



Iman Khalifeh, initiator of the Peace Movement in Lebanon will be going to Stockholm on the 7th of December 1984 to receive, together with three other women from India, the Philippines and Kenya, the **Right to Livelihood Alternative Nobel Prize for Peace.**

Who is Iman Khalifeh?

A 29 year old kindergarten teacher and researcher on the effects of war on children at the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World - Beirut University College.

What is her religion?

In a country torn by civil strife with religious overtones Iman answers:

«I am a Lebanese».

How was the idea of the Peace Movement conceived?

On a day of terrible shelling, on the 10th of April, three days before the 9th anniversary of the civil war. Iman was at home evaluating children's books for the Library. She had a pad in her hand. She felt the urge to write something to represent the feelings of the silent majority of the people of Lebanon:

«Nine years have elapsed of this war

and we have been receiving all the solutions in vain, resigned in our shelters... eating... drinking... sleeping.

Hasn't the time come to ask ourselves where to?

Until when? Are we going to let the 10th year (of civil war) do us in?

Are we afraid? What is left to be afraid of?

Let us all go out and give our voices to the other silent voices so it becomes a resounding scream.

Let us walk out of our silence and scream in one voice...

No to the war... No to the 10th year».

Iman then called a few of her friends around Beirut and suggested the 6th of May for a Peace

NO TO THE WAR

NO TO THE 10TH YEAR

YES TO LIFE

THE 6TH OF MAY

PEACE MARCH

march to the Green Line dividing East and West Beirut.

The suggestion snowballed. Friends called their friends and their friends called more friends.

At 10 a.m. on the 6th of May people from East Beirut and West Beirut would march towards each other and meet in silent protest at the Museum crossing point - the Green Line.

The response was tremendous. Thousands of people on both sides of the city signed Iman's

petition to march for peace. The movement captured the attention of the local and foreign press and was internationally publicized - it took the world by surprise.

The world **was** surprised because after 9 years of war in Lebanon it took Iman Khalifeh to show the world that there is a people in Lebanon - the silent majority - an apolitical people, whose cry for peace she symbolized for them in her call for the 6th of May March for Peace, a march that never took place because of militia guns.

Open Forum

A World Movement For Peace?

By Rose Ghurayyib

In my school days, I was fond of reading historical narrative and enjoyed the history courses given at secondary or college level. But when I came across descriptions of wars and battles, I skipped over the pages because I had a spontaneous abhorrence of cruelty and bloodshed, particularly when this made me recall the First World War during which thousands of Lebanese perished from famine and misery. History showed me that the desire for peace is not a recent development. It has been the wish of philanthropists since very old days. In pre-Islamic days, more than 1500 years ago, an eminent Arab Poet, Zuhair Ibn Abi Sulma, depicted, in very impressive tones, the evils of war which he compared to a gigantic mill, grinding people within its frightful stones. He earnestly warned his people of the dangers of the infernal machine.

In our days, thinkers like Michael Nu'aemy* represent war as a «reversion to savagery», marked by the dictatorship of greed, mad ambition and wild passions. Even the so-called wars of liberation leave behind them so much destruction that their justification remains questionable. No period of history felt the need for a Universal Peace Movement as the age in which we live. Nowadays,

man's amazing power to make life happier is sadly outbalanced by his terrifying capacity to do wrong, to make life miserable and to produce wholesale destruction.

While most people recognize the folly of war, few organizations work seriously against it. The United Nations Organization has failed to prevent international wars. It has been helpless in the face of civil war. Who can tame war's fury in defenseless countries? Who can give a thorough description of war horrors and terrorism in tormented Lebanon? The women of this country have shown a heroic courage in facing the hardships imposed on them by war. Giving an accurate picture of their struggle requires a long and serious research which nobody has yet attempted. After ten years of suffering, they keep awaiting a rescuer. They hear that, in the West, people show a tendency to put more emphasis on universal values and to multiply prayers for peace. Our women think that if the Great Powers decide to reduce the production of arms, war fever would greatly diminish. A concerted action taking place on a world basis might prevent a world catastrophe.

Some regions of the world need food, but all countries are hungry for a spark of humanity animating hardened hearts and a sting of remorse haunting blood-thirsty humans.

* A Lebanese writer and contemporary of Gibran.