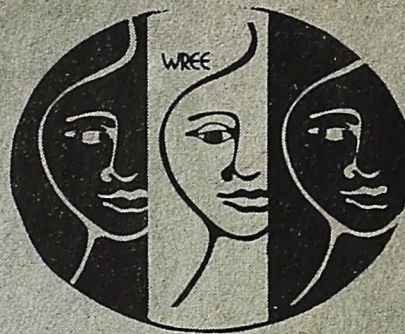


The WREE-VIEW

BI-MONTHLY BULLETIN OF WOMEN FOR RACIAL & ECONOMIC EQUALITY

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WREE AT UNITED NATIONS

By Vinnie Burrows

WIDF Permanent Representative at the UN

The Commission on the Status of Women, a functioning body connected with the United Nations Economic and Social Council held its 27th session at U.N. Headquarters in New York City from March 20th through April 5th.

In attendance with delegates from 32 Member States and observers from U.N. special agencies, inter-governmental bodies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were two WREE members, Vinnie Burrows and Carmen Teixidor. Although Carmen and Vinnie have been active with the U.N. International Year of the Child (IYC) Coordinating Committee, this experience marked their introduction to the United Nations as fully accredited NGO representatives of the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF) of which WREE is the U.S. affiliate.

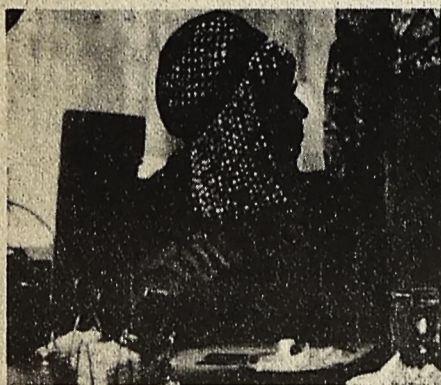
Historically, the Commission on the Status of Women has for the past 30 years been the chief international standard bearer for women's right and issues and its recommendations led to the General Assembly Proclamation of 1975 as International Women's Year and the subsequent Decade for Women (1976-1985) with its mandate for change along the goals of Development, Equality and Peace.

The 27th Session had on its Agenda a review and appraisal of progress made in the implementation of the World Plan of Action dealt with three procedural and four substantive items and the Commission was able in its 2½ week day-long sessions to debate in depth many issues relating to the programme for the U.N. Decade for Women including preparations for the Decade's mid-point World Conference of 1980 to be held in Teheran, Iran.



Carmen Teixidor

Carmen Teixidor spoke movingly of the general plight of women and the specific instances of atrocities and torture of women by the Chilean junta. It is interesting to note that the following day after Carmen's speech, the Chilean observer denied the charges and made a verbal attack on the NGO representative who spoke about Chile!



Vinnie Burrows

Vinnie Burrows spoke on the South African situation and observed that South African society is comprised of layers - at the top is the white man and at the bottom is the Black woman. Vinnie outlined the findings of a WIDF delegation of two women Members of Parliament from Finland who travelled to South Africa in July 1977 to examine issues and conditions of life and to conduct



personal interviews with many persons both Black and white in Johannesburg. They reported the pass law system as the largest single burden. Under these pass laws more than 50,000 Black women have been arrested and jailed since 1975. In her 20 minute speech simultaneously translated into French, Russian, German, Spanish, Arabic and Thai, Vinnie went on to detail many aspects of the degradation suffered by the Black women of South Africa. The inadequate, unhygienic and unsanitary conditions of the single sex hostels where women are forced to live are deplorable. The result of the official policy of migrant labour is social chaos, including bigamy, prostitution, homosexuality and a high infant mortality rate, a by-product of inadequate or non-existent health care systems.

African women are also subject to tribal laws, which have been artificially revived by the Pretoria government. Women are condemned to live on the reserves as a dependent of a father, husband or other male relative, although women often bear heavy family responsibilities, both social and economic. Furthermore, women are not recognized as workers, but are treated as appendages. Working women are dismissed if they are pregnant, and not hired if they are nursing.

The Commission on the Status of Women is the only legislative body in the United Nations system which directly concerns itself with questions related to women, including the coordination of activities in this field with all the organizations within the system at every level.

Non-governmental organizations, especially women's organizations have been most active participants in the work of this Commission. They have served to mobilize millions of others. WREE is mandated to continue and multiply this effort in the United States among our constituency. As a primarily working class women's organization, we have ideas, needs, issues, concerns which we want to share with our sisters here in the States and around the world. After all, there are over two billion women of the world, half of humankind and we want to learn from each other and we want to help each other make this world a place where every child, every woman and every man can live and develop to the optimum potential in a non-exploitative society.

WREE ON THE MOVE

By Norma Spector



The last couple of months have seen a concentration of WREE participation in international conferences. Our affiliation with WIDF brings with it the responsibility, as well as the opportunity, to join with our sister organizations all over the world to work for the issues with which we - and they - are concerned.

May Fisher, National Treasurer, participated in the "Women and Disarmament Conference" in Vienna. Our President Joesetta Lawus, and WREE-VIEW editor Carmen Teixidor, responded to an invitation from the German Women's Federation to spend two weeks in the German Democratic Republic to "study the conditions of women" there. Alva Buxenbaum, vice president from New York, attended the Bureau meeting of WIDF and the World Disarmament meeting of over 1000 people in Geneva. Amelia Headley, national administrative secretary, Luz Prieto, National Council member, Director of Mujeres Latinas en Accion from Chicago, and myself were delegates to the International Council meeting of WIDF in Moscow - together with almost 400 representatives of 109 countries. Pearl Bowser, leader of N.Y. WREE, went to Luanda, Angola, for a "Round Table Seminar on Southern Africa."

The most exciting and fascinating part of these trips is the opportunity to meet and talk with women from all over the world. All these travelers are eager to share their experiences and are available for speaking dates. Just contact the national WREE office.

WREE women constantly prove their creativity! Minneapolis, for instance, is initiating their IYC work by inviting "children from the cities, towns, and farms of Minnesota to participate in the 1978 Children's Camp to continue the progressive traditions established at Mesaba Park during the Depression." Chicago WREE initiated a coalition of women's organizations that held public Mothers' Day "Hearing on Motherhood and Work - Job Discrimination as it Affects Working Women." Over 50 women and two state legislators heard women testify on their experiences and needs and demands. The hearings were reported on TV and the local press.



Meridel Le Sueur

Within a few weeks, the small chapter in Duluth had a showing of the WREE Convention films, an International Pot Luck Dinner to meet and hear writer Meridel Le Sueur (a WREE founder), and acted to support the demand of the Institute for Afro-American Awareness that a city school be used as a community center. Is there a chapter of WREE in your city?

EDITORIAL



The declaration of IYC by the United Nations (initiated by WIDF) is focusing global attention on the conditions of the children everywhere. Every government has been asked to establish an IYC Commission to study the children of its own country and to come up with proposals for legislation and actions that will alleviate the problems. Just as the International

Year of the Woman was a catalyst to focus attention on the problems of women and expedited their organizing and mobilizing for change, so, too, IYC will become a catalyst for our children's welfare.

IYC must not be allowed to become the property of government and high-level studies. The best child experts are parents and we

must ensure that the very real problems are not buried in an avalanche of fine-sounding studies. We must be loud and clear on what those real problems are and what we done about them.

We urge WREE-VIEW readers to send for our "Bill To Save Public Education" and study it. There should be a thousand sponsors from among the educators who care, from community and labor leaders to launch the campaign. And then there must be millions of signatures of support for the demands of the Bill. We should build a groundswell of urgency for an education system that the American people want, deserve, and will have.

Everyone we know agrees that the education system in the U.S. is in bad shape. Many of its faults and weaknesses have become the particular concern of a wide variety of organizations, each one dealing with specific problems and offering solutions -- some good, some not so good.

The education system in the U.S. is used to perpetuate and institutionalize racism;

The education system (with rare exceptions) does not educate our children to be productive. Thinking adults who respect themselves, their fellow Americans, or the people and cultures of the world;

The education system does not prepare our children for meaningful occupations.

WREE believes that these failures are deliberate and self-perpetuating. Deliberate because our economy is geared to a profit system that thrives on racism and division among working people and on maintaining huge numbers of unemployed. Self-perpetuating because it trains future generations who in turn become the educators, the employers, and the politicians; as

well as the future untrained illiterate, confused adults who become competitive, prejudiced and insensitive.

We do not believe that piecemeal, "bandaid," patchwork will solve these basic evils. Yes - it is necessary to eliminate racism and sexism from the text books and the curriculum. Yes - it is necessary to build more classrooms and hire more teachers. Yes - it is necessary to give parents more control over the schools. And WREE women will participate in the efforts of their communities to achieve these and all other necessary changes. We have two aims in such participation. First and foremost, is the need to help as many children as possible - to keep them from being destroyed by the system. Second, to help women develop the organizing skills and experience and to gain the self-confidence to broaden their participation in all the struggles needed to change the conditions of life for themselves and their families. Every campaign for a limited objective helps the participants see the more fundamental goals that must be won. However, we must work for more than these individual solutions. Our Convention last September adopted a resolution on education that demands changes that would: redefine what education today means; reorganize the system to rid it of its racism and regionalism; and create mass education to meet the needs and aspirations of all children, young people and adults. Our Bill To Save Public Education contains seventeen demands that must become federal legislation and we will work to make these demands a popular issue - individually and as a "package."

There is no better opportunity to begin our campaign than now, in preparation for "International Year of the Child - 1979."

Our Sisters say...

To the Women at WREE:
Your article in off our backs (March 78) interested me. Could you send me information about WREE &/or perhaps a copy of WREE-VIEW? Yes I am a middle-class white woman. But no I am not a "joiner" - so you should not fear I will overload the racial &/or economic balance you correctly, I think, seem to want to maintain.

Who is responding to your article? OK - I am a "professional" dancer - modern "traditional" dance. I do it all day long, 6 days a week, I teach 4 classes to earn a few dollars, I belong to a "company" that rehearses and performs. (Of course) I've been actively politically in the past; nowadays I just do this work - "being a dancer" which is what I am, (to my surprise). And I subscribe to Off our Backs. That's all. The moral of this short, incomplete story, is - there are feminists everywhere, and if the revolution is not around the corner it is down the block. Hmmm... (and we each work as we can "according to ability.....")

Thanks for sending what you can.
Deborah Chassler
Allston, Ma.

Dear Ms. Spector,
Gave your new address to the down-town Muskegon Hackley Library. I'm a 69 year old shut-in so I can't run my legs off but will try running my mouth off over the phone.
Your dedicated sister,
Jennie Pepero

Dear folks,
I just read a small yellow and brown brochure on WREE. I support your struggle completely, and particularly by involving myself in and working with men's liberation issues, i.e. freeing ourselves of oppressive expectations and oppressive working and lifestyle conditions.

I want to know more about WREE before joining. I understand your general policy from the brochure, and I would like to hear about particular actions you are taking. Perhaps a newsletter or such publication would suffice.

Thank you.
Sincerely,
Christopher Cook
Mpls, Mn.

Dear Norma,
Enclosed find a few issues of a newspaper of Women in Action which Sue is involved with in Barbados.

I was down there for a month and just got back two weeks ago. Before I left, I attended a conference and dinner which they held. I spoke at the conference about WREE and the women were very interested.

Could you possibly send some information down to Sue? They even were talking about one of our women coming down to speak to them.

Love and Peace,
Anne
Bridgetown, Barbados

Dear Women,
I know this isn't much, but it's about as much as I can afford right now. I have worked with a center for Battered Women here in St. Louis so I know that every little bit helps.

I appreciate your existence, & although I did not get to your conference in Chicago, I want to support your (our) work.

Good Luck!
Sincerely,
Lucia R. Miller
St. Louis, Mo.

Dear Wree members,
I have just finished reading your organizations article in "off our backs" and am interested in finding out more information. I am a full-time student at Concordia University in Montreal, Quebec and a part-time bank teller at the National Trust Co. I would be interested to know if there are any Wree chapters in Canada, and specifically in Montreal. If there are not any chapters in Montreal I am willing to look into perhaps starting one here. I think it would be a perfect opportunity to get French and English women together to do whatever is possible in the spheres of economic as well as political issues in Montreal and Quebec as a whole. I may be able to make contact with the Black and Third World community here, through the colleges, universities and friends.

Before I commit myself to the task of organizing a Wree chapter I would definitely need (and it would be appreciated) any information you could send me and perhaps it would be possible for you to put me in contact with Wree members close to Montreal. I could probably get to New York sometime this summer (possibly) so any woman who is a member of Wree there could meet with me.

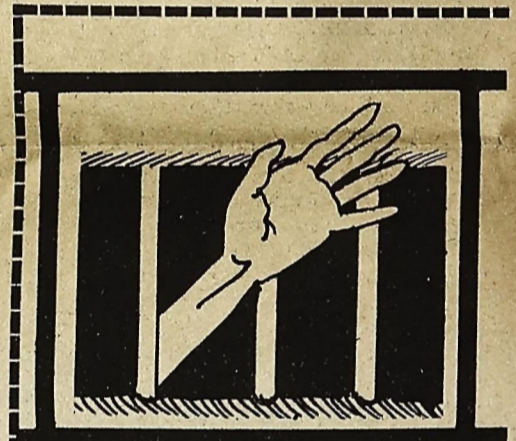
Thank you.
Yours truly,
Risa Thau
Laval, Quebec, Canada

Dear Friends,
I have just received the Nov-Dec 1977 issue of THE WREE-VIEW and I am thoroughly pleased with it from cover to cover.

I had hoped to see you in Houston but my trip to Chicago for your convention and another trip to Washington for the Gray Panthers proved to me that air and train travel is too much for me. The distances in the airports or train stations is too far and there are no porters to carry anything! I thought a friend was going down but she had to go ahead of time and I couldn't go it alone!

You remember I said I would send something the first of the year and herewith is my check of \$100. Best for 1978!

Very truly yours,
Z.C. Brandt



Dear Sisters,
I have just recently and belatedly received your correspondence concerning the move of the national headquarters location and your need for funds to facilitate that move.

I am sorry to say for both our sakes, that I am unable to contribute to our cause in a financial capacity as I am and have been incarcerated in a county jail since the first of the year. What can I say - times just got tougher, I got more desperate to pay the bills without a decent job and I made a foolish decision.

However, time and life marches on. I was greatly moved by the energy and determination exhibited by those great strong women I met at the national convention. I joined WREE at that time and had been doing some work locally for a short time before that.

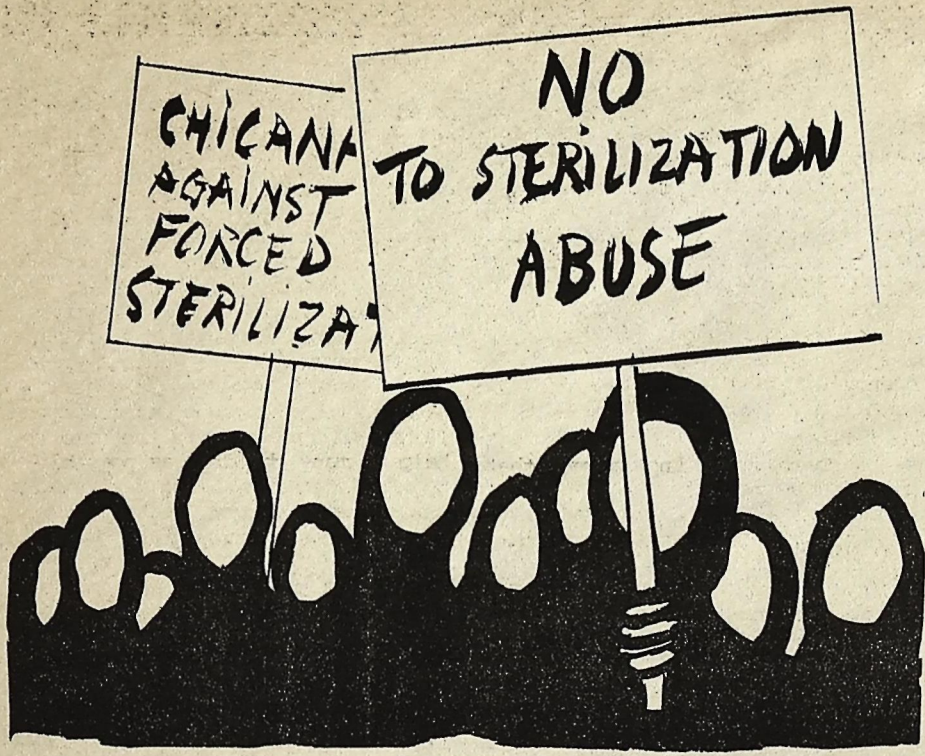
I hope to continue spreading your word even though I will be spending the next couple of years in a woman's prison. My concern at this time is that other than the above mentioned correspondence I have failed to receive the WREE-VIEW or any other literature from your headquarters since my membership with WREE.

I would greatly appreciate your correcting this oversight as I need as much as you to spread solidarity in struggle.

In sisterhood,
Dianne Lee Shetten

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CHICANAS FIGHT STERILIZATION

By Connie Pohl

Reading about the sterilization case, *Madrigal v. Quilligan*, must evoke rage and fear in any woman: rage at what can be done to women, fear of what might happen to her if she has to enter a hospital. The trial should begin soon in Los Angeles; it had been scheduled to begin May 30, but was delayed due to the death of the presiding judge.

Ten Chicana women, one of whom is Dolores Madrigal, are suing the University of Southern California - Los Angeles County Medical Center and Dr. Quilligan, Head of Obstetrics and Gynecology, because they were sterilized at the Center without having given their free and informed consent to the operation; in other words, they were forcibly sterilized. According to Antonia Hernandez, attorney for the ten Chicana women, "all of the victims belonged to a racial minority, were poor, and could not readily understand the English language". Since the effect of the operation is irreversible, no remedy can be obtained for the injury done to these women. The point of the lawsuit is to halt the forced sterilization of Black and Hispanic poor women which is presently being practiced in hospitals throughout the United States.

All of the women had entered the hospital to give birth; none of them wanted to be sterilized. Some of the women were sterilized without their knowledge while under an anesthetic for delivery by Caesarean section. Others were coerced, while enduring the pain of labor, to sign forms in English which they could not understand since their primary language was Spanish.

Consider the case of one of the women, Maria Hurtado, who appeared at the Medical Center for a routine medical checkup on December 6, 1972.

The doctors who examined her determined that her baby should be delivered by caesarean section. She was anesthetized with a spinal injection for the delivery of her child. After the delivery of the child, she was given general anesthesia. While under this unconscious state, she was surgically sterilized by a staff doctor without her consent. She was not informed about the sterilization until six weeks later when she appeared for a routine checkup. She spoke only Spanish and did not recall signing a form authorizing the operation. (Antonia Hernandez, *Chicano Law Review*, 1976)

Forced sterilization is not unique to USC-LA Medical Center, but is practiced throughout the United States. According to Claudia Dreyfus, author of "Sterilizing The Poor" (*The Progressive*, December 1975), forced sterilization is a part of academic training at more than a few of the leading teaching hospitals, as well as being a widespread practice in many maternity wards. Regarding the Chicana women involved in the law suit, there is evidence of pressure from a medical staff

which was prejudiced against them because of their poverty or ethnicity. They did not want these women to produce any more children, and often said so openly. Such an attitude motivates doctors in many similar cases in other hospitals. In addition, there are instances, according to hospital personnel, in which interns want to "practice" a sterilization operation and will use these women to experiment on.

Besides never being able to bear children again, there are other side effects. A woman who has been forcibly sterilized suffers the same psychological impairments as a rape victim. Some of the Chicana women are afflicted with attacks of nervousness, as well as, in some cases, being rejected by their husbands.

Pressuring a woman during her labor to have a sterilization operation is the most common practice. No woman approached while in labor can give an informed consent to such an operation, as any woman who has experienced labor knows full well. In addition to such tactics, the women are given misinformation or no information at all. In an overwhelming number of cases, the women were not told that the effect of the operation was permanent. Signed consent is often obtained by deception. Women are told they are signing a consent to a caesarean section, not a sterilization operation.

The United States Government wants to export this violation of women to the Third World. According to the federal government's Office of Population, the United States is seeking to provide the means by which one quarter of the fertile women in the world can be sterilized. Federal money is financing a program to train foreign doctors in "advanced fertility management techniques" a euphemism for practices that include sterilization.



SWEATSHOPS IN CHINATOWN

By Vicki Lam

When we speak about poor working conditions in New York City, the Chinatown "sweatshops" are often cited as an example. Although the existence of these sweatshops is generally known, details concerning the actual conditions are not readily available, considering the overall lack of information and interest towards minority communities, i.e., the media rarely reports on the Chinatown garment factories. Yet the garment factories are central to those living in Chinatown, particularly the women.

According to a 1970 U.S. Census Bureau report, the labor force participation of Chinese women 16 years and over was 49.2%. According to a 1976 report on Chinese women in New York City, 87% of those employed are garment workers. Most Chinese presently in the country came after the Immigration Act of 1965 (which extended the quota of Chinese allowed to enter to 20,000 annually as compared to the period 1943-1965 when only 6,055 were admitted).

Nearly all the women garment workers are foreign born. It is largely due to the language barrier which makes it difficult, if not impossible, for these women to seek employment in other areas of occupation, where an ability to speak English is required. Most of the factories are located in the Chinatown area. The Chinese women need not travel far to go to work. This is essential because most of the women have families to worry about (over 60% are married), and must be able to make quick excursions away from work to perform family duties.

The conditions in the factories contribute little to ease the burdens of these women. (It should be noted that although men also work in the garment factories, they are in the minority, making up less than 2% of the total number of workers). Almost every building in Chinatown is old and run-down. Those housing the garment factories are no exception. They come with all the attendant disadvantages: inadequate and often unsanitary toilet facilities, bad ventilation causing the high fabric content in the air to be particularly unbearable, lack of proper fire escape exists and other safety devices, and poor lighting which is especially damaging to the women who do fine, eye-straining work. There have also been reports of rape in the badly lit corridors. Naturally most or all of these conditions can easily be eradicated - as easily as

putting in a brighter light bulb - but more often than not, nothing is done.

Given this situation, it is difficult to believe that these factories or shops are unionized. Yet they are, and their union is the International Ladies Garment Workers Union. It might at least be concluded that the workers are paid by union scales and can make a decent salary. Unfortunately this is not usually the case. The work in these shops are what is termed "piecework", that is, the worker is paid for each piece of work she makes rather than by hourly wages. The union does specify a pay scale for piecework but the owners seldom adhere to that scale. A woman might work 8, 9 or even 12 hours a day and yet unless she is exceptionally fast, might make well below the union minimum wage. The 1976 Chinatown report stated that the union reported the average weekly salary of a garment worker to be \$115., but it was also found that at least 67% of the women worked much over 40 hours a week. Overtime is virtually nonexistent. On Saturdays a woman might get as little as an extra \$5 for a full day's work if she made more than \$100 for the whole week.

The reasons the owners are able to get away with such practices is because contact with the union is kept at a minimum - on both sides. Shop stewards are a rarity and due to the language problem and the fact that they are not familiar with the procedures, the women themselves face tremendous difficulties in trying to appeal to their union for redress of grievances. There are community organizations which attempt to service the needs of these women by going with them to the union, speaking for them and giving legal aid when necessary. However, any woman who is known to have complained to the union often suffers harassment and intimidation from her boss, and within the shop's atmosphere, is generally made to feel uncomfortable.

Yet, it would be a mistake to now put all the blame on the owners or the union. The Chinatown garment factories which are nearly all Chinese-owned are run on a contracting system. This means that the shopowner (or contractor) must go to a clothing manufacturer to sell his services. The manufacturer provides cloth and patterns, the shopowner supplies the machinery and other materials, and the women workers convert the cloth and patterns into articles of clothing. Because of the large number of shopowners, the manufacturers will generally play one shop against another. The manufacturer can pretty much determine the price he wants to pay through blind bidding, i.e., knowing that one shopowner is not aware what price another one has bid, and through haggling, with future contracts offered as an incentive for present low prices. With rising costs in materials and rent, the price paid to the shopowner per garment should increase but the manufacturers are able to use their greater economic power and the competitiveness among the shopowners to maintain low, inflexible prices. As a result, the owners in their desire for a profit then shift the financial burden onto the shoulders of the workers.

WOMEN FOR DISARMAMENT

May Fisher

"Sisters, the resolution is carried." And so amid loud applause, smiles and hugs, an historic seminar came to an end.

This seminar, "Women and World Disarmament" was held in Vienna, Austria, April 17-21, 1978.

What made it historic was that it was sponsored by the non-governmental sub-committee on the Status of Women - United Nations. The aims were to:

1. Make the voices of women heard at the United Nations Special Session on Disarmament.
2. Help create public awareness of the issue of disarmament.
3. Stimulate national action by women for disarmament as a contribution to the third theme of the Decade for Women.

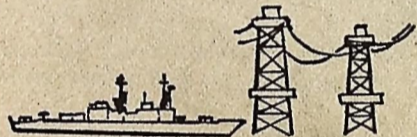
Weapons versus Development



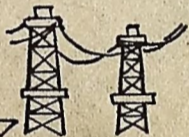
1 jet fighter
(US \$20 million)



40,000 village pharmacies



1 destroyer
(US \$100 million)



Electrification for 13 cities and 19 rural zones with a population of about nine million inhabitants



1 tank
(US \$500,000)



Equipment for 520 classrooms (30 pupils per primary school class)

How was WREE involved? The six sponsoring N60 organizations were the Commission of Churches in International Affairs, International Council of Women, Lutheran World Federation, World Women's Christian Union, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and the Women's International Democratic Federation.

WREE is an affiliate of WIDF and as such was requested to send a delegate. I was honored to have been chosen.

There is a long and interesting history of meetings and events that led to this conference and I'm proud to say most of them were initiated by a cosponsored by WIDF. The WIDF delegates came from 17 different countries. It was truly a world representative delegation and as such was unique at this conference.

It was just this uniqueness however that lent vitality to the debates and that led to the final resolutions reflecting the needs of all women, emerging nations, socialist and non-socialist.

WREE's policies on education, employment for women (affirmative action), elimination of racism, peace and international cooperation were warmly welcomed both in the plenary sessions and in committee meetings.

The five days of activity moved from cautious optimism the first day to a warm, cooperative, positive feeling on the last. The binding cord was the underlying belief by all that the arms race was draining away resources for social uses and eventually would lead to world destruction.

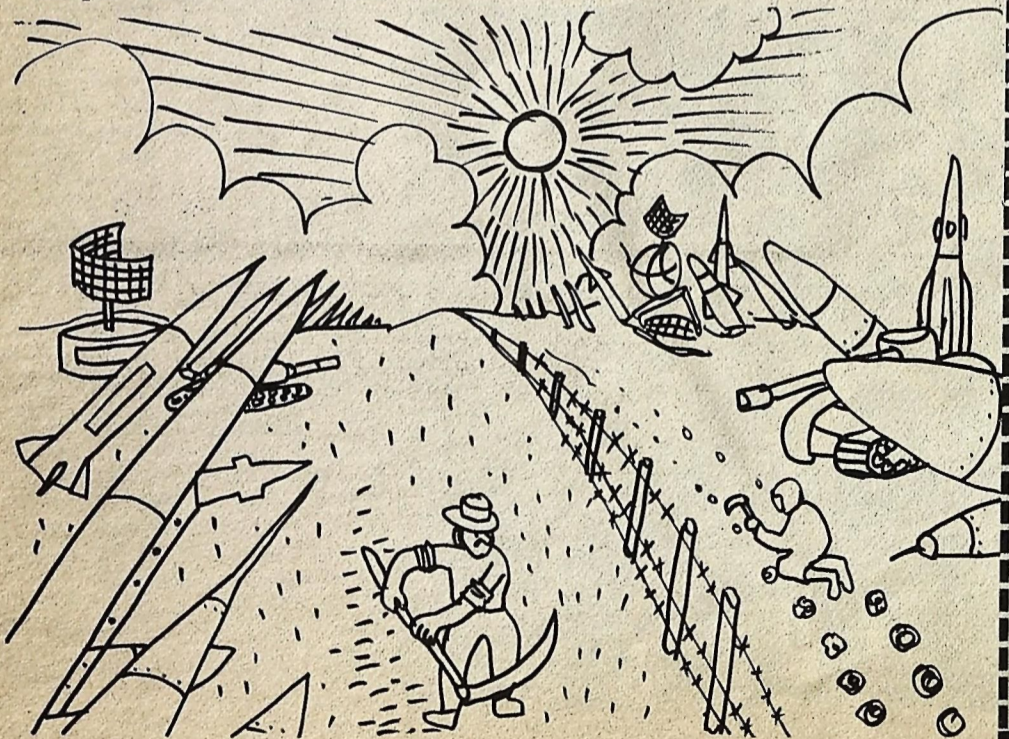
And so, in our message drawn up to the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament it is stated that:

"Women call for general and complete disarmament. They want the one billion dollars now spent daily on arms to be used to eliminate unemployment, disease, hunger and illiteracy and to improve the existing conditions of the millions living in want and economic underdevelopment.

Women and men everywhere expect this Special Session to argue to concrete steps to:

- halt the development, production and deployment of all weapons and weapon systems such as the neutron bomb.
- ban all nuclear weapons, their use, testing and production and destroy all existing stockpiles
- complete a treaty prohibiting production of chemical weapons and providing for the destruction of stockpiles;
- renounce the use and threat of use of force in international relations;
- provide for the peaceful settlement of all international disputes;
- proceed with the conversion from military to socially useful production, in the process of which women and men must be equally involved.
- encourage education for peace and disarmament
- strengthen the disarmament negotiating machinery
- call for the convening of a World Disarmament Conference

The goals of the UN Decade for Women and those of the 1979 International Year of the Child - the achievement of Equality, Development and Peace - can be fulfilled only if the arms race is halted and real disarmament measures instituted.



WILMAR 8: EQUAL PA

On December 16, 1977, eleven courageous women in a rural Minnesota town 75 miles west of the Twin Cities made history by walking out of the Citizens National Bank in Willmar -- the intended victims of sex discrimination. Since then, eight of the women have struggled for their lives. They have weathered ice storms, 60 degree below wind chill temperatures and the wrath of much of the business establishment in order to challenge the

ficer withdrew her name from the suit.

The Bank

The owner of the bank also owns two other banks in Central Minnesota. Bank president Leo Pirsch is pulling all the stops to get the bank position in the newspapers, including buying several costly fullpage ads. His position is clear: "We're not all equal you know. You just can't go



bank's practice of paying women employees less than the men. Harrassment from the bank officers and the economic hardships from the strike forced 3 of the 11 to withdraw their active support though they are still included in the suit.

Irene Wallin, one of the Willmar 8, appears an unlikely rebel. Married with three children and nine years experience in banking, she used to smilingly make deposits and cash checks for people. Now each day after she packs her children off to school, Irene surveys the weather, dons appropriate clothing and she and the other strikers picket in front of the bank, yelling "scab" at workers who cross the picket line. Neither she nor her co-strikers were active in electoral politics or the women's movement prior to this strike. Today, over 150 days later, they describe themselves as feminists and unionists.

Background

This strike is without precedent. It is the longest bank strike in the history of our country and the only strike in which ending sex discrimination is the major focus.

It all began when a new male employee was hired for \$300 a month more than female employees doing the same tasks. In addition, he was to be the next management officer, by passing two women - one with nine years employment at the bank and one with eight years employment and twelve years previous experience. To add fuel to the already flaring fires of injustice, the bank asked the women employees to train the would-be officer. In response, in November 1976, 11 women, including the one and only woman officer, filed a sex discrimination claim with the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission (EEOC). Within months, the EEOC issued a preliminary finding that said "There is reasonable cause to believe that the Citizen's National Bank has discriminated against the female bank employees in pay and promotion." In the face of thinly-veiled threats, the female bank of-

out there and replace Fran Tarkenton"; he said. "You have the president and the officers here", he said raising his hand up high. "And you have the bank employees down here" he said lowering his hand.

Organizing the Unorganized

The Willmar Bank Employees Association Local #1 (WBEA) is an affiliate of the AFL-CIO. It was formed when various office employees unionized. The Willmar women were too small a group and too controversial to accept into their membership. This is one of the many obstacles to organizing workers in traditionally unorganized occupations, such as bank and office work. Such workers must fight against what the Willmar 8 call "management mentality arguments". For example, bank employees are encouraged to see themselves as "all working for the same goals handling the same money and providing services to customers and owners, officers, cashiers and office workers alike are all in the business together." This myth of bank workers and bank owners sharing equally in work and profits has been effectively dispelled by the issues in this case. With one exception, bank officers are male. The only female officer, Karen Holst, has held the same position as assistant cashier since 1969 with no promotions or advancement possible. In addition, she nor any of the other workers are invited to participate in the all male local banking association meetings. Assistant cashier Holst was one of the 11, who actually filed with the EEOC, but thinly veiled threats from other officers changed her mind.

Demands

Although the majority opinion in this country is equal pay for equal work, women's salaries still lag far behind their male colleagues by about \$4000. And according to the U.S. Department of Labor the gap is widening.

The demands of the Willmar 8 are certainly reasonable and just. In fact, WBEA's positions are so moderate that

Y FOR EQUAL WORK

a St. Paul labor official commented that "This bank makes J.P. Stevens look like Mr. Nice Guy".

The Willmar Bank Employees Association is asking for:

1. Job descriptions
2. Vacation benefits
3. Non-discrimination clause
4. Equal pay for equal work
5. Seniority rights
6. Promotional ladder
7. Better wages
8. Five-day work week - forty hour week
9. Affirmative action plan filed with the EEOC as required by law.

The bank offers:

1. Minimum wage for starting pay - \$595 after two years
2. Seven day work week
3. No non-discrimination clause that can be used in a grievance procedure
4. Two weeks vacation up to ten years of employment
5. No job descriptions
6. No seniority rights
7. No promotional ladder

After five Federal Mediation sessions failed, the women walked out. Sandi Tremel, one of the 8 says, "Everything we have done, we have been forced into by the bank. They have tried to stall and delay us into submission, but we know we're right" Doris Boshart adds "This could be a long strike because we'll fight 'em to the end".

The justice of the demands and the pioneering effort to organize the unorganized have focused national and international attention on the struggle. Sandi Tremel proudly told this reporter that within days of the walkout, the story was picked up in Puerto Rico, Israel and even Saudi Arabia. Every major union in Minnesota has not only passed resolutions supporting the strike, they have also donated badly needed funds to enable the Willmar women to wage a successful fight. The AFL-CIO organized a demonstration of solidarity with the employees which drew unionists from all over Minnesota. The teachers union

union have unreservedly offered support. However, when this support becomes too visible, for example when too many supporters show up to picket, the police are called.

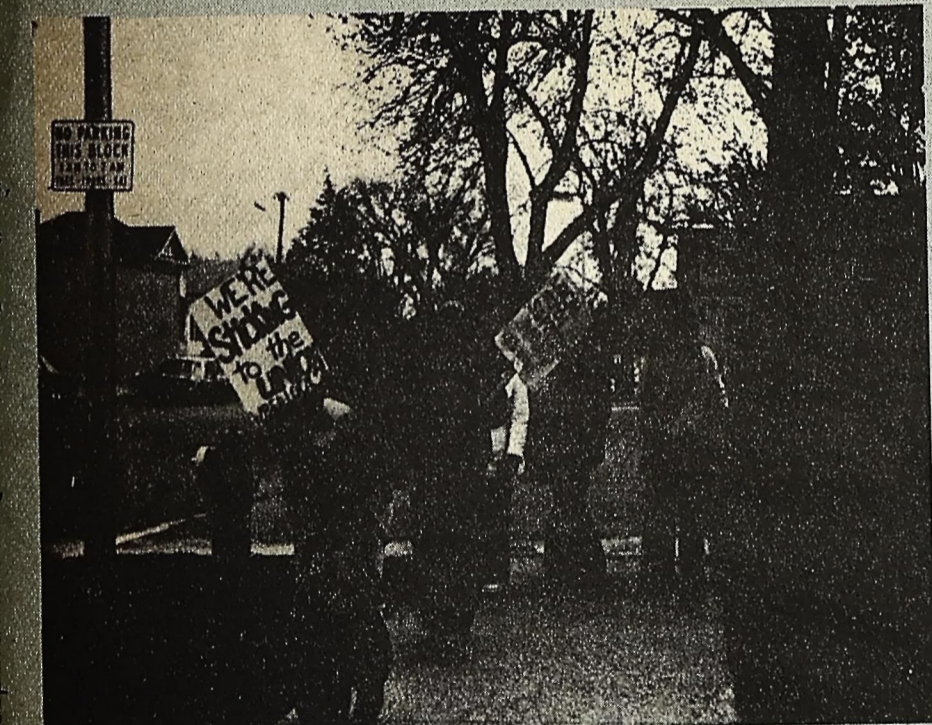
Effects of the Strike

The bank has undeniable been affected by the strike. In solidarity, large sums of money have been withdrawn from the bank--both from individuals and organizations. At last count, bank assets had dropped by over \$1 million. Security alarm inspectors, pickup and delivery people and other service personnel have refused to violate the picket line, so money pickup and delivery must be made at the gas station next door--certainly an undignified approach to banking.

The entire Willmar business community--department stores, other banks, grocers, etc. are apprehensive about the possible outcome of the strike. According to the Willmar8, "Wages are very low here. Most women receive little or no pay for the work they do". Rod Anderson, president of the Willmar Trades and Labor Assembly, the central labor body in the community, thinks all the Willmar unions have a stake in the outcome.

Solidarity of the 8

When this reporter visited strike headquarters in Willmar, it was apparent the hardships of the long strike has had little effect on the strike effort. Energy and solidarity run high. In Willmar the strike is a family affair. It is not uncommon for husbands and other family members to work right along side the women, making coffee and offering whatever assistance they can to the women as the Willmar 8 prepare for speaking engagements all around the state, grant interviews (including to the CBS Today Show) and attend to the arduous tasks that go into a successful strike such as this. Glennis Andreassen a 19 year old woman who has



(WBEA) has just made \$6000 available to the WBEA. The women's movement has mobilized around this critical strike. WREE, Women's Work and the Farmer-Labor Association sponsored a teach-in to raise for the Willmar8. The National Organization of Women led by Louise Mack in Willmar was one of the first to rally to the aid of the 8.

Willmar can hardly be considered a union town. However, the state hospital employees union, the teachers union and the grain elevator

demonstrated much leadership in this struggle faces special hardship as her husband is a farmer and is currently on strike with the American Agriculture Movement.

The strike has had a profound influence on the personal lives of the Willmar 8. "When you get angry enough, it's time to do something", says Teren Novotny. This justifiable anger has not only brought the women closer personally, it sustained them during these long months of economic and physical hardship.

Sexism and racism in books

INTERRACIAL BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

10 QUICK WAYS TO ANALYZE BOOKS FOR RACISM AND SEXISM

Both in school and out, your children are being exposed to many books that convey racist and sexist attitudes. These attitudes - expressed over and over by books and other media - gradually distort their perceptions until stereotypes and myths about minorities and women are accepted as reality. It is difficult for a parent or a teacher to convince their children to question society's attitudes. But if you can show a child how to detect racism and sexism in a book, the child can proceed to transfer that perception to wider areas. The ten guidelines below are a starting point.

PART 1: ANALYZING PICTURE AND STORY BOOKS

(1) Check the illustrations

* Look for stereotypes.

A stereotype is an oversimplified generalization about a particular group, race, or sex, which generally carries derogatory implications.

* Look for tokenism.

If there are non-white characters, are they just like the white faces but tinted or colored in?

* Look at the lifestyles.

Are minority characters and their setting depicted in such a way that they contrast unfavorably with an unstated norm of white middle class suburbia? For example, minorities are often associated with the ghetto, migrant labor, or "primitive" living.

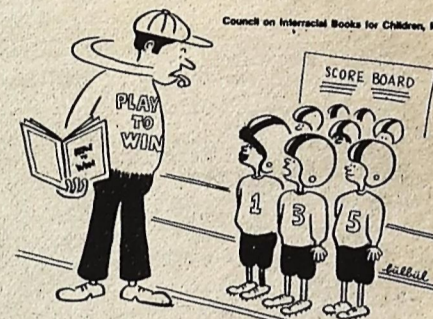
(2) Check the story line. Civil Rights legislation has led publishers to weed out many insulting passages and illustrations, particularly in stories with Black themes, but the attitudes still find expression in less obvious ways. The following checklist suggests some of the various subtle forms of bias to watch for:

* Relationships: Do the whites in the story have the power and make the decisions? Do non-white people function in essentially subservient roles?

* Standard for success: What does it take for a character to succeed? To gain acceptance, do non-white characters have to exhibit superior qualities - excel in sports, get A's etc.? In friendships between white and non-white children ("brotherhood"), is it the non-white who does most of the understanding and forgiving?

* Viewpoint: How are "problems" presented, conceived and resolved in the story? Are minority people themselves considered to be the "problem"? Do solutions ultimately depend on the benevolence of a white person?

* Sexism: Are the achievements of girls and women based on their own initiative and intelligence, or is their success due to their good looks or to their relationships with boys? Are sex roles incidental or paramount to characterization and plot? Could the same story be told if the sex roles were reversed?



COACH, THE TEAM WOULD LIKE TO RAP WITH YOU ON THE DESTRUCTIVENESS OF COMPETITION.

(3) Consider the effects of the book on the child's self-image and self-esteem.

(4) Consider the author's or illustrator's qualifications. Read the biographical material on the jacket flap or on the back of the book. If a story deals with a minority theme, what qualifies the author or illustrator to deal with this topic?

(5) Look at the copyright date. Books on minority themes - usually hastily conceived - suddenly began appearing in the mid-1960's. There followed a growing number of "minority experience" books to meet the new market demand, but these were still written by white authors and reflected a white point of view.

PART 11: ANALYZING SCHOOL TEXTS

(6) Determine the author's perspective. There is no such thing as a truly objective account of history. It is always from some point of view.

(7) Note the copyright date. It takes considerably longer to produce a textbook than it does a storybook - often several years - and therefore texts have been even slower to reflect the growing consciousness about racism and sexism.

(8) Examine the illustrations. The range and type of the illustrations can serve as another indication of the textbook's viewpoint. Are Blacks, Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and women of different groups shown at all?

(9) Watch for loaded words. A word is loaded when it carries overtones of insult. Examples of loaded adjectives, usually racist, are: savage, primitive, conniving, lazy, superstitious, treacherous, wily, crafty, inscrutable, docile and backward.

Look for sexist language and adjectives that ridicule women and for the use of the male pronoun to refer to both males and females.

(10) Note the heroes and heroines. For many years textbooks showed only "safe" minority heroes and heroines - those who avoided serious conflict with the white Establishment of their time. Minority groups today are insisting on the right to define their own heroes and heroines based on their own cultures and struggles for justice.

Boycott Nestle

A boycott of Nestle's Products is under way, because of the 'Profits Uber Alles' policy of the company in aggressively promoting their baby foods in undeveloped countries and in poor areas in this country, to the detriment of the millions of babies that are fed. The foods are diluted below nutritional strength, and contaminated with impure water and kept under unsanitary conditions. Brain damage, malnutrition and death result from these promotions.

The boycott has been endorsed by Ralph Nader, Dr. Roy Brown of N.Y.'s Mt. Sinai School of Medicine, Clergy and Laity Concerned, Church Women United Citizens Action, N. American Congress on Latin American and many other individuals and organizations.

Products on the list are: Taster's Choice, Nescafe, Nestle's Crunch, Nestea, Libby-McNeil and Libby products. Don't buy anything by Nestle's and Libby!

WHO IS BEHIND PHYLLIS SCHLAFLY?

By Maria Castiglione

The new ultra-right attack on the women's movement, took many women by surprise. The mobilization of these forces against the Equal Rights Amendment, abortion and the rights of minorities has left many wondering where this offensive came from. That question cannot be answered adequately without probing the career of that enemy of freedom and democracy, Phyllis Schlafly.

Over the past two years Phyllis Schlafly has emerged as the self-appointed leader of a new reactionary wave whose goal is the destruction of the women's movement. Considering the viciousness of these activities, it is not surprising to find that her involvement in right wing politics is much more extensive than is superficially visible. She would not otherwise merit the plaudits of Robert Welch, founder of the John Birch Society, who said in a 1960 issue of the John Birch Society Bulletin that Phyllis Schlafly is "a very loyal member of the John Birch Society."

Phyllis Schlafly's career as standard bearer of the ultra-right dates back to the early 50's. It was then that she compiled and published two bibliographical pamphlets designed as reading materials for "patriotic" Americans. Recommended by Schlafly as "reliable books" are A World Gone Crazy, by Robert Welch and America's Retreat From Victory, by one of the worst enemies of freedom America has ever produced, Joseph McCarthy.

Throughout the 50's and early 60's Phyllis Schlafly was active within the radical right-wing movement. She was Research Director and the driving force of the Cardinal Mindzenty Foundation, a lead-

ing right-wing group whose main purpose was giving fuel to the cold war and its repression of democratic freedoms in this county and abroad. She testified repeatedly before the Senate Armed Forces and Foreign Relations committees on the issue of national security, campaigning extensively for military armaments build-up and the development of a wide network of nuclear weapons.

Embarking on a public political career in 1960, she ran as an Illinois Republican candidate for Congress on a McCarthyite platform. She was elected delegate to the 19th Republican Convention and, having mobilized substantial support within right-wing Illinois GOP circles, became President of the Illinois Federation of Republican Women and, automatically, a VP of the National Federation of Republican Women.

Schlafly came out in support of Barry Goldwater's presidential candidacy in 1964 and soon after announced her own candidacy for the office of President of the National Federation of Republican Women, the most influential GOP women's organization, numbering 500,000 in membership. A struggle ensued between GOP moderates and the growing ultra-right wing elements that resulted in Schlafly's defeat. It was a bitterly contested loss that brought about countless concessions to the extreme right. As an example of how well organized Schlafly's forces were, the results of the election cause numerous local clubs to withdraw from the national body.

During this period Schlafly was busy at her typewriter as well, turning out right-wing propaganda designed to promote national hysteria,

militarism, racism, and ultimately, fascism. Among her credits are Strike From Space, on nuclear aggression, calling for a network of nuclear missiles to be installed in the earth's orbit, and Safe Not Sorry, on the United States "weak" posture in Vietnam, the missile gap and the 1967 "race riots" (She charged that the Poverty Program of the 1960's "subsidized" the unrest.)

We should pause here, long enough to note a change in Schlafly's public image. Originally too "hard line" for the front ranks of the GOP (they were, after all, competing with a squeaky-clean Democratic "New Frontier") her ties with the leadership of the Republican Party became more and more visible in the late 60's. She gradually became more acceptable in GOP circles, any objections voiced by moderates a few years back silenced, as evidenced by the fact that in 1969 Phyllis Schlafly appeared on the Oregon primary ballot as a vice-presidential candidate.

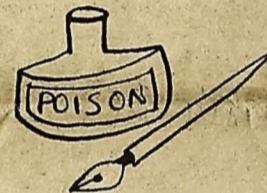
When Schlafly was too busy to do her own dirty work, she made sure that someone else was there to do it. For example, when in 1969 the Illinois House Committee ok'd liberalized abortion proposals in a move that put Illinois ahead of other states in progressive abortion legislation, who testified against the measure? J. Fred Schlafly, Alton attorney, husband of Phyllis, representing the Catholic Laymen of America. Phyllis was busy at the time, running in a House race in Illinois against a Liberal Democrat supported by COPE (Committee on Political Education, the political arm of the AFL-CIO). Her entire campaign was an attack focused on COPE and the Labor movement.

Since the early 70's, Phyllis Schlafly has been publishing a 4-page monthly newsletter "The Phyllis Schlafly Report" under the auspices of the Eagle Trust Fund. (Any guesses as to where the infamous "Eagle Forum" of IWY

conferences fame came from?) This newsletter is a platform for attacks on the ERA, abortion, the civil rights of homosexuals, defense cuts, poverty programs, etc.

It would be misleading not to point out that this is part of a much broader attack on the democratic rights of Americans. We see the attack on constitutional rights in the Son of Sl Bill. We see the racist, sexist attacks on affirmative action exemplified by the Bakke case. We see an intensification of militarism and a push to inflate the military budget being battled in the Panama Canal issue. We see constant attacks on labor, with the United Minde Workers the most current victims.

The prospects are chilling. It is a racist, anti-woman, anti-democratic fascist wind blowing in this country and throughout the world. As women we find ourselves under special attack as our rights as women, workers and citizens are being challenged. We are fighting back. For all the organizing the Schlafly forces mounted, they were only able to capture 20% of the delegates in Houston. But it is a choking 20%. And though the Schlafly followers were defeated in Houston, they continue to organize and are strong today in America. A new group has just recently formed in Chicago called the National Pro-Lifepac, Schlafly run, to elect congressmen favorable to a proposed constitutional amendment against abortion. It is imperative that we keep abreast of the activities of the right. They are designed to rob us of our rights. And they are going to be successful unless we stop them.



S.1437-H.6869 A THREAT TO WOMEN

NATIONAL COMMITTEE AGAINST REPRESSIVE LEGISLATION

Despite the overwhelming public outcry that stopped Senate Bill 1 in the last Congress, South Carolina's arch-conservative Senator Strom Thurmond and liberal Massachusetts Senator Edward Kennedy steamrollered S. 1437 through the Senate. Attorney General Griffin Bell is pushing for quick passage in the House. S. 1437/H.R. 6869, the so-called "Criminal Code Reform Act," is a re-write of S.1, which was designed to impose a Watergate-type straitjacket on the American people. S. 1437/H.R. 6869 retains many of the dangers of S. 1, and also adds serious new threats to the women's movement.

IF S. 1437/H.R. 6869 IS PASSED INTO LAW, WHICH OF THESE FEDERAL CRIMES COULD YOU BE CHARGED WITH?

ABORTION "ADVERTISING" PROHIBITED, Title 39, Section 6035

The bill passed by the Senate revives an old obscenity provision which makes it a felony to mail any materials, printed or written, which "directly or indirectly" give any information about procuring abortions. The statute expressly prohibits "every written or printed card, letter, circular, book, pamphlet, advertisement, or notice" of any kind giving abortion information. Anyone mailing any article, instrument, or drug intended for producing abortion "or for any indecent and immoral purpose" could also be prosecuted for a felony. On the Senate floor Senator Kennedy admitted doubts about the statute's constitutionality, but successfully urged the Senate to accept it anyway.

IF S. 1437/H.R. 6869 IS PASSED INTO LAW, WHAT KIND OF PROTECTION AGAINST RAPE WILL IT PROVIDE?

RAPE, Section 1641

H.R. 6869, the House version of the bill, defines rape as being committed by someone "not the spouse" of the victim, making spouses completely immune from prosecution for rape in federal jurisdictions, which includes all military bases. This total spousal immunity extends to any man who is living with the victim "as husband". Senate drafters responded to feminist pressure by removing this express spousal immunity from the Senate version.

VICTIM'S SEXUAL HISTORY, Section 1646

Attorney General Griffin Bell claims that S. 1437 eliminates testimony of a rape victim's prior or subsequent sexual behavior. In fact, the statute obscures this reform by stating that such evidence is not admissible "except as otherwise required by the Constitution," a vague disclaimer which could open a floodgate of appeals of rape convictions.

SEXUAL ASSAULT, Section 1642

Both the Senate and House versions give spouses complete immunity from prosecution for sexual assault, a crime which includes compelling another person to engage in sexual acts by threatening her or placing her in fear. Although each version defines "spouse" differently, by either definition this immunity encompasses not only married couples living together, but also non-married couples living together, and married couples no longer living together who have not yet obtained a judicial decree of separation. This broad immunity leaves too many women without the protection of either rape or sexual assault laws.

ACT! WHAT YOU CAN DO:

1 Urge your U.S. Representative to oppose S. 1437/H.R. 6869; and, to join other members of Congress in introducing a HOUSE RESOLUTION-calling upon the Committee on the Judiciary to disapprove S. 1437/H.R. 6869, and to conduct full & complete hearings regarding the revision of the Federal criminal code!

ADDRESS: House Office Building - Washington, D.C. 20515

2 Order literature & arrange for a speaker before your organization!

3 NCARL is in critical need of support! Contribute generously to the campaigns of NCARL & other organizations working to defeat S. 1437/H.R. 6869!

NOTE: It is unlikely that S. 1437 can be successfully amended. Omnibus legislation of this nature is subject to very limited change in the legislative process. As an instrument for considering reform of the Federal Criminal Code, your attention is directed to legislation introduced in the last Congress by Representatives Kastenmaier, Edwards, and Mikva-H.R. 12504, and in the present Congress by Rep. Cohen as H.R. 2311.

OUR PROGRAM DEMANDS

1. An end to unemployment and inflation.
2. The right to a decent job.
3. Equal pay for equal work.
4. An end to discrimination in hiring and promotion.
5. Special legislation to protect and safeguard the health, safety and comfort of women on the job.
6. Organization of the unorganized.

ECONOMIC SECURITY FOR WOMEN CANNOT BE GUARANTEED WITHOUT:

7. Universal, federally funded child care.
8. Comprehensive, federally funded health coverage.
9. Maternity leave with pay.
10. An end to forced sterilization and experimentation.
11. The right to abortion.
12. A guaranteed annual income.
13. Quality education for our children.
14. Decent housing.

Our ultimate aim is the passage of a WOMEN'S BILL OF RIGHTS, a program of legislative demands, which guarantees economic independence and social equality.



ART AND LITERATURE



BOOK REVIEW by Verano

black as i am. Poems by Zindzi Mandela. Photographs by Peter Magubane. Forward by Andrew Young. The Guild of Tutors Press. 1019 Gayley Ave. Los Angeles, California, 90024. 120 pages. \$5.95.

Andrew Young testifies that Zindzi Mandela's "poems are the mirror of the eyes of a child of Soweto, of a young mother waiting in a line for non-whites, of a black laborer with sweat glistening on his back. They are eyes full of questions. They are eyes that can light with mirth and laughter and never quite lose the shadow of pain. They are eyes that can hold love and friendship, as well as quiet rage."

Teenaged Zindzi Mandela affirms, "so you've heard it before, we are inhumanly treated, we are hidden from all, so you've heard it before, so I've complained before." Yet in spite of all the pain, "the song that life plays is the joy that children bring, like a new melody or a rusty guitar."

The black bird
perched itself on the cement world
as it jerked its little head
and faced me
I saw the white patch on its chin
and
before I could study it further
it took off
leaving me the admirer
and the wall the support
waiting
every morning she comes
to display herself
for a few minutes
insults the wall
by her little droppings
gives me her back
and takes off gracefully
gliding at an odd angle
then
her tail a dot far away
bids me farewell
all I can do is smile
and wipe the tears off my face
awaiting
again
that black bird
my beauty
who reminds me
of myself



Lord

we are black
even in prayer
because
when we do worship
we are silenced
by the white man
who lent you to us

We do not need a roof anymore
to protect us
and to bring us closer to you

If all our leaders have gone
then you have to lead us
and show us the way
a tunnel to freedom
is our prayer

Take my hand
for it is still warm
lean on my shoulder
for it is still comfortable
hold on to my apron
for it is still useful
sit on my lap
for it is still soft
step on my foot
for it is still fit
come.....



ZIDZI MANDELA

Childhood days
far away
Slipping through my aging fingers
falling into my sweetest memories
so hot
that steam evaporates
and
the drops dissolve
in the cold forgotten air
I always cry
when
I think of my happiness
its innocence
and confidence
in my childhood days
far away
so far
that I wish I could reach out
and bring them back
knowing
that I won't let them go
no
not again

Women

My life is but a dirty penny
that is only valued because
it is the only one

My life is but a ten rand note
that can be used only because
there may be change

My life is but a faithful husband
who smiles alone only because
he thinks he knows

My life is but a broken mirror,
that still stands up only because
it has to act

The photographs presented throughout the book are from the exhibition entitled, "Shanty-Towns", which lie on the outskirts of Cape Town and Johannesburg. They are taken by Peter Magubane, a prize-winning photographer and staff member of the Rand Daily Mail.

MERIDEL LESUEUR

At 77, Meridel Le Sueur is being restored to her proper place in American letters. As a short story writer with proletarian leaning in the Thirties, she was hailed by such colleagues and comrades as Cale Sandburg ("a witness, with a genius for moving and highly implicative testimony"), Nelson Algren ("a powerful realism and a deep sense of beauty"). Blacklisted in the Forties, she was rediscovered in the Seventies by the feminist movement.

This pamphlet gathers her writings of the Thirties on the subject of women. Just as relevant today, they are once again finding a broad, appreciative and militant audience.

"I did not write these Please send me _____ copies of Meridel Le Sueur's 'Women on the Breadlines' at one dollar per copy. Enclosed is \$ _____.

NAME _____ (please print)

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

WREE - 266 West 23 Street, New York, N.Y. 10011

ANNOUNCEMENT

THE WREE-VIEW Art and Poetry Awards

THEME: Women Workers

DEADLINE: July 31, 1978

Submit artworks suitable for off-set printing which includes; prints, photographs, drawings, etc. and original poetry.

Works of art and poetry will be selected and presented in a collection. Proceeds from sale of collection will aid future publications of the WREE-VIEW. Awards will be given to each entry selected for the collection.

Enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope. All entries will be retained unless otherwise instructed.

Send all entries to: Cultural Editor
WREE-VIEW
Women for Racial and
Economic Equality
266 West 23rd Street
New York, N.Y. 10011

CORRECTION

In the March-April Issue, the miners art work are original paintings by Blue Lamb and Tony Willis. The artists were mistakenly credited as photographers.