

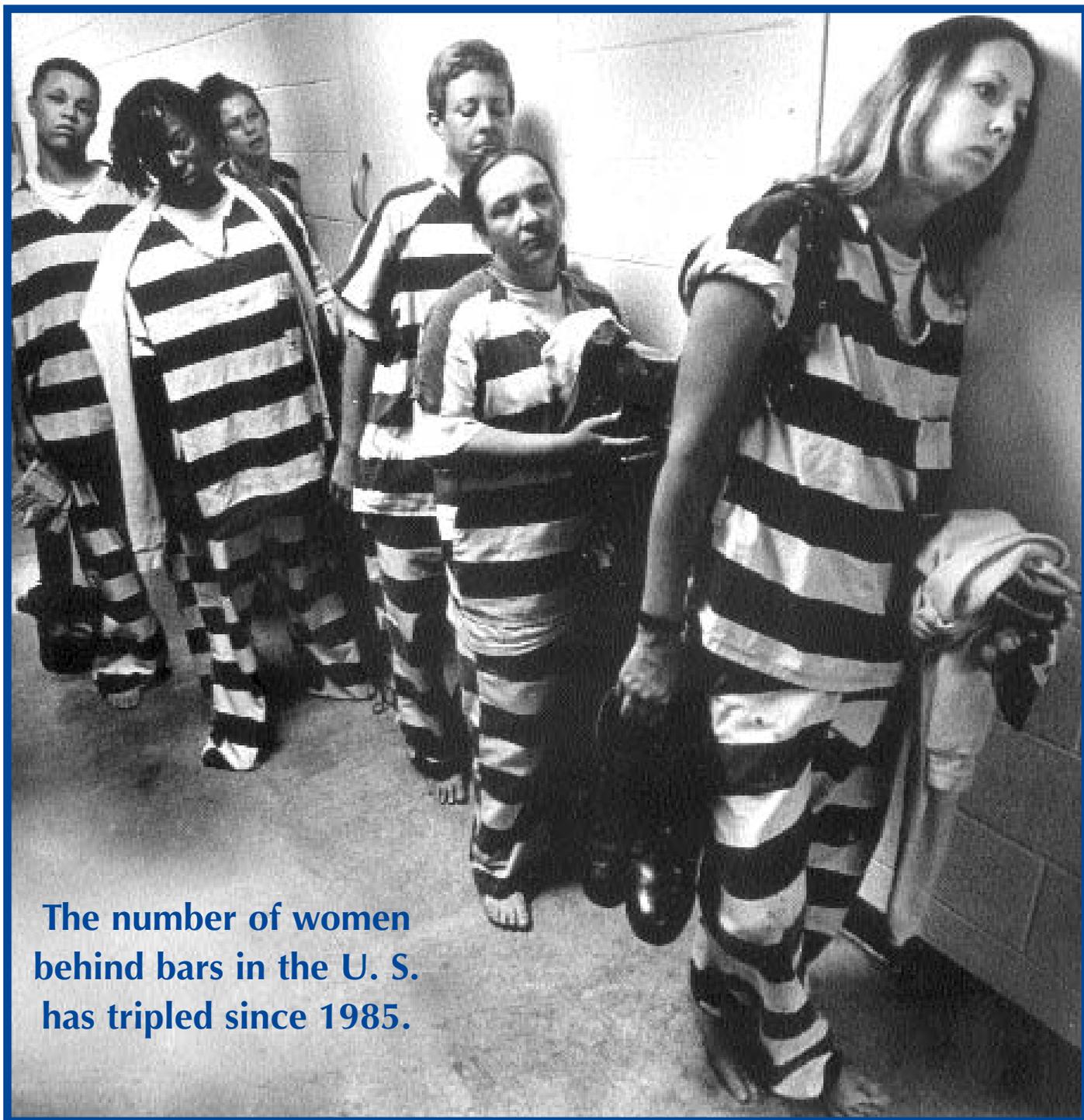
# Peace & Freedom

MAGAZINE OF THE WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM

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## Women in Prison



The number of women behind bars in the U. S. has tripled since 1985.



U.S. Section members perform in typical "native-dress" at the WILPF International Executive Committee meeting in Costa Rica (see page 20). They sang "Ain't Gonna Study War No More."



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Cover: Members of an all-female chain gang wait to be strip searched before entering lock-down in Maricopa County Jail, Phoenix, Arizona.

Stan Grossfield/The Boston Globe

**Correction:** In the last issue of *Peace & Freedom*, a letter to the editor from WILPF member Beatrice Siegel was printed with a misspelling of her name. We regret the error.

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

has been working since 1915 to unite women worldwide who oppose oppression and exploitation. WILPF stands for equality of all people in a world free of racism, sexism and homophobia; the building of a constructive peace through world disarmament; and the changing of government priorities to meet human needs.

### National Program: WILPF envisions a world

free of violence, poverty, pollution and domination — a genuine new world order of peace and justice. WILPF's program stands firm for disarmament and against oppression. The 2000-2003 program cycle has three key campaign areas: Challenging Corporate Power; Disarmament; and Racial Justice. Each campaign area focuses on local and national effectiveness in creating lasting social change.

### WILPF has sections in 37 countries

coordinated by an international office in Geneva. U.S. WILPF carries out its work through grassroots organizing by WILPF branches, coordinated by a national office in Philadelphia. WILPF supports the work of the United Nations and has NGO (Non-Governmental Organization) status.

***We invite all people who support our goals to join us.***

# Welcome to the year-end issue of *Peace & Freedom*

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*Theta Pavis, Peace & Freedom editor*  
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It's been a big year for WILPF — and for this publication. In 1999, WILPF held its Triennial Congress in St. Louis, elected a new board, chose three new, exciting campaigns and hired several key staff members. WILPF's new Executive Director Mary Day Kent and Leadership/Outreach Coordinator Kathryn Kasper are both in place. In addition, our International sisters have hired WILPF's new Secretary General, Michaela Told, and JAPA's new Executive Director Dilys Schnell Purdy has also come aboard.

*Peace & Freedom* also saw some changes in 1999. At the beginning of the year, I took over as your guest editor. A journalist by training, I got my first editing job as a student at UCLA when I revamped the campus feminist newsmagazine. I was new to Philadelphia when I started at *P & F*, and in WILPF I found many wonderful, committed women. Some of the women I must quickly thank here include: our outgoing President Betty Burkes, who encouraged me to keep going; our past Executive Director, Marilyn Clement, whose ideas and careful reading helped me so much; our past *P & F* editor Roberta Spivek, who has been an unending source of ideas, input and content; Pamela Jones-Burnley, whose assistance makes this magazine possible; and two fabulous interns, Wanda Jones and Kristen Flurkey.

In 1999, the magazine tackled such important topics as disarmament, gender, Latin America, refugees and now, prisons. Perhaps it is fitting to end the year on this topic. As we head towards 2000, we are constantly being told that our country's economy is booming, but one of the fastest growing sectors of this economy is the prison industry. Increasingly, these prisons are being run by corporations. They are also being filled with a disproportionately large number of people of color.

In these pages you will read many astonishing facts culled by a range of authors. Consider, for example, that the number of people in U.S. prisons has almost doubled in the last decade; by the beginning of 2000, about 2 million Americans will be incarcerated.

This issue of *Peace & Freedom* also ties into WILPF's three new campaigns: Challenging Corporate Power, Asserting the People's Rights; Disarm! Dismantling the War Economy; and Truth and Reconciliation: Uniting for Racial Justice. For corporations, building prisons and prison labor have become big operations. More money for the military means less for social spending and education which can help keep peo-



ple out of prison. Meanwhile, the so-called War on Drugs, which WILPF has consistently worked to expose, has directly contributed to the rise of the prison population.

While some of the articles in this issue point out the special problems women inmates face — such as sexual abuse by male prison guards — our authors have also found that prison can

sometimes be the first safe place a woman has ever been. Because of domestic violence, drug addiction and sub-standard education, prison can offer opportunities not found on the “outside.” It is an irony highlighted in this issue and one worth looking at. The last issue of the year is also filled with suggestions for improving the situation, including supporting alternatives to incarceration, helping children visit their parents in prison, and information about legislation that would give former inmates the right to once again vote.

Next year, we hope to tackle an equally informative mix of topics. In 2000, you will also see some changes in *P & F* to reflect the changes in WILPF. We look forward to hearing from you as we roll out these changes. We look forward to hearing from you about these changes, and hearing other suggestions you may have for helping P&F serve you, the members.

Our tentative production cycle for 2000 follows. Under proposed changes, we will have less space to dedicate entire issues to particular themes, but more room for reports on WILPF's ongoing campaigns and work.

WINTER: WILPF'S Work in 2000 and Beyond  
(Copy due Nov. 12; Published first week of February)

SPRING: Beijing+5  
(Copy Due Feb. 23, Published first week of May)

SUMMER: Democracy and the Media  
(Copy due May 22, Published first week of August)

FALL: Consumerism  
(Deadline to come, Published first week of November)

*Peace & Freedom* welcomes your ideas and submissions, but we ask that you contact us before sending articles. We also welcome letters to the editor. You can email submissions to: [peacefreedom@wilpf.org](mailto:peacefreedom@wilpf.org), mail to us at the national office, or call us at (215) 563-7110. We look forward to hearing from you.

Peace, Theta Pavis

# The Corporatization of Prisons

Virginia Rasmussen and Mary Zepernick

*“Maximize investment opportunities in this explosive industry . . . Private prisons offer a whole new area for revenue growth in the private sector. . . Privatization can be viewed as outsourcing.”*

Thus did a glitzy brochure hawk the 2nd Annual Privatizing Correctional Facilities conference, held two years ago in the shadow of Wall Street. The publicity made no bones about the agenda, promising to provide “the tools you need to grow profits with privately managed correctional facilities.”

Along with U.S. public education, health care and military functions, the “corrections” system is being turned over to and exploited by large corporations. Aptly called “privatization,” the shrinking of collective responsibility and the corporatization of our public institutions are relentlessly removing from the public arena more and more functions of our common life.

In a June 13 article in the *Washington Post*, Representative Ted Strickland (D-OH) cited prison privatization’s “potentially corrupting effects on public policy. Prison corporations like the Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) have hired politically well-connected lobbyists to advocate for their cause. The profit motive is also an incentive for private prison advocates to begin lobbying for long-term and mandatory sentences that would keep their beds filled, their profits flowing and their investors happy.”

Of all harms done by giant corporations, the fundamental one that makes the rest possible is the usurpation of our authority to govern. Our founding political theory located this authority in the sovereign citizens, and the job of public officials in our communities, states and nation is to ensure that institutions created to serve us are subordinate to the people’s will.

Nowhere is this taking of public authority more evident than in what activist, educator and author Angela Davis calls the punishment industry. Every week at least one new jail or prison is opened, resulting in close to 2 million people now incarcerated in the United States—more than in any other country. Over 70 percent of these are people of color, and Davis points out that black women are the fastest growing group, with Native Americans the largest per capita.

Non-violent offenders account for most of the burgeoning prison population, due primarily to the misbegotten “War on Drugs” and mandatory sentencing. Writer Eric Schlosser attributed most of the growth to “crimes that in other countries would receive community service, fines, or drug treatment—or would not be con-

sidered crimes at all.” The mentally ill are another source of the rise. Linda Teplin, psychiatry professor and director of the psycho-legal studies program at Northwestern University, calls jails “the poor person’s mental hospitals.”

Rather than address the myriad reasons for the rapidly rising prison population, municipal, state and federal officials, with fewer dollars to build and maintain facilities, have increasingly abdicated responsibility to a thriving for-profit “corrections industry.”

Corporations also push the prospect of jobs, especially in economically depressed rural areas where less opposition is expected. Such privatization can take the form of a government entity hiring private contractors to operate a prison; selling facilities to a corporation; a corporation building a facility and contracting to house inmates; and variations on the theme.

Eve Goldberg and Linda Evans, writing for Berkeley’s Prison Activist Resource Center, draw an analogy between the building and maintenance of weapons and armies and of prisons. They contend that “like fear of communism during the Cold War, fear of crime is a great selling tool for a dubious product.

“Investment houses, construction companies, architects, and support services such as food, medical, transportation and furniture, all stand to profit by prison expansion. A burgeoning ‘specialty item’ industry sells fencing, handcuffs, drug detectors, protective vests, and other security devices to prisons . . . ‘Night Enforcer’ goggles used in the Gulf War, electronic ‘Hot Wire’ fencing (‘so hot NATO chose it for high-risk installations’) and other equipment once used by the military, are now being marketed to the criminal justice system.”

Inadequate and ill-enforced as regulations of government-run prisons are, there is even less public scrutiny of corporations, to whom compliant courts and legislatures have handed illegitimate rights, powers and immunities over the past 125 years. It doesn’t take an economic wizard to see that when a for-profit corporation engages in human services, the interests of patients, clients or inmates are readily sacrificed to the bottom line. CCA, the largest in the field, and Wackenhut Corporation, for example, embody the term warehousing.

Overcrowding, poorly trained and paid staff, and cost cutting on food, health care, recreation facilities and

rehabilitation programs, make corporate incarceration increasingly punitive with little prospect of correction. Danny Thompson, with the North Carolina Department of Correction, summed it up: "If you want an effective program to rehabilitate inmates it's going to cost. Private enterprise is simply not going to spend the money to really try to make a difference in people's lives."

Strickland, who worked for nine years as a psychologist in a maximum-security prison, points out that "A public prison is obligated to maintain a safe and secure environment for the corrections staff, the inmates and the surrounding community. A private prison, on the other hand, is obligated to its corporate shareholders. The *raison d'être* of a private prison is profit, not protection."

This was borne out most dramatically in the September 1998 escape of six inmates from a CCA-run prison in Youngstown, Ohio. Since opening in May of the previous year, there were at least 13 stabbings, two deaths and numerous assaults. Inmates sued, claiming that the prison violated their contract by importing prisoners too dangerous for a medium-security facility. When legislators demanded more state oversight, CCA countered that its shareholders hold the corporation accountable!

Arguably the most exploitative of corporate penal practices is the use of prison labor. Mirroring the post-emanicipation "convict leasing" that provided African-American prison laborers (many incarcerated on trumped-up charges) to plantations or railroad and other corporations, a growing number of U.S. corporations are "employing" inmates. Often billed as job training, "prison slavery" is replacing educational programs for a captive workforce without unions. Inmates are paid super sub-minimum wages and get no benefits.

A far cry from making license plates for the state,

outfits like the Oregon Prison Industries—producing "Prison Blues" jeans—compete with small private textile and furniture manufacturers. Escod Industries moved to South Carolina after finding that prisoners' wages cost them less than Mexican non-union sweatshop workers, and according to Goldberg and Evans, U.S. Technologies closed their Austin electronics plant out from under 150 workers, reopening weeks later in a nearby prison. Among corporations that use prison labor are JC Penney, Victoria's Secret, IBM, Toys "R" Us, Chevron and TWA.\*

Representative Strickland has filed a bill to prohibit privately run federal prisons and limit their growth on the state level. "Short of execution," he wrote, "incarceration is the ultimate

expression of society's power over the individual, and it must remain the responsibility of the public." Called the Public Safety Act, HR 979 is in the Judiciary's Subcommittee on Crime, and while its chances aren't good in the current Congress, it's an opportunity to make our legislators accountable for their abdication of responsibility.

The corporatization of prisons is a critical issue on which to challenge corporate power and assert the people's rights and responsibilities.

\* Sources:

*Perspective Magazine*; *Color Lines* magazine, (Fall 1998, article by Angela Davis); Prison Activist Resource Center, *Prison Legal News*.

Virginia Rasmussen and Mary Zepernick co chair the Committee on Corporations, Trade & Democracy, which is implementing WILPF's current campaign on Challenging Corporate Power, Asserting the People's Rights. To join the committee, call 508 398 1023 or e mail [people@poclad.org](mailto:people@poclad.org)



# A Caravan for Prison Justice

*Gail Walker*

The United States is a nation addicted to incarceration. While the FBI has reported a drop in crime for the past five years straight and violent crime is at a 25-year low, close to 1 percent of the total U.S. population is currently behind bars. In fact, if the present rate of incarceration remains unchecked, one of every 20 persons in the United States will serve time in prison during his or her lifetime.

Racism and the criminalization of poverty are primary factors in the imprisonment binge which is gripping the nation. This means that the primary victims of the growing prison-industrial complex are persons of color and the poorest of the nation. Increasingly the color of U.S. prisons is black and brown.

According to The Sentencing Project, one in seven African-American males is either currently or permanently disenfranchised from voting as a result of a felony conviction and nearly one in three African-American males between 20 and 29 is either in prison or jail, on probation or parole.

The statistics for women are also startling. Currently, there are 138,000 women behind bars in the United States; more than triple the number in 1985. In addition, 5.1 percent of black and Hispanic women are likely to go to prison or jail at least one time during their lifetime compared to .5 percent of white women.

The devastating human toll caused by this crisis of incarceration falls disproportionately on black and Latino families. And the crisis is not limited to the present generation; its destructive ripple effect will tear at the fabric of community and family life for generations to come.

Like the military-industrial complex, the prison-industrial complex is a mix of private business and government interests. Its public rationale is the fight against crime. But its twofold purpose is profit and social control. In the 1970s, Chief Justice Warren Burger called for turning prisons into "factories with fences" and the nation heeded the call. Big business, looking for cheap labor and greater profits, has turned to prison labor as the answer. Today, U.S. inmates are being paid as little as 23 cents per hour to manufacture goods for corporations like McDonald's, TWA, and Starbucks. A public report from the Department of Justice makes it clear: "Inmates represent a readily available and dependable source of entry-level labor that is a cost-effective alternative to work forces found in Mexico, the Caribbean Basin, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific Rim countries."

Another segment of society associated with prison justice and too often overlooked by the government and



Impact Visuals

Jessica Diaz says goodbye to her mother and son on visiting day at the California Youth Authority Ventura School, Camrillo, CA. Carmen and Jessica, whose father was murdered by soldiers in El Salvador, are working on their relationship since Jessica's been in prison. All of Carmen's children became gang members when they fled El Salvador and moved to Los Angeles.

mainstream media, are U.S. political prisoners. This nation refuses to acknowledge the existence of "political" prisoners because it conflicts with the image of a nation built on justice and democracy. But in fact, there are more than 100 political prisoners in the United States; imprisoned for their radical dissent and resistance, and their struggle against oppression.

Mumia Abu-Jamal, Sundiata Acoli, Silvia Baraldini and Leonard Peltier are just a handful of the more well-known U.S. political prisoners. Scores more are behind bars and have been victimized by government misconduct, the persecution and disruption of their organizations prior to their arrests, hostile courtroom conditions, assaults, repeated strip searches, extended periods of isolation and sensory deprivation and denial of visitation and medical care while in prison.

Next March, the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization (IFCO) will launch a Caravan for Prison Justice to address these issues. Working with experienced advocates for prison justice, IFCO/Pastors for Peace will apply its successful caravan-organizing model — now more than a decade old—to this important topic. As we approach the millennium we are all called upon to challenge the crisis of incarceration that is tearing away at the core of this nation.

For more information on how you can support this project contact: IFCO/Pastors for Peace, 402 West 145th Street, New York, NY 10031 (212) 926-5757 or email: [ifco@igc.org](mailto:ifco@igc.org)

*Gail Walker is the Communications Coordinator for IFCO. She was a co leader of the IFCO delegation to Nicaragua that was attacked by Nicaraguan contras and led to the formation of IFCO's Pastors for Peace project.*

# No Safe Haven: WILPF Member Writes Book On Women in Prison

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*Lori B. Girshick*  
.....

*I stayed in all this time and I've grown up a lot. I needed that. I would take nothing for the time I've done, but I wouldn't do it again. It's been a valuable experience and I've learned a lot, and hopefully I've helped someone else along the way. But it's broke me. They got their point across. — inmate, Black Mountain Correctional Center for Women*

Incarcerated women are largely an invisible population because of their small numbers; they make up only 6 percent of those imprisoned in the United States. Yet the experience of the woman quoted above should not be ignored.

That women who lack options for self-support, or who need drug treatment, job training, or a haven from battering often end up in prison is an indictment of society. Where are the resources for these women?

*No Safe Haven: Stories of Women in Prison* (1999, Northeastern University Press) is the result of interviews with 40 inmates at the Black Mountain Correctional Center for Women in North Carolina, as well as family members, community volunteers and program providers. In it, I explore the women's lives before imprisonment, enabling me to understand their incarceration within the context of childhood and adolescent experiences, domestic violence, alcohol and drug abuse, low education levels, and poor work histories. Through my volunteer work at the prison as a sponsor taking women out into the community, and also as a facilitator of a support group for battered women, I have come to understand how childhood and adult victimization combine with a lack of resources to become a major pathway to crime. Substance abuse is another significant factor.

I have been most struck by the childhood and adolescent experiences of the women. Given the multiple traumas they endure it is no wonder that they are ill-equipped when they enter adulthood. Their early experiences typically involve family dysfunction and disorganization, abuse, poverty, alcoholism or drug abuse by caretakers, and high criminal involvement by family members. More than half (68 percent) of the women were abused as children, and 52 percent had run away from home. Are we surprised to learn that 65 percent had dropped out of junior high or high school, and that more than half (55 percent) had been involved in juvenile

delinquency? Teen pregnancy and early marriage also were factors for a third of these women, often as a means to escape from their homes.

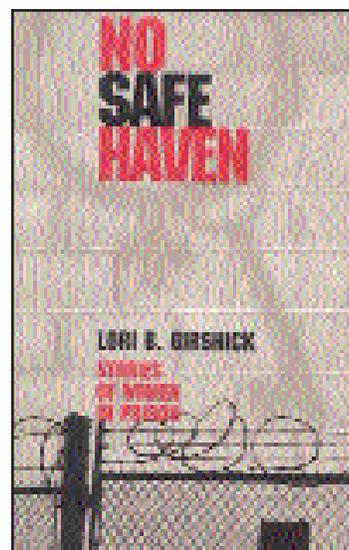
In their adult lives, these women struggled to support and to keep their children with them. Addiction often interfered with their working lives, and domestic violence was a dominant factor that complicated parenting, work, and family stability. Once in prison, they are safe from battering and can participate in substance-abuse counseling, have some job training options, and many earn a GED. However, the context of prison life is itself psychologically abusive. Most women are nonviolent offenders and could receive these services in their communities if these programs existed and were accessible.

I am very concerned that there are prevention options we are not utilizing. Why aren't there more resources for dysfunctional families? Why aren't there more effective programs to prevent so many adolescents from dropping out of school? Why are we surprised that women commit economic crimes to support their families when the minimum wage isn't even a livable wage? Where are the drug treatment programs that will accept women and *their children* making it feasible for women to enter drug treatment?

The defining context of our lives, patriarchy and its privileges, influences women and criminal behavior and the criminal justice system. In spite of the women's movement and our progress, gender roles remain entrenched, women are paid less than men and violence against women is pervasive. Sexism, racism, and classism all combine as powerful forces in explaining who gets services and resources in society and who ends up in prison. By creating a stigmatized, disposable group of women, those of us who remain free can view them as "other." However, incarcerated women are our sisters who experience the most extreme aspects of the "isms." Those of us women not in prison cells are just in more comfortable cages.

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*Lori B. Girshick is a sociologist, community activist and WILPF member. She can be reached at [lgirshic@warren.wilson.edu](mailto:lgirshic@warren.wilson.edu)*

*No Safe Haven* (ISBN 1-5553-373-6) can be ordered from Northeastern University Press. The web address is [www.neu.edu/nupress](http://www.neu.edu/nupress)



# Working for Alternatives to Incarceration

Kristen Flurkey

JusticeWorks Community is a national, non-profit organization which advocates for alternatives to incarceration and seeks an end to the imprisonment of women who are non-violent and have children. The Brooklyn-based group contends that women in the criminal justice system are usually there because of homelessness, poverty, drug addiction and spousal abuse.

Alcohol abuse and drug addiction play a large role in the lives of female inmates, and JusticeWorks sees current U.S. drug policies and sentencing regulations as unjustly punishing women who are already the poorest and most vulnerable portion of the population.

As part of their campaign to highlight imprisoned mothers and their children, JusticeWorks has published a national anthology of testimonies and poetry by mothers in prison. *Breaking Silence: Voices of Mothers in Prison* illustrates the conditions under which these women must live.

In her poem "Sometimes It's the Small Things," Kathy Boudin of New York writes: "She needs toilet paper. / but / it's after ten o'clock lock-in./ The guard won't answer her call. / She has to beg him. . ."

Another woman, an anonymous mother, writes a diary entry for her son: "We have been separated almost three years. The diary is my way of making up for the lost time."

Sue Kennon, an inmate from Virginia, addresses the invisibility of women in prison, "our existence is rarely acknowledged and when it is, the general consensus about us is, 'How could they have done that to their children?' as if we had set out to shame our children and break their hearts."

Alternatives to incarceration have been stressed by JusticeWorks since 1992, when it came together as a national partnership of religious and secular grassroots advocates. The alternatives include: community service work, restitution, employment/job training assistance, alcohol and substance abuse treatment, probation, deferred sentencing, suspended sentences, conditional or supervised release, dispute resolution, fines, house arrest, residential care and counseling.

JusticeWorks advocates for these options—which are a cheaper, more effective and more humane way for

a community to embrace and help women, mothers and their children. The group believes incarceration should be reserved for the most violent and dangerous of our citizens.

Their research shows that it costs up to \$59,000 a year to incarcerate one woman, and an additional \$15,000 to \$20,000 for each of the estimated 1.5 million children of incarcerated parents in this country, many of whom go into foster care when their mothers are imprisoned. Sentencing alternatives would not just be a cheaper means of dealing with the children, but also a less disruptive, more humane way of keeping families together.

Alternative community-based sanctions can cost as little as \$2,000 for supervised community service and up to \$20,000 for treatment at a residential substance abuse program, and would often save the cost of foster care.

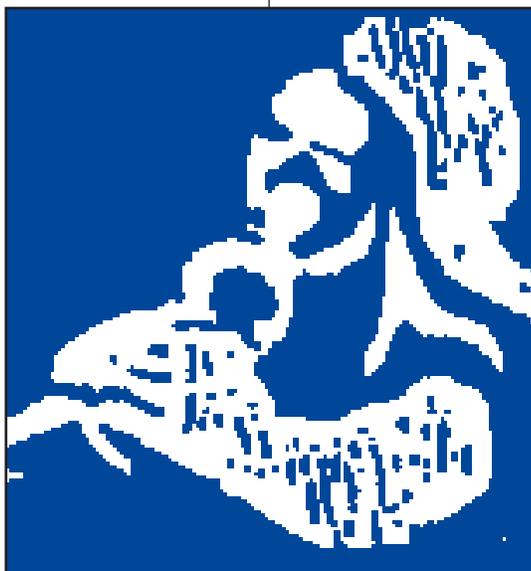
Maintaining sustained contact between incarcerated mothers and their children is difficult. Often visits are restricted to children over the ages of 14 or 16. More than half the women in state prisons never see their children during their imprisonment. Some 21 percent have less than a monthly visit. Women's prisons are often located in very remote areas,

making visitation logistically and financially difficult. These facts are highlighted by the JusticeWorks "Mothers in Prison, Children in Crisis" campaign.

Under the current circumstances, children are unfairly punished for the crime of their mother, according to JusticeWorks. They may be removed from home, school, and community. Without community support, children of women prisoners are prone to experience anger, alienation, failure in school, feelings of abandonment and overall dysfunction.

Besides this campaign, and seeking alternative sentences for non-violent mothers, JusticeWorks also seeks treatment for ex-prisoner women in recovery and runs a drug abuse education project, with forums and discussions in 21 cities.

Kristen Flurkey was the 1999 Peace & Freedom summer intern.



# Life on the Texas Death Row

*Lynn Furay*

Members of the Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty visit prisoners on death row and some have formed friendships with inmates. While the goal of the group is to abolish the death penalty, the conditions on death row are so bad that they cannot be ignored.

These are conditions that have been reported to us by prisoners.

In Huntsville death row inmates are kept in one unit but when they are going to be executed they are transferred to another one several miles away. The person to be executed spends his or her last day in an unfamiliar setting, with no friends in sight. Executions, by lethal injection, happen at 6 p.m. on weekdays. Sometimes there are two executions in one evening.

Last year prison officials did not allow the use of fans and threatened to do that again this year. Prisoners are kept in 9-by-5 foot cells, with no air conditioning and no windows for cross ventilation. Inmates had been allowed small 10-inch fans, but temperatures in Texas can rise above 100 degrees. Last year a man died of the heat.

Another existing condition is in the F wing, formerly called solitary confinement. About 30 men are housed in a different unit, living in tiny cells, in which they spend 23 hours a day. By calling it F wing, the prison doesn't



Amnesty International

have to abide by the rules that govern solitary confinement, which limit the amount of time a person can spend in solitary.

One man I visited in F wing had been there for seven months, and he told me of one man who had been there over a year. The cells in the F wing are arranged so that each person cannot see anyone else. During the one hour inmates are not in their cell, they are showering or taking a solitary walk.

Other inhumanities that have been reported are spraying pepper gas on prisoners, trashing their cells, destroying their family pictures, and taking away their books or their visitation rights.

Women who are sentenced to die are kept separate from male prisoners.

The latest news is that all of the death row inmates—more than 450 people—will be moved to the Terrel Unit, which is similar to F wing but has a forced air system that will provide some kind of circulation. But once all the death row inmates are in Terrel they will all suffer the isolation of F wing.

Some inmates wait over 20 years for their date—almost none are waiting less than 10 years. This isolation causes mental illness. Isn't execution enough? Is driving people crazy part of their sentence? I think prisoners should have a bill of rights.

With Nebraska and Illinois making moves toward a moratorium on the death penalty, the rest of us should try to involve our states in a moratorium too.

For more information about death penalty moratoriums, contact Lynn Furay: 1Lfuray33@aol.com or 5929 Queensloch #134 Houston, TX 77096



*Lynn Furay is a longtime WILPF member.*



## Ensuring Voting Rights for Ex-Felons: The Next Step in the Voting Rights Movement

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*Representative John Conyers, Jr.*

The latest estimates tell us there will be 2 million American citizens incarcerated by the year 2000—a virtual doubling of the prison population from that of 10 years ago. It is particularly disturbing that women are a larger and larger percentage of that population.

Currently, the laws governing whether or not a person can have the right to vote after being incarcerated are unequal in different states. It is estimated that one in 50 adults cannot vote as the result of a felony conviction. Thirteen percent of the African American adult male population, or 1.4 million African American men, cannot vote due to these laws. We must assert that we cannot have a healthy, thriving democracy with such large percentages of our population disenfranchised.

On Tuesday, March 2, I introduced H.R.906, the Civil Participation and Rehabilitation Act along with 26 of my colleagues in the House. We seek to protect the rights of all individuals not currently incarcerated, to vote in federal elections.

All of this was possible because of the work of a coalition of organizations, led by groups like the Sentencing Project, the NAACP, the ACLU, the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law and many other civic and religious organizations who have helped to galvanize grassroots support for this bill all across the country. We have momentum. This is as far as we've ever come in advancing this legislation. There is growing support, but there is also growing opposition.

Therefore, we must develop a comprehensive strategy for moving this bill to the forefront of the Congressional agenda. Most important is how we frame this debate over the coming months. It is vital that we do all we can to set the tone of the debate and not allow the issue to be defined by its opponents.

This is a crime reduction bill. We must emphasize that our efforts to re-enfranchise the ex-offender are designed to reduce the recidivism rate. A person who is actively involved in voting and civil participation is less likely to engage in violent acts against his or her community.

This bill seeks to erase the last vestiges of voter disenfranchisement. The Civic Participation and Rehabilitation Act of 1999 will ensure the right to vote to citizens who have paid their debt to society and need to begin their life anew.

As long as African Americans, Latinos, the poor and now women are over-represented in the criminal justice system, there will be a need for this bill. Our challenge is to move this debate beyond the worn-out discussion of punishment versus rehabilitation. This is a voting rights issue for American citizens who share the misfortune of having served time for a wide variety of offenses.

We need to re-define the affected class. Who are ex-felons? Half a million of the disenfranchised are women, daughters, mothers and even grandmothers. Ten percent of incarcerated felons are veterans.

We need you to continue to build support for the bill. We need co-sponsorships, especially from members whose states have high percentages of disenfranchised felons.

Keep expanding the coalition. There are millions of families who are affected when a loved one is incarcerated. Continue to outreach to churches, community groups, and other supportive agencies. We need to make sure that their members are registered to vote, and then get out to vote in the upcoming election.

Let's build a coalition that will transform the Congress, changing this legislation from an idealistic dream to a judicious reality. I welcome the friends and supporters of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom to join us in this crusade.

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*Representative John Conyers, Jr. (14th District, MI), an 18 term Congress member from Detroit, spoke at WILPF's November, 1997 Symposium on Truth and Reconciliation at NYU Law School. A WILPF sponsor and member of its advisory council, Conyers works for peace, justice and restoration of democracy through legislative initiatives that would never be introduced without his leadership on Capitol Hill. As ranking minority member of the Judiciary Committee, he is in position to become its chair if Congress*

# Lori's Story

.....  
*Wanda Jones*  
.....

On November 30, 1995 Lori Berenson, then a 26-year-old New York native and freelance journalist living in Peru, was arrested on suspicion of aiding a leftist, pro-Cuban group called the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA).

After being arrested, Berenson was taken to the anti-terrorist police headquarters in downtown Lima. She was denied the right to remain silent and the right to have legal counsel present while being interrogated relentlessly for a week. Under Peruvian anti-terrorist law, guerilla suspects may be held for 15 days without being formally charged.

While in custody she was denied the presumption of innocence and was given no information or statement about the charges against her. By means of physical exhaustion, psychological abuse, false claims of evidence and false accusations against her, intensive efforts were made to force her to confess to collaborating with the MRTA. Without being charged of specific acts, she was accused of "treason." She was forced to sign a written confession without the opportunity to understand its content, or consult with a legal advisor to learn her rights. Eventually, Lori's family—with the assistance of the U.S. Embassy—was able to retain a Peruvian lawyer, Grimaldo Achahui, to represent her.

Dr. Achahui was only given a period of four hours before going to trial to read the 2,000-page document describing the charges against his client. Because of the limited time allowed, the most that Berenson's lawyer could do was skim the document and take notes. Using his notes, he was able to point out numerous irregularities and violations of Peruvian law in developing the case. Dr. Achahui included a formal protest stating that the document was insufficient and pointed out the flimsy, circumstantial evidence presented against her. He argued that the charge of treason was inappropriate for a non-Peruvian citizen and that the case must be tried in a civilian court on lesser charges.

On January 11, 1996, Berenson was accused of being a "senior" member of the MRTA, an international subversive involved in international arms trafficking and charged with treason. She was sentenced by a secret, "faceless" military court and given life imprisonment without the possibility of parole.

The sentence that Berenson received was completely different from the recommendations of the prosecutor, who asked for a 30-year sentence.

It is a common practice for military trials to be held secretly in Peru. Prosecutors and judges wear masks and

are anonymous. After reviewing the proceedings of her case, one of her family's legal advisors, former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, said, "the military courts of Peru violate every principle of due process of law. They are not concerned with truth, or justice, but are an instrument of repression."



On January 17, 1996, Lori Berenson was sent to Yanamayo prison in Puno. The prison is at an altitude of nearly 14,000 feet in the Andes, and never warmer than 40 degrees Fahrenheit inside the prison. She shares the all-concrete cell with another prisoner. The cell has no heat, only a ceiling window to let in light and a slice of sky, no running water and a hole in the ground for a toilet. Meals consist mainly of rice, beans, legumes, and no meat.

Berenson spends 23-1/2 hours a day inside the cell and is allowed to go outside into the courtyard for only half an hour everyday. After a year of no visitors, Lori's parents, Rhoda and Mark Berenson, were allowed to visit.

After two years and nine months, Berenson was transferred from Yanamayo prison to Socabaya Women's Prison in Arequipa, to receive a series of medical tests to monitor her deteriorating health—the result of the high altitude of Yanamayo Prison. Although receiving treatment for her health problems, Berenson remained in solitary confinement, what is called "dark silence," for 115 days.

In March 1999, a human-rights delegation visited Berenson in prison, concerned by her continued deteriorating health and the effects of three years of solitary confinement on her mental health. Outraged by Peru's flagrant disregard for basic human-rights, they are demanding that Berenson be released from prison.

Despite requests from President Clinton, the State Department, the Congress, the United Nations, numerous human rights groups and citizens from around the world, Peru has not shown any willingness to give Berenson a new, fair and open trial in civilian court. She remains in Socabaya Prison.

For more information or to find out how you can help, visit the website [www.freelori.org](http://www.freelori.org)

.....  
*Wanda Jones is a former Peace & Freedom intern.*

# Abused Behind Bars:

## U.S. Women Inmates Suffer Human Rights Violations

*Kristen Flurkey*

**W**omen make up only about 6 percent of the total prison population in the United States, yet for more than a decade their numbers have been increasing at a faster rate than that of men.

At the same time that more women are being incarcerated, several recent reports have found that the state and federal prison systems are unsafe, and not designed for female prisoners. The results of this disregard for women were highlighted recently in an Amnesty International report entitled *Not Part of My Sentence: Violations of Human Rights of Women in Custody*.

The report details instances of torture, from rape and other sexual abuse, to the dangerous shackling of women—even as they are giving birth. It also describes unequal access to medical and psychological treatment that has resulted in the death of some neglected female prisoners.

This report, along with coinciding investigations and reports by Human Rights Watch and an independent fact-finder for the United Nations have garnered well-deserved attention. Fortunately, these reports and publici-

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**The number of women in the United States who have been incarcerated in federal or state prison for more than a year is 78,000 (or 6.4 percent of the total U.S. prison population). Another 60,000 women are in county or city jails.**

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ty surrounding sexual misconduct of prison staff outlined by the Association of State Correctional Administrators in 1996 have resulted in some action.

In Michigan, for example, a settlement and six-month moratorium on “pat-down” searches being conducted by male guards on female inmates was the result of a civil lawsuit brought by the Justice Department. The department found officers abused women by “routinely touching all parts of the woman’s body, including fondling and squeezing their breasts, buttocks, and

genital areas in ways not justified by legitimate security needs.”

Other states are in the process of, or have already criminalized, certain types of staff sexual misconduct. In addition, the United States General Accounting Office published a June 1999 report on sexual misconduct by correctional staff.

### The War on Drugs Connection

The imprisonment of women for drug crimes has been the main element in the overall increase of women in custody, according to the Amnesty International report. Nationally, one in three women in prison, and one in four women in jail, are incarcerated for violating a drug law. Hispanic and black women make up a disproportionately large segment of the prison population. According to The Sentencing Project, black women are incarcerated at a rate eight times that of white women.

“Without any fanfare, the “war on drugs” has become a war on women, and it has clearly contributed to the explosion in the women’s prison population ... While the intent of get-tough policies was to rid society of drug dealers and so-called king-pins, over a third (35.9 percent) of the women serving time for drug offenses in the nation’s prisons are serving time solely for ‘possession’,” a California study quoted in the Amnesty International report concluded.

While it is not factored into women’s sentences, the Amnesty report cites research that women tend to commit “survival” crimes. Often they are trying to earn money, feed a drug-dependent life, or escape brutalizing physical conditions and relationships.

Additionally, most women often play a subordinate role in the drug market, and therefore may have little information to offer police and prosecutors to leverage a more lenient sentence.

“We need to be more honest with ourselves that the vast majority of women receiving prison sentences are not the business operatives of the drug networks. The glass ceiling seems to operate for women whether we are talking about legitimate or illegitimate business. They (women) are very small cogs in a very large system, not organizers or backers of illegal drug empires ...” said Elaine Lord, the warden of Bedford Hills Correctional facility, New York State’s maximum-security prison for women.

Considering these facts, legal scholar Professor

Myrna Raeder said “gender-neutral” federal sentencing guidelines placed women at a distinct disadvantage.

### **Male Guards; Female Prisoners**

Hiring practices at many prisons and jails are also “gender-neutral.” The result is the employment of male

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## **One settlement, reached by the Federal Bureau of Prisons, was in response to three women who sued after guards had taken money from male inmates in exchange for allowing the men to enter the women’s cells in order to sexually abuse them.**

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staff to guard female prisoners. This practice, in violation of international law, puts women at risk for abuse.

However, some court rulings in the United States have found that anti-discrimination employment laws indicate that prisons and jails cannot refuse to employ men to supervise female inmates, or women to supervise male inmates. The percentage of male staff in women’s prisons varies greatly between states; men made up 72 percent of correctional staff guarding women in Kansas; while Mississippi reported it had no male officers.

The duties of male guards also vary from state-to-state. Men often have roles where they must supervise undressed female prisoners or search their bodies. Amnesty International reported these roles sometimes resulted in guards being guilty of “prurient viewing during dressing, showering and use of toilet facilities.” Also in contention are male conducted “pat” searches or “pat frisks” for female prisoners. Courts have different rulings on the legitimacy of these searches, which are conducted on women while they are dressed but with some contact with the genital area.

In Washington state, a court decided these searches of women by men amounted to cruel and unusual punishment, in violation of the Constitution. The ruling stated that because many of the women in the prison had been subjected to physical and sexual abuse prior to being imprisoned, the pat searches by men would “traumatize them because it constituted continuation of the abuse.” Amnesty reported that as many as 48 percent of the women have suffered physical or sexual abuse and 27 percent have been raped.

In 18 states, different agencies have found occurrences of “not truly appropriate or truly “voluntary” incidents of sexual relationships between staff and inmates, including rape, sexual touching and fondling, assault, verbal abuse and harassment.

One settlement, reached by the Federal Bureau of Prisons, was in response to three women who sued after guards had taken money from male inmates in exchange for allowing the men to enter the women’s cells in order to sexually abuse them.

The full extent of staff-on-inmate abuse is unknown because many female inmates may be reluctant or unwilling to report such incidents. Impeding further research is the fact that some states, like California, do not distinguish between sexual misconduct and other forms of staff misconduct.

In response to the findings of abuse, Amnesty recommended that prisons comply with international stan-



**After graduation at Summitt Shock Incarceration Camp in Summitt, N.Y., women are given a uniform and paper bags for their belongings, and are either met by their friends or families or are put on a bus to go home.**

dards and not employ male guards for female prisoners.

### **The Health Care Crisis**

Besides abuse, women prisoners are also at the mercy of health care conditions that are “appallingly bad.” According to the Amnesty International report, the repercussions of inadequate medical care in prisons and jails have resulted in: late-term miscarriages, untreated cancer, other life-threatening diseases, and increased disability as a consequence of poor or nonexistent care.

Where health care is available, it is often provided for a fee of between \$2 and \$5. Prisoners interviewed by Amnesty International said that even a small fee could be a significant deterrent for poorer women. Charging for treatment is in violation of international standards,

*Continued on next page* ➤



Women at MCI, Framingham, MA

mpact Visuals

however, authorities argue that the imposition of charges is a reasonable measure to deter prisoners from seeking medical attention unnecessarily, for minor matters, or to avoid work.

As early as 1980, the General Accounting Office reported to Congress that female prisoners were inequitably treated and were not provided

with comparable services, educational programs, or facilities as male prisoners.

In California state prisons, male prisoners received specialized HIV-related medical services while there was no comparable specialist in the women's system. This despite the fact that there are more than 2,000 HIV-positive women in prisons (as of 1997) and the fact that the number of infected women in prisons has increased by more than 88 percent since 1991.

### Unequal Access to Education and Services

Other inequalities include educational and other programs, such as Alcoholics Anonymous, which are often only available to male prisoners. Women often have less access to work, recreation and religious programs.

One reason for the inequality, given in a study of mental health for imprisoned women stated: "Ironically, the relatively small number of women in jail makes the per capita cost too high to provide them with needed services."

Once a prisoner manages to receive medical care, it is often conducted with unnecessary prisoner restraints that can impede treatment. During hospitalization of any prisoner, leg shackles are generally used, regardless of physical condition, history of violence, or whether she has ever attempted to escape, and regardless of her state of consciousness.

One officer's example of a medical condition that would preclude restraints was: "If an inmate has no legs, we would not put a leg shackle on them."

While exceptions are made if a doctor makes a request on medical grounds, removal can not always be prompt.

While serving time for a drug violation in Illinois, Maria Jones received pre-natal care in handcuffs and leg shackles. She told her story in the Amnesty report: "The doctor came and said that yes, this baby is coming right now, and started to prepare the bed for delivery. Because I was shackled to the bed, they couldn't remove the lower part of the bed for the delivery, and they couldn't put my feet in the stirrups. My feet were still shackled together, and I couldn't get my legs apart. The doctor called for the officer, but the officer had gone down the hall . . . my baby was coming and I couldn't open my legs."

Amnesty International acknowledges that the routine use of shackles on pregnant women does not violate criminal laws.

However, since few women have either a history of violence or escape, Amnesty argues there is no need to restrain them.

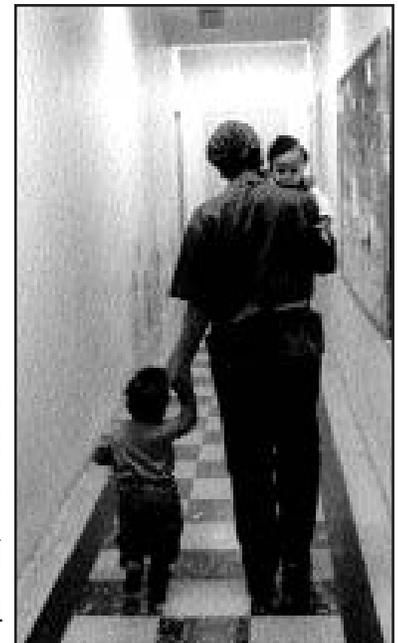
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### The report *Not Part of My Sentence:*

*Violations of the Human Rights of Women in Custody*, and other reports released in the Amnesty International worldwide campaign against human rights violations for women in the U.S., including the detention of women who seek asylum in the U.S. and the incarceration of girls, can be obtained by contacting Amnesty International

USA, 322 Eighth Avenue, New York, NY 10001. For the report by the United States General Accounting Office, *Women in Prison, Sexual Misconduct by Correctional Staff*, contact the United States General Accounting Office.

*Kristen Flurkey was the 1999 Peace & Freedom summer intern.*



mpact Visuals, © Andrew Lichtenstein

Because of an overwhelming increase of women in prison, experimental family programs have had to be set up. At this one at Bedford Hills Prison, New York, an inmate cares for other prisoner's children in the maternity ward hallways.



Essay

## Going to Prison for Peace

.....  
*Elizabeth McAlister*  
.....

Prison is part of my life, but to many it seems a kind of death or doom.

It might be helpful then to spend a little time talking about aspects of prison life—because there are moments in prison when one experiences the Kingdom of God—growing, alive, real.

I don't seek prison; I seek to bring public expression to the deceit, lawlessness, immorality, danger and death at work in our imperial life. I seek to give voice to the pain and grief that those qualities spin. I seek to live and be. I have a vision of life that redefines social perceptions. It is as close as my next breath.

Prison is a multi-layered reality. There are prisoners in lock down who suffer sensory deprivation, political prisoners whom our government labels "terrorists," a label it has broadened to include peace activists. For instance, in 1984 all of the Plowshares prisoners were labeled members of a terrorist organization. (*Editor's note: The Plowshares Fund aims to prevent armed conflict and supports organizations working to reduce the level of insecurity that leads countries to acquire armaments.*)

There are also prisoners—I know a number of them—who are persecuted first by the FBI, prosecutors, judges and later by parole officers. They are women who, because they kept faith with their friends, had their offenses "aggravated" (a technicality by which the seriousness of an offense is raised and parole delayed by years) through insinuation and innuendo, instead of evidence. These women are forced to make a choice between fidelity and freedom. Those who choose fidelity shine in inner freedom. They inspire and strengthen all whom they touch; their friendship is a priceless gift of my prison experience.

In prison there is also the displacement—separation from all I love. I could feel their embraces, hear their voices, see their expressions, intuit their ups and downs and live, in part, in the remembering. But then I need to free them to live, and free myself to be where I am.

Within minutes I'd talk with a woman back from court under a 30-year sentence. She, her three young children, her people, would all be in shock. Then I'd rejoice with another whose sentence was cut to 18

months; she can begin to see daylight for her family. Aside from the pain of others, none of us is free of personal pain. Pain is pain. It doesn't compare.

There is paranoia in prison—it's life in a goldfish bowl and I can't breathe under water. There is no way of altering the suspicion with which you are regarded—you are under constant observation, having behavior recorded and interpreted, from a totally different perspective. Associations and friendships are noted and evaluated as a threat, conspiracy, and illicit intimacy—you never know. You develop gills.

There is a lack of "freedoms." Every day is circumscribed. What you can eat or drink or buy, the people with whom you can associate, the resources for spiritual, intellectual, and emotional growth, health care—all are severely limited.

James Douglas has written that prison is the contemporary monastery: "In a society preparing for nuclear war and ignoring its poor, jail is an appropriate setting in which to give one's life to prayer. In a nation which has legalized preparations for the destruction of life on earth, going to jail for peace—through nonviolent civil disobedience—can be prayer..."

It can be. It is. There is an order to life in prison that can free one to probe more deeply into her life. There are few diversions; you can immerse yourself in work that is important. The uselessness of prison, if kept in perspective, is the same as the uselessness of the monk's life. It is uselessness as art, or prayer, or death. And once in a while we are given a gift, with a flick of perspective into its utility. Between such a moment and the next moment, we live on faith, hope and above all the love of creation that drives us to act.

.....  
*Elizabeth McAlister is a WILPF sponsor and longtime member. She is one of the founders of Jonah House, a community of people in Baltimore committed to non violent resistance. She has been arrested many times for non violent actions at the White House and other sites. She once spent 25 months incarcerated for a Plowshares action at Griffiss Air Force Base in Rome, NY where she and others disarmed a B 52 bomber.*

# Creatures of Relationships

Marjorie Berman's photographic exhibit, *Creatures of Relationships*, explores the healing power of relationships in women's lives. This raw and candid expose grew out of her advocacy work with women in prison, in an effort to give voice to their struggle to break intergenerational cycles of abuse, and to their recovery within the context of relationships.

*Creatures of Relationships* provides the opportunity to identify with the universal struggles of women and children by provoking the viewer to question pre-constructed judgments and stereotypes regarding women involved with the criminal justice system. The honesty of the photographs serves to eliminate the barrier of prison bars.

Prison serves as a microcosm of society at large in which women and children who are victimized often end up in some form of isolation. "Recovery can take place only within the

context of relationships; it cannot occur in isolation." (Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 1992.) *Creatures of Relationships* explores through a photographic eye, the bonding and building of relationships of women in prison and how these relationships contribute to the healing of the women's lives and their relationships beyond the prison walls. ". . . in our culture it is women who have long done much of the work of building growth-fostering relationships for the society as a whole, and so we believe that it is from women's lives and experience that we can best learn about the potential power of a relational approach toward all of human development." (Miller and Stiver, *The Healing Connection*, 1997.)

Society's perceptions of women in prison are grossly inaccurate. These women, often perceived as bad and undeserving are in fact like multitudes of women and children in society at large, struggling to survive their pasts, confront

*Continued on page 18* ➤

***Peace & Freedom is very grateful to Marjorie Berman for allowing her photographs to be displayed here in this special photo essay. The accompanying text was gathered by Berman, and is the property of the inmates who wrote it.***



And there I  
discovered myself  
in the essence  
of our existence . . .  
(excerpt from  
"Entering Essence"  
by O.C., Inmate)



Having a friend in prison isn't easy to find or lose.  
(excerpt from "Having a Friend in Prison" by Andrea Williams, Inmate)



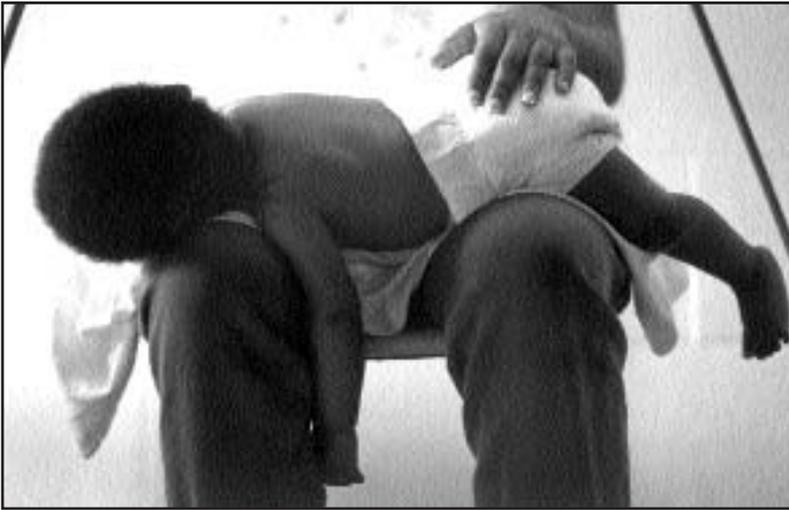
Looking into the universe of my children's eyes, I know just how a single star is born!  
(excerpt from "First Awakening" by O.C., Inmate)



**She Knows. . .**  
She knows that  
I'm often trying to drown out  
the sounds of my fury  
in the still waters of my silence  
And yet, through her presence  
I know she listens to me  
with great attention and a  
gentle sensitivity.  
(excerpt from a poem by O.C., Inmate)



Women need to bond together for survival. We are creatures of relationships. For many women prison has been the first safe, supportive place they have found to begin to address their experiences of abuse and isolation.



► **RELATIONSHIPS** *continued from 16*

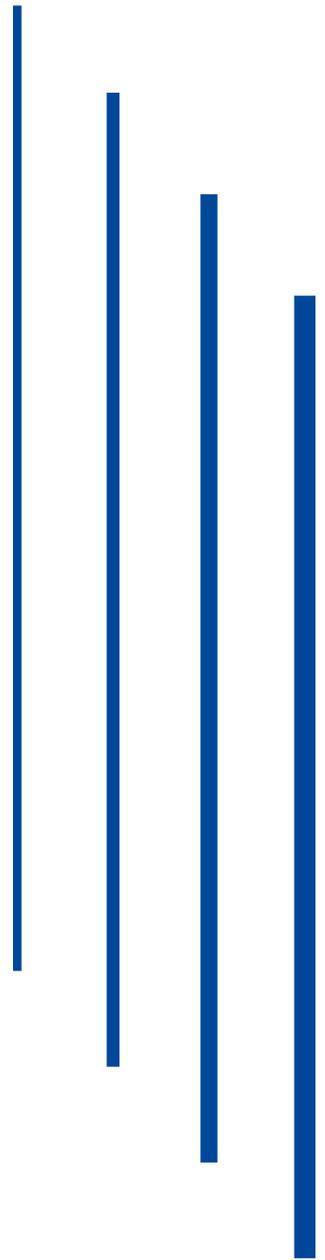
their present situation and break the cycles of violence, victimization and substance abuse in their lives. "Women need to bond together for survival. We are creatures of relationships." (Family Violence Group, Bedford Hills Correctional Facility) For many women prison has been the first safe, supportive place they have found to begin to address their experiences of abuse and isolation.

The project is a result of a collaborative effort between photographer Marjorie Berman and the women of the Family Violence Program at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility for Women. ❖



As I cherish the  
bridges of sweet  
memories  
Still trying to  
soothe my  
grieving heart  
I'm seeking  
very hard for  
some direction  
Trying to figure  
where to start

(excerpt from poem by  
Martha Bradley, Inmate)





## What if Jane Addams Were Alive? In Search of the Perfect Celebration

.....  
*Chris Morin*

Since I am up to my earlobes in thoughts about the 85th Anniversary, it is no surprise that I had a dream the other night about this glorious celebration. What was quite exciting is that I had a conversation with Jane Addams. The discussion went like this:

Jane Addams: I can hardly believe that it has been 85 years since the birth of WILPF.

Chris Morin: I can hardly believe that I am talking to you! You are quite an icon, as you might know. WILPF has the Jane Addams Peace Association, the Jane Addams Children's Book Awards and the Jane Addams Intern Program.

JA: So, are you planning a celebration for the 85th Anniversary?

CM: Oh yes, it's in the works at this very moment. We are planning events that will lead up to the April 2000 anniversary date, and then we plan to celebrate throughout the year.

JA: Are you calling it the Jane Addams 85th Anniversary?

CM: Well, uh... no...

JA: Just joking, I know I wasn't known for my humor. Back to the celebration, what are some of your plans?

CM: We have been getting great ideas from the members on how to celebrate. Whereas an anniversary like this is always used to bring in new members, to become more visible and to fundraise, we really plan to organize our events so that this year, WILPF will make more of a political impact than ever before.

JA: That is quite a large order.

CM: Yes, it is, but our foremothers in many ways were so much more radical and outrageous than we are.

Women didn't even have the right to vote when WILPF began, cementing the fact that women had no worth. And look at the demands that you wrote up at The Hague — and then you traveled to countries talking to the leaders of nations.

JA: Ah, yes, but the war still continued and solving conflicts with violence is worse than ever today.

CM: But the women of the U.S. have so much more power today. We have let the powers that be take it from us. WILPF members have been involved in the Peace Movement, the Civil Rights Movement and the Women's Movement, but our society is still embroiled in violence, racism and sexism. What would you do differently? How would you celebrate this 85th Anniversary?

JA: I would celebrate all of our herstory because we do have a dynamic list of accomplishments, but I would also be realistic and know that our main struggle, to change the power structure in this country, is yet to be addressed. With all your technology today and modern transportation, couldn't you organize demonstrations at state Capitols all on the same day? That would have to make an impact, wouldn't it?

CM: Yes, it would. (Ring.... Ring... "Chris, Chris ... time to get up!")

Wow! What a dream. I have got to write that idea down. No one will believe it came from Jane Addams herself.

And thus the strategies for the ultimate 85th Anniversary celebration begin.

As of this writing, we have many wonderful ideas that need development and leadership. I am looking to form the most dynamic planning committee ever to be assembled.

As my dream revealed, this celebration is about attracting new members, getting visibility, fundraising, of course having fun, but mostly to make more of a political impact than we ever have before. Ideas that are still evolving are listed below. Let's not let this anniversary go by without leaving our imprint on a society that should be seeking peace with justice. Further details will be available on the Internet, via branch mailings and in the next *Peace & Freedom*. Volunteers are needed for each event, idea and program.

On the weekend of April 28, 2000 we are planning a gala dinner event in a major city of each of our four geographic areas, affordable to all, to honor our sponsors. The event will be festive, political, entertaining and will

*Continued on page 22* ➤



## A Report from Costa Rica

Joyce McLean

This summer, 75 women came together for WILPF's International Executive Committee (IEC) meeting in San Jose, Costa Rica. Women from 26 different countries attended the meeting, which ran from July 29 to August 2. It was led by President Bruna Nota, WILPF officers and the Costa Rica WILPF Section.

The first three days of the meeting were spent at a seminar on Women Workers, Globalization and Human Rights.

In a world where 70 percent of trade is controlled by a handful of corporations, the plight of women workers is extraordinarily difficult. Women are central in the search for cheap labor, as exemplified by the *maquiladoras* in Latin America and workers in Asian sweatshops.



Noris Marcano of Venezuela with Colombia representatives, Patricia Guerrero and Ampara Guerrero.

Workshops during the seminar included discussions of free trade zones, migrant workers, child labor and sustainable development.

One of the most dramatic workshops dealt with the rebuilding of traumatized communities. Led by Burundi and Colombia WILPFers, the problems of forcibly displaced people were outlined. Unfortunately, this problem is worldwide—from East Timor, to Kosovo, Bosnia and Sierra Leone.

### Reforming the IEC

During the IEC meeting there was discussion about the structure of International WILPF and the IEC's responsibilities, both of which are in the process of being reformed and enhanced, thanks to the Rainbow

Recommendations (a project similar to the U.S. WILPF restructuring work) adopted in Baltimore. Standing committees on finance, fundraising, communications and leadership development were formed and began to meet. (All WILPF members can join these committees.)

President Nota reminded us that we need to put International WILPF on a sound financial footing and told us "raising money for peace and justice work is a political act."

How we communicate effectively across 41 nations and enormous language barriers also needs constant reappraisal.

Tributes and sad goodbyes were made to Barbara Lochbihler, our resigning Secretary General. A warm welcome was given to Michaela Told, who is replacing Barbara. Michaela is experienced in fundraising, gender issues, refugee problems, global economic interdependency and conflict resolution in Mozambique, Sri Lanka, Austria, and presently in Laos. She will work for WILPF in Geneva, starting in January.

The substantive work of International WILPF centers on our focus issues for the next three years:

- Claiming Economic Justice in a World of Limited Resources, which includes globalization challenges, World Trade Organization lobbying and United Nations work with the International Labor Organization.
- Global militarism; Achieving Human Security through dismantling the Permanent War Economy (which also parallels U.S. WILPF campaigns) and includes work on the Small Arms Network, Abolition of Nuclear Weapons and the de-nuclearization of space.
- Citizen Responsibility for Good Governance, which includes our efforts to democratize the United Nations, UNESCO involvement, work for the Hague



Outgoing Secretary General Babsi Lochbihler receiving gifts from Olga Branch, Costa Rica.

Continued on page 31 ➤

# A Pan-African Women's Peace Movement

*Regina Birchem*

I spent a good part of May in East Africa, attending an UNESCO conference in Tanzania and then visiting a new WILPF group in Burundi.

The UNESCO conference, "Women Organize for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence in Africa," was a historic forum for African women leaders, politicians, gender and peace researchers, educators, media professionals and community-based activists to exchange ideas, propose strategies and prioritize actions for conflict resolution and peace building.

More than 300 women from across the continent of Africa came to the conference to launch a Pan-African women's movement for peace. A handful of people were there representing countries from the North.

Zanzibar is part of the spice islands of the United Republic of Tanzania. The island is filled with the remnants of many palaces, once inhabited by sultans. There



Regina Birchem

**Gloriosae Nzinahora, President of Burundi WILPF Group, Bujunbura.**

are ports where valuable spices were transported, ancient, narrow streets, and the underground quarters where newly captured slaves were once held.

The conference was not an isolated meeting, but part of a sequence of conferences, including: the Kampala Action Plan for Peace (1993), the Dakar African Platform for Action (1994), the Beijing Conference (1995), the Johannesburg Women in Leadership Conference (1995), and the Pan-African Conference on

Peace, Gender and Development in Kigali (1997).

The work of the conference resulted in two documents. *The Zanzibar Declaration* launched the Pan-African women's peace movement, and declared a commitment to promote non-violent means of conflict resolution and African values for a culture of peace. *The Women's Agenda for a Culture of Peace* recommends a number of initiatives and strategies to promote the role of women in prevention and resolving conflicts.

WILPF-Sierra Leone has been a part of the movement and on the opening of the afternoon conference, Fatimata Deen held everyone's attention as she described what was happening in her country, which was being

torn apart by a brutal civil war at the very moment she was speaking. She talked about the killing, looting, burning, rape, and the amputations of many people's arms and legs by drug-maddened soldiers. She told us that some of these soldiers are mere children. Fatimata also described witnessing the pain of seeing a woman, eight months pregnant, die in childbirth. The woman's legs had been cut off.

When asked how old she was, Fatimata, who is 29, said, "I am two years old. This war has changed me."

She went on to say that "Though the feeling of insecurity of life and property pervades the air . . . and a good part of the country is either inaccessible or lies in ruins, we are ready and willing to help our less fortunate compatriots, especially the women and children . . . As long as civil society is alive, we hope to be of help. We do not intend to abandon the country, we want the war to stop immediately."

Accounts of women from Angola, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan, Northern Uganda, Guinea Bissau and elsewhere strengthened the resolve of conference participants to address issues of disarmament, the proliferation of small, easily transferred weapons, and the recruitment of children soldiers. Participants also pledged to work on the root causes of violence: poverty, exclusion, economic, social and political injustices, and the violation of human rights.

Gertrude Mangella, who was elected chair of the Zanzibar conference, observed that this was the first time the issue of disarmament was addressed with such great



**From left: Mary, Gloriosae, Doris, three women from the WILPF Burundi Section.**

*Continued on next page* ➤

## ► PAN AFRICAN

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resolve by African women.

“The vision of an African women’s peace movement is different from the male vision. We believe we cannot stop killing by killing. We are not interested in guns. We are interested in technologies that eradicate poverty. People who are good leaders do not need guns. We may accept arms for defense at this time. However, the conflicts on the continent do not demonstrate this principle. Arms are being used to kill brothers and sisters.”

### **WILPF in Burundi**

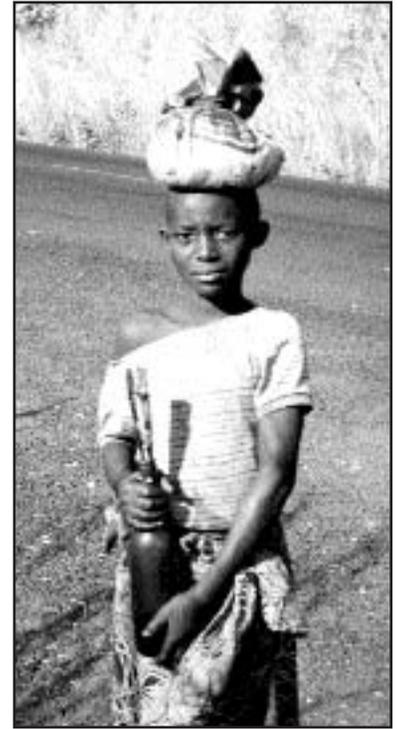
The new WILPF members in Burundi were not able to attend the Zanzibar conference, and I went to Bujumbura to meet them.

Burundi is still struggling to recover from the massacres and crisis of 1995 and in the countryside matters are not settled. The embargo, which ended only this year, created new problems and economic injustices. The refugee camps still exist and there is an evening curfew on many roads in the countryside outside of the capital.

There are about 27 WILPF members and they are striving very deliberately to be diverse and include both Hutu and Tutsi women. They are teachers, office workers, journalists, medical workers, and U.N. personnel. Each has her story of dedication and working towards peace and many belong to other peace organizations that came into existence after the crisis.

For example, Gloriosae Nzinahora organized micro-enterprise projects in villages and assists them by supplementing their food with resources from the World Food Program.

We welcome the new members from Burundi and will hear more from them in a future issue of *Peace & Freedom*. They send greetings to those they met in Beijing and to all their new WILPF colleagues around the world.



**Child with a bottle of cooking oil in Bujumbura.**

*The Zanzibar Declaration and The Women’s Agenda for A Culture of Peace* may be obtained from

[www.unesco.org/cpp/zanzindex.htm](http://www.unesco.org/cpp/zanzindex.htm). If you do not have access to the Internet, please send \$2 to the U.S. Section Africa Issues Committee, Regina Birchem, R.D. 1, Box 134, Irwin, PA 15642.

## ► CELEBRATION

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generate publicity for WILPF.

Branches are asked to conduct fundraising events. We have a fundraising cookbook, available at cost at the national office with fundraising ideas. Here are a few ideas so far:

- Branches hold a vintage party and people could come dressed up from the 1915 era.
- Find out the outrageous political acts that members were involved in, in the 20’s, 30’s and 40’s and see how we can match them today.
- Produce a WILPF calendar with pictures of WILPF members and activities for each month. Have it ready by this fall for the year 2000 or sell it in 2000 for the year 2001.
- Produce a souvenir journal and/or a photo journal honoring our members 80 years and older.
- Have resources available for promoting the 85th Anniversary, such as banners, flyers, note cards, T-shirts.

These ideas and others are waiting to be put into



Felicity Hill

action. We cannot make the impact we need to make unless you get involved.

*Chris Morin is WILPF’s 85th Anniversary coordinator and the former Leadership/Outreach Coordinator. To contact her, call (757) 229 3384 or email [FunForLife1@aol.com](mailto:FunForLife1@aol.com)*



## WILPF Interns Work for Peace

Kristen Flurkey

The first annual WILPF Intern Campus Organizing session was held in late July at the national office in Philadelphia.

Different approaches on how to utilize and promote WILPF on college campuses were discussed. The brainstorming meeting resulted in the creation of an email listserv for current and future WILPF interns.

Some 10 women — from Washington, D.C., Philadelphia and New York — attended the meeting, which gave the interns a rare chance to all meet each other.

The interns exchanged brief biographies at the meeting. The following are excerpts:

Working in the New York United Nations office, Molly Wallace, Ericka Davis and Adrienne Kalosieh attended U.N. meetings and helped with various other responsibilities.

**Molly Wallace** worked with WILPF U.N. Liaison Felicity Hill this summer. She was involved with many projects, including a U.N. manual for all of the WILPF sections around the world, a U.N. training session held at the end of August, and an oral history project interviewing older WILPF women in the New York area. She is a senior at Mount Holyoke College.

**Ericka Davis**, a sophomore at Columbia University, was also an intern at WILPF's U.N. office. She worked on the production of several backgrounders—one on the World Conference against Racism and another on female genital mutilation. She also prepared a report about Ireland's presentation to CEDAW (Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women) for WILPF's Irish section.

**Adrienne Kalosieh** is a recent graduate of Georgetown University who is working at the U.N. chapter of WILPF in New York. She is working on a project explaining why militarism is not compatible with sustainable development, and possibly creating a history-of-WILPF calendar for fundraising. She plans to use her research and experience with WILPF to begin a career in international human rights law.

Two Jeanette Rankin interns worked in WILPF's Washington, D.C. office: Becky Smith and April Swain. **Becky Smith** is a rising senior at Agnes Scott College, in Atlanta. She worked on several different projects, including following legislation, lobby work, and working with other legislative-focused offices and organizations

in the peace and justice community.

**April**

**Swain** assisted WILPF's Legislative Organizer Gillian Gilhool on a wide range of legislative tasks, including tracking legislation, lobbying members of Congress, attending coalition meetings and creating a

weekly hotline message. This fall she started her senior year at American University.

The only intern working at the Main Line branch outside of Philadelphia, **Dominique Johnson**, just graduated from Bryn Mawr College and is working with Disarmament Committee Co-Chair Kay Camp. Together they organized several actions, including one for Nagasaki Day, and are also considering creating a study circle on racism. In addition, they hosted Blanche Wiesen Cook at a reception for her new book on Eleanor Roosevelt.

For most of the summer, four Jane Addams interns worked in the national WILPF office.

**Laura Wimberley**, the webmistress in the Philadelphia office, is about to be a senior at Oberlin College. At WILPF, she was one of two current Internet communications interns. Laura maintains the WILPF listserv and designs and updates the website.

**Nayoung Kim** was the other Internet communication intern and worked on website maintenance. She is a junior at Bryn Mawr College, where she studies economics and mathematics.

**Heather Shafter** was the development intern, and will be a senior at Drew University in New Jersey. She worked on a Nagasaki/Hiroshima Day activity, compiling a foundation chart, and various other tasks.

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*Kristen Flurkey, Peace & Freedom summer intern, worked on this magazine. She worked with Theta Pavis on many diverse aspects of the publication, including writing articles, selecting photos and design elements, and planning issues. She is a junior at Sarah Lawrence College.*



# We Made a Difference

Evelyn Alloy

*We Made A Difference: My Personal Journey With Women Strike for Peace*, by Ethel Baron Taylor is a vivid recounting of her experiences from 1961 to the late 1970s during a chaotic period of U.S. history.

Leavened by a playful sense of humor, she explores the ramifications of our nuclear policies and economic imperialism in Southeast Asia. Chapter headings attract attention: “The FBI- Our Faithful Followers; Keep Movin’ Ladies; President Johnson Reads in Bed; In Case of Nuclear War- Take A Bus and Maybe a Shovel; and Let’s Not Bring Garbage into the 21st Century.”

How can you not read on and on?

Taylor bestows honor on the “Mother” of Women Strike for Peace (WSP)—Dagmar Wilson, who in 1961 alerted her friends to the menace of radioactive Strontium 90 as a cancer risk to children via the contaminated food chain. These early environmentalists were the nucleus of WSP.

By 1962, WSP’s growth demanded a more formal organization. Ignoring the redbaiting climate spearheaded by the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), WSP issued a courageous National Policy statement: “We are women of all races, creeds, and political persuasions.”

WSP, unlike other organizations such as the American Jewish Congress and SANE, emerged strengthened by its principled position, and unscathed by HUAC interrogations. The sole criterion for membership remains opposition to nuclear testing, nuclear weapons and nuclear wars.

If you are of my generation, your memory will be jogged by Taylor’s pithy analyses of the contrived fall-out shelter program; the Bay of Pigs expedition, barely averted missile crisis with Cuba; nuclear war threats by the Pentagon, and the incremental steps toward all-out war in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. Younger readers may

gasp at the chicanery of elected officials. For example, Jimmy Carter ran on a platform of “Zero Nuclear Weapons.” After he was elected president, however, he came out in favor of the neutron bomb—a bomb designed to kill people, but not harm property.

WSP’s honorable and groundbreaking history, as described by Taylor, is notable for the organization’s early decision in 1965 to shift its concentration from passage of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty to involvement against the war in Vietnam. Increased militancy drew the attention of both the FBI and the CIA. WSP joined a class action suit against the CIA that resulted in an out-of-court settlement on proven charges of mail and telephone interception and infiltration. Winning the case was a stunning victory for the democratic right to dissent. Another first was the return of WSP members from Vietnam with over 300 letters from POWs to their families. With the full cooperation of the Vietnamese government, letters and packages began to flow freely through the Committee of Liaison with Families and Servicemen Detained in North Vietnam which was set up by Cora Weiss, a New York City WSP leader, and David Dellinger, a well-known pacifist and peace leader.

Taylor’s book includes her letters to the editor, op-ed columns and quotes from newspapers when they were critical of official policies. However, the press as a whole dutifully echoed the twisted rationalizations of our government. Actions and analyses by WSP and other peace groups were mainly ignored, downplayed, or misrepresented. I would have welcomed a chapter on the

role of the corporation-dominated press.

Today, extant WSP branches continue to oppose nuclear testing and weaponry, and the whole concept of Strategic Defense Initiative (STAR Wars). They vigorously support the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Their goal is “an end to the arms race, not the human race.” Get a copy of *We Made A Difference* to see what determined women accomplished. Then resolve to make a difference today!

*Evelyn Alloy is a longtime member of the WILPF Mid City, Philadelphia (PA) branch.*



**Visit WILPF’s website**

**@ [www.wilpf.org](http://www.wilpf.org)**

- **Easier navigation**
- **Useful resources**
- **WILPF issue statements**
- **WILPF history & structure**
- **Internship opportunities**
- **NEW calendar of events**

**Visit the website for more up to date information than *Peace & Freedom’s* publication schedule allows. To post information on the site, email [WILPFwebmistress@yahoo.com](mailto:WILPFwebmistress@yahoo.com)**

# Great Women of WILPF

**W**ILPF would like to acknowledge the contributions of members who have left a legacy to the organization. This is the culmination of remarkable lives dedicated to peace, freedom and justice for all. WILPF is grateful to have received special resources to carry on our important work through the friends and family, and estates, of the following members.

**Gladys Blum:** An outstanding role model who was the first woman to graduate from the Cornell School of Civil Engineering in 1934. She designed locks and dams on the Mississippi and worked on other engineering projects, as well as devoting great energy toward the achievement of social justice, human rights and world peace.



**Julia Cohen:** A courageous woman who valiantly dealt with the reality

of today's troubled world through her many good works in the communities where she lived, as well as on the national and international level through WILPF. She was a devoted wife and loving mother and grandmother, as well as an organizer for social justice.



**Julia Cohen and grandson Jesse**

**Harriet Guignon:** A strong woman who tirelessly worked for peace and justice well into her nineties and left an important legacy to WILPF. WILPF is proud to carry on her life's work through our programs of peace and justice.

We also wish to acknowledge legacy and memorial gifts from the estate of **Pearl Lipson, Margaret Moseley, Jean Miller and Ruth Burgess.**

Personal tributes and information about the lives and accomplishments of WILPF members who have worked for peace, freedom and justice for all are welcomed.

*- Rosemary Burke, Development Director*



## IF YOU CARE YOU WILL!

Share your peace legacy with future generations of women by including WILPF in your will.

*For more information*

call Rosemary Burke at 215-563-7110  
or write and request the "bequest brochure"  
from 1213 Race Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107.

# Resources about Prisons

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**THE SENTENCING PROJECT** A national leader in the development of alternative sentencing programs and in the reform of criminal justice policy. This independent source of criminal justice policy analysis, data and program information has helped to establish alternative sentencing programs in more than 20 states. Visit their website at: [www.sentencingproject.org](http://www.sentencingproject.org)

**JUSTICEWORKS COMMUNITY** Find them online at [www.justiceworks.org](http://www.justiceworks.org) for more statistics about women and mothers in prison, in New York state and nationwide and information on the JusticeWorks community. Email: [justicew@interport.net](mailto:justicew@interport.net) [justicew@interport.net](mailto:justicew@interport.net)

**NATIONAL CLEARINGHOUSE FOR THE DEFENSE OF BATTERED WOMEN** For information on battered women charged with assault, parental kidnapping/child abduction charges, clemency and parole, legislation, or support groups for incarcerated battered women. Their address is: 125 S.9th Street, Suite 302, Philadelphia, Pa 19107 or call (215) 351-0010.

**WOMEN IN PRISON PROJECT** Based in New York, this advocacy and lobbying organization promotes more responsive and effective criminal justice policies around women in prison. It also does work on how laws have effected women and their families. The project issues reports and runs the Coalition for Women Prisoners. Check out their website at [www.corrassoc.org](http://www.corrassoc.org) or call them at (212) 254-5700.

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At Summitt Shock Incarceration Camp, Summit, New York, the women have exactly eight minutes to eat and must line up in formation to empty their trays. Everything they do is under constant surveillance by military type guards.



Linda Rosier, impact Visuals

**PRISON LEGAL NEWS** *Prison Legal News* is a monthly newsletter published and edited by Washington State prisoners Dan Pens and Paul Wright. *PLN* has been regularly published since May of 1990. *PLN* covers prison-related news and analysis from across the country and around the world. A one-year subscription for the print version is \$15 for prisoners, \$25 for individuals, more if you can afford it, and \$60 for lawyers and institutions. Write to: 2400 NW 80th Street, PMB 148, Seattle WA 98117 or visit their website at: [www.prisonlegalnews.org/index.html](http://www.prisonlegalnews.org/index.html)

**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL** <http://www.amnesty-usa.org>

**HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH** To get the "Global Report on Prisons" call (212) 972-8400 or email: [hrwatchnyc@igc.apc.org](mailto:hrwatchnyc@igc.apc.org)

**CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND REHABILITATION ACT OF 1999** For a complete copy of the "Civic Participation and Rehabilitation Act of 1999" see: <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query>

**"WOMEN IN PRISON: SEXUAL MISCONDUCT BY CORRECTIONAL STAFF"** For a free copy of the federal General Accounting Office's report "Women In Prison: Sexual Misconduct by Correctional Staff," order by mail to: U.S. General Accounting Office P.O. Box 37050, Washington D.C. 20013, or call (202) 512-6000. Visit the GAO online at [www.gao.gov](http://www.gao.gov)

**WEB LINKS IN SUPPORT OF POLITICAL PRISONERS INCLUDE:**

**LORI BERENSON**

For more information on political prisoner Lori Berenson, see the website: [www.freelori.org](http://www.freelori.org)

**LEONARD PELTIER**

For more information on political prisoner Leonard Peltier see:

<http://members.xoom.com/freepeltier/index.html>

**THE PRISON ACTIVIST**

website provides links to organizations, articles, news, statistics and publications on the criminal justice system: [www.prisonactivist.org](http://www.prisonactivist.org)

**LATINOS IN THE U.S. CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM**

Go to <http://boards.latinolink.com/> and click onto "Criminal Justice."

**CRIMINAL JUSTICE FACTS**

Email: [ncia@igc.apc.org](mailto:ncia@igc.apc.org)



## WILPF Branch Helps Children Visit Moms in Prison

Joyce R. Best

At least 75 percent of the women incarcerated in the U.S. are mothers, with an average of two to three children. More than half of the women in state prisons never see their children during their incarceration. The children suffer anxiety, trauma, guilt, and depression. In fact, over 50 percent of the children in the juvenile justice system nationwide have an inmate parent.

In St. Louis, WILPF members and others are involved in a program that helps children visit their incarcerated mothers. Four times a year, children and their caretakers board chartered buses to visit their mothers who are incarcerated in Vandalia, MO, about a two-hour drive from St. Louis.

There is no public bus or train service available, so the bus is very important to the children. Each trip costs about \$1,000, but we have been successful in raising those funds. Before the trip, all visitors must be cleared for the visit by the prison staff, paperwork must be completed, the bus rented and sack lunches prepared. Snacks, toy/activities bags and videos are all stored aboard.

When they arrive, the children's appearances are checked by their caretakers and keys, belts, and coins are gathered and stored in lockers. Everyone excitedly lines up to go through the metal detectors.

In the small visiting room, moms and children are united with hugs and kisses. There are tables with chairs where they sit in family groups. Checkers and board games are popular activities. The two hours are soon over and good-byes are said sadly and reluctantly. The bus trip home is fairly quiet. Videos are chosen and turned on. Some children prefer to nap.

For the last five years on the Friday before Mother's Day, the St. Louis branch of WILPF has participated with many other groups in a "Mothers in Prison, Children in Crisis" rally.

Over 70 percent of female inmates in the United States have been convicted of nonviolent crimes, which often involve substance abuse. Most of them do not receive treatment. The RAND Corporation reports that treatment could save more than \$150 billion in social costs over the next 15 years while requiring only \$21 billion in treatment costs.

The purpose of the rally is to protest the harm done to children when their mothers are incarcerated. The

rally promotes alternatives to prison, in the belief that addiction should be treated as an illness, not a crime. It also highlights the fact that prison should be the last resort. Perspectives of incarceration and its effects on children are presented. Speakers include formerly incarcerated mothers. Other rally activities include music, passing out paper flowers and buttons, and signing petitions. Mother's Day cards are signed and later given to moms in prison. Posters showing the costs of prison as opposed to other solutions are carried or posted. This year, a busload of children and their caretakers left the rally to visit moms in Vandalia.

Twenty-two cities nationwide hold similar rallies in cooperation with JusticeWorks, an organization headquartered in Brooklyn, New York.

Our local group, "Mothers and Children Together" is a non-denominational collaborative of women with diverse life experiences. We include criminal justice workers, nuns, a lawyer, social worker, filmmaker, and others. A key participant is "Let's Start," a support process for women coming out of prison. WILPF is also represented; Jill Evans Petzall is developing a 60-minute documentary film on children of prisoners and the need for alternatives. Currently, a conference to make positive changes in our criminal justice system through alternative sentencing and restorative justice is being planned. Bus trips, rallies, advocacy and lobbying will continue. We work to encourage and give support to families affected by incarceration, to educate our community and to change the system.

Joyce R. Best is a member of the St. Louis WILPF branch.



Photo courtesy Jill Evans Petzall

# Cuba Opens Latin American School of Medicine

*Lisa Valanti*

Responding first and foremost to humanity's need — and not a financial "bottom line" — 1,000 students from Central America began arriving in Havana during March. The students came to be part of a new medical college dedicated solely to training future healthcare professionals from Central and Latin America. The college is Cuba's most recent example of its long-standing commitment to international human solidarity.

Cuba cut its national defense budget to help convert and refurbish a former Naval Academy for the college. The facility has its own campus hospital and more than 6,000 students from Central and Latin America will attend classes there. Over the next 10 years, they will receive a medical education, housing, tuition, books and a stipend — completely free of charge. Unlike students graduating from U.S. medical schools, they will not be burdened with astronomical student loans upon graduation but are instead committed contractually to work for five years, in community service in their homelands.

The significance of this gesture is enormous.

WILPF member Teresa Konechne, a videographer, visited this college as part of the 9th Pastors for Peace U.S.-Cuba "Friendshipment" Caravan last June, which brought lifesaving medicine and medical equipment to Cuba in direct challenge to the internationally condemned, 40-year-old act of war — the U.S. embargo.

"Walking away from the last of my video interviews with the young women students, I realized the brilliance of the idea," said Teresa. "Most of these 18-to-25-year old students would never have been able to study medicine in their own country, because of gender issues and economic and political conditions. Or certainly not within a first rate, world-respected medical system. Cuba not only has free and universal health care, with a doctor for every 167 people, an average lifespan of over 76 years and lower infant mortality rate than most U.S. inner cities, but Cuba's majority of doctors, scientists

and technicians are women."

Prior to arriving in Cuba, many students, under the influence of conventional U.S. media, had a negative view or knew very little about their host country. Now they have the unique vantage point of being trained by Cuban educators and physicians, and experiencing first-hand how the medical system works.

Their perceptions are already shifting as they learn more about this extremely complex country. Equally important, these young people are forming a medical community in revolutionary Cuba, interacting with students from Latin American and all over the world who are already part of Cuba's international studies programs. While being trained in an outstanding socialist medical system, a Latin American consciousness is being raised, which will facilitate the creation of a much needed Central American medical network as the students — fully trained as physicians — return home to their respective countries.

This college is part of Cuba's ongoing assistance to the people of Central America, who suffered devastation of almost Biblical proportions from Hurricane Mitch. That catastrophe was exacerbated by the lack of medical personnel and facilities for the general populations. With widespread injuries and imminent epidemics threatening, an international emergency was declared.

Cuba responded immediately, sending over 2,000 doctors who earned the gratitude and respect of Central America's most hostile governments, for their heroic willingness to go where other relief workers feared or outright refused to go. This averted compounding an already profound humanitarian crisis. Cuba was the first to release all the affected nations from their entire

foreign debt to Cuba, so all their resources could be used for reconstruction. Cuba then offered what it does best — to teach and train doctors. These are examples of international solidarity and peace education at its best.

## Cuba Action Alerts

1. Current legislation to end the blockade by exempting food, agricultural supplies, medicine and medical supplies, as well as freedom to travel are rapidly gaining support in the Congress. Contact your Senators and your Congressperson to urge their co sponsorship of HR 1644 or S 926; or thank them for voting yes; or, if they are in opposition, indicate that a recent Gallup poll found over 70 percent of the United States wants normal relations with Cuba.

2. Join 1999's most significant U.S. Cuba solidarity conference, "A New Conversation for a New Millennium," featuring progressive leaders working in sectors of Cuba and U.S. Relations, Culture, Democracy and Human Rights, Economy and Economic Development, Health, Labor, Religion, Women, Youth from Cuba and the U.S. in Detroit, during December 3-5, 1999. Organized by the National Network on Cuba; contact information and to register: (phone/fax (313) 561 8330)

3. Organizing U.S. Cuba Sister Cities Projects achieved new levels due to a recent conference in Mobile, Alabama. For a conference packet and more, contact Lisa Valanti, (412) 563 1519 or e mail LisaCubaSi@aol.com

To join WILPF's Cuba Action Committee or receive more information, contact Co chairs Jan Strout at (609) 448 3819 (e mail: jan.strout@fex.org) or Lisa Valanti, above.

*Lisa Valanti is co chair of WILPF's Cuba Action Committee. She participated in the WILPF/Hermanas International Women's Day Delegation on Women's Health and the Environment last March. Teresa Konechne of Richmond, Virginia, contributed to this article.*

## National Peace Camp in St. Louis

*Gabriel Litsky*

One of the bright spots at the National Congress this year was the Peace Camp. Our overall theme was “Rainbow People” and on the very first day of camp we told the story of the “Rainbow People” and how much we have in common beyond what we look like. We demonstrated this theme with a game called the People Scavenger Hunt and learned the “Rainbow People” song with sign language. In the afternoon, counselors took the children to the St. Louis Children’s Museum.

On the second day we acted out the story of two goats on a narrow bridge, each going a different way, and invited the children to problem solve what to do. We had many scenarios, from very violent to very peaceful solutions. As we talked about all the solutions, we categorized each — deem-



Lauren Draper

ing it helpful, unhelpful or possibly helpful. This was a springboard to a broad discussion of conflict resolution, feelings about solutions, etc. We also had a visit from Mary Rose and Yvonne Simmons, two talented WILPF members from the Portland Branch, who taught us songs and games. In the afternoon, after making our own zoo with recycled boxes, we visited the St. Louis Zoo and started making Rainbow shirts.

On the third day, we worked on our shirts and started to make plans to do a short presentation for the Congress members on Sunday morning. We took time to tell stories, sing, and do other art work as well. That day we went to the pool.

On Sunday morning the children presented their skits and sang the Rainbow People Song and did the Children’s Peace rap. It was quite exciting leading a couple of hundred adults in the chorus “Can you dig it, We can dig it.” Afterwards there was an ovation for the children.

Beyond the fun, children learned how to use the peace table, and there were several serious conversations about bias of many kinds, conflict and problem solving, making and keeping peace, and working together . . . all themes we adults talk about within WILPF.

I want to thank Dede Berg and Valerie Dietrich, my co-counselors from St. Louis, without whom camp would not have been possible.

*Gaby Litsky is chair of the WILPF Peace Education Committee.*

## Peace Camp Manuals Ready

A Peace Camp Manual is now complete and ready to order. It includes everything you wanted to know about how to set up a camp, get funding, hire counselors or find volunteers, and many ideas about curriculum and resources.

This manual was produced by the Peace Camp Coordinators Collaborative as a cooperative effort. The group represents nine WILPF branches and several more independent Peace Camp groups. For five years this group has met in Nevada City, California to share experiences, give each other advice and work to promote Peace Camps. Almost a year and a half ago Betty Burkes commented that it would be great to have all that information down in one place and asked, in the name of WILPF, if that could happen. Although there have been other manuals written which, with permission, we have borrowed from, we hope this will be the most complete.

Our mission, through this manual, is to provide an alternative day camp experience which fosters an under-

standing of peace, justice, and environmental awareness appropriate to the needs of children and their families and consistent with the goals of WILPF. What separates the WILPF manual from others is its dedication to conflict resolution, addressing children’s needs to be listened to and to participate in conversation and agreements about physical and emotional safety, and anti-bias curriculum with critical thinking and activism. We not only hope to spread the Peace Camp word, but also to use Peace Camp as a tool to recruit younger women with children or young people who go through Peace Camp.

Several members of our collaborative are willing to be resources, over the phone, email or in person. If any of you are thinking about setting up a Peace Camp, here is the resource you need and the people to help. You can get your manual by contacting: Millee Livingston 11251 Tahoe St. Auburn, CA 94502-9235. Voice: 530-823-2224, fax: 530-888-0535, email: mlivin5387@aol.com ❖

**This Peace Education section is funded  
by the Jane Addams Peace Association.**



# BranchAction News

*Leslie Reindl, Branch Action Editor*

## GOOD IDEA OF THE MONTH:

**Cape Cod** set up “discussion stations” at its yearly planning meeting. It posted a list of discussion topics and times, plus whatever topics others wished to add, and provided each station with a container for comments, ideas, suggestions, etc. One station was a “socializing” station. Discussion ran from 3 p.m. until dinner at 6:45 p.m.

## CONGRESS REPORTS

All branches reported on the outcome of the WILPF U.S. Section Congress in St. Louis in June, and the three national priority campaigns that were chosen.

## DATE TO REMEMBER:

The World Trade Organization Ministerial will meet in Seattle, during Nov. 29 — Dec. 3. **Portland** urges joining the campaign to oppose the reemergence of the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) in another guise. Groups from all over the country plan to be present as witnesses to the World Trade gathering and to conduct their own meeting.

## ANTI-VIOLENCE VIGILS:

Women in Black continue to gather weekly for a silent vigil in **Oakland**, as well as in **Portland**. **Cape Cod** conducts a monthly silent vigil against Iraqi sanctions. **Fort Collins** holds a weekly vigil against the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia and in memory of the tragedy in Littleton and other acts of violence.

## DIVERSITY AND RACISM:

**Fort Collins** attends monthly community forums to discuss diversity issues. In April the group heard from the chief of police concerning diversity training for the police. The branch is working with a Unitarian church to implement the long-range “Journey to Wholeness,” a national program to end racism.

## PACIFICA RADIO:

**Berkeley** carried a long article about the struggle over community radio occurring at radio station KPFA, whose parent, Pacifica Foundation, is trying to eliminate local control and community input. The Pacifica board is now self-selecting and unaccountable. Takeover of the station by the Foundation has called forth an enormous and sustained protest. Joan Baez gave a benefit concert that raised \$60,000 for legal expenses. *[Editor’s note: As we*



*Above:* Nevada County WILPF Peace Camp Registration table staffed by Bodki Pederson, Millee Livingston (not pictured) and campers.

*At right:* Kyra Young, camper, with Lisa Haller, staff.

*go to press, it was reported that Pacifica had given in to some of the protesters’ demands. This battle is over corporatization of one of the last remaining alternative radio stations, and its outcome concerns everyone who relies on it for real news and in-depth analysis.]*

## NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY

**Detroit** carried Peace Action’s petition on abolishing nuclear weapons, to be delivered to candidates running for national offices during the year 2000. The petition is available by emailing [peaceactmich@earthlink.net](mailto:peaceactmich@earthlink.net) or writing to Peace Action of Michigan, 195 W. Nine Mile Road, Suite 208, Ferndale, MI 48220. **Portland** participated in the annual “Remembering Hiroshima and Nagasaki” memorial on August 6 and an action against Trident submarine nuclear weapons the following day.

## GETTING THE WORD OUT:

**East Bay** participated in the annual Solano Avenue Stroll in September, with an exhibit table, merchandise, and petitions. **Portland** took the message of WILPF to women in a correctional institution, giving them copies of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and discussing problems at the Hanford nuclear plant. They were warmly received.

## SPECIAL EVENTS:

**Catonsville** arranged for a private visit of the branch to the Benjamin Banneker Museum in the town of Oella, Maryland, together with a potluck supper. Banneker (1731-1806) was a free African American, an

astronomer, writer of almanacs, and surveyor of Washington, DC. His home is now an historical park and museum.

### EVALUATING OURSELVES:

**Cape Cod** had a potluck-evaluation meeting in the summer, conducted as follows: Large sheets of paper, each having the name of a WILPF-sponsored event or an ongoing project from the past year, were pinned up around the room. Attendees were invited to comment on each regarding what worked, what didn't, and how it might be changed. Discussion followed. Some outcomes: Integrate political education and action into potluck and planning meetings; be more "out in the streets" and more antiwar; make use of other public relations outlets; include differing viewpoints; send renewal letters to all 300 names on mailing list and do follow-up phone calls; have a permanent, traveling WILPF table to be displayed at every event the branch is part of.

### ODE TO THE NEW AND ENLARGED NATO

*Julianne Spillman*

*Verse 1*

WE are the guardians of the world  
Haven't you seen how we've grown?  
Our corporations' flags unfurled  
There's more mergers than we've ever known.

*Verse 2*

WE are the guardians, ask and you'll see  
We'll loan you money for your country  
Your leaders can go on a weapons spree  
Then with our protection bomb your enemy.

*Verse 3*

For WE are the guardians of the world

Just sit there and see how we've grown.  
With all the corporations' flags now unfurled  
Why, we'll save you from all that you own.

*Verse 4*

Now don't worry or feel that you're all alone  
We're doing it to the whole world!

*(This poem was published in the **Detroit** newsletter.)*

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### TO SISTERS EVERYWHERE

The United Nations is preparing to hold a conference on racism in the year 2001. Currently, locations for this conference are being considered. One option being discussed is Geneva, Switzerland. All of us in WILPF are aware of the importance of this issue. It is critical this conference be located in an area that provides the greatest access and visibility to all. Other possible options are Rio de Janeiro, Brazil and New York.

Everyone is encouraged to contact the United Nations, as well as branches of their local government and insist this conference be given the visibility and focused attention it deserves.

Everyone in U.S. WILPF is also encouraged to contact the President and their legislators in Congress to demand they mandate a United States conference on racism. As we move toward the millennium, it is critical we address the issue used most frequently to divide people into "us" and "them." We are all pieces within a multifaceted tapestry: humanity.

— Karal Solace, vice president,  
New Haven WILPF Branch

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### ► COSTA RICA

*continued from 20*

Appeal for Peace, support for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and our worldwide preparation for the U.N. Conferences on Racial Justice.

It was decided that the IEC would be held in Germany next year.

### Americas Regional Meeting

During the Americas Regional meeting at the IEC the Panamanians reminded the U.S. Section that the scheduled return of the Panama Canal at the end of 1999 should include plans to clean the polluted waters, which resulted from the U.S. Army's occupation. Contamination is affecting many miles of Central and South American coastline.

Our Bolivian and Colombia WILPF sisters were also

adamant in their demands for the end of U.S. intervention. Attempts to label U.S. arms and money as "drug eradication assistance" must be exposed as lies and opposed vigorously. Many see Colombia as a potential and imminent Kosovo, with its enormous and purposeful destruction of communities. So far, some 2 million people have been forcibly evicted.

At the meeting, it was also stressed that personal responsibility includes knowing that what you buy is made and sold by workers earning a livable wage, working for 40 hours a week, and that the product involved no environmental destruction. Some countries—including the United States—have new "accrediting" organizations that are not just granting organic labels, but ratings of "Fair" or "Justice" to note that products were produced without causing harm to people or the planet.

*Joyce McClean is the U.S. IEC Representative.*

## Join your sisters in WILPF to:



- **UNITE** in a worldwide sisterhood of peace and justice;
- **BUILD** a constructive peace through world disarmament;
- **WORK** for the equality of all people in a world free of sexism and racism;
- **CREATE** lasting social change and worldwide peace and justice.

*WILPF, one of the world's oldest, continuously active peace organizations, works in 37 countries, over 100 U.S. communities and on many campuses, and with the United Nations, where it has Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) status.*

## Yes! I want to join WILPF to work for peace and freedom.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

Branch Name \_\_\_\_\_

New Member       Renewal

Annual dues include a subscription to *Peace and Freedom*

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"More if you can, less if you can't" \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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All dues and contributions are payable to WILPF and are not tax deductible. Make tax deductible contributions of \$50 or more to Jane Addams Peace Association Fund.

Mail to: WILPF  
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