



al-raida

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World Campaign for Peace

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) organized on March 8, 1982, under the slogan «STAR» (Stop The Arms Race), a campaign for peace led by women delegates from all parts of the United States. Carrying a message which contained the signatures of a million women pacifists, they marched to the White House where they delivered the message to President Reagan and later left the States to join their European sisters in delivering the message to NATO headquarters.

Shortly before, in September 1981, a conference on women's role in peace and development was held in Manila under the auspices of the Asian Women's Institute. It was attended by 45 participants, representing mostly Third World countries⁽¹⁾.

In New York, a huge demonstration for peace including 550,000 anti-nuclear pacifists coming from every part of the world, paraded on June 13, 1982. Starting from the seat of the United Nations where a conference on disarmament was taking place, they marched to Central Park, where a giant stage, three storeys high, had been set up.

A massive mobilization of women and men for putting an end to war has thus been started. Its success will depend on how many countries in each continent are willing to respond actually and sincerely to this movement. It is true that the idea has already won idealistic adherents and enthusiastic supporters everywhere. But there are, on the other hand, those who suspect the existence of subversive aims in the minds of some promoters of the peace campaign. They are afraid that disarmament, if undertaken by only one group of nations, might give the other group the chance to increase its armaments and thus be better prepared for attacking the pacifists. This means that the movement for peace and disarmament should be global and simultaneous; otherwise it would result in an imbalance of power and favor aggressiveness among those who support it only by word but not by deed. It was probably this contradiction which made of the Middle East a battlefield for antagonistic nations during the last twenty years.

During the last 150 years, independent women's organizations have been active in promoting the cause of peace. It was a woman pacifist, Bertha Suttner, who persuaded Alfred Nobel, in 1894, to establish an international prize for peace⁽²⁾. But the women's movement cannot be of real help unless it becomes global. It is perhaps this idea which made Robin Morgan, the American feminist author, to follow up her work, «Sisterhood is Powerful», by another one called «Sisterhood Is Global». The step has been inspired by a visionary mind, moved by the idea that, only through reaching a universal dimension, may a project or movement be said to have achieved real power.

(1) See Al-Raida, August 1, 1982, no. 21.
 (2) See Al-Raida, Aug. 1, 1980, no. 13, p.9

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