? Pupils are saying: “My neighbour has dyed half of her hair yellow and the other half green and she is allowed to present herself like this in public. This does represent our liberty. But I want to cover my head with a thin headscarf. And I’m told that it’s not allowed. That it isn’t possible because it suggests a characteristic of my religion and would be a sign of my religious affiliation. Why such inequality?”

I can fully understand this young woman. Simultaneously, however, I also understand the situation in which such a question is raised. In contrast to the authorities, the members of national minorities are not as convinced that they are French. "Pay our dole, but otherwise don't bother us!" a young Arab shouted during the riots in the Paris suburbs. He might be a French citizen, possibly the son of a French citizen, but he does not feel French. Surely you can explain this behaviour with social problems and it also corresponds to the truth. But these problems occur in an environment in which human rights are not recognised; nor in the legal system they are living in. It is dangerous to ignore these circumstances. Banning headscarves does not solve the problem. And with a social welfare system that creates dependency, a way out of it can not be bought. But it is also not feasible that the laws are breached. It is not of much help for the perpetrators. Human rights require implementation with strict regard to the law.

Back to the Old Home Country for Marriage

In Germany, were they also emphatically debate a lot about the rights of national minorities, the problem of isolation is huge. They strive so hard to cultivate tolerance, they are even willing to compromise with the traditions and lifestyles of minorities even if they are directed against human rights and laws that are based on respect for human rights. So we are witnessing a paradoxical phenomenon: a state protects minority rights, but not individual members of this minority from traditions that violate his or her rights.

I was told that in Germany parents send their fourteen-year-old daughters back to their home countries to get married in accordance to local rules of law. Thereafter the newly-married girls travel back to Germany, bringing their newly-married husbands with them to live under the traditions of their home country. And if I then ask: "How can you let such things happen?", I am told that "they simply have those traditions, they like it that way, and it's not our business."

I myself highly respect traditions and Islam. I have great respect for Russian women who decide for themselves to convert to Islam. But I am not entirely sure whether a fourteen-year-old girl who went to the grammar school in Germany really wants to be taken to Pakistan to get married to an unknown man. Even if she agrees: can we accept such far-reaching decisions of a fourteen-year-old girl? It is completely obvious that the principle of equality of women

and men is hurt through such a marriage (Article 16 Universal Declaration of Human Rights). What about the murder of girls and young women by relatives because the girls or young women have, in the eyes of their families, damaged the reputation through rebellious behaviour? If such a murderer is on the dock, how does the judge evaluate a tradition that violates the right to life (Article 3 Universal Declaration of Human Rights). Is this tradition a mitigating or aggravating circumstance?

Do they not have laws in Germany that allow marriage only from a certain age and penalizes sexual contacts with minors? If so, please apply these laws to all citizens! They can not abandon all responsibilities to a girl only because she belongs to a national minority by birth. Traditions, culture, and the beliefs of large and small groups alike are very important. They bring so many colourful tones to our lives and our world. Yet, set in contrast to human rights and a judicial system based on human rights, they are secondary.

Unprotected Women in Chechnya

We also are observing similar developments in Russia. And the first victims are women. The topic of women's rights was never my subject. I had the impression that women in the Soviet Union enjoyed, due to necessity, more rights than women in the West. In the Soviet Union a man was never capable of supporting the family alone, so women worked, went to school, and raised the children. They did not suffer from inequality compared to men, but from the missing opportunities for self-fulfilment. Neither at university nor at work did I ever feel any kind of discrimination. The idea of figuring out whether we have more male or female professors teaching in the mathematics faculty of the Moscow State University would have never occurred to me. That most of my teachers were men did not bother me, all of them were very talented people.

However, when seeing today how, for example, young girls in Chechnya are kidnapped and when I see no one opposing this, the question comes to me: what does the statement "Chechnya belongs to Russia" mean? Does Russian law still apply there? Chechnya's president, Ramsan Achmatowitsch Kadyrow, says that a women should know her place, the man is her owner, and she is his possession. He is sorry that the murderers of "stupid women" are kept in jail. And how does the central authority react on such statements? With silence. My colleagues – western politicians who are not familiar with Chechen traditions - keep repeating the following, when I meet them: "Well, they are Chechens. It's just

the common practice there.” But this is not true at all. Such a tradition does not exist there. It is rather a new tradition which is being created there: a tradition of lawlessness and impunity.

Nowadays one likes to speak of the apparent stability in Chechnya. But how can one say that the situation in one part of a country is politically stable if they neither adhere to national law nor to human rights? How can one speak of peace if it is based on fear and humiliation? One can not call a region peaceful if the authorities publicly set fire to houses of residents simply because they are suspected of collaborating with illegal armed groups or because they are related to a member. And how shall one call a region peaceful if great benefits are taken from newly established residential properties, financed by the state budget, while refugees have not even roofs over their heads, disappearances and extra-judicial executions are on the daily agenda and heads of NGOs dare not protest for fear of having their names put on questionable declarations without their approval, which are then published by the so called Commissioner for Human Rights?

All this has really nothing to do with traditions. And, further, that all this is tolerated by the authorities has nothing to do with respecting minority rights. The brutal regime that Kadyrow established in the Republic of Chechnya violates all these rights. Kadyrow’s power relies on Russian guns and help from the Kremlin. He bought this support with his vow of fidelity: “Russia is our mother country.” And in reality, the Chechen traditions are deformed and trampled underfoot. Furthermore, the preservation of religious customs is rigorously controlled. Many religious denominations are regarded as criminal. For instance, the Salafi branch of Islam, which is based on the early days of the faith.

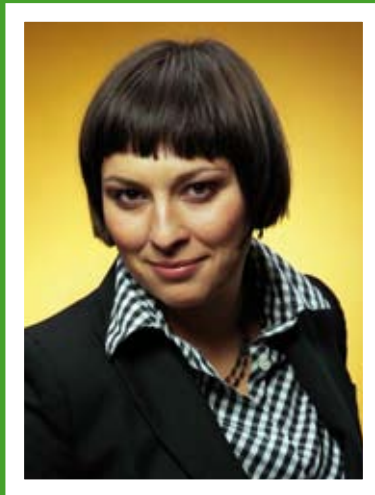
The children cannot take lessons in their mother tongue and their school lessons from their first year on and in all subjects are held in Russian – a language they do not speak due to the isolation of the last 15 years. The few hours of instruction in their native language are not enough to enable the students to articulate themselves in writing and work in a scientific field or creatively later on in life. Simultaneously, it is still impossible for Chechens to find jobs in Russia, they are not given any housing and in jail they are being abused. Instead of tolerance and inter-ethnic communication, we are witnessing an increase of violence along ethnic and denominational lines. Russia will ultimately lose the chance to become a federal, democratic state governed by uniform laws where human rights are an ideal value, which are not shaken and which would, in this way, create room for cultural traditions of peoples and ethnic groups and where they can develop.

The Right of not Wanting to Belong to a Minority

I now want to come back to the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. The description of this convention is not entirely right. It is not about the rights of national minorities, but rather the rights of people, who then again belong to a minority. The articles within the convention are worded in exactly this way. And that is how it should be, too. Article 3 is especially important to me: “Every person belonging to a national minority shall have the right freely to choose to be treated or not to be treated as such and no disadvantage shall result from this choice or from the exercise of the rights which are connected to that choice.”

This implies that the state is obligated to offer each member of the society belonging to a designated minority the possibility to withdraw from this minority without prejudice. A young Arab from a Parisian suburb, a German pupil of Pakistani origin, a Chechen woman who has fallen in love with a Russian man – all of them must have the chance to leave the surroundings of their origin. The state is obliged to guarantee their safety in such cases. The rights of those who do not want to belong to a minority are as important as the rights of those who want to remain representatives of this minority. A nonchalant handling of minority issues does not create a multiculturalism, but instead it creates an environment made out of enclaves, which function by different rules and which do not follow their country’s laws. Such a situation in the end leads to conflicts which can not be solved easily.

I would like to conclude with a quote from an article that was handed to me by the author herself: the adviser to the attorney general of Estonia, Xenia Zurakowskaja. I had discussed the question of the universality of human rights within our multicultural world with her. She asks to simply imagine the following situation: a victim of state force is able to leave his/her country after imprisonment and finds a safe place in a foreign country and now states there, after arrival: “Yes, I have been in prison without court order yes, I was tortured; nevertheless, I do not object to this, because to me and in my culture the western concept of human rights is alien.”



© private

Livia Járóka, born in 1974 in Hungary, is a social anthropologist and the first female Roma Member of the European Parliament. Since 2005 she has been parliamentarian from the European People's Party and Christian Democrats (EEP-ED) parliamentary group. In 2006 she won Parliament Magazine "MEP Award 2006" in the category of Justice and Fundamental Rights. Currently she is the vice-chairwoman of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality, and rapporteur of "The EU strategy on the social inclusion of Roma", which was appointed by the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs. In her country she has worked very hard on the situation of the Roma minority; amongst others she made a Ethnographic field research on assimilation tendencies of Roma in Hungary.

Lívía Járóka

Hereditary deprivation and the ghettoisation of poverty

New faces of social exclusion: priorities and principles for tackling the situation of Roma in Eastern Europe

Hereditary deprivation and the ghettoisation of poverty

The nature of poverty has changed dramatically in the past two decades in Eastern Europe, where more than 70% of European Roma live. Due to the fundamental economic repercussions following the collapse of communism and the re-structuring of national economies, most Roma – along with their companions of majority origin - suddenly fell out of the labour market and started gradually sliding out of society. With their traditional communities disrupted by the regime and at the same time being blocked from western-type social mobility, Roma have become the most excluded subgroup of society and, therefore, almost completely disconnected from national economies.

A new and isolated social stratus characterized by deep poverty and the lack of ability to provide for its own subsistence and to satisfy even the most basic necessities has emerged. It is important to emphasize, though, that deep poverty is not only a Roma issue. Only about one third of poverty stricken Eastern-Europeans are Roma and vice versa: only around one third of Roma live in deep poverty. Proportions of those living below or near the subsistence level are similar: the post-communist rural underclass is neither exclusively nor predominantly Roma.

Deep poverty and social exclusion is not a Roma issue

In all policy areas targeting the social inclusion of Roma, a clear distinction must be made between general and ethno-specific issues. Most aspects of education, employment, health care, housing and economic development

regarding Roma must be included into mainstream policies; whereas issues of racial discrimination, culture and identity must naturally be treated in connection with ethnic origin. Projects explicitly targeting the Roma minority are only reasonable if the disadvantage it intends to tackle is clearly and principally ethnicity related.

Research, however, indicates that the exclusion of Roma in most policy areas is not primarily defined by their ethnicity, but by a multitude of other interconnected economic factors. Even in the case of educational perspectives – despite the serious violation of human rights caused by the widespread ethnic segregation – the widest gap is not among Roma and non-Roma children, but among those whose parents have jobs and those who come from an economically inactive family. According to a recent study conducted by the Hungarian Ministry of Culture and Education, the labour market situation and qualification of parents is the most decisive factor influencing the educational performance of their children and in addition, the primary cause of child poverty is the joblessness of their parents. A growing proportion of teenagers (currently more than 70%) living in families where everyone is unemployed are neither learning nor working: so joblessness is starting to become hereditary.

According to most standard research, direct or indirect discrimination – as defined in EU Directives 2000/43 and 2000/78 – is only one among the several factors of the low employment rate among Roma: the primary cause naturally being low education. Additional factors include:

- Geographic disadvantages – The vast majority of European Roma reside in isolated clusters of villages, mostly in economically deprived rural territories;
- Collapse of the communist economic structure – Priority sectors of the communist planned economy – such as the building industry, mining and heavy industry – have traditionally employed a large number of unskilled labour, including Roma, who have irreversibly been taken out of the labour market;
- New type of labour demand – Modern enterprises and actors of the market economy need highly qualified employees;
- The “Poverty Trap” phenomena – As a result of all the aforementioned factors – also considering the chances of entering or re-entering the labour-market and in view of maximizing the total profit of the family – most Roma become financially interested in not working;

- Barriers to self-employment – Launching enterprises is almost impossible for most Roma due to the lack of proper capital, entrepreneurial skills and knowledge.

Demographic Dynamism

Compared to the equally excluded majority communities, however, there is one distinctive attribute of the Roma population, the economic relevance of which cannot be overemphasized: demographic dynamism. Roma and non-Roma populations can be characterized by reverse demographic trends: while the majority society is ageing rapidly, the proportion of Roma is quickly increasing and, for example, according to some estimations, in Hungary the ratio of Roma within the economically active population will exceed 50% by 2050. So it is vital to take into account that, on the one hand, the proportion of Roma within the active population that carries the social security system on its shoulder is growing steadily; and on the other hand, there is a huge potential in the labour market for the reintegration of the massive unemployed population.

Integration is an Economic Necessity

The integration of Roma is a necessary investment and is financially profitable in the long run: in a 20-30 year period – when the results of educational converts will also start to unfold – it is actually cheaper to integrate the Roma population than sustaining their substandard socio-economic conditions. If the employment rate of Roma could be raised to that of the majority, the overall rate of employment would be increased by 5% to 10% depending on the proportion of Roma population in the country. Taking into account its affect on the growth of GDP, national economies themselves would grow, which in turn would trigger a substantial improvement in all the indicators that are based on the percentage of GDP per capita.

According to most standard economic models – like that of the World Bank – increasing labour market participation is indispensable for facilitating economic growth and especially requires the participation of those who are at an economically active age but are unemployed. The proportion of Roma over 50 years of age is generally lower than the European average, while that of those below 30

is far higher. Roma, therefore, comprise a significant and permanently growing percentage of the necessary resources for increasing labour market participation and – according to modest estimations – could trigger a 4-6% growth of national GDPs, which is more than any European country spends on national security for example.

The Cost of Non-inclusion

So by not prioritizing the economic inclusion of Roma, Member States are wasting a significant amount of financial assets, let alone social benefits. Losses include:

- The indirect cost of lost GDP – as a result of social exclusion, unemployed Roma fail to add to the gross domestic product;
- Social assistance and welfare benefits as well as the social and healthcare insurance provided by the state to those in poverty;
- Higher health costs due to substandard living conditions and lack of prevention;
- Wasted education expenditure – the cost of segregated and/or low standard schools that fail to provide quality education is wasted money; moreover, special-needs schools incur higher costs;
- Extra safety costs, due to the higher crime rates caused by social exclusion and economic deprivation;
- Administrative cost of supervising the flow of welfare expenditure.

In brief, it is important to realise that the social inclusion of Roma is not merely a moral obligation, but also an economic necessity; and the overall integration of Roma is essential not only because of some kind of charity, but in the same time the strict financial interest of all the Member States.

Chances for Low-qualified Labour

There are concerns, however, that those who are now permanently excluded from the labour market – including Roma – would be unable to find work even if the general demand for labour increases significantly. Arguments state that labour-intensive activities, especially those requiring more manual and low-

qualified labour, would not thrive in Eastern Europe given the current trend of exporting labour-intensive productions to economies where the cost of labour is low – e.g. to South-East Asia. Another concern says that due to global competition, economic growth will be concentrated in specific economic sectors where most Roma would be excluded from due to technologies and workforce skills that are the most productive and are expected to create the greatest number of new jobs.

Statistics, however, show that the astoundingly low level of employment among unskilled citizens is a typical Eastern European phenomenon and more developed western Member States in some ways manage to employ a much greater proportion of their low or unqualified labour force. Research also shows that higher productivity and, hence, higher income in competitive sectors lead to increased demand for “basic” and “auxiliary” services that are traditionally labour intensive and in many cases do not require high level of education and qualification. In addition, as the demand for skilled workforce of the high productivity sector increases, a significant proportion of those being currently employed in low productivity jobs might shift to newly opened windows of opportunity and this would logically make jobs accessible for workers with lower education.

Opportunities in Eco-industry

Another great opportunity for the employment of unskilled Roma lies in eco-industry and environment-related industries. European eco-industries are a significant and quickly growing portion of the EU economy, currently representing 2.1% of EU GDP. Eco-industries and related services – including air pollution control, waste water management, solid waste management, soil remediation, renewable energies, and recycling – sustain 3.5 million full-time jobs at present and around 75% of these are in labour intensive sectors such as water and solid waste management. The EU eco-industry has grown to become one of Europe’s biggest industrial sectors and pollution management and resource management are the industry’s two most important divisions.

According to the OECD, the eco-industry is highly polarised into high-skill and low-skill areas, with the majority of environment-related jobs being manual positions. The largest proportion is in water-related sectors – namely in waste recovery, waste management and recycling where over 80% of jobs are either manual or clerical providing low-skill working opportunities.

Territorial Exclusion

Another important feature of the social exclusion affecting Roma is the strong territorial dimension of poverty and marginalization. The geographic distribution of social disadvantages is not uniform throughout the Member States, but poverty and social exclusion is concentrated in underdeveloped micro-regions, which in many of the new Member States are predominantly inhabited by Roma. Exclusion from economic and social development has a predominantly territorial nature and these left behind areas hamper social development in its entirety. Intra-regional disparities are in many cases higher than those between the regions and the polarization is deepening, since economic and social interventions are concentrated in the dynamic centres causing the further decline of the excluded periphery.

The most disadvantaged regions and micro-regions lack the necessary financial resources to provide their own contribution to the Community funding that they are eligible for and most often lack the administrative capacity and human resources to make good use of the funding. These regions, therefore, enter the competition for EU and budgetary sources with a significant disadvantage and it is necessary to pick them out from the underdog position and to target their specific needs through an equivalent, complex and intensive program.

The above described territorial exclusion is currently 'invisible' to European statistics as well as for policy objectives and instruments. Since the scope of analysis, decision making and planning is too wide to locate these regions, they usually remain hidden from EU level approaches. These social and economic crises areas are mostly emerging in peripheral intra-regional areas or in micro-regions that are lagging behind.

Holistic and Integrated Approach

Complex and holistic development programs with a cross-sector integrated approach are needed. These will make immediate intervention possible in those underdeveloped areas struggling with serious structural disadvantages by especially focusing on:

- Developing infrastructure;
- Fostering development opportunities in accordance with their specific potential;

- Maintaining services of general interest through enhanced local administrative capacities;
- Decentralisation of the public sector;
- Appropriate training and employment opportunities;
- Improving housing and living conditions;
- Enhancing agricultural and agriculture-related economic activities.

From its beginning up to the “Big Bang” enlargement of 2004, the European cohesion policy has been successful in many ways, but those regions in the new Member States that are engulfed by deep poverty and the cumulating social disadvantages cannot wait decades. Here we need urgent action, an immediate intervention of crisis management.

Roma as an Economic Target Audience

From the above reasoning, pronouncing that ethnicity and ethnicity-based discrimination is only one of many factors – such as low qualification and territorial exclusion – determining the socio-economic deprivation of European Roma, it follows that the exclusion can be best grasped by considering them not as an ethnic group, but as an economic target audience. In line with principles No 2 and No 4 of the Common Basic Principles on Roma, which declare “explicit but not exclusive targeting” as well as “aiming for the mainstream”, the EU strategy must focus on the common economic features of socially excluded Roma instead of trying to address all the social issues that any single group of the remarkably heterogeneous European Roma population suffers from. Notwithstanding such country or region-specific issues as the availability of halting sites for travellers or the lack of personal documentation in some countries, the social and economic conditions and the demands of Roma communities themselves are extremely similar in all countries.

A common and uniform European solution is needed for a common and uniform European problem, irrespective of the diversity of additional and collateral concerns in specific regions affecting specific subgroups of Roma. The social and economic exclusion of Roma thus requires a strategy on its own, of course not excluding the subsequent or parallel development of independent policy responses to independent controversies.

Similar to the Member State and community level legislation concerning the direct and indirect discrimination as well as anti-gypsyism, any strategy aiming at the elimination of substandard socio-economic situation of European Roma must also have a firm legal basis and must also formulate a clear obligation towards the stakeholders.

Not Compromising, but Complementing Anti-discrimination Legislation

There is also a lot to achieve regarding the above mentioned rules of anti-discrimination, since the application and implementation of existing regulations are insufficient. They either do not cover certain areas, such as multiple discrimination, or they prove to be inadequate when implemented. A good example of the latter is the low level of awareness about the anti-discrimination legal framework, which results in the astoundingly few number of complaints lodged.

The strategy aiming at the economic integration and reintegration of Roma, however, will not compromise the entirety of, but rather complement the transposition or implementation of anti-discrimination laws; moreover, given the extent of social and economic exclusion of Roma, overall integration is essentially an issue of fundamental rights. A significant proportion of European Roma face such substandard conditions – almost totally disconnected from the economy, resulting in their exclusion from their basic human rights – that fostering social inclusion cannot be viewed within the frameworks of general policy alterations, but must be handled as bridging the largest gap in the fulfilment of constitutional and human rights in Europe.

Gradual Normalisation and the Legal “Grey Zone”

Several intergovernmental initiatives have been developed in the last few years. International organizations, such as the Council of Europe and the OSCE have drawn up good proposals and progressive ideas, but the results are doubtful at the very least. The primary lesson that we have learned from either the “Decade of Roma Inclusion” or the “OSCE Action Plan” is that rotund political slogans will never become reality without sanctions and obligations. The European Union, however, as a “sui generis” legal entity can provide the necessary leverage to force its participants to comply with their own pledges.

Most EU actions regarding the socio-economic situation of Roma – except those in connection with tools defined by the Treaties, such as directives and regulations – belong to the category known as soft law. Resolutions, reports, declarations, conclusions and communications of the EU's three major institutions constitute a legal “grey zone” between non-law and positive law. Soft law is, however, deficient in fostering the social inclusion of Roma: rules and norms without sanction may be effective, but not efficient.

Following the argumentation of standard legal theories, nevertheless, community soft law regarding Roma is thus the prefiguration and feedstock of legislation to come, to which the legal community committed itself by issuing the related quasi-legal instruments. Embodying the gradual normalisation of international law, soft law represents a grade of liminality that points from unregulated to regulated conditions, from subjective to objective, from general to specific, from informal to formal, and from ambiguous to predetermined. So soft law can only exist parallel with hard law and will subsequently become effective by the introduction of follow-up legislation.

Possibility and Necessity of a Legally Binding Strategy

After the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, the European Union has a variety of powerful instruments by which concerned Member States can commit themselves in fostering the social inclusion of Roma. By a clear mandate from the European Council, with the self-commitment of interested and devoted Member States and with the acquiescence of others – e.g. through enhanced cooperation – a legally binding European Roma Strategy can come into existence. So current regulations put the Commission into the position of “The Guardian of Treaties”, which means that this body is solely responsible for ensuring the correct application of Community law. The possibility of an action for non-compliance empowers the Commission to put an end to infringements sustained by a Member State's central, regional or local authorities and the EC enjoys the discretionary right to carry on the proceedings to the European Court of Justice.

The strategy can and must set clear and unambiguous indicators and benchmarks in order to evaluate progress. Proper monitoring mechanisms also need to be introduced in order to ensure effective and the bona fide utilization of financial and human resources. Given that local implementation is the crucial

factor of all initiatives, the three most important elements – planning, management and monitoring – must be carried out by local authorities and NGOs. When defining the specific content of the legal and policy framework initiated by the strategy, it is also essential to measure the needs of local communities and to succeed in smaller scale, local objectives. To this end, it would be beneficial to do extensive surveys on the demands of local target groups; something similar to what has been so successful in Ireland regarding agricultural tenders.

In brief, not only is there no legal obstacle to the development of an EU level strategy aimed at the social inclusion of Roma, but the existing soft law regulations on the matter can be viewed as a pending legal situation, a promise by the European Communities for a properly enforceable legislation to come later.



© private

Dr. Krishna Ahooja-Patel from India is the representative from the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WIPLF) at the UN in Geneva. She studied political science, worked several years as a lawyer and a journalist and is the author of the 2007 book "Development Has a Women's Face". She is currently a distinguished visiting professor at the International Development Studies programme at Saint Mary's University in Halifax, Canada as well as a visiting professor on Women and Peace at the Gandhi University in Ahmedabad, India. In 2005 she received an award on Global Friendship in Bombay; in the same year she was nominated for a peace prize among 1,000 women globally working for peace. She was also on the Peace Train to Beijing.

Dr. Krishna Ahojapatel

Glass Barriers

Religious repression, unequal wage, unpaid work: women are in a better situation than before, but gender equality still does not exist

In the 1970s, when the civil rights movement in the United States had somewhat faded and the civil protests against racism in the streets slightly receded, equality became a major issue on the social agenda of many countries. Women's organizations continued their protests in some countries of the North, particularly in the United States and Europe, to demand policy change and alter legislation to legally recognize equality between men and women. At the same time, decolonization had proceeded at a rapid rate since 1963 for more than two thirds of the world's population out of 500 years of subjugation and oppression. These seismic changes contributed to drawing new economic and political boundaries of the map of the world.

It is generally recognized that it was at the beginnings of the decolonization process in 1963 that the first resolution linking women with development was adopted by the United Nations. This was the period when new leaders from the ex-colonial countries in Africa and Asia were demanding big changes from their institutions. The UN resolution specified that in this historical period of change, women need to participate fully and involve themselves in the political and economic processes to transform the social fiber of their countries.

Women's Power from the South

Much to the dismay of a large number of writers on feminism, the demand for equality between men and women did not begin in the streets of New York or Paris or London. It was certainly not a western import to the third world. In

fact, it began with the independence movements of a large part of humanity from colonialism in which women had participated at all levels and had learned lessons on liberty and equality. From that period onwards, the right to vote for women wherever it existed began to be inextricably linked to development and the democratic processes.

In Asia, Africa and Latin America – where the populations had been living under occupations for long periods – women had variously participated in anti-imperialist and anti-colonial struggles for social and economic equality. It was at that time that women's organizations rallied to begin to demand social and political equality between men and women. This demand became more vocal in the 1970s and 1980s when women's organizations from different regions joined their voices and started networking at different levels. Never before in history had women organised themselves into so many groups, associations and organisations.

It was in 1972 in Finland when women's organizations proposed to the United Nations General Assembly – through Helvi Sipilä and with support from other Nordic countries and some leading NGOs – that an International Women's Day be celebrated on an annual basis. Its main theme was that women's equality be recognized in practice and in law at the national level. It might be noted that this was the critical period of the cold war between the United States and the USSR that had begun immediately after the end of World War II and had encroached almost all levels of international development.

Gender Equality and Gender Equity: the Distinction

Gender equality has been defined and described in several international standards, conventions and treaties beginning with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. The legal notion of equality between men and women first appeared in that document in articles 16 and 25, which define equality between men and women at economic, social and political levels. The operational part of the articles, in general, guarantees women the right to freely consent to marry and found a family "without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion" and to be entitled to "protection by the state".

During industrialization in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, equity and equality were used synonymously, depending upon the professional preference of the user. The legal profession monopolized equity while the political economists stuck to equality during the period when liberalism emerged as a political

doctrine. Throughout five centuries of colonialism, beginning particularly with the origins of international law by Grotius in the fifteenth century, metropolitan powers introduced rules of law that flourished despite inequalities among countries and continents. Equity and equality were the slogans of reformers and revolutionaries. During the economic reforms in England and France throughout the nineteenth century, citizens based their demands on notions of economic equality and social equity

UN Conferences and the Status of Women

There were four UN conferences on women in 1975, 1980, 1985 and 1995 (and General Assembly reviews in 2000 and 2005). The first and second UN conferences on women in Mexico (1975) and Copenhagen (1980) linked economic integration of women to the process of development in the world economy. It is during this period that the distinction between private and public spheres for men and women was narrowed and the traditional division of labour was erased. This in turn resulted in the recognition of women's contribution to the production process.

The third and fourth UN conferences in Nairobi (1985) and Beijing (1995) were both milestones in enhancing the status of women in different ways. Step by step the UN conferences focused on the role of women, lifting it from the social to the economic to the political until women's organizations could confidently state that all "human rights are women's rights" and "women's participation at all levels of decision-making in the political process is essential". The Platform for Action adopted in Beijing still remains the core document on gender equality.

In the 1990s, when globalisation became the buzz word in the world economy, it became critical to increase the number of women in the labour market in order to strengthen the export sector of developing countries and establish free economic zones, which in turn created rapid profits for the foreign investors. The majority of women continued to work in the export sectors of the developing countries from the 1970s to beyond 2000, when the decline in world financial services changed the pattern of trade. The unequal distribution of wealth – within and outside countries, externally and internally – emerged as an important part of unequal trade and globalisation and, most importantly, unequal remuneration between men and women.

It was in this decade that the UN sought to define gender mainstreaming. Gender mainstreaming is the term that was used to urge the UN organizations and agencies to introduce the equality dimension in their current policies, programmes and projects. Collated from 78 national reports, a United Nations Development Programme report published in 2005 presented the results of gender mainstreaming. It was found that gender concerns were not mainstreamed and that women and gender continued to be categorized separately or ignored. In most of the reports, women continued to be cast as mothers and victims, rather than agents of development.

Development Models and Women's Advancement

During the last half of the twentieth century, economists from different schools of thought refined their ideas and concepts in the regular meetings of the UN Committee on Development. These early blueprints have all left their intellectual mark on the development debates that continued from the 1950s through to the 1980s. It was in this period that both the concepts and terminologies on development and women's issues underwent a remarkable transformation. It was later in the 1990s, when the Berlin Wall fell and the Soviet Union disintegrated, that the development agenda in the UN conferences began to weaken and finally disappeared into cyberspace, slowly merging to global politics and peacekeeping in 2000. In the development sphere, terminology changed several times – including from "backward nations" to "the Third World" to "developing countries" and finally to "the South".

There are several factors which have exclude women from the production process of an economy and which keeps them out of top jobs. In addition to the institutions and structures of the economy and society, religion, state and community also encroach in their full participation. In the past, the state has utilized different systems of law and practices which have discriminated against women and made women immobile – tying them to the family and preventing them from full participation in the labour market. Unequal remuneration, discrimination in hiring practices and promotion and lack of facilities for childcare have become the legal norm. Religions – rituals rather than philosophies – have supported and perpetuated some of the patriarchal traditions by sustaining women's subjugation in the household.

Drawing on the results of a global survey of over 1600 women's rights activists as well as in-depth interviews with over 50 key experts, an international NGO called The Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) has recently highlighted major trends. The global survey focused on the strategies and impact of religious fundamentalisms and their movements across different regions around the world in 2007. According to this survey, the strength of religious fundamentalisms has increased globally over the last ten years.

These movements are gaining the power to shape norms, influence international institutions and national decision makers. They are also defining laws and policies especially in the areas of morality and physical autonomy and sexuality. In the experience of eight out of ten women's rights activists, religious fundamentalisms have a negative impact on women's rights and over two-thirds regard these movements as obstructing women's rights more than other political forces.

Some communities and families have also perpetuated religious traditions by coercing women into marrying against their wishes and ignoring sexual crimes committed by the members of the family, clan or tribe. The so-called honour crimes (now called dishonour crimes) have killed or murdered women for the simple act of wearing trousers or not wearing a hijab or burqa as well as reintroducing stoning women for adultery.

Women in the World Economy

Development research during the 1980s analysed the causes of the economic crisis by placing international debt, trade and finance at the centre. How these causes influenced the daily life of women everywhere was a question placed on the periphery. Their diagnosis, analyses and policy prescriptions were frequently left to the economists, with other social scientists taking the back seat. When the crises were analysed with women placed centre stage, it became clearer that the economic inequalities had increased in the labour markets where women were most vulnerable.

If problems were posed from a woman's point of view, solutions could well have been different depending – of course – upon the geographical place, country or region. And such an exercise might well have thrown a different light on the paths to development, and provided insights to the roots of the crisis deeply embedded in the social fabric.

According to several reports by the UN, including the Human Development Report 2001, women have continued to be poorer than men. Women work longer hours than men and mostly in strenuous physical jobs, particularly in agriculture in developing countries. It took women 15 years of pressure on national and international statistical offices to prove that women continued to be poorer than men in all countries: rich or poor, North or South. Subsequent surveys indicate that poverty is the major killer of people and that gender discrimination at all economic levels is the main cause of women's poverty and deprivation.

One basic factor that goes to the root of the problem is that the highest estimated earned income of women continues to be approximately half of that of men in several countries. There is no economy in the world where women and men earn equal wages for equal work and where women's value of work is given its economic worth. There is not a single country in the world where women and men are paid equal wages in most occupations of the economy.

The International Labour Organization Convention on Equal Remuneration has not yet been implemented in the national laws of several countries. It was estimated by the United Nations Development Program in its Human Development Report 1995 – presented to the Beijing Conference – that women perform two-thirds of the work in the monetized economy and their unpaid labour amounted to \$16 trillion. Subsequently, this figure has been revised and this amount has increased, especially during the decline in the earnings of women worldwide.

As globalization increased inequalities in the decade after 2000, women's livelihoods began to disappear. The higher rates of unemployment generally have increased women's unpaid work and the decrease in social spending in education and health has increased their burden in the household. In some countries they are the main provider of the needs of the family.

The current financial crisis had added to the number of national and international migrants – in some areas, doubled or trebled their numbers. This increase has created social instability both in their country of origin and their receiving country. In the population movements of over 200 million persons globally, the recent trends show that more and more women are becoming migrants, refugees, displaced and stateless persons.

Condition of the Women Worldwide

After two decades of statistical compilation and data, it is now being accepted everywhere that women are poorer than men. This means that the earlier social campaigns on feminization of poverty should now be replaced with 'poverty has a woman's face'. Of the more than two billion people living in poverty worldwide, 70 percent of women and two thirds of the 800 million poor in Asia are women. Women in 2010 still continue to perform unpaid work and in this period of economic crisis are meeting the basic needs of the family. No pay or low pay is still the norm.

Gender inequalities continue to limit girls' education. But given half a chance, they perform better than boys. At the university level in some countries women and men have not achieved parity. For example, on average girls can expect to receive one year less education than boys in African and the Arab states and two years less in South Asia. Gender disparities are even wider at the secondary and tertiary levels.

The most critical issues relating to women's poverty is the many forms of violence against women. All types of violence – in particular sexual violence – has increased in all countries irrespective of class or income. One of these aspects deserves urgent attention: the trafficking of women and girls. Conservative estimates show that 200,000 women and children are trafficked from South-East Asia. Between three and five times this number, that is between 600,000 and one million, is the latest figure on global trafficking and trade.

In the decade from 1990 to 2000, in non-agriculture sectors in Latin America the gap in pay per hour between women and men narrowed by ten percent over the past 125 years. The United States has recorded the largest decrease among OECD countries in the wage gap between women and men with a fall of 38 percent. In Europe the gender gap in incomes has also been narrowing in most places; however, pay inequity still persists and the glass ceiling still exists. Women continue to represent the majority of part-time workers. In Africa, gender inequality is widespread. Women generally earn less than men and are more likely to be trapped in low paid, low skilled jobs with little or no hope of advancement. Women are more likely to work in the informal economy. In many countries women are put at a disadvantage by laws that restrict their rights to own land.

The Middle East is experiencing social and political change which is reflected in increased recognition of women's rights. Several countries that have revised their labour codes included Bahrain, Yemen, Iraq, Syria and Palestine territories. In Asia, gender inequality and discrimination on the basis of sex is still widespread. Women earn less than men for work of equal value, the jobs are less secure and the glass ceiling still stops them from advancing.

In 2010, despite serious violations of women's human rights – in particular mass rape as a weapon of war, during peace and conflict the increase in both incidence and intensity of violence – women continue to meet the basic needs of the family in difficult and hazardous conditions. It was a great landmark for women's advancement when the UN decided to place gender equality as the main issue in the Economic and Social Council in 2010.



© Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung

Barbara Unmüßig is a member of the directorate of the German Heinrich Böll Foundation. She is responsible for the strategy and the development of programmes on Latin America, Africa, Asia, Middle East and the Gunda-Werner-Institut for Feminism and Gender Democracy. Her main focus is on globalization and international politics on climate, national and international gender politics, promotion of democracy and crisis prevention.

Barbara Unmüßig

Poverty Remains Feminine

The Millennium Development Goals have many blind spots, and the outcomes of the Beijing World Conference on Women were rarely considered

The 2000 Millennium Declaration of the United Nations and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are often presented as important milestones of international development cooperation. Indeed, only a few UN declarations have been so widely accepted by governments and international organisations, and have been able to mobilize as many financial resources in such a short time. Moreover, the objective of cutting the number of people living in absolute poverty in half by 2015 deserves, without any doubt, all possible political attention. Soon, the UN General Assembly will convene to evaluate the past ten years, and it will certainly be able to present several achievements. Thanks to increased financing because of the MDGs, for instance, the fight against malaria and AIDS and the resulting alleviation of pain and sorrow as well as vaccination programmes have advanced considerably. In many poor countries, an increasing amount of children attend primary school, which is undoubtedly a consequence of the MDGs.

It is equally beyond dispute that the number of people living in absolute poverty has dropped. Given that the world's population has increased at the same time, this development represents another achievement. Extreme poverty has declined substantially. In 1981, as many as 1.9 billion people lived in absolute poverty, compared to 1.4 billion in 2005. Relative to the population growth between 1981 and 2005, poverty went down from 52 to 25.7 per cent.¹ Nevertheless, this successful process needs to be qualified, as it has mainly been restricted to a few regions. The best example is China, whose economic developments show a huge influence on global poverty. In 1981, 84 per cent of the Chinese population lived in poverty – by 2005, the number had dropped to 16 per cent.² As a result, China

¹ United Nations Department for Social and Economic Affairs 2009, Rethinking Poverty: Report on the World Social Situation 2010, 14.

² United Nations Department for Social and Economic Affairs 2009, Rethinking Poverty: Report on the World Social Situation 2010, 25.

has recently reached the objective of halving poverty by 2015. However, this success story has little to do with conventional development policies or the narrowly defined MDGs, but rather with China's growth and modernisation strategy. So if we exclude China from our global calculations, the trends look much darker. In 1981, a total of 1.1 billion people lived below the poverty line. In 1999, the number increased to 1.3 billion, and only dropped to 1.2 billion in 2005.³

The World Bank adapted the so-called one-dollar-a-day indicator. Until 2008, people having less than one US dollar per day at their disposal were considered poor. Based on 2005 values, the World Bank then increased this limit to 1.25 dollars a day. Obviously, this change of the empirical basis has had far-reaching consequences for the United Nations MDGs that aimed at cutting the number of people living in absolute poverty in half. Indeed, with the new value in place, more people have become officially poor.

In regards to the global distribution of poverty, Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia come first. In 1981, 11 per cent of the world's poor lived in Sub-Saharan Africa, compared to 28 per cent in 2005. For South Asia, the respective values are 29 and 43 per cent.⁴ What is more, the number of hungry has increased since 1995, both in absolute and (at least since 2004-2006) in relative terms. While from 1990-1992, 842 million people suffered from starvation, the number increased to 873 million in 2004-2006, and to 1.02 billion in 2009 – a sad record.⁵ Finally, Eastern Europe illustrates another phenomenon: social polarisation and inequality have drastically increased there as well.

Poverty and Its Gender-Specific Causes

Yet the above facts are bare figures without a human face. They fail to reveal how differently women and men are affected by poverty and hunger. Seventy percent of the 1.4 billion poor are women. They are not only affected more strongly by poverty than men, they also have less access to education and less secure income conditions. In many regions, their legal situation is much more precarious. According to UNICEF, women perform 66 per cent of the world's work – both paid and unpaid – but earn only 10 per cent of the world's income. Moreover, they only share access to one per cent of the world's resources, inclu-

³ United Nations Department for Social and Economic Affairs 2009, *Rethinking Poverty: Report on the World Social Situation 2010*, 15.

⁴ United Nations Department for Social and Economic Affairs 2009, *Rethinking Poverty: Report on the World Social Situation 2010*, 19.

⁵ United Nations General Assembly 2010, *Keeping the promise: a forward-looking review to promote an agreed action agenda to achieve the Millennium Development Goals 2010*, Report by the Secretary General, A/64/665, 4.

ding land and credit.⁶ In short, poverty is feminine and women make up a major part of what is known as the working poor. Therefore, it is both necessary and wise to ask how the distribution of poverty looks like from a gender rather than a geographical point of view and why the situation is as it is.

The Millennium Development Goals

When the international community agreed on the MDGs – that is eight core development objectives and several quantitative indicators, such as the halving of income poverty and hunger by 2015 – it immediately drew harsh criticism, especially from scientists; civil society associations in the South; and environmental, indigenous and women’s organisations.

According to Tetzlaff (2005, 228), for instance, the MDGs represent the “lowest common denominator of international development politicians” and are far away from what Loewe (2005, 1) called a “paradigm shift of the international development debate”. For Tetzlaff, the MDGs mark a setback for many areas and continue to veil the large and partly contradictory conceptual and programmatic differences and schools of thought in development practice and theory. This is why many critics, including Martens (2005, 15), call the MDGs “Minimum Development Goals”. They are right to do so.

The MDGs are based on a purely materialistic understanding of development – the complexity of reasons that can cause poverty and social exclusion is not taken into account. Development and poverty alleviation are treated in a simplistic manner. Structural issues of distributive justice, asymmetric and unfair world trade relationships and, above all, central aspects of democratic and political development – such as the rule of law, democratic participation, transparency, human and civil rights – have been entirely neglected in the eight MDGs, their sub-objectives and the corresponding indicators. Christa Wichterich (2006, 126) concludes: “Poverty is treated as if it was a symptom of a social imbalance, totally independent of power and distributive aspects. It is being dissociated from its structural causes, from macroeconomic processes [and] social injustice.”

Development is reduced to some basic social services, and to ending extreme poverty. To reach these goals, several indicators and deadlines were adopted while all other important factors of fighting poverty, such as trade and financial markets, had no indicators and no deadlines. Poverty, however, is not the mere

absence of money. In the same way as social exclusion and marginalisation, it is linked to the lack of power, legal entitlement, rights, titles of ownership and political participation. Strategies to alleviate and end poverty should therefore aim at strengthening the rights and opportunities of the poor (Heinrich Böll Stiftung, 2002).

According to Nobel laureate in economics and development, economist Amartya Sen (2000, 110), the “lack of capabilities, and therefore real poverty are determined by other factors than just low income”. That poverty analyses have to take multifaceted factors and reasons into account is nothing new – it has long been understood by development theorists. Still, the authors of the MDGs seem to believe that they could do without them.

In doing so, they revived a ‘pure aid philosophy’ in which actors who would take their lives in their own hands and fight for their rights almost do not exist. The structural causes of poverty, be they national or international, were simply neglected.

MDGs and the Environment – a Blind Spot

Even though the interdependence between poverty, development and the environment has long been accepted, there is no trace of it in the MDGs. Issues of gender equality and ecological sustainability – both are cross-cutting issues and tasks par excellence – are reduced to a few highly inadequate indicators. However, it is true that global environmental changes – above all the climate, energy and resource crises – do aggravate poverty and inequality. They make the poorest, especially women and children, more vulnerable to climate changes and catastrophes. The lives of millions of people living in absolute poverty directly and indirectly depend on natural resources. Nevertheless local, regional and global environment and resource problems were, despite their immediate causal link with poverty, relegated to a side issue by the authors of the MDGs.

The ecological blindness of the MDGs is incomprehensible, even more so in the UN framework. After all, the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro and its final documents such as the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21 in particular all recognized the close relationship between the fight against poverty and environmental protection – which is nothing else than the concept of sustainable deve-

lopment. However, the attempt to tackle development processes in a holistic manner – for the purpose of ecological viability; social justice and participation; political co-determination; and gender equality – was not even defined in the MDGs.

MDGs and Gender Equality – a Step Backwards

The diversity of the findings and results that arose from another UN conference in the 1990s was not, or only slightly, integrated into the MDGs. Indeed, the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, a milestone of international women's rights, acknowledged the causal link between gender inequality and poverty, and considers gender equality and women's rights to be crucial means for fighting poverty. Moreover, the Beijing Platform demands that any planned policy action should adopt a gender perspective – a process called gender mainstreaming, which was again not included in the MDGs.

Since then, women's organisations and networks have raised their voice, especially to criticise the absence of hard-won rights and demands in the MDGs. Sure, the third MDG aims at promoting gender equality and empowering women. More importantly, however, are the sub-objectives, which lay out what is actually meant by this clause. According to these, the signatory states should further increase the share of women in wage employment, and improve girls' access to primary schooling. So far, so good. But what about the lack of rights or the absence of titles of ownership? What about reproductive and sexual rights of women? They are not even mentioned in the MDGs. Compared to the 1979 anti-discrimination Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the final documents of the World Conference on Women, such as the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, this represents a clear step backwards.

Poverty reduction must take into account gender-specific causes of poverty. Instruments and measures, including the MDGs themselves, should be chosen in view of the many complex interrelations. Indeed, to quote Christa Wichterich (2006, 127), "women are poor in terms of resources, education, health, employment, etc. because they are poor in terms of rights, opportunities, power, social security, time, non-violence, etc."

The Millennium Development Goals represent, for the majority of women's organisations and networks, no positively connoted reference. This is true even though it was possible, thanks to committed lobbying, to incorporate some references to women's rights and gender equality in the final declaration of the Millennium +5 Summit in 2005, an initial evaluation of the MDGs. In order to assure a holistic, rights-based approach to fighting poverty, the most important international reference documents must remain the Beijing Platform for Action and the CEDAW. Indeed, governments throughout the world agreed to transpose these documents into national law. It is high time to do so.

Gender Equality and the Fight against Poverty Need to Go Hand in Hand

Due to political and economic upheavals, gender relations worldwide have started to change. Economic, social and cultural upheavals – often the result of globalisation – have brought about many different ways of life and working conditions everywhere on our planet. Women have grasped the chance and won some more economic and political autonomy in the process. Especially in the labour market, they have performed well: forty per cent of the world's labour force is feminine today, even though significant regional differences persist. Thirty years ago, women accounted for only half of that.

Compared to the situation of women in the first half of the 20th century, a considerable transformation has taken place. Nonetheless, not counting many undeniable achievements, national and global gender-based hierarchies, power differences and dominance relations between the genders are far from being dismantled. Poverty statistics are but one area which perfectly illustrates this fact.

Women are over-represented in the very insecure informal sector, excluding agriculture. The opposite must be said about leading positions, where women continue to be under-represented.⁷ Even worse, gender inequality does not only characterise the labour market, but in the care sector (household, care, reproduction) is dominated by women who most of the time work for free, partly because this kind of activity seems to be incompatible with the dominant image that men have of themselves. Recently, women and men all around the world have started to solve this compatibility problem by engaging housekeepers, nannies or nurses – often migrant – at low wages. Yet, this redistribution is not

(or at least not sufficiently) taking place between men and women. Instead, in what can be described as a global supply chain, work is passed on between very different women from very different countries, classes and cultures.

The migration process has witnessed significant changes as well. On the global markets, more women than ever are looking for new ways to earn their living. Migration, which used to be a masculine domain, turned feminine a long time ago. Almost 50 per cent of the 214 million migrants are women,⁸ and they are not only searching for jobs in the care sector, but now they are interested in gainful employment. This demand is often met by multinational firms and their suppliers, which do not hesitate to pay low wages and have their workers work and live in inhumane conditions. Discrimination and violence still continue to determine the lives of millions of women in all regions of the world. There is hardly any international document or (women's) conference that doesn't confirm that the structural inequality between women and men has increased rather than decreased in many societies. Women are still excluded from political decision-making processes and their legal situation can only be qualified as precarious.

When presenting the UN report on women, peace and security, the former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan declared: "In no society today, women enjoy the same opportunities as men." Only the UN has not even been able to work effectively against this fact, neither within its own bodies nor on the political level – as the lack of gender-specific aspects in the MDGs sadly illustrates. In terms of political demands, the MDGs consequently drop far behind the Beijing Platform for Action. Eight years after the adoption of the Goals, UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon does not mince his words – in his latest report on the Millennium Development Goals, he explained: "Redressing gender inequality remains one of the most difficult goals almost everywhere."⁹

International gender policies need to be revitalised. Following the example of the various UN Conferences on Women starting in the 1970s and ending with the 1995 meeting in Beijing, we should establish a forward-looking reference project that international women's organisations or gender-related networks could refer and adhere to. Whether or not the brand-new UN Women organisation, established in July 2010, will be able to live up to the expectations remains to be seen. Its success will depend on its financial means, its staff members and – as usual – the political will of its member states.

⁸ United Nations, Population Division (2010), International Migration Stock. URL: www.esa.un.org/migration/index.asp?panel=1.

⁹ United Nations, General Assembly (2010), Keeping the promise: a forward-looking review to promote an agreed action agenda to achieve the Millennium Development Goals 2010, Report by the Secretary General, A/64/665, 6.

References

- End Poverty 2015 millennium campaign, Poverty has a female face.* URL: http://www.endpoverty2015.org/files/Women_and_Poverty_Brochure.pdf (28.07.2010).
- Loewe, Markus (2005), ‚Die Millennium Development Goals: Hintergrund, Bedeutung und Bewertung aus Sicht der deutschen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit‘. In: Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (Hrsg.), *DIE Discussion Paper*, 12/2005, Bonn, 25-28.
- Martens, Jens (2005), *UN-Reform und Millenniumsziele 2005. Chancen für neue Initiativen zur Entwicklungsfinanzierung und Global Governance?*, *Global Issue Papers*, No.16., Berlin, Heinrich Böll Stiftung.
- Sachs, Wolfgang (2006), ‚Die Millenniums-Entwicklungsziele – (k)ein Entwicklungsparadigma?‘. In: Kuhn, Katina und Rieckmann, Marco (Hrsg.), *Wi(e)der die Armut? Positionen zu den Millenniumszielen der Vereinten Nationen*, 60-76.
- Sen, Amartya (2000), *Ökonomie für den Menschen*, München.
- Tetzlaff, Rainer (2005), ‚Armutsbekämpfung durch globale Entwicklungspolitik‘. In: Deutsches Übersee Institut (Hrsg.), *Nord-Süd aktuell*, Band 19, Heft 3/4, Hamburg, 228-238.
- United Nations (2010), *The Millennium Development Goals: Report 2010*. URL: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/MDG%20Report%202010%20En%20r15%20-low%20res%2020100615%20-.pdf> (12.07.2010).
- United Nations, Department for Social and Economic Affairs (2009), *Rethinking Poverty: Report on the World Social Situation 2010*. URL: <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/russ/2010.html> (12.07.2010).
- United Nations, General Assembly (2010), *Keeping the promise: a forward-looking review to promote an agreed action agenda to achieve the Millennium Development Goals 2010*, Report by the Secretary General, A/64/665.
- Wichterich, Christa (2006), ‚Die Millenniums-Entwicklungsziele und Frauenrechte‘. In: Kuhn, Katina und Rieckmann, Marco (Hrsg.), *Wi(e)der die Armut? Positionen zu den Millenniumszielen der Vereinten Nationen*, 123-136.



© European Parliament

Jean Lambert has been the Green Member of the European Parliament for London since 1999. She was re-elected for the third time in the June 2009 European elections. She is a member of the European Parliament's Employment and Social Affairs Committee, where she works on issues including social inclusion, equal treatment, workers' rights, social security, immigration and improving work-life balance. Jean is also a substitute member on the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, where she works on immigration, anti-discrimination, and asylum policy. She has recently been appointed Chair of the European Parliament's Delegation for Relations with South Asia.

Jean Lambert

Care Assistant, not Nurse

Women migrants are disadvantaged in the European Union. Bad integration- and employment policy drives them into a precarious situation

Globally, about half of the migrants are women – this is not a recent phenomenon as the figure for women has been over 40 per cent for at least 4 decades. Research into women migrants has been gradually rising since the 1980s, but there has been very little done on highly-skilled women migrants: research has tended to concentrate on the unskilled and often on those perceived as vulnerable. Comparatively less research has considered women as autonomous actors.

Within the EU, women make up 52 per cent of migrants: reasons include marriage, family reunion or work. About 30 per cent of asylum seekers within the EU are women¹ and globally women make up around 66 per cent of the victims of trafficking.² As with male migrant workers, the large majority of women migrant workers are single, aged 20 to 40, with at least a high-school education.

Migration into the EU: Who Are the Migrants?

EU terminology generally classes a migrant as someone from a 3rd country outside the EU – EU nationals moving from one member state to another are viewed as “mobile”, not migrant and they have a right to equal treatment with nationals in almost every way.

Migration is an important part of development, not a substitute for it. At the most obvious level, this is reflected by the importance of remittances. Migration can also bring skills and experience back to the home country, but this requires access to finance in the country-of-origin. It should be possible to radically

¹ www.epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-QA-10-018/EN/KS-QA-10-018-EN.PDF

² www.unodc.org/documents/Global_Report_on_TIP.pdf

improve the management of this process so that more people can benefit. The International Organization for Migration's assisted return programme is just a drop in the ocean. Given that in many developing countries a high percentage of small-scale businesses that cater to local needs are owned or controlled by women, it makes sense to invest in returning women. Circular migration can assist in this economic development, maintaining business links in two countries.

Current EU migration policy can tend to make people "stick", as they feel they might have only one chance to enter the EU and do not risk leaving in case they cannot return. This is even more likely to happen if someone's status is irregular: so it can lead to long-term separation from family and community in one's country-of-origin. Travel can also be expensive when one is in a low-paid job and expected to send as much cash back to family as possible, so trips home can be few and far between.

Precarious Employment Market for Women Migrants

So, why do women move? Earn, learn, yearn are the classical reasons put forward for migration. The opportunity to increase earning power can be a powerful motivation, but it has to be enough to outweigh all other considerations. Highly-skilled women can still find it difficult to enter the EU labour market. It can be difficult to have one's qualifications recognised which can lead to "brain waste": being employed at below your level of qualification. Women may accept employment at below their skill level because the pay seems reasonable (compared to their country-of-origin) and it is easier to find a job doing casual work via an agency as a care assistant rather than working as a qualified nurse.

The EU labour market is still highly gendered in many countries and there is often a tendency to employ men in IT, engineering and research, to name only 3 areas. Gendered employment affects opportunities: women migrants are mostly concentrated in the health sector (hospitals, nursing homes, elderly care, and private homes), education and domestic service at a variety of qualification levels. This often reflects the domestic labour market.

EU legislation, while seeming to be gender neutral, also has an impact in a gendered labour market. The so-called "Blue Card Directive", aimed at highly-qualified workers, contains a salary requirement (despite the best efforts of some of us in Parliament): given that women tend to work in lower-paid professions

and/or earn less than men, this can prove a barrier because they don't earn enough to enter. In fact, much of the legislation dealing with migrants requires a financial threshold.

Indeed, the public charge provisions including “own resources” – in the form of minimum income requirements, proof of stable income, and a requirement not to be a burden on the state especially in terms of healthcare – have remained one of the features of selective immigration policies in general and a core element of family migration up to the present.³ While we have seen a shift in the law to more gender neutral language and provisions, the outcomes will be different for men and women.

In the current context of economic hardship, the doors are closing even on the highly-qualified migrant worker, with a few exceptions. For many women, the only way they can find work is either in the domestic sector or in other low-skilled service jobs. The demand for women migrant workers in unskilled occupations, in particular those going into domestic service, is often high and sustained since they represent a form of “replacement mobility” for female nationals who are then freed from their household and care responsibilities to take up other positions in the labour market.⁴

Pushed in Insecurity and Illegality

For many women, the route to migration is family reasons. They may be the “trailing spouse”, following a husband who has work. In these cases she often has no automatic right to work herself, no matter how highly qualified. Family reunion may be another route, where a husband has gone ahead to work and, after a qualifying period, his wife is allowed to join him with their children if they are deemed young enough to integrate effectively (according to the Family Reunification Directive). Some women come expressly for the purpose of marriage, but this is being made more difficult in some Member States. If the relationship becomes abusive during that marriage, the woman is trapped - totally dependent on her husband for her right to remain.

In many circumstances, these accumulated rules can prove restrictive to women. Some women find that their children adapt rapidly and acquire the language more quickly as they have very different social opportunities. This can leave the

³ Civic Stratification, Gender and Family Migration Policies in Europe Final Report Albert Kraller, 2010

⁴ ILO Thematic Review seminar of the European Employment Strategy 29 April 2008

woman dependent and vulnerable to any change in circumstances as she ages. This is often perceived within the EU as a consequence of religion rather than culture.

Having no formal right to work, women's vulnerability is further increased by being employed in the informal economy:⁵ it also puts them in a semi-compliant situation. If they have migrated for economic purposes, but lose their job and subsequently move to another rather than leaving the country to apply for another job abroad, their status becomes irregular. They may be "overstayers", the largest category of irregular migrants. Some come as students, find work (or a partner) and stay. Others may deliberately enter on a tourist visa intending to look for work or to join a partner, and stay on. It can be very difficult to change one's migration status while in the territory of the EU.

And the consequences of this informal economy? In certain sectors, women can be very vulnerable: the work may often be isolated. Some women are brought in legally to work as a domestic worker and, after being placed in a private household, may become invisible – subjected to long hours and even both physical and sexual abused. The domestic sphere may even be outside normal employment law: an exception in terms of some penalties was made for this sphere in the EU Directive on the sanctions against employers of illegal immigrants. They may be in casual employment, such as food production, which is poorly unionised, poorly paid and poorly inspected in some areas. Sweat-shop labour may take place within a woman's own community, making it more difficult to approach the authorities or find other support networks.

Little Progress on EU Migration Policy

In 1999, the Tampere Declaration became the framework for the European Common Immigration Policy (ECIP). Its declared intention was to ensure that the rights of third-country nationals be as close as possible to those of EU nationals, which is essential for both moral and pragmatic reasons. The right to equal treatment closes the gap on exploitation and gives migrants a clear legal right to challenge poor treatment. The debate is currently under way on the proposal for

a directive on a single application procedure for a permit for third-country nationals to reside and work in the territory of a Member State and on a common set of rights for third-country workers legally residing in a Member State.

While there is no support for obviously exploitative working conditions, there is political disagreement about entitlement to training and, in the area of social protection, access to family benefits and social housing. Given that we know many migrants – especially women – are working below their qualification level and often in low-paid jobs, unequal treatment in these areas will have a particularly strong negative impact on women migrants.

So what is the progress on opening more possibilities for regular migration? Limited: for all the rhetoric and acknowledged need for migrant labour, there is still a huge reluctance from many Member States to open up and make legal migration easier. The UK food production industry is estimated to depend on migrant workers for about half of its workforce. We know there is a huge need in the care sector alone, and many posts are already being filled by migrant labour. There is a regional scheme in Italy to deliberately employ certain African workers because it is felt they have a greater respect and understanding towards older people. A region in Austria has recently regularised over 20,000 migrant workers in the care sector. Deportation was presumably not an option on grounds of cost and collapse in the provision of care.

What are the problems in terms of being more open? The problems - both real and imaginary - are many or at least overstated. Racism, fear of change, concern about the costs to social security budgets – especially of family reunion when there is an entitlement to social security and welfare benefits (there are arguments over access to primary health care from the national system, family benefits, the "strain" on public services and housing) – ignoring the fact that some of these services would not operate as effectively as they do without migrant labour! There is concern that migrant workers will undercut wages and working conditions or even replace national workers, but many of the labour market concerns seem to be focused on the sectors that traditionally employ men rather than women.

Receiving Communities Have Responsibility

There is a concern that many migrants do not fit in and won't integrate. However, integration is a two-way street - the receiving community also has to adapt. Why should someone take steps to participate in society if they are on a fixed-term labour contract and have a residence permit with no built-in flexibility should they lose their job? The system is designed so that it is very difficult to gain status as a long-term resident. We also need to recognise the practical difficulties of integration: migrants tend to work long hours and women may have caring responsibilities, lack a work network or be reluctant to enter venues such as bars alone.

Part of the background to these preconceptions about integration was increasing concern about the role of Islam and terrorism, as well as the perception amongst some people of all political colours that Islam necessarily represses women. The Vichy Council meeting on integration of 2008 and its conclusions concerning women reflect those concerns about culture and essentially start from a family perspective, rather than seeing women as autonomous actors.

Regarding policies for the promotion of women's rights, the discrimination and violence to which immigrant women may be subject run deeply counter to the values of the European Union and call for particular vigilance and specific measures. Situations such as polygamy, sexual mutilation, forced marriages and repudiation must be fought against through preventive and sanction actions.

So What Should We Aim For?

We should aim for an immigration system that is fair to all migrants, both men and women, and is as liberal as possible. It should offer individuals the chance to come and go and return again: genuine circular migration. After all, the EU is a continent that has a migration history, positive and negative in its effects, and many EU nationals live and work in other countries. How would we wish to be treated? I suggest an open list of proposals.

- The apparently gender-neutral migration policy may be no such thing: we need a real gender analysis of immigration proposals if we mean what the treaties say about gender mainstreaming.

- Awareness of rights and the ability to access and enforce them. This applies to the pre-migration period as well as arrival and afterwards as well as on return. Information, specifically for the individual, should accompany any visa and be available at points of entry: it should also be available in the appropriate language and in both written and oral formats.
- Clear information as to where to find advice and support in the country of destination from the authorities, trade unions and relevant NGOs. Embassies should also have staff members dedicated to supporting their migrant nationals.
- A regulation of agencies bringing in foreign workers, and an effective inspection regime: there are many cases of women being misled by such agencies as to what their work and terms and conditions will be. In its worst form, this can be a front for traffickers. There must be enforceable contracts in place. Women must also have time to consider their options in such a case, rather than automatic deportation.
- Victims of trafficking must have the option of a residence permit, social security and other effective support.
- Women need an independent status: in terms of legal migration, a woman's status is often dependent on that of the sponsored individual and this problem is most obvious in the event of that partnership failing for some reason (divorce, widowhood) or the loss of a job and therefore the need to leave. A "trailing spouse" should have the right to work.
- End probationary periods, which can mean that a woman has to stay in a violent relationship because she may face deportation or destitution if she has no independent rights. Probationary periods lock her in.
- Make skills the basis for entry, not salary or paper qualifications alone. Women may face difficulties acquiring formal educational qualifications in their country of origin. Women, due to the employment they are likely to take up, are likely to be lower paid, so some may not qualify in terms of the financial (earnings) threshold required under, for example, the "blue-card" proposal, even if employed in a profession.

- Make more use of skills evaluation in the employment process. There is valuable experience from the the European Social Fund EQUAL programme's asylum seeker strand which could be used.
- We need a formal EU system of recognition of qualifications for 3rd country nationals and clear conversion paths for those who may need to adapt their qualifications in order to work in the EU.
- Equality of treatment with nationals: migrants contribute to society in a variety of ways, paid or not. It makes no sense to deny access to healthcare or education, for example, for either the individuals involved or society as a whole.
- Improve the portability of pensions, whether state or employment related, and at the rate paid to nationals. Women, in particular, often face poverty in later life because of inadequate pensions: they should at least receive that to which they are entitled.
- Equal rights in the workplace, including the right to training: it must be possible to improve one's career and employment prospects and not be stuck at a low level. This also includes the right to equal pay with nationals and with men!
- The right to change jobs without the farce of having to apply from outside the country: this is expensive, bureaucratic and risky.
- The possibility to change migration status from within the country, to stay on the right side of the administration and for the process to be clear, so people understand what is involved.
- The possibility of regularisation – again under clear rules so people do not feel they, or their family, will be at risk of deportation if they enter into this process.
- To protect the basic human rights of undocumented migrants, so as not to leave them vulnerable.
- Affordable access to language classes and flexibility in their provision: it should be easy for those with caring responsibilities, or long working hours, to access tuition.

- Stop interfering with women's clothing! If we want women to feel welcome and able to participate, don't put such barriers in their way.
- Support migrant women's organisations so that they have their own voice and power.
- Support women in their countries-of-origin where their rights are not respected. Be aware that some women may face gender-based discrimination on return – work with those countries to remove such discrimination.
- Ensure our governments, and the EU, ratify the relevant ILO Conventions of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families

The receiving population also needs to be included, so that migration is not seen as a threat but a fact. Migrants are part of our society and should be recognised and treated as such.



Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) is the oldest international women's peace organization in the world. Since its establishment during the First World War in April 1915 in The Hague (Netherlands), WILPF has brought together women from around the world who are united in working for peace by non-violent means, promoting political, economic and social justice for all. WILPF is a Non Governmental Organization (NGO) with 36 national sections, covering all continents with an international secretariat based in Geneva, and a New York office focused on the work of the United Nations.

In 1948, WILPF was in the first group of NGOs to receive consultative status with the United Nations through the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and has Special Consultative Relations with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), as well as special relations with the International Labour Organization (ILO), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other organizations and agencies.

WILPF is a part of numerous international networks and coalitions and works on issues of peace, human rights and disarmament at the local, national and international levels, participating in the ongoing international debates on peace and security issues, conflict prevention and resolution, on the elimination of all forms of discrimination, and the promotion and protection of human rights. It contributes to analysis of these issues, and through its many activities, educates, informs and mobilizes women for action everywhere.

Its aims and principles are:

- To bring together women of different political beliefs and philosophies who are united in their determination to study, make known and help abolish the causes and the legitimization of war
- To work toward world peace; total and universal disarmament; the abolition of violence and coercion in the settlement of conflict and their substitution in every case of negotiation and conciliation; the strengthening of the United Nations system; the continuous development and implementation of international law; political and social equality and economic equity; co-operation among all people; and an environmentally sustainable development
- Believing that under systems of exploitation these aims cannot be attained and a real and lasting peace and true freedom cannot exist, WILPF makes it one of its missions to further by non-violent means the social and economic transformation of the international community. This would enable the establishment of economic and social systems in which political equality and social justice for all can be attained, without discrimination on the basis of sex, race, religion, or any other grounds whatsoever
- WILPF sees as its ultimate goal the establishment of an international economic order founded on the principles of meeting the needs of all people and not on those of profit and privilege.

WILPF holds a triennial Congress for members and in interim years an International Executive Board meeting is convened. Congress reports in English are available from the International Secretariat in Geneva, by emailing inforequest@wilpf.ch. More information about WILPF: www.wilpfinternational.org

Links

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom www.wilpf.int.ch
Internationale Frauenliga für Frieden und Freiheit – Deutsche Sektion www.wilpf.de
Women for Peace – Peace for Women www.peacewomen.org
Feminist Peace www.feministpeacenet.org
Women and Armed Conflict Caucus www.womenaction.org
Women's Human Right Network www.whrnet.org
Reaching Critical Will www.reachingcriticalwill.org
European Women's Lobby www.womenlobby.org
Women for International Peace and Arbitration (WIPA) www.wipa.org
1000 Women for the Nobel Prize www.1000peacewoman.org
Terre des Femmes – Menschenrechte für die Frau www.terre-des-femmes.de
Frauensicherheitsrat www.un1325.de
Gunda-Werner-Institut www.gwi-boell.de
Medica Mondiale www.medicamondiale.org
Frauennetzwerk für den Frieden www.frauennetzwerk-fuer-frieden.de
European Peacebuilding Liaison Office www.eplo.org
Hessische Stiftung Friedens- und Konfliktforschung www.hsfk.de
Internationale Ärzte für die Verhütung des Atomkriegs www.ippnw.de
International Crisis Group www.crisisgroup.org
International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms www.ialana.com
Plattform Zivile Konfliktbearbeitung www.konfliktbearbeitung.net
Stockholm International Peace Research Institute www.sipri.org
International Alert www.international-alert.org
Amnesty International www.amnesty.de

Listen to women for a change

© private



15 years after Beijing World Conference on Women international politicians, activists and scientists take stock: What's about the decisions made in this meeting, which in that moment had been the biggest reunion of women worldwide? Why does poverty keep staying a female issue? Why today is expended more money than ever for armament, meanwhile the resources for gender justice are short of cash? The authors from Russia, India, Australia, South Africa, Hungary, Great Britain, Germany, Sweden, Turkey and Kosovo also are writing about the situation of ethnic minorities, migrants, the feminist movement, sexual violence in war times and last not least about the Peace Train, which brought in the year 1995 more than 200 women from Helsinki to Beijing.

The Editors:

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) – German Section

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) was established during the First World War in April 1915 in The Hague (Netherlands) and has brought together women from around the world who are united in working for peace by non-violent means, promoting political, economic and social justice for all. WILPF is a NGO with 36 national sections, covering all continents with an international secretariat based in Geneva, and a New York office focused on the work of the United Nations. WILPF works on issues of peace, human rights and disarmament at the local, national and international levels, participating in the ongoing international debates on peace and security issues, conflict prevention and resolution, on the elimination of all forms of discrimination, and the promotion and protection of human rights. WILPF organized the Women's Peace Train to Beijing.

Barbara Lochbihler

© European Parliament



Barbara Lochbihler, born 1959, is a member of the Greens/EFA parliamentary group in the European Parliament. There, she is a member of the Human Rights Committee; substitute member of the Committee of Foreign Affairs; and chairwoman of the European Parliament Iran Delegation. In her work as a parliamentarian, she also deals with international justice, migration and UN Resolution 1325. She is a social worker and political scientist. Since 1985 she has been a member of the German section of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) where she served as Secretary General in Geneva from 1992 to 1999. From 1999 to 2009, she was the Secretary General of Amnesty International Germany. As Secretary General of WILPF, she participated in a significant way in the organization of the Peace Train from Helsinki to Beijing.

