



VICTORIA VOICE OF WOMEN  
Box 853, Stn. E  
Victoria, B.C. V8W 2R9

"If it's not appropriate for women, it's not appropriate."  
--from a poster at the Nairobi conference

Dec./85.

V.O.W. Gathering at Shady Creek (Victoria)

December 7 was a day-long gathering of Victoria, Nanaimo and Saltspring Island V.O.W. groups for discussion and a potluck lunch. We had three presentations, sandwiched between two rounds of the circle. First we shared some of our recent successes in working for peace and after the presentations, we shared ideas for individual, local and national actions.

Presentations

Nairobi Conference--Mary Wynne Ashford attended the conference for non-governmental organizations--12,000 women--very high security--very high presence of men--women were chairpersons at sessions but they took their cues from male officials--contrast with the mid-decade conference at Copenhagen, where even camera crews were women--however, there seemed to be some value in having African men exposed to new ideas about women--most beat their wives--many African women displayed tremendous facilitative skills--difficulties with Middle East women--very hostile towards each other--encouraging to hear about Bulgarian-Greek peace initiative to make Balkans nuclear free--women have been allowed freedom of movement across this traditionally very hostile border--Peace Tent--partly a Canadian initiative--very beautiful place--an open microphone with a long line of waiting women, each allowed seven minutes to speak on their cause--turned out to be endless despair with no chance to discuss what was being said--Tech and Tools--hands-on demonstrations of very simple technology which women can use to immediately improve their lives--e.g. clay oven to replace traditional three stones for cooking fire--uses much less wood, so women spend less time gathering wood--many women waiting in lines to learn how to build these ovens--must conclude that women have not advanced over ten years, and in many cases have even reversed.

Greenham Common--Beth Hill spent a day at end of August--very tough women--on front line--evicted up to 6 times a day--as bailiff is spotted, they scramble to get their belongings into their cars or even just onto the road to avoid having them put into a garbage cruncher--women at one gate are being micro-waved--under constant harrassment from American soldiers--one women hit by a car--food and firewood supplied by support group, but under these conditions, the women seem to just barely be hangeng on--compared to a Pershing base in Germany which has abandoned chain link fencing in favour of sold metal fence and moves in and out by helicopter to avoid the peace campers there--seems to be more support from German population than British.

Arpilleras--Chilean wall-hangings--combination embroidery and applique on burlap--women gather to sew them as a kind of cottage industry--started because of the poverty under Pinochet--some themes considered subversive by the government--Saltspring V.O.W. has been buying them with a cross-Canada exhibition in mind--selling for \$25--compared to women in Africa who spend so much time collecting wood and water and yet are still so creative.

Around the Circle

like these Chileans

Microwave Tower On Saltspring Island--Saltspring peace groups have discovered that the U.S. government is going to erect a microwave tower on top of Bruce Mt.--tower now at the bottom of the mountain--want to stop it from going up--3 other towers also in the works--possibility of connection between Nanoose Bay and central U.S.--ten year lease--public was kept totally dark--Islands Trust not notified--done through Lands, Parks and Housing--Tony Brummett--suggestion of a peace camp on May long weekend--an outdoor conference at the foot of Bruce Mt.

Nuts and Bolts--must appreciate those who stand in lineups to Xerox, write press releases, make phone calls, book halls, arrange speakers, chair meetings, take notes, look after money and all those other things which need to be done--we also need to take time to get to know each other and share information and experiences.

War Toys--successful campaign at the Bay in Victoria--feeling of more acceptance and awareness this year than last--Janet working at college day care with 30 families re: toys and t.v.--large display of articles about war toys and effects of violent t.v. and toys next to pictures of creative, peaceful toys and information on where to find them in Victoria--talked to all the parents --good response.

Communication Skills--Alice has been working with a parent's support group as facilitator--getting training in communication skills --listening actively--expressing self assertively--conflict resolution (problem-solving)--may arrange workshop for Victoria V.O.W. --Saltspring interested in developing conflict resolution game based on the book "Getting to Yes".

Greater Victoria Disarmament Group--becoming more exciting--no longer hierarchical--14 person executive committee--new computer which should be utilized in information sharing--being programmed now with lists, etc.--later should be available for bulletin board --Physicians for Social Responsibility using to link with other physicians groups.

6th Day Peacemakers--Mary Wynne instructs her receptionist to tell patients who phone for an appointment on 6th of the month that she only takes emergencies that day, because the 6th of every month is her day to work for peace--has told this idea at conferences with immediate media coverage.

Letter Writing--important--for every one letter received, politicians know there are probably one to two hundred people who feel the same way, but haven't written--Marilyn writes one or two letters every Friday--write letters to the editor--send cards to friends in England and ask them to offer support to Greenham women --to Stephen Lewis re: woman for Secretary-General at U.N.--to banks re: their support for war involvement--in support of the Haida Indians--could have cards or letters ready for people to pay, sign and leave them to be sent.

Peace Wins the Nomination in Oak Bay--Milnor Alexander has won the nomination as the N.D.P. candidate for the next provincial election she campaigned as a peace person and is committed to the concept of nuclear free zones.

Talking to the Unconverted--invite ten or twelve to your home--have a speaker give a short talk--rest of the evening social, entertainment, open talks--Beyond War uses similar approach--active Beyond War groups in Victoria and on Saltspring--outline is useful.

Nanoose Bay--peace camp still holding out, although its usefulness is being questioned--N.C.C. working with Saltspring peace groups on microwave tower issue--also investigating the reality of nuclear alert teams at Esquimalt and Comox--asked at Comox and were referred to Esquimalt, where they were referred to the man supposed to be in charge at Comox who told them to ask at Esquimalt--Terry will ask Victoria reporter Sid Tafler to look into the existence of such a team at Esquimalt--People's Enquiry coming up Jan. 18 and 19 in Nanaimo--Nanaimo Times-Colonist is covering it--publicity getting better--Victoria V.O.W. is organizing a workshop Jan. 16 with Rosalie Bertell and Barrie Zwicker, who will be on the coast to attend the People's Enquiry.

Another Gathering--on Saltspring Island this summer--it felt good to get together and share with one another and we want to do it again.

*prepared by Alice Whitehead*