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Women's Voice

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Women's Voice, Volume 6, Issue 4, November/December 2000

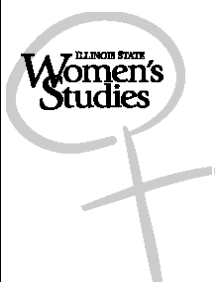
Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program
Illinois State University

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Women's Voice

Illinois State University

Volume 6, Issue 4, November/December 2000

From the Director:

Women Wage Peace Around the World

Last month I wrote about an international initiative on women, peace, and change in the Euro-Mediterranean region, coordinated by the Bruno Kriesky Forum for International Dialogue in Vienna, Austria. This month I want to describe a similar initiative coordinated by the Women and Public Policy Program of Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. At a time when conflicts continue to rage around the world and militarization shows no sign of abatement, it is time for women's perspectives and their actions to be recognized.

Earlier this month I was invited to attend a three-day research symposium at Harvard that brought together academics, researchers and women peacemakers from 14 conflict areas around the world to discuss various aspects of gender and peace-building. The first day began with three presentations that were meant to provide a framework for the ensuing discussions. Jane Mansbridge, Faculty Chair of the Women and Public Policy Program at Harvard, spoke about gender and "essentialism", pointing out that although biology does matter, much of gender is indeed a social and cultural construct, which also varies across time. Even the stereotype that "men are warriors and women are peacemakers" is largely a product of socialization – although she acknowledged that there is much about testosterone about which we still don't know. Deborah Kolb, professor and director at the Simmons Graduate College of Management, talked about gender in negotiations, mainly with respect to interpersonal- and organizational negotiations. Cynthia Enloe, who has done much to bring feminist analysis to the academic study of international relations, said that it was important to continue to "ask feminist questions" about conflicts and to challenge patriarchy.

During a lunch-hour break, the new journal *Meridians* organized a taped roundtable discussion involving six participants around the following questions: what is a good definition of peace; what are the ways in which such a peace can be achieved; where do issues of human rights, prostitution, religion, ethnicity, economics, the

environment, war, and militarization fit into such definitions and attempts to achieve peace? My own responses were that peace is a situation devoid of violent conflict and characterized by stability, human security, coexistence, cooperation. The conditions necessary to achieve such peace are social and gender equality and social and gender justice. Thus genuine peace cannot be achieved without human rights, the dignity and well-being of women, the elimination of poverty, and the reallocation of resources from the military to the social sectors.

The concurrent roundtable discussions were on various important topics. Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, a member of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, coled the roundtable on forgiveness and memory. Joshua Goldstein, professor of international relations at American University and author of a forthcoming book on gender and war, led the roundtable on masculinity and war. Other sessions were on women, media technology and peace-building; the gendered political economy of peace and reconstruction; prostitution and human security; women as a constituency for democracy in post-socialist societies; training women in peace-building and conflict resolution; forced migration in armed conflict; gender and peace-building in South Asia. In the roundtable on gender and fundamentalism, which I led along with Amrita Basu, we discussed: definitions of fundamentalisms; gender dynamics; links between fundamentalisms, conflicts, and women's insecurity; internal tensions and contradictions; anti-fundamentalist and feminist responses. Regions discussed were the Middle East, North Africa, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, the United States, Israel.

The second day began with a panel discussion on civil society's role in waging peace. The point was made that when one looks at the organs of state power, they are invariably male-dominated, while in contrast, civil society organizations tend to have many women leaders and members. Thus prospects for conflict-resolution, peace, and security could come about when civil society takes a more active role in such matters. At one point, and mainly in connection with the very interesting presentation by Marta Segura of the (Continued on Page 2)

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WOMEN WAGE PEACE AROUND THE WORLD (Continued)

Colombian Confederation of NGOs, a lively discussion ensued regarding the responsibilities of the state versus those of NGOs. For example, I pointed out that while we may want a strong civil society, we do not want the state to abdicate its responsibility for the health, education, and welfare of its citizens, or for the availability of "public goods". This, it seems to me, is a basic (socialist)-feminist position. How the state allocates its resources (acquired mainly through taxes or "rents") and the amounts spent on the military versus social sectors is a critical measure of the responsibility of the state.

Two other fascinating panel discussions looked at how ethnic conflicts could be resolved, and how a culture of human rights can be established. Rita Manchanda of the South Asia Forum for Human Rights in Nepal is also author of *Women and Peace in South Asia: Beyond Victimhood, for Agency*. She began by posing some troubling questions for further reflection and research. First, democracy has failed to undermine ethnic conflicts and indeed has sometimes reinforced them. Second, gender is a marker and a constructed identity; sometimes, however, when gender becomes politicized it provides an opportunity for women to contest it. Here she gave the example of Muslim women in Kashmir, many of whom resisted attempts to impose compulsory veiling. Third, she noted that women are bridge-builders in situations of conflict, but that they also need to move from informal politics to formal political processes.

Martha Nussbaum, professor of law and philosophy at the University of Chicago, talked about the capabilities approach, which she has developed along with the economist and Nobel laureate Amartya Sen. She said that the approach gives an account of the material conditions necessary for the acquisition of human rights: bodily integrity, learning, income, leisure time, emotional well-being, political partici-

pation, and so on. The capabilities approach is about what people are capable of doing and being, and it is a theoretical counterweight to the problematical language of economic growth. I should add that this approach has been adopted by many international feminists.

In yet another fascinating presentation, Rita Arditti, author of a book on the Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo spoke about the contributions of these Argentine women to democratization and human rights. When right-wing generals took power in 1976, some 3,000 Argentines disappeared, of whom 30% were women and 3% were pregnant. The children of the pregnant women were taken and given to childless couples, many of whom were associated with the military. The Grandmothers have insisted on an accounting for the executions and disappearances, on trying those responsible for crimes against humanity, and on identifying the children who were taken away from their jailed mothers (and from their grandmothers).

On the third day, I attended a "spontaneous session" on war and peace in the Caucasus, former Soviet Union. Arzu Abdullayeva of Helsinki Citizens Assembly spoke about the war model and the peace model, which allowed us to understand the ways in which ethnic elites and third parties were able to foment a crisis and war between the two countries, and how citizen groups are trying to effect a lasting peace.

Like the Women, Peace and Change in the Euro-Mediterranean Region initiative, Women Waging Peace will continue to research the links among gender, war, and peace, and to publicize the activities of women peace builders throughout the world. □



Participants at the workshop on globalization and Arab women. Participants are academics from Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, Lebanon, France, and the US., and officials of UN agencies. Dr. Moghadam is seated, far left. Fourth from left is the CAWTAR director, Dr. Soukaina Bouraoui, who is also a professor of law.

Photo Gallery



From left to right: Dr. Moghadam; Dr. Fadela Kanouni; Ms. Fatima Kassem, ESCWA, Beirut; Dr. Nabila Hamza, Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Tunisia.



This building houses the Ministry of Women's Affairs. Tunisia's President Ben-Ali (pictured), champions women's rights in his country.

Globalization and its Impact on the Economic Conditions of Arab Women A Project Coordinated by CAWTAR, Tunis The photos were taken at the first workshop, in September 2000.



Outside the hotel in Sidi Bou Said, Tunisia.



From left to right: Dr. Mona Khalaf, director of the Institute for Arab Women's Research, Lebanese American University, Beirut; Dr. Moghadam; Dr. Fadela Kanouni, professor of management, University of Fez, Morocco.

PROFILE

Becky Hines: A Community Gem

By Veronica Howard,
Women's Studies
Graduate Assistant



Becky Hines (right)

"The YWCA seeks to effect social change and to promote racial justice through programming in the areas of childcare, health/ fitness, women's programs and senior services." This is the mission that Central Illinois native Becky Hines takes to heart. As the Executive Director of the local YWCA, she's in a pivotal position in the community to facilitate social change. She is also the Community Representative on the Women's Studies Programming Committee at ISU providing a necessary link between the campus and the surrounding community.

Hines is an alumnus of ISU's Department of Family and Consumer Sciences with a concentration in Early Childhood. After graduating, she spent four months in India through the Four-H Exchange Program. Upon returning, Hines began working in the Childcare Department at the YWCA, eventually becoming the Childcare Director. Her next stop was Associate Executive Director and finally Executive Director, a position she has held for nearly six years. Within that period, Hines returned for her MBA at ISU.

Since Hines has been with the Y, she has witnessed growth and accomplishments. "In the childcare area, we had two childcare rooms on Hershey Road and a pre-school program on the west side of Bloomington. Now we have a full service childcare center here and another full service childcare center on Alexander Road and nine before-and- after-school programs in schools. So from a time when we were probably serving 40-50 kids, we now serve over 650 kids a week."

In response to the lack of night-time transportation in Bloomington-Normal, the YWCA is in its third year of operating a service that provides transportation both to and from work during the evening and Sunday.

In describing her daily responsibilities, Hines laughs. "I usually refer to myself as jack of all trades -- master of none. It's kind of 'the buck stops here.' I report to a board, which is an all-female board. I am the only paid staff person that directly reports to the board. The rest of the staff are either directly or indirectly under me. So it's a whole realm of responsibilities. Although I have people who specialize in different areas, I am ultimately responsible for the personnel, the financial management, the programming, the PR, the development of the organization."

Howard: I understand that you are the community liaison between the Women's Studies Program and the community. How do you see your role functioning in that capacity?

Hines: I think that with the Women's Studies Program, it's helping them get in contact with the community. I think that there is a movement on the part of the Women's Studies at ISU to get more in touch with the community and bring the community in. But that can be difficult to do if you do not have those community resources or community contacts and I think that I can provide some of those.

Howard: What kinds of community based organizations does the YWCA work with and on what kinds of projects?

Hines: We are a very diverse organization and we work with a lot of different groups. One example is transportation. Just yesterday we had a press

conference to announce funding from the State and from the two cities. It took a lot of people to pull that together. It was not only we. Representative Brady and Senator Maitland came to the table and worked to make sure that this funding was secured. The funders themselves -- the two mayors, the two city managers, the Secretary of the Department of Human Services, and a lot of other community groups. United Way was there, the Advocacy Network, the Chamber of Commerce which represents a variety of businesses in our community. We had six different corporations gave us the money for this program, so that's six additional partners to the program. We had the Regional Planning Commission, the Local Department of Human Services Office and that's just one small piece, but it gives you an idea of how varied those community connections and collaborations are.

Howard: Do you see the YWCA having a role facilitating community development?
Hines: To summarize our mission statement: it is to empower women and to eliminate racism. I see those as two key pieces --you empower women, you empower their families, and you empower communities. Same thing on working on racial justice issues.

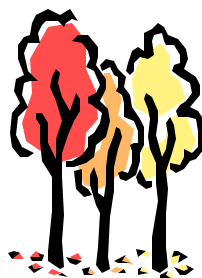
Howard: What are the main issues facing American women today concerning class and race?

Hines: I think that one of the biggest challenges facing us is that we feel so consumed by everything that sometimes we don't feel like we have time to do anything, but I also think that it's whatever position you are in life that brings that woman additional challenges regardless of her race. If she is a single parent and working, she has some additional challenges than other women. If she is a middle-aged woman sandwiched between caring for her older relatives and caring for her children, she's in a different state of life and presented with some different challenges. One other thing that we see because we deal with childcare and -- this is more a part of African American culture, but it's also in the white and Hispanic cultures as well, we're seeing a real increase in grandparents raising grandchildren and so there are additional challenges to the family under those circumstances.

Howard: Are any of your services other than transportation geared toward low-income women?

Hines: We do in-home non-medical care for seniors. They have to meet income criteria and we have staff that would go into a senior's homes and do some of those non-medical things -- yard work, minor home repair and renovation, meal preparation, housekeeping -- some of those things that makes the difference between them being able to live independently and being institutionalized.

Our discussion ended with a description of the Y's diversity programming. Jennifer Nkongo, a Peace Corps Fellow, is in charge of this area. "It's a direct piece of our mission and over the last 5 or 6 years we've become very involved and pretty much a community leader in this area." One of the programs is called Study Circles. These Study Circles are small, diverse groups of people who meet once a week for five weeks with a facilitator and they go through a discussion curriculum. "The curriculum starts out pretty basic about getting to know the other people in the group -- what your background is, where do you come from and looking at how you're all different and how you may be alike regardless of your race or religion and it progresses until you're talking about deeper issues -- who we are and how we think and why we think and how other people are thinking until the last session. At the last session we talk about how can you use your new-found energy for the community. It's a wonderful process for people who have gone through the program. I have gone through it twice, I think you can't help but come out changed."



Did you know that Women's Studies has a Resource and Documentation Center available to use for your research studies that focus on women's issues? Photo copy service available. We do not allow materials to be checked out. Call 309/438-2947 for information, hours available, or scheduling study-groups. You may also e-mail Rozel White at rwhite@ilstu.edu for further information.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Faculty--Please encourage your fall semester students to submit abstracts or complete papers that they prepared for your classes to the Women's Studies Programming Committee for consideration for the spring symposium.

Sixth Annual Women's Studies Symposium

**Friday
March 23, 2001
9 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

**University Galleries
Center for the
Visual Arts**

**Illinois State
University**

*For more information, contact
Women's Studies at:
(309) 438-2947;
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Call for Papers

Panels in the morning and afternoon

Lunch at noon

Keynote Address (1:00 pm)

Call for Papers (first round)

Undergraduate and graduate students are invited to submit proposals for presentation of papers at the Symposium. Proposals/papers are welcome on any topic related to the study of women and gender. Outstanding papers on women and gender issues prepared for courses will be especially welcome!

Proposal

Please send a one-page proposal with the following information to the address below, preferably by December 11, 2000:

Proposed paper title

Your name

The course for which and the professor for whom you wrote/are writing the paper

Your address, telephone number, and e-mail

Please briefly describe your proposed presentation. Where relevant, include a summary of the main argument or findings, your research methodology (if applicable), and sources of information/data.

Send to:

Women's Studies Programming Committee

Illinois State University

Campus Box 4260

Normal, IL 61790-4260

or bring your proposal to the Women's Studies offices, Rachel Cooper, 2nd floor, or e-mail to rwhite@ilstu.edu. ✉

NEWS ABOUT WOMEN'S STUDIES STUDENTS AND

FACULTY/STAFF

Student News and Profiles

By Sandra Harmon

Jennifer Day, a Sociology major, will graduate in May of 2000. She plans eventually to work toward a Ph.D. in Sociology. She is a member of the university honors program and of Golden Key National Honor Society. This semester she is an undergraduate teaching assistant for Dr. Gerschick's Sociology of Gender classes and also is working with Dr. Wazienski in the social sciences professional practice program. Jennifer is an active member of Womyn's Coalition and is employed at the University Bookstore as the lead student worker in the general reading section.

Lori Barsztaitis, a transfer student from Illinois Valley Community College, is in her first semester at Illinois State University. She is a Social Work major who also will be earning a Women's Studies minor and certificate. She does volunteer work at a nursing home over school breaks.

Stacey Concannon is a sophomore Social Work major and Anthropology minor. On campus she is a member of PRIDE and No Sweat. She also attends the women's spirituality and religious reflection groups at the Campus Religious Center. Off campus she has been a volunteer for PATH since last spring and for Countering Domestic Violence since last summer. She is finding her Women's Studies 120 class taught by Meredith Kruse very empowering as she thinks about gender issues that she never questioned before.

Rose Simpson is working on her degree in Sociology after raising her family. After she graduated from high school, she attended Illinois Central College before enlisting in the Navy for two years and serving in Hawaii. She married, had two children, and made the family her chief focus. Now that her children are grown, she has returned to school—first to ICC and then Western Illinois University. She transferred to Illinois State this year. She is interested in issues of equality/inequality in American society and issues relating to women and children. The latter interest grew especially out of her experiences as a secretary for Child Protection Services in Berson, Arizona. She has also researched issues relating to the adult children of alcoholics.

Amanda Karvelaitis is a junior English major. She serves as secretary for the Association of South Campus Government. A Presidential Scholar and honors student, she is a member of the Honors Student Organization and does volunteer work at Safe Harbor and Phoenix Towers Retirement Center as part of her HSO service. In addition, she is a founding member of the Illinois State University chapter of the National Society of Collegiate Scholars and serves as the organization's College Success Co-Coordinator, setting up mentorships with students in local junior highs. Amanda is also a member of Golden Key and Alpha Lambda Delta, a national honor society. She works in the Honors Office and has an internship with the Unit for Contemporary Literature. She is the recipient of a Sam Walton Community Leader Award in her hometown. The award is based on grades, extracurricular activities, leadership positions and volunteer work. □

Women's Studies Alumni News

Amanda Grant, a summer 2000 graduate, is currently enrolled in the masters degree program in the Department of Communications at Illinois State University. She teaches a section of COM 110, Language and Communication, and works at WGLT public radio. She has a special interest in gender and communication. □

Welcome New Women's Studies Minors

Jennifer Stolleis--Speech Communication
Laura Elliff--Anthropology

Faculty and Staff News

Meredith Kruse's Master's thesis in Sociology, "The Voices of Women Transitioning Off Welfare: Their Lived Experiences and How They Define Successful Welfare Reform", was recently selected as the best social science thesis in the College of Arts and Sciences. She conducted in-depth interviews with six women in Bloomington-Normal who had received cash assistance within the last four years to explore their experiences and perspectives around successful welfare reform. She is a former graduate teaching assistant and current instructor in Women's Studies.

Dr. Moghadam has accepted an invitation to be a member of the Advisory Board of the newly-formed Institute for Research on World-Systems, which is based at the University of California at Riverside.

Dr. Moghadam also participated in the Women Waging Peace Research Symposium, 10-12 November. This is a global initiative of the Women and Public Policy Program of Harvard's Kennedy School of Government and Hunt Alternatives. She led a roundtable discussion on gender and fundamentalism.

In mid-November she chaired a session on Women and Islamization at the annual meetings of the Middle East Studies Association, in Orlando, Florida. The session was organized by the Association for Middle East Women's Studies, of which she is President.

Following the MESA conference, **Dr. Moghadam** gave a lecture at Duke University on transnational feminist networks. She focused on the network Women Living Under Muslim Laws.

In late November she attended the second workshop of the project on Globalization and its Impact on the Economic Situation of Arab Women, coordinated by the Center for Arab Women's Training and Research (CAWTAR), Tunis, Tunisia.

Maura Toro-Morn, Sociology, served as moderator and commentator for the panel, "Living Across Borders: Mexican Immigrants in Atlanta," during the Global Currents in Southern History Conference at Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, in October. Also in October, she organized and chaired a paper session, "From the Margins of the Margin: Negotiating Borders and Boundaries in Chicago," at the 4th Conference of the Puerto Rican Studies Association held at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. She presented a paper, "The Politics of Identity and Community in Chicago: A Migrant Woman's Narrative," at the same conference.

She was appointed to the editorial board of *Centro: Journal of the Center for Puerto Rican Studies* and to the editorial board of the journal *Gender and Society*.

The Visual Arts Gallery of the University of Illinois at Springfield hosted the exhibit "After" by **Cynthia Kukla**, Art, from October 23 to November 21. The watercolor paintings in the exhibit reference ancient Egyptian imagery and portray goddesses and strong women of the time period.

Sandra Harmon, History and Women's Studies, was a member of panel on domestic violence at Heartland Community College's Diversity Conference: Reducing Violence in Society on November 2. She spoke about the proposed Illinois Gender Violence Law. She chaired a panel on Community and Classroom Connections through Local History at the Illinois History Symposium in Springfield on December 1.

Rozel White, Women's Studies, attended the Women Employed Women's Information Network (WE-WIN) meeting on October 19, at the YWCA., Bloomington. WE-WIN is an information exchange and action network for women dedicated to improving the economic status of women in Illinois. She also attended the Education and Training Working Group of the Governor's Commission on the Status of Women in Illinois hosted by Illinois Center for Specialized Professional Support on November 9, at the GED Adult Literacy Center in Normal. □

SPEAKER'S CORNER/ANNOUNCEMENT

Speaker's Corner

In this column of *Women's Voice*, students may submit a personal essay on their experiences.

Respecting the Rights of Nicaraguan Women

By Kristin E. Jackson, Sophomore, WS 120 Student

Saturday, September 30th, I attended an event held in Schroeder Hall at Illinois State University. Charles Kernaghan, of the National Labor Committee, presented an argument against low wages for those who work in sweatshops in developing countries. Although Kernaghan knew the statistics and figures regarding this issue, the first hand experiences that Angelica and Cynidia, two fired sweatshop workers from Nicaragua, presented truly relayed the emotional side of this issue. Their comments really emphasized the fact that low wages and horrible working conditions provided by manufacturing contractors for department store chains such as Kohl's are contributors to the poverty, disease, and starvation that many developing countries experience.

Now, I must be honest, when I heard that stores such as Kohl's had some type of direct correlation with these underpaid sweatshop workers I was confused. My question was "How could a department store such as this one be the cause of someone's hardships and horrible living conditions?" I soon discovered by listening to the speakers, that the answer to this question was a simple one. Many young women spend anywhere from twelve or more hours a day, six days a week, working inside a factory that produces clothing such as jeans for those in America to purchase. The women work in the worst of conditions; not being able to urinate when needed, being offended and insulted, sometimes being hit or abused, being searched completely upon entering the factory, and worst of all getting paid as little as thirty cents an hour. They must work in conditions like these because they need the money in order to survive. But, how can one survive on wages that accumulate to sixty-five dollars a month? The answer is that they live in ten feet by ten feet cardboard and plastic huts, and eat whatever is available at that time. Mothers often feed their newborns coffee because milk is too expensive. Living with only the bare necessities in life must be practiced heavily in countries such as Nicaragua, because the money is simply not available. Or is it?

According to Charles Kernaghan, the money is available and stores such as Kohl's can afford to pay fair prices. After the clothing is made in Nicaragua for as little as twenty cents it is bought through a free trade zone by companies in Miami where its monetary value is now around seven dollars. Then the clothing is sent to stores like Kohl's all over the nation where the clothing is then sold for thirty dollars. This means that Kohl's is making a huge profit at the expense of many hardworking women in Nicaragua.

When the women within these factories began to take a stand on the "unfair" situation, they were fired simply because they were trying to stand up for their rights. They formed a union and asked for a small increase of eight cents an hour and in turn seven hundred of the workers were fired from the job that provided their sole source of income. Without the support of their own government, they seemed to be "on their own" in this battle for something that they rightly deserved. But, are they really on their own?

The answer is "no". We as consumers can take a stand and question stores such as Kohl's about the conditions in which the clothing they sell is made and by applying pressure to increase the wages of these underpaid workers. As students, we can become part of organizations that stand up and fight for the rights of these Nicaraguan women. Protesting the selling of this clothing can help to make Kohl's question and reevaluate the circumstances under which the clothing they sell is made. Although we as individuals might feel that our opinion on this issue does not matter or make a difference, we need to stand up for the people of Nicaragua and other developing countries to help them obtain what they rightly deserve and what they need. Individually it might be hard to make a difference, but if we started joining groups that were actively involved with this issue, our opinions and feelings towards the issue might be influential.

An example of a group that is helping specific stores to realize the conditions of these young women that are making the clothing they sell is *Students Against Sweatshops (SAS)*. The organization's goal is to help ensure that universities do not put their school logos on clothing that was made in the conditions similar to the ones within Nicaragua. SAS is located in Toronto, Canada, and recently won a major victory with the University of Toronto in May 2000, as reported on the www.campuslife.utoronto.ca/groups/opirg/groups/sweatshops/campaigns/toronto/ website. The college adopted "Canada's first code of conduct for its licensees" that outlines standards for labor when making any type of clothing that has the U of T logo or name on it. The code of conduct stresses that the working environment where the clothing is made must be safe and that the wages must meet legal requirements. According to the article on this website "This code marks a major victory for workers rights and for public accountability." This is only one example of students who have gathered to take a stand for these underpaid and mistreated women. There are many opportunities, even on our own Illinois State campus, that students or individuals can become a part of to help make a difference in someone else's life.

That is exactly what I feel that the next step for me is. I desire to become a part of one of these groups simply because the information I heard disturbed me greatly. Listening to the two women who were once a part of the factory in Nicaragua really made me stop to realize how lucky I have it. Not only did I begin to think about everything I have that they do not but I really began to think that something needed to be done. It is not good enough to simply become aware of the situation at hand, but rather I feel that I as an individual need to help these women fight for what they deserve. I need to become actively involved with an organization that is against sweatshop labor and low wages so that I can help make someone's life a little better. Thirty cents an hour is pocket change to many Americans but to the people of Nicaragua it is the income that they depend on in order to survive. Not only do I feel that this is unfair, but I also feel that no one deserves to be treated with such disrespect within his or her job. We are all human beings that have rights and privileges. Therefore, I feel that it is time to take a stand against the outrageous treatment of these women and help to make a difference that needs to be made. □

Victory on Wage Survey and Affirmative Action Regulations

By Jennifer King, Women Employed

In a major victory culminating a 20-year national effort spearheaded by Women Employed to update affirmative action regulations, the U.S. Department of Labor published new rules on November 13, 2000, in the Federal Register. The regulations require companies doing business with the federal government to submit annual employment data to the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) including information on wage and personnel activity broken down by gender and race.

The data compiled through the new Equal Opportunity (EO) Survey is critical for documenting wage discrimination. Prior to these regulatory revisions, OFCCP could only collect wage and other data through on-site compliance reviews of contractors. However, the agency conducts only 4,000 compliance reviews per year. Now, the EO Survey will provide OFCCP with annual data covering all contractors and enable the agency to target companies for review more effectively. There are approximately 100,000 contractors, half of whom will be required to submit the EO Survey every other year.

In addition to pay discrimination, enforcement efforts will be able to target occupational segregation and other discriminatory practices. More importantly, this new approach will encourage contractors to conduct self-audits and undertake proactive measures to ensure non-discrimination and pay equity in their workplaces. It is through voluntary audits that companies will address the wage gap between women and men. These rules are the most important new weapon against pay discrimination since the passage of the Equal Pay Act in 1963. For further information contact Jennifer at jking@womenemployed.org. □

RESOURCES/ANNOUNCEMENTS

New Resources at the Women's Studies

By Priyanka Samarakoon, Women's Studies UTA

The Women's Studies Library has acquired two new resources,

?? A video entitled "Cultural Boundaries and Cyber Spaces"

?? The book "*Breaking the Earthenware Jar*" by Ruth Finney Hayward.

Video: "Cultural Boundaries and Cyber Spaces:

This video is described as an innovative education and teaching tool for individuals or groups, which address women's advancements within specific cultural boundaries. Leading women who are involved in politics, law and education from the Middle East, Africa and elsewhere describe their experiences and perspectives on women's empowerment and leadership in their communities and how they use information and communication technologies (ICTs) to organize and educate.

Mahnaz Afkhami from Iran (President of the Women's Learning Partnership), Ayesha Imam of Nigeria (Executive Director, BAOBAB for Women's Human Rights), Janice Brodman of USA (Director, Center for Innovative Technologies, Education Development Center), Zahira Kamal of Palestine (General Director for Gender Planning and Development, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation) and Aruna Rao of India (Independent Scholar and former President, Association for Women in Development) are among the participants. Running time: 30 minutes.

Book: "Breaking the Earthenware Jar: Lessons from South Asia to End Violence against Women and Girls"

Breaking the Earthenware Jar is a story of courage and hope. Women and men from South Asia face and try to end the problem of violence against women and girls both in family and outside it. The book documents the personal accounts of about 180 women and men from all walks of life, who are working to end violence against women and children in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

Chapters under Part 1 of the book discuss how South Asian activists see violence against women, why this violence occurs, and at the role of NGO corporation against violence. This section also examines the cost of gender violence for women's lives and health: certain chapters look at the responses of the medical system to violence against women. It also examines the prevention of violence at a village level.

Part 2 goes on to examine and discuss the excuses and explanations for violence against women as well as the challenges faced by women, men and groups that try to address the issue of violence against women. It also includes a section on how men are beginning to challenge patriarchy in various societies and communities such as in Afghanistan and Nepal.

Part 3 of the book examines the solutions and work geared towards gender peace. It also discusses how the legal system can be used to end violence against women and girls. This section also examines the movements and histories of these movements that are dedicated to ending violence against South Asian women and girls as well discussing the ways in which movements could be set up to help women on both local and regional levels.

Part 4 is a compilation of the key developments and discussion of human rights issues at the international level. It also examines the risk and possibilities for those involved in the ending of violence in the new millennium. □

Women's Studies Minor

Have you considered a minor in Women's Studies? If you would like further information, you may contact Dr. Sandra Harmon, Academic Advisor for Women's Studies at 309-438-2947. She would be most happy to meet with you and review your plan of study. □

Internship in Feminism and Public Policy

The Feminist Majority Foundation seeks highly motivated college students who aspire to become leaders in the feminist movement to serve as interns in their Washington, D.C. and Los Angeles offices. Full-time internships, which run for a minimum of two months, are available all year round. Feminist women and men of all ages are encouraged to apply. The internship is most suitable for undergraduate students who have experience working on women's issues on campus and/or in their communities, or through a previous internship or job. The Feminist Majority Foundation is committed to diversity and encourages applications from people of color and math/science majors. For further information, contact Sarah Boonin, Campus Program Director at 703-522-2214 or fax at 703-522-2219. You may also e-mail her at sboonin@feminist.org or visit their website at www.feministcampus.org. You may also visit the Women's Studies Resource and Documentation Center for complete announcement of internships offered. □

Online Resources

The Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) is a public policy research organization dedicated to informing and stimulating debate on issues of critical importance to women and their families. Research includes the Status of Women in the States, a project that discusses and ranks the well-being of women in each of the states on a number of indicators, including women's civic and political participation. For further information, visit their website at www.iwpr.org, or telephone 202-785-5100.

The Center for American Women and Politics' (CAWP) mission is to promote greater understanding and knowledge about women's participation in politics and government and to enhance women's influence and leadership in public life. CAWP's website includes up-to-date statistics about female candidates and elected officials in the various state and national offices, historical information on women in elected office for each state, fact sheet on women of color in elected office, and reports that analyze the impact of women in public office and trace women's routes to public office. For further information, contact their website at www.rci.rutgers.edu/~cawp/.

Women Employed Women's Information Network is an information exchange and action network for women who want to improve the economic status of women in Illinois. Women across Illinois are joining WE-WIN to obtain information about key issues through WE-WIN Briefings and to learn about opportunities for action steps via WE-WIN Action Alerts. WE-WIN's current agenda is increasing women's access to education and training. For further information, visit their website at www.womenemployed.org, or telephone 312-782-5249; e-mail Jennifer King at jking@womenemployed.org.

Illinois Center for Specialized Professional Support (ICSPS) is home to three educational grants related to the specialized needs of Illinois learners. Their mission is to assist state and local professionals by providing information and assistance needed to help every learner succeed in education. The current projects for FY 2000-2001 are as follows. Special Populations Project is a Perkins funded grant from the Illinois State Board of Education designed to assist professionals working with special populations including non-traditional students in career and technical education programs. Serving All Learners is an Education to Careers (*etc*) funded project from the Illinois State Board of Education to assist the etc Division staff, statewide subcommittee and partnerships by providing information on *all* learners and assistance with etc activities. Including Individuals with Disabilities in Education to Careers (*etc*) is a grant funded by the Illinois Council on Developmental Disabilities. The purpose of the project is to provide a training curriculum for etc partnerships in order to increase the participation and coordination of all stakeholders. For further information, e-mail Stacy Heuberger at sdheube@ilstu.edu. Visit their website at <http://www.coe.ilstu.edu/icsp>. □

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Happy Holidays

Wishing you
health and happiness
in the New Year!

