

WRI Statement on the Middle East

The following statement of WRI's position on the Middle East conflict (based on discussion at the Zürich Council meeting) was adopted at the last Executive meeting, September 16-17, 1989.

As a pacifist international committed to the elimination of war and to the non-violent transformation of the conditions that lead to war, WRI is deeply concerned with the Middle East conflict between Israelis and Palestinians.

WRI seeks to remove the causes of war. Consequently, we support the struggles of oppressed and exploited peoples to change systems of domination. Sometimes this support may be critical. We warn against the consequences of armed struggle. We insist that rights claimed for one group of people must be claimed for all. We distinguish between the oppressed and their oppressors but recognise that these are not homogenous groups: within oppressed communities, there are always those who are doubly oppressed—most obviously women—while within oppressor communities, there are always those who act in conscience against injustice.

With these general considerations in mind, WRI agrees on the following points as a basis for its work on the conflict:

1. The killing will not cease until some realistic settlement is reached between the competing claims of those involved. At a minimum, this requires the satisfaction of the human and national rights of Palestinians and Israelis to manage their own affairs on an equal basis. While any group in the conflict denies others the right to freedom and independence, then the cycle of war and violence will continue, yielding only further destruction. Mutual

respect for the rights of others is a necessary precondition of a peaceful future, when Israelis and Palestinians may live together as neighbours.

2. WRI has historically sought a "third way" to resolve conflict, beyond the use of violence and state power. However, we recognise the political reality that, in the short term, movement towards a peaceful settlement is more likely to follow from international state-level actions. Conse-



quently WRI supports the widespread call for the UN Conference on Peace in the Middle East at which all parties to the conflict should be represented, including the PLO on an equal footing and the Permanent Members of the Security Council.

3. WRI supports all resisters to military service in the region, including both those who completely refuse to be part of the Israeli Defence Force and those who

specifically refuse to soldier in occupied areas of Palestine, Lebanon or Syria.

4. WRI supports all those in the region who are working nonviolently for a just peace and partnership between Israelis and Palestinians. In particular, the WRI expresses its solidarity with the Palestinian Centre for the Study of Nonviolence in East Jerusalem.

5. WRI particularly acknowledges the work of Palestinian and Israeli women who are struggling against all forms of oppression and domination, such as Women in Black and members of the Palestinian women's committees.

6. The current *intifada* (uprising) of Palestinians against Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip is a civilian-based struggle. WRI notes that the predominant modes of resistance are unarmed, insofar as the Palestinian leadership has decided against the use of lethal weapons in the *intifada*. We also note the many nonviolent, constructive and self-organised efforts to create a new Palestinian society.

7. WRI condemns the brutal suppression of the Palestinian *intifada* by the Israeli state, as we condemn all forms of terrorism, whatever their source or rationale. Consequently, we urge the PLO to continue its current commitment to unarmed methods of struggle in the *intifada* and to resist calls to begin using lethal weapons.

8. At some stage in the future, Palestinians and Israelis will have to live together as neighbours. The basis for such a future can never be laid by violent means. We reiterate WRI's conviction that means and ends are intimately related and that true justice and freedom are best achieved by nonviolent methods of struggle.

September 1989

1990: Time for peace—working for peace with Israelis and Palestinians

"Maybe you, too, who are sleeping / can listen to it" goes a Palestinian poem, quoted by the *Associazione per la Pace* in calling for peace movements internationally to support a nonviolent march in Palestine and Israel.

"Palestinian people need help. Peace movements in Israel need support. Can we do something?", asks the *Associazione* in an open letter to peace movements and peace activists.

The "march", from 29-31 December 1989, will take the form of a series of meetings with a wide range of groups in the occupied territories, and forums on health, human and civil rights, and education.

It will culminate in a human chain from the Jaffa Gate (West Jerusalem) to the Damascus Gate (East Jerusalem) under the slogans "Negotiate for Peace", "Respect Human and Civil Rights", and "Two Peoples, Two States".

As well as the many Palestinian groups which have offered support, some Israeli peace movements have endorsed the project, including *Yesh Gvul* and *Women in Black*. *Peace Now*—the largest and least radical Israeli peace movement—has no quarrel with the slogans but has yet to decide whether it will endorse the march.

For further information, contact: *Associazione per la Pace*, Via Francesco Carrara 24, 00196 Roma, Italy (tel: +39-6-3608687 or 3612539).

AUSTRALIA

High Court challenge to illegal nuclear strategy

Along with a group of law academics, barristers and solicitors, war tax resister Robert Burrowes is preparing a writ to be issued in the High Court of Australia which will challenge the constitutional validity of Parts III and VI of the Income Tax Assessment Act. He argues that they are not "laws for the peace, order, and good government of the Commonwealth" as stipulated in Section 51 of the Constitution.

Burrowes maintains that these laws require Australian taxpayers to violate their obligations under international law: by financing the planning and preparation for a nuclear first-strike, for instance, taxpayers are guilty of conspiracy to commit genocide and crimes against peace.

The constitutional challenge will be based on two main arguments: firstly, under Australian and international law, the government has no power to finance such illegal acts as Australia's involvement in US nuclear strategy, itself illegal under international law. Secondly, the government has no power to deny taxpayers their legal duty to refuse to obey orders of the government which conflict with their own moral choice; this includes orders to support the arms race financially.

Contact: Peace and Development Foundation, PO Box 167, North Carlton, Victoria 3054; tel +61 3 387 3398.

DENMARK

At their 1989 Yearly Meeting, Danish Quakers adopted a statement on peace tax asking "the government and Folketing [Parliament] to take steps to change the legislation so that it will be possible to avoid contributing economically to military activities, parallel to the possibility of refusing military service..."

(Among Friends)

VIVE LES DÉSERTEURS!



F R GERMANY

A Quaker couple, Christa and Klaus-martin Voigt have taken the Freiburg tax office to court. The Voigts had for some years been withholding that part of their income tax which they knew from published budget details was used to finance armaments.

At a public hearing at the fiscal court in Baden-Baden on June 1, they pleaded that the basic human right of freedom of faith and conscience took precedence over the tax laws.

They explained that they could see no difference between bearing arms and paying for arms. "We are accessories to the crime however insignificant we may be. In other words we share the guilt and the responsibility—even if the connection is blurred by bureaucracy." Judgement is pending.

(Among Friends)

CONFERENCE REPORT READY

Beweging Weigering Defensiebelasting, who organised the second international conference on war taxes, has now completed the conference report. Available from: BWD, Utrechtseweg 159, 3818 ED Amersfoort, Netherlands; tel: + 31 33 61 00 26.

USA

Alternative Revenue Service to be launched

"Wouldn't you like to drop by the post office and pick up an EZ Peace Form where the IRS [Internal Revenue Service] forms are stacked? You might take it home without even noticing that it's not the traditional form. As you begin to fill it out, the questions seem unusual. 'Where do I want my tax dollars to go?' The IRS never asked that before. The instructions say the Pentagon isn't really buying national security, but there's something called Common Security which sounds interesting..."

An alternative income tax form is just the first stage of what is to be a co-ordinated campaign over the next year organised by peace tax activists in the War Resisters League. The Alternative Revenue Service (ARS) form will ask respondents to resist paying \$1 (or more) of their federal taxes. The national ARS office will divert the money to real human needs.

The actions will start on January 16, 1990, Martin Luther King Day, with rallies and leafletting at post offices and IRS offices. Piles of IRS forms will be replaced with ARS forms, and ARS counselling tables will be set up at IRS offices.

On April 16, 1990, Tax Day in the US, nationwide actions are planned to include the setting up of ARS processing centres at IRS offices, and the announcement of the number of alternative forms returned and the amount of money diverted.

YOUR OWN PROTEST CHEQUE BOOK?

Ruth Herring in Britain pays her war taxes at the last possible moment and always protests. She puts her withheld tax into a separate account, and pays with specially printed cheques which read: "RHG Herring Peace Tax Fund Account", to make sure the Inland Revenue gets the message.

(Peace Tax Campaign Newsletter)



CZECHOSLOVAKIA

On June 14, a Prague military court passed a 14 month conditional sentence on **Libor Frank**, a 19-year-old Hare Krishna devotee, for evading military service and attempting to leave the republic illegally. Libor, a joiner, was arrested in April close to the Hungarian border. From the day of his arrest until the court hearing, he was held in police custody. *Informace o chartě* reports that at his trial, Libor declared that he was now willing to begin military service. After the hearing he lodged an appeal against his sentence.

Meanwhile, the Independent Peace Association is circulating a petition calling for the release of COs **Vladan Kočí** and **Jan Šubrť** (see report in last issue). The IPA is campaigning for a civilian alternative to military service in Czechoslovakia.

It is estimated that there are up to 50 Jehovah's Witnesses (JWs) and up to 10 Seventh Day Adventists in prison in Czechoslovakia at the moment for refusal to serve in the military.

EL SALVADOR

Thousands of Salvadorean men and boys (from 10 to 30 years old) are victims of forced military recruitment every year. They are virtually "captured" from schools and markets, while walking in the street, travelling by bus, leaving a cinema,...

Military service for 18 to 30-year-old men is compulsory under the Salvadorean constitution, but there is no law regulating this, and basic human rights are not respected. (See article in *Newsletter* 221.)

The Centro de Protección Juvenil (Centre for Youth Protection), started in 1988 by the Baptist church, gives workshops on CO, Christian peacemaking, and the situation in El Salvador. It also offers legal assistance to secure the conscripts' release and/or safety, and for induction and desertion cases. The Centre is trying to build an international solidarity network; for more information contact: **Centro de Protección Juvenil, Apartado 347, San Salvador, El Salvador.**

ESTONIA

Erkki Luik, a 20-year-old farm worker from Polva, is serving 18 months compulsory labour for refusal to serve in the Soviet army on the grounds that it is an occupying force in Estonia. He is the first CO on political grounds in Estonia.

On June 28 Luik wrote to the Polva Military Commission, stating his refusal to serve. At his first trial, on August 22, Luik's lawyer demanded that the judge—a reserve army officer—be replaced. At the second trial, on September 11 (with a new judge), Luik's lawyer argued that his conscription to an occupying army violates the 1949 Geneva Convention.

On August 10, the Estonian paper *Noorte Haal* carried a letter to the Estonian

authorities in support of Luik, calling for the introduction of alternative service and drawing attention to the provision of alternative service in Hungary and Poland. "Once and for all, the shameful practice of putting people behind bars because of their pacifism must come to an end." Prominent signatories included human rights activist **Enn Tarto**.

Letters of support can be sent to **Erkki Luik, Savi 2/46, Polva, Estonian SSR, USSR.**

Four other men are currently serving sentences for refusing military service—all of them on religious grounds. **Andrus Altpere** of Rapina, **Aarne Heide** of Parnu, **Taavi Kuusk** of Antsla and **Tiit Kruuse** of Saku. (Kruuse, aged 20, is reported to be serving a two year sentence in ordinary regime labour camp at Tisleri in Tallinn.)

Estonians to complete training nearer home

Jane's Defence Weekly reports that, following an agreement between the Chairman of the Estonian Supreme Soviet and the Soviet Defence Minister, some Estonian conscripts with dependents are to be allowed to complete their military service in the Baltic Military District. Other conscripts will serve in the same climatic zone as Estonia. Normal Soviet policy is to post conscripts away from their home districts. In another agreement, young men about to enter higher education will be allowed to take entrance exams and will be called up only if they fail.

(*Transatlantic Peace Newsletter*)

ENGLAND

Two workers have been fired from an English plastics factory after refusing to do work for South Africa. On July 17, **Ross Galbraith** and **Gary Sherrif** told the management of the non-union Granby Plastics factory in Leicester that they wouldn't work on a contract to supply Nyfoil plastic to South Africa. On August 17 they were sacked. Their unemployment pay has been suspended and they are now living on donations, while visiting Granby's customers to persuade workers to boycott its products. Messages of support can be sent c/o: **Leics & District Trades Council, 138 Charles Street, Leicester, England; tel (mornings) +44 533 530005.** (*Peace News*)

F R GERMANY

After a delay of two years and ten months—due to the INF talks and other political factors—the trial of the second group of German Plowshares activists is finally getting underway on October 11, 13 and 16.

On December 12, 1986 (seventh anniversary of the NATO decision to deploy cruise and Pershing II in Europe), the four activists—**Heike Huschauer**, **Susanne Mauch-Friz**, **Wolfgang Sternstein** and **Stellan Vinthagen**—disarmed a Pershing II carrier with hammers and boltcutters. They are charged with attempted

sabotage, wilful destruction and trespass.

They plan to conduct the trial in a spirit of nonviolence, not turning the courtroom into an arena for the sake of the media. However, they still want publicity, and ask people to organise support actions.

Contact: **Heike Huschauer, Im Hawisch 5, 4040 Neuss 21, F R Germany; tel +49 2107 70871.**

Increasingly, West German corporations are taking army service as a criterion for employing young men, thus disfavouring COs. BMW manager **Franz Koehler** recently emphasised the importance of army service: "Whoever objects to taking responsibility for our society which allows prosperity cannot take responsibility in serving the corporation either."

HUNGARY

Civilian service begins

There have been 209 applications for the recently introduced civilian alternative service, out of a total of 31,800 new conscripts, according to figures released by the Hungarian government in August. Of these, 14 were Jehovah's Witnesses, and two Nazarenes. A further 39, mainly Nazarenes, had applied to do unarmed military service, an option for members of their church since 1977. Two Nazarenes and 27 JWs had refused to perform either civilian or unarmed military service.

By October, the total number of applications had risen to around 600, with about 50 JWs also refusing civilian service. No prosecutions have yet been initiated.

Decisions were to be taken on applications in October, and most of those performing civilian service will be employed by the Ministries of Health and Transport. One CO working in a church institution has been allowed to continue this work as his civilian service.

ISRAEL

Veteran Israeli peace campaigner and broadcaster **Abie Nathan** was sent to prison for six months on October 3, for breaking the Israeli "Anti-Peace" law by meeting the PLO leader **Yasser Arafat**.

Abie Nathan, aged 62 was sentenced by Ramle magistrates' court after rejecting community service. He is the first Israeli to be sent to prison under the 1986 law which forbids meetings with members of "terrorist" organisations such as the PLO—others have been fined or sentenced to community service.

Nathan spent 40 days in prison in 1968 after flying an illegal peace mission to Egypt. In recent years he has run the Voice of Peace radio station, broadcasting from the Mediterranean off Tel Aviv. After being sentenced he said, "I knew I was violating a law. This law is an obstacle to peace. It has no place in a democratic country. If anyone thinks six months in

continued ⇐

prison will keep me from talking to the enemy, they have a big surprise coming."

The Israeli Prime Minister's Advisor on Women's Status is examining the complaint of a woman bus driver who was dismissed from her work in a bus cooperative. A spokesman (sic) for the cooperative said, "We don't accept women as members because they bear an unequal share of the security burden."

Noya Jibly, the woman concerned, was fired after working for the coop for 22 months in order to avoid her becoming a permanent employee. The coop claims that having a woman who doesn't have the same "security" burden as a member would damage the spirit of equality that is fundamental to a cooperative.

In Israel, women are subject to conscription, but serve for only two years as opposed to three years for men, and do not serve in combat situations.

Sergeants David Golan and SL Golan from Jerusalem were sentenced on September 14 to 32 days for refusing service. For both men this is their second sentence. Corporal Amir Rappaport, an accountant from Tel Aviv was sentenced to 21 days. In all, there are six Yesh Gvul members in prison at the moment.

The Israeli Tourist Guides' trade union has told its members to refuse to take on the armed guarding of tourist groups. If their employers find it necessary to guard tourists in the occupied areas, they should make suitable arrangements, but the guides should prevent themselves from becoming armed guards.

LABRADOR

Five Innu jailed for NATO base reclamation

Five Innu (native people of "Labrador") were arrested on September 18 on the runway of the Goose Bay Canadian Forces Base in the latest action in the non-violent resistance to NATO air war games.

The five—Jackie Ashini, Raphael Gregoire, Rose Gregoire, Martha Hurley, and Joachim Selma—had entered the base in the dark. As dawn brought the first jets out for flight, the three women and two men walked onto the taxiway and tried to stop them taking off. Four were offered release on condition that they wouldn't enter the base again; they refused to promise this. Martha Hurley had previously signed such an undertaking and is being held for violation of this agreement. The five are due to be arraigned on October 24.

The Innu claim the presence of the rapidly expanding air base is illegal. A previous runway occupation case is on appeal after the lower court judge affirmed Innu claims to the land.

For more information, contact: Rick and

Louise Bauman, Mennonite Central Committee, General Delivery, Northwest River, Labrador, AOP 1M0, Canada.

LITHUANIA

Kestutis Jasulevicius, from Kudirkos-Naumestis in the Sakiai district of Lithuania was called up to the Soviet army in December 1988 and sent to a unit in Latvia. He refused the oath of allegiance "to the army which occupied his homeland". On December 31, 1988 he was put in the psychiatric ward of a military hospital in Kaliningrad, where he was treated with medicines. After two months he was sent to Riga, in the charge of the military procuracy. He ran away, but was soon arrested and sent back to Kaliningrad. He was tried on April 21 1989, and sentenced to two years conditional deprivation of freedom.

SOUTH AFRICA

Wilhelm Libenberg, one of the 143 objectors who last year publicly refused to serve in the SADF, was detained under the Emergency regulations on September 1. Libenberg, 36, is a lecturer in Afrikaans at Witswatersrand University. He has also been active in the UDF and other organisations working for democracy, and was chair of the Grahamstown End Conscription Campaign.

Sandy Smit, another ECC activist, was also detained on September 1, and is being held without trial in Bamberton Prison. She is an executive member of the Johannesburg Democratic Action Committee, and works as a freelance photographer.

(Weekly Mail)

SRI LANKA

Amnesty International reports that since mid-June, hundreds of civilians, mainly young men have been forcibly detained by paramilitary groups in the north and east of Sri Lanka. The men detained are apparently being forced to participate in the Citizen's Voluntary Force, a special security force set up by the Sri Lankan government in January 1989 and closely aligned with the Indian Peace Keeping Force. The groups involved in the detentions are the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), and the Eelam National Democratic Liberation Front, which exercises governmental control in the region.

By the beginning of August, about 1300 young men had fled from the north-east of Sri Lanka to Colombo to escape forced recruitment. According to reports, one eighteen-year-old who refused to serve in the defence force had his head shaved in punishment and was beaten with sticks.

The EPRLF claim that they are in a state of war and need the "recruits", and say that recruitment was not involuntary: they claim that, fearing reprisals from the Tamil Tigers if they appear to join voluntarily, some young men have actually asked to be recruited forcibly.

UKRAINE

Two Ukrainian Catholic priests, Fr Volodymyr Vityshin and Fr Hryhori Simkailo have each received six-month army details for publicly holding Ukrainian Catholic services. Fr Vityshin has been sent to the Tambov region in Russia to serve his sentence. The authorities have yet to find Fr Simkailo. Both priests have already served duty in the army and both are over 30 years of age.

USA

Red tape traps CO

Only administrative incompetence is keeping Monte Heil in the US Army, according to the US Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors (CCCO). It has asked the Secretary of the Army John Marsh Jr to intervene directly in the case.

Even though Heil satisfies all the requirements for honourable discharge as a CO, the army's mismanagement of its own paperwork is preventing him having his claim fully considered.

Heil, who has served in the National Guard, the Reserves and the Army, first applied for discharge as a CO in November 1988. His application included his own statement and supporting letters from his family, friends, the army chaplain and psychiatrist, and even from his commanding officers. Someone in Heil's position should normally have no trouble in obtaining discharge as a CO.

Letters of support to: Monte R Heil, 9815 Copper Creek Drive, #1503, Austin, TX 78729, USA.

(Fellowship)

YUGOSLAVIA

On September 18, Djuro Zegarac, a JW from Biograd na Moru, Croatia, was arrested after refusing conscription. This is his third time in prison for CO.

He has already served a total of three years in prison, after previous sentences of four years in January 1986 and two and a half years in March 1988 were reduced. Released in May 1989, he again refused conscription in September and that same day was re-arrested. He is now being charged under an article of the criminal code dealing with "particularly severe cases of refusal to carry out military commands", and may face a sentence of several years.

A mechanical engineer, Djuro Zegarac has recently married. He is probably being held in a remand prison in Belgrade.

Yugoslavia has no civilian alternative service. The option of unarmed military service for certain religious objectors introduced this year lasts twice the length of military service.

Write, demanding the immediate and unconditional release of Djuro Zegarac on the grounds that he is a prisoner of conscience, to: His Excellency Janez Drnovsek, President of the SFRJ, Predsednistva SFRJ, Bulevar Lenjina 2, Beograd, Yugoslavia; telex 12 412 RESBEG YU.

BOOK REVIEWS

Indispensable for the peace activist

Housmans Peace Diary, 1990: Children's Visions of the Future, Housmans, £4.25 (ISBN 0 85283 216 8; ISSN 0957-0136).

Once again, a new edition of Housmans peace diary is with us. As always, it's an indispensable tool for the international peace activist. In the WRI office at any rate we're continually referring to the directory section: the most comprehensive international listing of peace organisations available. This year, a lot of work has gone into seeing that the addresses are as up to date (and correct) as possible, and the listings now include e-mail addresses and indicate who has faxes.

The articles this year are on the theme of children, and what kind of world we are passing on to them. There are also plenty of contributions from children themselves. I felt disappointed though that some of the darker issues of childhood (such as sexual abuse and violence against children) were not really addressed.

The diary section contains the usual enjoyable and sometimes idiosyncratic selection of quotes and anniversaries "to celebrate or mark with protest".

This year the diary is available in the usual bound format, and for the first time, for all us aspiring *Weigeryuppies*, in a loose-leaf, filofax™-compatible edition. Both options are printed on recycled paper.

The diary is available direct from WRI for £4.75 (including postage); order your copy right away. **CB**

Remembering Myrtle

Inventing ourselves: lesbian life stories, Hall Carpenter Archives Lesbian Oral History Group (Routledge), £9.95.

Myrtle Solomon was quite excited. This was to be the most intimate interview she ever gave. Now it has been published in collection of 15 lesbian life stories, a book dedicated to Myrtle. Fittingly, the book begins with Myrtle, the oldest woman interviewed, and ends with the youngest, a Black Greenham woman.

The interview with Myrtle will delight all her friends. On reading the transcript, she commented: "I haven't got it over that I don't give a damn about 'being a lesbian'—it simply does not worry me. It was the upheaval of loving so deeply and becoming so passionately involved that disturbed my life, not my choice of sex... I had no desire to share my love life with a cause, but it was never shame that held me back... Anyway, remember me as a happy and fulfilled woman, as I am". This interview helps.

What next for WRI?

Where is WRI heading as an organisation? What priorities should we have in our work over the next few years? As a starting point for what we hope will be an ongoing discussion of these questions, we are reprinting some conclusions and questions from the office report presented to this year's Council meeting. We'd be very interested to hear other's thoughts on these questions.

Any dynamic organisation has to strike a balance between outreach and maintenance. WRI has been over-reaching itself, neglecting maintenance in pursuit of outreach. In organising the Vedchhi Triennial and since, WRI has made many new contacts in different parts of the world, but has usually lacked the organisational means to follow these up. The absence of a coherent development strategy has created a severe lack of direction: people have bright ideas, people see good opportunities for WRI to get into a new area of work, but there is no consistent pattern in deploying WRI's resources.

Thinking about the future development of the WRI certain fundamental issues need to be addressed, for instance:

● **Does WRI have a political line beyond what its affiliates have in common?**

We hope the answer is yes: that the International has a larger picture than any one Section, that it has its own projects and its own identity. The problem is that this picture is unclear and this identity under-defined, that projects are taken up or dropped haphazardly rather than according to an overall strategy.



● **To what extent can WRI carry out its work through Sections?**

After Vedchhi, the WRI Executive and staff resolved to be of greater service to the Sections, to find more forms of direct contact with Section members, and to offer new avenues of involvement in WRI to members of affiliates. Working groups were seen as a chance for this involvement, a way of creating centres of initiative outside the staff and Executive, and of bringing some people from outside WRI structures into a WRI project. The hopes of those days have not materialised.

● **How can WRI develop a real base beyond Europe and the US?**

WRI aspires to be a global organisation,

yet its geographical and ideological foundations were laid in Europe. How much are existing WRI Sections natural partners for "Third World" movements for peace and justice? What balance should be struck between developing programmes of co-operation with "Third World" movements and working with existing WRI groups on their existing agendas? The International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFoR) is in the process of trying to establish regional structures—could or should WRI consider this?



● **What balance should be struck between project work and servicing WRI as a network?**

Historically, many WRI initiatives have led to the creation of separate, independent organisations: most obviously in the last decade the European Bureau for COs and the International Nonviolent March for Demilitarisation. Does that imply that WRI is more effective at planting seeds than bringing them to fruit? To become more project-based would have wide organisational implications. WRI would narrow its range of activities, and would need a clearer idea of its constituency and more precisely defined goals. To make servicing a higher priority means being guided much more by the Sections' own campaigns, priorities and debates.

● **How should the International be funded?**

Only a small proportion of WRI's income comes from affiliates. If we want more funding from trusts, then that means concentrating more on projects and investing less in Sections; if our work is mainly to be servicing Sections, then we need Sections to fund-raise for us and cannot expect more grants from Trusts.

WRI STAFF

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C096
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SOUTH AFRICA
Please see page 13



"War is a crime against humanity.
We are therefore determined not to
support any kind of war and to strive
for the removal of all causes of war."

W.R.I.



INTRODUCING THE WRI

War Resisters International is, like its name, straightforward and obvious. This same simplicity as well as an inner strength, is evident in the WRI Declaration which is the basis of membership:

"War is a crime against humanity. I therefore am determined not to support any kind of war and to strive for the removal of all causes of war."

But these few words cannot convey the richness in human stories of people from all over the world who have pooled their energy and their pacifist ideas to create a force for social change.

And how effective have we been? Looking back WRI's presence and many of its campaigns have had a profound influence on individuals and collective bodies which have then gone on to have a direct influence on the course of history.

PACIFISM

While pacifism involves a seeking after truth in a way that does not always produce the same set answers, there are certain ideas and beliefs that are common among WRI members. For example, we see that means and ends are forever related; that goals are irrevocably tied up in how we work toward them. We believe that there is something of value in each person, something to reach out to, it is fear and pain which often lead people, as individuals or as nations, to behave in violent, harmful ways.

With this premise, it seems clear to us that war and violence are not the way to solve conflict. They will only reap yet more war and violence. It is often claimed that war can help to preserve order, liberate the oppressed and provide security. But experience shows that in all wars, order, security, and liberty disappear, and the oppressed suffer the most.

Pacifism is an ongoing experiment, taking place every day. It is from this creative search that the WRI reaches its campaigning ideas, analysis of political situations, and long-range strategies.

THE IMPORTANCE OF INDIVIDUAL RESISTANCE

This experiment takes place among each of us differently. We put a high value on personal action, empowering people to take individual responsibility and act on their beliefs. War resistance often starts as a personal decision: Will I serve in the military? Will I pay my taxes that go to the military? Will I buy war toys for my children?

Sometimes such stands require people to act with great courage, speaking in

isolation from most of their fellow citizens. WRI works to provide these resisters with support, putting them in contact with each other and creating a "family" of resisters to belong to. In some situations, it has helped to get war resisters out of prison by bringing public pressure to bear on government officials, in others, it has provided material aid for their families.

Publicity about individual acts of war resistance has another important purpose besides protection for the person involved. It can inspire and encourage the rest of us, bringing more people into the movement. "Why, if this young man can risk four years in jail for his beliefs, I can certainly do something." Thus one action can bring out a growing wave of activity.

COLLECTIVE ACTION

Then this is our approach to organizing a mass movement. As the folksong goes: "One man's hands can't tear a prison down, but if one and one and fifty make a million, we will see that day come around." We recognize that significant social change will only come about when large numbers of people begin resisting the present system and creating alternatives. We therefore recognise the importance of collective strength but still take care to encourage the unique contributions of each individual.

Noncooperation needs to be nurtured and organized in its individual and collective forms. In her individual refusal to move from the back of the bus in Birmingham, Alabama, Rosa Parks helped to catalyze a city-wide bus boycott and the new civil rights movement in the American South. Solidarnosc, in Poland, encouraged each individual Polish citizen to see themselves carrying out the new ideas of freedom and workers' democracy in their schools, and neighbourhoods. This massive grassroots empowerment gave that non-violent revolution immense strength, and has helped to keep its spirit alive through the oppressive times that have followed.

AN INTERNATIONAL NETWORK

War resistance can be found everywhere but it is popular nowhere. One of WRI's major functions is building lifelines of communication among resisters, not letting anyone remain lost or invisible. We are a network where people in one country may reach out a supportive hand to their counterparts in another.

This can be a valuable experience for those of us working in countries where peace movements are strong. It is so easy to become self-absorbed in our own local successes. When we meet our counterparts who are facing stiff prison sentences or exile for pursuing the freedom to resist militarism, we begin to see our own experience in a broader perspective.

Our international framework is very much a political statement. While we value the strength that people can gain from living in a social structure that embodies their cultural identity, we see the nation-state as one of the causes of war. It encourages barriers between people rather than bringing them into a cooperative circle. It plants the seeds of fear and competition that lead to border wars, to an arms race and eventually to imperialism.

We face a challenge: to push for a decentralized autonomy without planting the seeds of isolation and defensiveness and to find ways to encourage and support self-determination among peoples in an atmosphere of internationalism, where borders are not barriers.

A LONG HISTORY

War Resisters International is 66 years old. This long existence helps to give us a healthy perspective. We can look back and see how the organisation has developed in both peacetime and wartime. We can understand we are part of something bigger than ourselves and our immediate situations and will not solve all the problems of war and militarism in our lifetimes. This perspective can provide us with a crucial stamina: a patience to pace ourselves, and a hopefulness in the face of a more immediate hopelessness.

AT THE BEGINNING

In 1921, when WRI was founded at a conference in the Netherlands, the world was just recovering from World War I. Before the war, many anti-militarists had advocated an international general strike against the war – and indeed this had remained the policy of the Second International right up to the outbreak of war. When the war came, nationalism prevailed and workers followed the flag rather than their international class loyalty. Nevertheless, many individuals stood out against the war, resisting military service at a cost sometimes of imprisonment, sometimes of execution. After the war, the surviving conscientious objectors formed their own national organisations – seeking to encompass both personal pacifism and an economic critique of class structures. In 1921, representatives from such organisations in four countries met to create Paco (the Esperanto word for peace) and to adopt the broken rifle as their common symbol. The name was changed to War Resisters' International a year later.

Why did they feel they needed an international organization? The need for a community of support was strong. There were people all over the world who often in complete isolation, had decided that participation in war was impossible for them. It was with great joy that they learned of the many others who shared their views and with whom they could act in solidarity. Runham Brown, the first chair of the WRI, used to say that it was not so much a case of creating an organization as discovering it.

AT THE PRESENT

What are the purposes for the WRI today, in 1988? Our answers reflect how the nature of war has changed, and how much we have learnt about the political institution of militarism. Under the threat of nuclear weapons, pacifism and nonviolence have become imperative for the planet's survival and not simply an individual moral stand. Our investigations into the root causes of war have highlighted relationships of domination – economic domination, domination of the earth, racism and sexism.

Yet, no matter how compelling pacifist arguments may appear, the mass public outcry for peace and disarmament often seem shallow and sporadic. Many people seem to have given up hope and retreated into their private lives. This is the challenge we face now: how to rekindle hope and empower people to create new nonviolent alternatives.

RESISTING CONSCRIPTION AND MILITARY SERVICE

Supporting young men (and now more women) who refuse to serve in the military has always been central to WRI's work. This has involved a variety of issues: government recognition of conscientious objection, support for total resistance to conscription, countering high-pressure volunteer recruitment. WRI put the rights of conscientious objectors on the agenda at the United Nations and the United Nations Commission on Human Rights finally voted to recognize conscientious objection as a human right.

We give attention to individual CO cases, remembering that they can have the power to turn the tide. The campaign for Pepe Beunza in Spain in 1971 is an example. By building up international publicity for him, we put pressure on the Spanish government to recognize CO's. Pepe's public stand also encouraged thousands of young men to take the brave steps of saying "no" to their call-up. Eventually, ten years later, new Liberal laws were passed. More recently, the WRI has been involved with the case of Michalis, a young man refusing military service in Greece. While Jehovah's Witnesses are routinely sentenced to 4½ years in prison there, other CO's have gone into exile rather than face such long sentences. Michalis decided to stay and wage a very public campaign around his case, hoping that it will not only benefit his situation but build public support to liberalize the law. In the face of thousands of letters from all over the world, the Greek government is discussing a change in the law.

WRI provides support for broad campaigns against conscription as well. A case in point is the End Conscription Campaign in South Africa, a movement of young, white South Africans who refuse for both pacifist and anti-racist reasons, to serve in the South African Defence Forces. They face prison sentences of up to six years for their resistance. WRI has actively helped to build up international awareness of the ECC, making their existence felt in the offices of governments and international agencies like the United Nations. It has arranged for ECC members to attend international conferences, set up speaking tours for them, and kept peace activists informed through publications and 'emergency response' channels. ECC activist Laurie Nathan said in a recent letter to WRI members that we must not underestimate how important such international support is to resisters within South Africa, in helping everyone continue with their struggle.

WRI's Prisoners for Peace Campaign is an effort to build support for those war

resisters who are already serving time in prison. Every December 1st since 1956, the WRI office has distributed a list of resisters in prison and to peace groups and WRI members worldwide, enabling people to send greeting cards to the prisoners. This effort has been quite successful in making prison authorities aware of the massive support that exists for a resister and often helps to improve his treatment in prison. It also gives a major boost of confidence and sense of solidarity to the prisoner. In recent years, WRI has expanded this campaign; it now sends out a campaign packet outlining

**WAR
CAN BE
STOPPED!**

conditions in countries where the punishment for refusing military service deserves particular attention.

In recent years there have been many more kinds of situations where war resisters go to prison for their beliefs. The Prisoners for Peace list now also includes people in prison for civil disobedience actions and war tax resistance. Many local groups now hold vigils and send letters to the consulates of the worst offenders.

BROADER MEANINGS for RESISTANCE

The expansion in the Prisoners for Peace list is a sign of a much deeper change in the peace movement. As the conditions for CO's is improved and the nature of war becomes more technological, the issue of conscription becomes more limited. But at the same time, militarism has become more insidiously integrated into our whole lives. The economy depends upon military contracts and military spending. Our culture is infused with military images.

This raises new aspects of individual and collective resistance. In February 1987, we organized a seminar on 'Refusing War Preparations: Conscientious Objection and Noncooperation'. This event, cosponsored with the Green Alternative European Party in the European Parliament, involved people who have left jobs in military industry, scientists who have turned down military contracts, war tax resisters and people who have declared their communities as nuclear free zones. The printed reports of the proceedings should be a starting point in redefining what we call "the wider implications of conscientious objection."

One of these models, war tax resistance is very simple, very radical and growing in popularity. We publicise worldwide news of this movement in the WRI Newsletter.

Another growing field of resistance and protest is against the war toys industry, which has grown six fold in the United States since 1982. It is making an indelible impression on the next generation. Fortunately, there is increasing opposition – Finland, for example, has recently banned the sale of new war toys – but most of the awareness is now taking place in small communities and individual families.

Any work against war toys needs resources and examples of toys and books for children that promote peace. WRI is currently compiling an international biography on children and nonviolence. The War Resisters League in the United States has produced a campaign packet on war toys and is conducting campaigns against some of the biggest war toys producers. WRI friends in Yugoslavia are also working on this issue, setting up tables in city squares offering to exchange war toys for other toys.

Resistance to the military is now finding a collective voice in neighbourhoods and communities that declare themselves nuclear-free zones or try to close down a local foreign military base. WRI was involved in actively supporting an earlier dramatic struggle of this nature. The farmers in villages on the Larzac Plain in France developed a campaign to stop the expansion of a military base onto their grazing land. The farmers used noncooperation, creative nonviolent direct action, humour and constructive work as well as an incredible tenacity, to eventually win their struggle. On one occasion, they took their sheep to Paris and set them grazing under the Eiffel Tower as a way of raising awareness of their struggle. WRI helped to set up workgroups of volunteers who came to Larzac to assist with the farming and building new farm structures. The plans for the base were finally cancelled after nearly ten years of campaigning.

DURING WARTIME

Organizing for a pacifist future is often strongest in wartime. This may sound surprising, but even in World War II, the WRI found its need to be greater and its purpose clearer.

In addition to developing political campaigns to end the war, WRI throughout attempted to provide practical relief to the victims of war and to make special efforts to

behalf of war resisters and pacifists in all the warring countries.

It managed to secure the release of war resisters from prison and concentration camps, pleading their cases with public officials and using other forms of public and personal pressure. They also operated homes for the refugees and displaced or orphaned children. Lansbury Farm in England was a working farm for British CO's when other alternative service opportunities were unavailable. On the political front, WRI contributed its analysis of the war in a pamphlet titled "Why Hitler?" which showed how much fear had led the German people to embrace fascism. Maintaining links and communication among war resisters during the war was the highest priority. "Letters from Behind the Line" published in 1944, is a collection of correspondence received in that year which gave proof of how much resisters in prison and in hiding valued the WRI, with the knowledge that they were not forgotten.

During the War in Vietnam, many Sections of the WRI carried out a similar broad variety of activities. They had campaigns to raise funds for medical supplies, sending them to the victims on both sides. In Europe counselling was provided to American military deserters. The peace movement in opposition to that war was quite broad, and within it WRI tried to present the pacifist perspective clearly. One way was to highlight the nonviolent campaigns of the United Buddhist Church in South Vietnam, and to protest when Vietnamese Buddhists were imprisoned and tortured for their nonviolent action.

EAST-WEST RELATIONS

When the lines were drawn through Europe after World War II, WRI sought to keep communications open with members in the Eastern bloc. It has been an active participant in the movement challenging the militarization of Western Europe, but has been just as strong in pressing for less militarism and more human rights in Eastern Europe as well.

Perhaps the most dramatic example of this was following the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. WRI coordinated an extraordinary protest within the Eastern Bloc. Small groups of demonstrators were dispatched to four cities: Moscow, Warsaw, Budapest and Sofia. They carried a leaflet condemning the Warsaw Pact invasion and

reports of war resisters and the growing pacifist movements in the USSR, Hungary, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. We are working increasingly with "Freedom and Peace", the new Polish nonviolent action and war resistance group.

FEMINISM AND NONVIOLENCE

There has always been an active involvement of women in War Resisters International, but it is only in recent years that sexism has been considered seriously in examining the roots of war. Discussions about such a feminist analysis began at the WRI Triennial in 1972. WRI sponsored the first women's conference on feminism and nonviolence in 1976 at Les Circauds, France. A second one took place in Scotland in 1980 and a third is scheduled for the summer of 1987 in Ireland. We co-published "Piecing It Together" with the Feminism and Nonviolence Study Group soon after the Scotland conference. This pamphlet was a commentary on the role of women in the peace and disarmament movements. More recently, we have begun producing "WRI Women", a biannual newsletter which contains articles about special women's projects against militarism and more analytical pieces exploring the relation between feminist and pacifist anti-militarist work.

There are strong feelings that the WRI has a lot to explore in this field, both internally - encouraging more women to take leadership roles - and politically - investigating the links between warmaking and male socialization.

NONVIOLENT INTERVENTION

Some of the most challenging experiments in nonviolence have been those that involve direct intervention nonviolently, with the perpetration of violence. In 1960 the creation of the World Peace Brigades took place at a WRI Triennial. The idea behind the Brigade was for groups of people trained in nonviolent direct action to go to points of confrontation and help to create a buffer zone, setting the stage for the conflicts to be handled politically rather than militarily.

One such plan was to conduct a peace march from Tanganyika into Rhodesia at a time when the Rhodesians were refusing any steps to curb their white supremacist policies, and the possibility of violent confrontation with blacks was increasing. The march was seen as support for a general strike among the black population in Northern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and to protest an election controlled by the white supremacists. The plans for the march succeeded in pressuring the British to sit down and negotiate with the Africans; most Rhodesians boycotted the forthcoming white-controlled election and plans for a new election were set up, that would allow for a greater participation of black citizens.

The World Peace Brigade idea is currently being carried on by Peace Brigades International which operates a project in Guatemala and is investing opportunities in Sri Lanka and El Salvador.

Another form of nonviolent intervention has been to provide direct humanitarian aid to the victims of war even when this involves the risks of breaking embargoes and crossing behind enemy lines. In 1971, War Resisters International organized Operation Omega to Bangladesh, first running food into occupied "East Pakistan" and then, after independence, doing constructive work with the Biharis, a non-Bengali minority group.

CONSTRUCTIVE WORK

The idea of constructive work as part of a nonviolent campaign originated from the writings of Tolstoy and then Gandhi. The idea they put forward was that in any campaign to stop a violent system, besides the tactics of demonstrations and public marches, vigils and written leaflets, there must be concrete practical work to help the people who are victimized by the violence. This not only helps their very real situation, but it also helps to raise the consciousness of those involved in the campaign. Constructive work thus plays a dual role as a nonviolent tactic in putting forth a message in dramatic terms. War resisters who have not been granted CO status, such as Pepe Beunza and Michalis Maragakis began carrying out their "alternative service" work voluntarily while at the same time public saying no to the military authorities; they wanted to give visible proof that they did intend to serve the people of their country without a gun, even if the government had refused them this right. Another dramatic example was the "reverse strike" organized in Sicily by Danilo Doici, a former WRI Council member. When the government refused to give the community a much-needed paved road, they went out and started building one themselves. This embarrassed the government so much, that they had to come in and finish the job, thus giving the villages the road they needed.

NONVIOLENT TRAINING

As nonviolence has developed detailed strategies for action, the means by which individuals and communities prepare for such activities has produced a whole new area and style of education. Nonviolent training is a structured process, built on small-group work and the use of roleplaying, that helps people to think ahead about their behaviour in a tense situation, and thereby giving them a better possibility of steering it in a nonviolent direction. There are many different cultural definitions of this kind of training: in some countries, it is geared to particular demonstrations, in others it is geared toward one's daily life. At the forthcoming Triennial in Finland in June 1985, one full day of the conference will be set up as a nonviolent training session, for all the participants to take part in. Along with this event, WRI is currently setting up an international nonviolent trainers network, as a structure for sharing skills and information.

POLITICAL ANALYSIS

Campaigns are only one thread of political activity. Developing a political analysis and subsequent strategy are crucial, if the individual campaigns are going to blend toward social change. WRI has made some special contributions in this area, articulating pacifist thought and introducing this into the general discussion of disarmament and social justice.



THE TRAGEDY OF SPAIN

Will You Help!
???

REFUGEES from Madrid, Malaga and other bombed areas are fleeing into the eastern and southern towns of Spain where in certain cases the population has been quadrupled. They are mostly terrified women, little children and old people who have travelled the roads on foot amid the horror of machine gun fire.

"HOMELESS"
THOUSANDS OF REFUGEES IN SPAIN

THE WAR RESISTERS' INTERNATIONAL

Has opened a Relief Centre in Valencia. Is distributing food and clothing in Almeria. Is facilitating the evacuation of the civil population from bombed areas.

Has its appointed representatives in struck areas to investigate cases of most urgent need and to attend to them.

OUR OWN SPANISH MOVEMENT IS CARRYING OUT THIS WORK
THERE ARE CONSEQUENTLY NO ADMINISTRATION CHARGES

Every penny you give goes in direct relief

SEND YOUR GIFT TO-DAY

The War Resisters' International, "Spanish Relief Fund"
11, ABBEY ROAD, ENFIELD, MIDDLESEX, ENGLAND

banners which read: "End NATO, End the US War in Vietnam, End the Occupation of Czechoslovakia". Participants in the groups came from 16 different countries. In each city, they went to a town square or a shopping centre where they hung their banners and began distributing leaflets to local citizens. Most of them were arrested quite quickly and soon deported but not before they had met with an enthusiastic response and support from the local people who read the leaflets. This was a small break in the wall of silence between East and West, and a small act of consistency from people who oppose NATO militarism in Western Europe. As with many small actions, it had its own kind of power. WRI continues to break that wall of silence, publishing

LIBERATION STRUGGLES

There are more questions than answers in the pacifists approach to liberation struggles. The debate over how an oppressed people could defend themselves without resorting to violent self-defence is complicated even further by the question "Who are we to judge how anyone else decides to fight for their survival?" WRI has raised the questions and attempted to answer them many times over the years. During the Spanish Civil War, WRI produced a booklet titled Spain, 'A Challenge to Pacifism' which expressed the conviction that there are ways for pacifists to support self-determination without serving the war effort. In 1968, as the same questions were raised over the war in Vietnam, the WRI Council adopted a statement on Liberation Movements. More recently, as the conflicts in Nicaragua and South Africa challenged us again, WRI produced a paper at its 1986 Triennial about Pacifists and Wars of Liberation.

No one should underestimate the gravity of this dilemma for pacifists. Many war resisters passionately see the need for people to throw off their oppressors. When it seems to them that this can only happen with the help of armed resistance, they have to find a way for this to live alongside their abhorrence of war and violence. Fenner Brockway, one of the first Chairs of the WRI, felt that he had to leave the organization in 1936 in order to express his support for the arming of the workers in Spain. Such stands were not taken lightly, when he felt he must leave his comrades on this issue they respected his decision although disagreeing with it.

The WRI statement in 1968 again raised this dilemma:

The WRI is first of all a freedom movement. We work for man's right to freedom: freedom to live without hunger, war, pestilence; freedom to live without economic, social, racial and cultural exploitation; freedom for the individual to express himself and to develop to the full his powers as a creative human being; freedom to develop social capacity, so often cramped and distorted by authoritarian structures, which enables men to live in community and to rise above egotism.

NONVIOLENT REVOLUTION

War cannot be ended without fundamental social change, some form of nonviolent revolution. This has been recognised from the foundation of the WRI, but our understanding of the scope of that revolution has varied over time, reflecting also different political tendencies within the organisation - anarchist, socialist, Gandhian, and more recently ecologist and feminist.

In the early days, the WRI identified with the cause of proletarian internationalism - papers on "pacifism and class struggle" challenged the middle-class pacifism which dominated certain national movements. Then, responding to Gandhi and other movements for colonial freedom, the analysis extended especially in the writings of the Dutch social-revolutionary Bart de Ligt. De Ligt argued that there were three social forces which would revolutionise society and end war: the proletariat, the colonised and racially-subjected, and women.

In Gandhi's centenary year, 1969, the Triennial conference - "Liberation and Revolution: Gandhi's Challenge" - embarked on a process of clarifying WRI's view of nonviolent revolution. The result was a 1972 draft "Manifesto for Nonviolent Revolution" by an American Quaker, George Lakey. Lakey's analysis of the world concentrated on economic injustice, ecology and sexism; his strategy of grass-roots revolution advocated organising through small group structures - a model with which many have since become familiar in the form of anti-nuclear "atfinity groups".

The 1975 Triennial conference - or rather "Festival of Alternatives" as it was called - was presented with a new draft: "Towards Liberation" by Michael Randle. It concluded:

Liberation cannot be achieved without risks. Do we think the risks of some disorder, inefficiency and injustice that will certainly accompany the dissolution of centralised power are to be compared with the risk of the present system of nation-states leading us to ecological disaster or nuclear war? Do we, like the liberals and advocates of world government, think we can ride the warhorse of the state or subject individual states to a super-power which does not in its turn become an even greater menace to human life and freedom? Or do we take that other real but creative risk and declare that we believe that - with the props that bolster inequality, privilege and power taken away - the people themselves can find a way of running their own affairs, of working out their own path to self-management and liberation?

HOW WAR RESISTERS INTERNATIONAL OPERATES

It is largely through personal contacts that this somewhat cumbersome international family of pacifists is sustained.

CONFERENCES

Triennial conferences are a time for speakers and workshops, for films and plenaries, for planning the next three years of work. They are a time to learn about the host country and its political struggles. Strategies are hammered out and new campaign ideas are hatched. But most important, Triennials are the place to meet people, to make new friendships and to hear personal stories of resistance. This is what makes the WRI come alive for people. The last WRI triennial was held in January 1986 in Vedchhi, India. The next one is set to take place in June 1988 in the Åland Islands, a demilitarized zone between Finland and Sweden.

WRI holds smaller seminars and conferences on specific topics for special audiences. Recent examples are seminars on Social Defence and on Refusing War Preparation, conferences of European CO's and the forthcoming Women's Conference in Ireland.

PUBLICATIONS

Apart from these personal contacts the WRI Newsletter comes out five times a year; it gives short concise reports of war resistance activities worldwide and a list of contact addresses.

To cover emergency stories that need feedback we produce the *Broken Rifle* a one-page sheet sent out bi-monthly. The office in London also maintains a telephone 'hotline' with updated messages. Analytical pieces can be found in WRI's Annual review, the *War Resister*. WRI also operates a features service, distributing articles to other peace movement publications. Then there are the special publications geared to a particular topic or a special constituency. Amongst these is *WRI Women*, a new pamphlet on the militarization of the Pacific, a bibliography on children and nonviolence and a special series of publications on nonviolent civilian defence. Publications are produced in more than one language.

WRI STRUCTURE

The WRI office is based in London. A staff of three tries to cover all the campaigns and projects with help from volunteers and an active Executive Committee. The structure is based on a Council made up of 12 people elected internationally and a representative from each member Section, plus a Chair and a Treasurer. The WRI Council meets once a year to follow up decisions agreed at the Triennial. A new feature is Working Groups, open to any member. They focus on special topics: Middle East, Nonviolent Training, Women, South and Central America, Fundraising.

The general peace movement has grown immensely since 1921 and many of the War Resisters International's concerns have been adopted by a much larger portion of the population. But the need for our special pacifist contribution has increased - as more wars are waged, in more countries, as more forms of resistance develop, as the threat of nuclear war becomes more possible, a nonviolent and pacifist vision becomes more compelling to the whole world for its own survival.

In 1925 Runham Brown, then Chair of the WRI wrote the following words in the War Resister. They are as powerful today as they were then:

Pacifism has too long been a vague desire for peace and goodwill when it does not involve any great sacrifice. The War Resisters' International stands for resistance to war and the refusal of all violence but not for the cessation of struggle. It identifies itself with the weak and oppressed and works for a revolution of ideas which will change the whole social and economic order of our day. Personal refusal to use violence is the first and necessary step - it is a big step, because it makes it possible to abandon fear and suspicion. It changes the whole relationship between men and nations. The war resister will support the law when it is based upon right and justice, but no law is backed by the threat of violence. In refusing the old and recognised rule of force, the resister accepts a great responsibility.

WRI XIX TRIENNIAL
MARIEHAMN, ÅLAND
18.-22.6.1988



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END CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN (ECC)

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