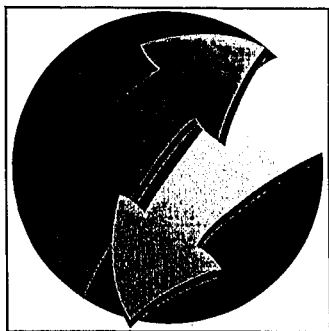


WOMEN SHAPING DEMOCRATIC CHANGE

DOCUMENTATION
OF A WORKSHOP IN THE
FRIEDRICH EBERT FOUNDATION
BONN, 21.-22. OKTOBER 1992



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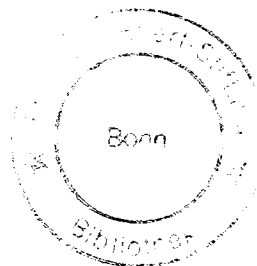
**FRIEDRICH
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ISBN 3-86077-155-8

Published by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation

Division for International Cooperation

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Department for Economic and Social Development

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Printed by : satz und druck gmbh, Düsseldorf

Printed in Germany 1992

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Introduction

This international workshop forms part of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation's extensive commitment to women's political issues. It finds expression in a series of national and international conventions which we are carrying out, particularly in the framework of a discussion circle established on "Women and Politics". Within this discussion circle, we provide a forum for debate on questions of political equality for interested women and men from trade unions, politics, the world of science, the media and administration. This is why the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES) organised this international workshop in order to enable foreign and German experts to come together and exchange their views on this topic.

In the same vein, a wide range of material and results, produced by the research institute of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, were presented. The proportion of female scholarship holders was increased by a third. At seminars for political adult education about 40 per cent of the participants are women. We contribute to the development of an active democracy

- through political education
- through scientific research and the promotion of studies.

We promote understanding between nations through international co-operation and development projects in the Third World and the intervention of women in politics. Democratization has become a global political theme. Throughout the world, democratic forms of the political constituents of societies are under discussion. In many countries, the social image of female organising abilities, solidarity and social commitment is being shaped.

Countless local and regional groups of women have been formed on a voluntary, democratic basis and in the main independent of the state.

Women's self-help organisations have been created out of situations of economic and social need and have taken on important tasks. Many of these networks of mutual aid develop into social movements and are regarded as vehicles of hope for the democratization process. The collapse of the communist system triggered dramatic economic and political developments. Women are particularly affected by the economic downward trend. Will they acquire new importance and new

dignity in the process of democratization? How will the scope for discussion and formation of these groups develop, or on which political level will women manage to intervene?

Despite the international women's decade, worldwide women's action programmes and the adoption of a convention to eliminate every form of discrimination against women, the living conditions of many women in the South has deteriorated. Neither in relation to overcoming female poverty, nor in relation to the elimination of differing forms of violence against women was any lasting progress achieved. In recent years, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation was approached with the request to more strongly promote the involvement of women in the development process. Women's promotion components in our projects have been increased in the international department since 1991. Generally speaking, the promotion of women combines all measures for the improvement of living and working conditions of women. This strategy aims at

overcoming poverty and sexual inequality and at the same time at influence in politics with regard to the chances of survival of women.

The Friedrich Ebert Foundation, to whose tasks number, alongside the promotion of international understanding and partnership with developing countries, also scientific research, the cultivation and transmission of the history of the social movement, also wants to contribute to recalling again and again what has been achieved in order to do justice to future demands and in order to pose new questions.

All progress towards more equality cannot, however, blind us from the fact that it is also necessary, now and in the future, to fulfill the existing legal norms so as to really enable women to have an equal share in our society. Stocktaking makes these deficits clear. Joint objectives are not solely sufficient on their own. Concrete measures come closer to the aim of according men and women the same rights and obligations, but also the same chances. Stocktaking, suggestions, the consideration of perspectives and discussion, this is what I wish for our conference today.

Courage to Power: Women in the Political Process

1. All stocktaking and analyses (not only) from the women's movement (and not only) those stemming from the past twenty years arrive – with a few differences on specific questions – at the conclusion that our world, as it looks today, is the result of the political activities of men. Even the growing number of outstanding women in prominent positions – on whom we can and should be proud! – cannot obscure the fact that existential decisions – from Maastricht to the Economic Summit, from the Environmental Summit in Rio to the Conference on Yugoslavia in Geneva (to name but a few international examples) are taken by male politicians. This has consequences not only for the role, but also for the status of women.

It means, above all, that in all matters under consideration, planning and decisions for the further development of the world, the experiences and knowledge of half of humanity are not taken into account and are not used. If we follow the effects of mismanagement and war in the world – and here we have daily such a sad opportunity – we become conversant with a facet of world affairs shaped by men: women and children are, in the overwhelming majority, the victims.

And also German internal statistics, as, for example, in the CARITAS documentation on poverty in Germany published at the beginning of September this year, or the data collected regularly by the Federal Agency for Labour Affairs show: women are affected on an above-average basis; unemployment in Germany is also unemployment of women; poverty in Germany is also above-average poverty of women with children.

2. Whoever wants to refer us, in view of these facts, to the principle of hope, according to the well-known motto, we should wait patiently until the well-educated women, existing today, "grow through" into decision–

making positions and then it will become evident if we are doing things differently and better, –these people are to be answered:

No! We cannot wait! Because we feel responsible, we must take action, we must take on responsibility.

Women sceptics question, as a rule at this point, who then guarantees that decisions taken by women will be more judicious, better for humanity. No-one can or wants to guarantee that; but above all: no-one can refute it, for until now we have had no opportunity to try it out.

I do not belong to those who believe that women are the better people, the better politicians. It appears to me, however, to be first of all simply "normal" if the abilities of the world are at least determined equally by those "affected", in other words by women and men. This observation is neither new nor presumptuous. We all know social fields from our own experience (or observation) in which proportional representation is already a long-standing, normal practice. So, for example the composition of committees of representatives of "socially relevant groups", or the nomination of candidates for election.

This approach is, as a rule, justified on the basis that different interests and experiences must be taken into consideration in order to reflect the social spectrum as realistically as possible – in fact it concerns, above all the question of power.

3. If we want to have the interests and abilities of women taken into account, we must pose the question of power; we must clarify our relationship to the concept of power. Here, too, there is a standard objection which I would like to examine now, namely: "Then, of course, everyone could come!"

I believe on the other hand: women are not just any population group or lobby. Women are young or old, married or unmarried, mothers or childless, lesbians or not lesbians, handicapped or not handicapped, workers, housewives, unemployed and – even if more seldom – employers. They are, however, in any event, those who are responsible for the family, children, for those in need of care. They are the ones who have concrete experience with living conditions, with town planning, with

Frauen gestalten den demokratischen Wandel

Johanna Holzhauer, Eva Rühmkorf

road traffic and with the cost of living; they are the ones who know and experience, in the most intensive way, every day life in its entirety from household, profession, social work and "big politics".

4. In the many discussions which I have experienced over the past twenty years on the topic "Women and their Relationship to Power", I have learnt that women have a more negative conception of power than men. They associate power with violence, conjure up an apparently insolvable relationship between power and misuse of power; place power with hegemony over others and oppression on the same level. This attitude of repulsion can certainly be explained from past historical experience and finds its parallel also as a central theme in the women's movement: the fight for the self-determination of pregnancy (in Germany §218), the problem of violence within the family, structural

violence within our society, which is violence of the rulers against women and children.

The negation of power is, however, also an expression of the avoidance of responsibility, is fear of incrimination which is linked with the assumption of "positions of power" and appears to me to be also the result of unrealistic and exaggerated power phantasies which are projected on male and female politicians and on superiors.

Grimm's dictionary devotes almost nine columns to the concept of the German word "Macht" (which means power in English). It derives from the German verb "mögen" (to like), whose "real meaning is strength" (in German "Kraft"), particularly virile power – so it means first of all biological – and of course male! – and physical power; in the wider sense, however, also "strength, wealth, including the mental or the resources which one has at one's disposal." Hereto a quotation from Kant: "Power is the ability which is superior to major obstacles". For a female understanding of power – who can wonder – not much is to be found in the dictionary which appeared at the end of the last century, apart from the reference to the concept of "motherly power".

5. We must, therefore, clarify our relationship to power in so far as we must define for ourselves what we understand under the term power, what expectations we attach to it for ourselves and for female politicians. I would like to warn us against falling into the trap of groping with "motherly power" which is raised by politicians (and not infrequently also women) ostensibly positively disposed to women's issues. Whoever wants to condition women to the "gentle violence of the family", to natural motherhood, they want to put them on a pedestal of the honourable mother and keep them away from public events!

According to Article 21 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany, parties contribute to the formulation of the objectives of the people. We can, therefore, exert our influence within a party or over the parties. For example, in that we can put pressure on party representatives and members of parliament, we can confront them with our demands and expectations and publicly ask them what they have done; or we can commit ourselves to action, take on political responsibility ourselves.

This proposal may sound absurd at a time in which chiding of politicians has become a favourite hobby of many. At a time in which the one who describes in the most colourful way, the failure of the "political class" can reckon the best with approval, who is best able to powerfully implore "those up there" should finally think of something to solve the problem, should develop a "vision", should counter a little the "decline in values".

Exactly at this time of general "political listlessness", should we women join those who are so relentlessly made responsible for everything which makes us fearful, anxious, displeased?

There is no question about it – it is more pleasant to sit in the dim loge amongst the audience and to boo if the performance does not please us; it is simpler to sit back comfortably with folded arms and wait for things to happen which one can with every right expect from those in the lime-light. But is it also democratic? And: can we really afford to do so?

6. Whoever gets involved in power, gains influence, expands his or her own creative possibilities. But: he – or in our case: she – relies also on the apparently unassailable position of those who, without consequences for their own credibility, can make demands on others. Whoever takes on a political task must know that their demands and promises are measured in terms of action. And this also means as a rule that she can no longer stand "at the head of the movement", but must be satisfied with, in the first instance, modest progress and compromises on many questions, in order then – continuously and steadfastly – to prepare the next steps.

"Who as a woman has power", says Margarete Mitscherlich, "must reckon with a loss of affection. Such a woman is often not only subjected to the hatred of men, but also of women who feel themselves powerless." And further: "Who as a woman decides to use her abilities openly, to take independent decisions, to fight for changes in behaviour for herself and others, to overcome her fear of necessary aggression, must give up masochistic innocence and reproach. I know how difficult that is, but without critical and self-critical protest women, in particular, can and will not change anything in this society".

Is this step worth taking? What will it achieve? Are female politicians threatened with what Hans-Magnus Enzensberger (in his essay: "Pity on

the Politicians", FAZ 5 Sept. 1992) describes as "lack of experience" and "deficit in terms of reality" or are women politicians different?

Hans-Magnus Enzensberger describes in his (excellently researched and brilliantly written) essay "Penitential Exercises" which are imposed on professional politicians, like for example, the discipline which he must have and the continual social control which he is subject to, the "subjugation gestures (...) which the milieu demands from him". He asks, "How and why does one become a politician?" and sketches the typical background of a professional politician in the following way:

"Already during adolescence he spends his day in a school organisation or in a university union. Only the one who neglects his studies, in other words learns as little as possible, manages to become a spokesman, delegate, chairman (...). Only when the winding road has been completed through the local club, district committee, parish council and the jump into the regional federations has succeeded, can he save himself from looking for a job..."

A truly repellent satire of real life!

But: have a look around the well-known women politicians! You will only rarely find such a curriculum vitae. What women's research has documented in professional biographies of women in general, can also be applied to the careers of women politicians. They are, namely, not as Enzensberger characterises professional politicians as "A man without profession" but are women with typically female socialisation, with professional experience and experience of life itself.

From my experience and observations, many women come into politics over the "second educational channel" – after a time with the family and/or working life or after increasing politicization in the profession or through voluntary work. Such women politicians enrich the office with experiences and leave it also richer through experience which they would not otherwise have been able to have attained.

Women are also more aware than their male colleagues of the fact that political office is an office limited by time and many of them commit themselves to a concrete case in the hope that it will only be required for a limited amount of time. When I stress this way of thinking so

positively, I do not want to speak in a short-winded way about the rotation principle.

Social processes require time, political success must be achieved in a tenacious and hard way, it must be gained by working. From my own experience it takes on average one-and-a-half to two years before the first results become apparent. But: the awareness of a limited amount of time strengthens the obligation to continual self-critical reflection, strengthens one's own independence, opens prospects for a fulfilling time "afterwards".

This encourages me, also, in this circle to sketch a few personal experiences. In June, this year, I retired from active political life after almost 25 years of public service. They were very fulfilling, very intensive, also very strenuous but – on reflection– above all happy years. Years of shaping which have left their mark, about which I am proud. I made a career, but I did not plan a career – how did it then come about?

I took up challenges three times, used the chances offered to me to help to form, to change important social fields: reform of the prison system, women's politics, minister in Schleswig-Holstein (after 38 years in which the SPD was in opposition in this federal state). I have never regarded myself as being exceptionally courageous and self-confident, but certainly as a woman who knows very well her own limitations (and also her abilities). And I have never given way to temptations and enticements if I believed myself to be overtaxed and have learnt to be watchful when disinclination, overexertion and frustration began to build up, that I must stop or change. Or, slightly more exactly formulated: my courage to change increased over the decades.

7. With the women of my generation, who like me came "first" into higher or political offices, I share the same experiences linked to male colleagues: astonishment, uncertainty, exaggerated politeness and boyish workmate reactions. And – with the strengthening of the women's movement and particularly during the heated debate about quotas – the entreaty: "You do not need it! You are completely different!" But each time sceptic whether the woman could succeed.

I can very well remember my first working day as head of a detention centre for juveniles (for particularly difficult young men serving long sentences of imprisonment): The doorkeeper, a colleague due to retire shortly, welcomed me thoughtfully with the remark that this is really no job for a young woman (I was then, nevertheless, 36 years of age) and with the announcement that "Miss N." (a social worker) also left after six months. Well, I stayed five years and saw him retire.

Alongside these women of my generation I had a double difficulty, for one's own orientation one has to look with great effort for exemplary women, and with the knowledge that I must and wanted to be a model for younger women (and, moreover, also for male superiors who had risked the "experiment" with this woman. My "examples" were alongside the early female socialists – Simone de Beauvoir and Betty Friedan.

For the women from the women's movement and in the positions of equality, the formation of networks was, as a result, a central strategy. We need them not only to secure and expand success in women's politics, we also need them for our own strength.

I do not want to idealise women's networks too much, for, of course, there is competition also between women; and the more we are and the more widespread, I think is also good. But from my experience there is a basic difference between these networks and the traditional "Männer-seilschaften", informal connections, or literally from the German men's roped parties in the sense of mountain climbers: nets are thrown out to catch, if a rope breaks then everyone only thinks of saving himself from falling.

Women in politics and in positions of responsibility are still far from being a matter of course, but: we are no longer individual exceptions, we are becoming more. We can contribute through women's political personnel decisions to increasing the numbers and many women are doing just that. In this way, too, women shape democratic change.

Women's Self-Help Organisations in Africa and their Role in the Democratization Process

African women have a long tradition of fighting against injustice and despotism. In terms of courage, they do not lag behind men and in the fight against colonialism and colonial hegemony some even took on positions of leadership. In Zimbabwe, Mbua Nehanda, who was a "spirit medium", led the first fight for independence which ended with victory over the British and her own execution. In the Mau Mau movement in Kenya, there was a "female field marshall" called Muthoni Kirima who was ignored in official historiography until she was recently rehabilitated by the Kenyan women's movement. In the Casamance, in Senegal, Aline Sitoe fought against and organised the resistance when the French colonial masters requisitioned stocks of rice and recruited men by force for the war in Europe. She, too, had to pay with her life.

The well-known heroines represent the numerous unknown women who were involved in the fight for independence: in Algeria in the fifties and sixties in the national liberation front FLN; in the second "chimurenga" which ended with the victory of ZANU and ZANLA; in Eritrea where women formed a third of the "fighters" of the EPLF; and not last in Namibia and South Africa where their heroic fight in the front line hit the headlines.

But where are these women today? We can, with a few exceptions, look in vain for them in positions of leadership in politics or the economic sphere. In Algeria, after independence, they yielded – with a few exceptions – to the traditional role of women. They were not able to prevent the downfall of the encrusted and corrupt FLN supremacy and the victory of the Islamic Fundamentalists who decreed the veil and subjugation. In Zimbabwe, only the very few have managed to build up a secure existence, most manage to survive rather worse than better. In Eritrea they are fed up with fighting and would like, at last, to lead a completely normal

woman's life, marry and have children – and to that they have a right. History always seems to repeat itself: when the fight has ended, when victory has been achieved, then women regard their task – to be involved in the fight for a matter of national concern – to have been fulfilled. They do not apparently consider fighting for themselves and for the realisation of matters in their own interests.

Women's Groups and Social Movements

The impression that women only mobilise themselves in exceptional situations or in national crises is, however, deceptive. They also have a long tradition in helping one another and in solidarity in everyday life. The roots probably lie in the customary institution, in almost all societies in Africa, of "age groups" not only for boys but also for girls, and in the custom of neighbourly help in work in the fields. For the past almost 15 years, we can observe almost everywhere the mushrooming of self-help groups and observe too that the majority of the members are women. This derives certainly more from the effects of famine and the general price increases in the fight for survival than from mobilisation in the framework of the UN decade for women. Many of the groups which were initiated "from above" only exist on paper, while groups which have grown "from below" in many regions have become a firm constituent part of the social system. The phenomenon has a different stamp from country to country. In Kenya there are meant to be about 25,000 such groups, but many of them could belong to the "filing cards out of date". In Burkina Faso, the phenomenon appears to stem more from the grass-roots level. In many countries the groups are in the process of getting together at the district or provincial level and are gaining political importance; in other countries they are rather isolated and unknown.

In this connection it is interesting to look into how these groups function. At the top is a management committee which generally consists of a chairperson, a secretary and a treasurer, as well as a deputy chairperson. Some groups also include an – often male – adviser, who can help them in matters concerning officials and the authorities. The chairperson is often the initiator of the group, the secretary can read and write and the treasurer is an older lady who is trusted. It is rarely the case that an office

holder is voted out of office, the chairperson often remains in her position until the end of her life. It is rarely the case that the rights and obligations of the management committee are precisely defined, it concerns more the overall perception of certain duties such as the taking of minutes, safekeeping of money etc. Most groups have rules of procedure which are appropriate to their activities. Therein is, in many cases, very precisely stipulated how often the group meets, when and how cooperative work is to be carried out, how much money is to be paid in the event of unexcused absenteeism. In this way, many groups show an astonishing talent for organisation.

Women are certainly in the majority in self-help groups, and even mixed groups have generally more female than male members. As soon as structures develop at a number of levels – in Senegal up to the level of a national federation – then men clearly dominate. Women's groups clearly find it difficult to get together at the next highest level. This is certainly due not least to the fact that women have less time and are not so easily available. Attempts are, however, being made to form regional associations, e.g., in the Province of Kivu in Zaire, in Western Nigeria and in Burkina Faso. The federations mainly stem from an initiative of a woman who already played a leading role in the formation of a group at the grass-roots level.

Another problem is that women's groups are easily manipulated and exploited. They cultivate, for example, cotton so that the church can buy bicycles for the catechists. They cook for the local party secretary or member of parliament who gives them the honour of visiting them without contributing a penny. In Kenya, 80 per cent of the "Harambee" money (a type of "voluntary" contribution to development) is supposed to come from women. And everywhere governments try to get votes through women's groups, which makes corn mills financed by foreign development money appear particularly appropriate.

In any event, women's groups play an important role at the grass-roots level in the formation of a wider social movement, without whom democratization would stand on a weak footing.

In Bamenda, in north-west Cameroon women demonstrated, in May 1990, with six small wooden coffins against the shooting of six young people during the first public meeting of the first opposition party in the one-party history of the country and they did this without being influenced by the presence of armed military personnel and policemen.

In Bamako, the capital of Mali, women were massively involved in the protest marches which led to the overthrow of the dictator Moussa Traore.

In Togo, it was mainly market women who demonstrated repeatedly against the blocking of the democratization process by President Eyadema and his military personnel.

In Kenya, mothers and wives of the political prisoners demonstrated for weeks at the corner of "Uhuru" Park – which has since then been called "Freedom Corner" – for the release of their husbands and sons.

Even in Niamey, the capital of the very Islamic Republic of Niger, the first major women's demonstration took place in May 1991 with a "sit-in" in order to force the participation of women in the forthcoming preparatory committee for the national conference.

Women's Organisations and Professional Groups or Interest Groups

In the past, national women's organisations were almost exclusively appendages of the single party, just like the youth organisations or also the trade unions. While some had founded themselves as independent organisations – e.g., Maendeleo ya Wanawake in Kenya – they soon became an extended arm of the ruling politicians, who saw them in the first place as an instrument for mobilising women. However this did not always pay off, or rather when the single parties had collapsed the national women's organisations also landed on the rubbish dumps of history. This is what happened to the already mentioned Kenyan women's organisation and the Union Nationale des Femmes du Mali, while the Association des Femmes du Niger tried to become an inde-

pendent women's organisation, just as the National Union of Eritrean Women has tried to stress its independence since the victory of the EPLF. It will be interesting to follow the development of the women's organisations in southern Africa.

While the national women's organisations appear to have made no notable contribution to the democratization process, more and more professional and interest groups have subsequently appeared which cannot be assigned to any party political tendency. I encountered one of their first forms of expression about 15 years ago in Burkina Faso, the "Association for the Protection of Widows and Orphans" which incidentally stemmed, like most self-help groups from the great famine at the beginning of the seventies. In the meantime they belong in almost every country to the social spectrum and are increasingly being taken seriously: e.g., the "Women's Action Group" in Zimbabwe which reacts against every form of discrimination against women and informs women throughout the country about their rights, or the association against the impairment of health of women in the Republic of Niger, also the association against rape which a committed woman in Kenya founded recently.

Another role is being played by women's professional organisations which are being formed everywhere: female lawyers, journalists, teachers, midwives and nurses are coming together in order to react against professional discrimination and to enforce their rights. Incidentally, the oldest female professional associations are those of traders who have particular weight in the West African coastal towns. Before the civil war, the Liberian "Market Women Association" was the largest professional organisation in the country and ranked ahead of that of the transport employers. It is not since democratization that regional and continental associations of such federations have been formed e.g., of female lawyers and journalists and certainly the "African Association of Women in Research and Development" is one of the most well-known. These associations are, above all, a town phenomenon, after all their members belong to the privileged women who have enjoyed school and professional education. This is, however, not an indispensable prerequisite for a strong association as is proved by the market women, many of whom cannot read and write, but who can mobilise their mem-

bers within a short space of time in order to defend their interests – also against single-party regimes and military dictatorships, as occurred in Ghana and Benin.

Women and Parties

In the old single parties and the new – and old/new – opposition parties, some of which, in the meantime, form the government, women are hopelessly in the minority, although not so blatantly as the small farmers and young people – two other, even more, neglected groups. The parties – at least those who lead them – appear as town phenomena, as a matter of the powerful and/or educated, in any case as a male alliance and frequently as an alliance of older men. At their head are professional politicians, opponents from the beginning of the present rulers, or those who split after a difference of opinion (Oginga Odinga and Mwai Kibaki in Kenya), or the sons and brothers of old veterans from the fight for independence (Tieoule Konate in Mali, Hermann Ouedraogo in Burkina Faso, Ahmed Ould Daddah in Mauritania), but one can search in vain for daughters and sisters. Many of the newly founded parties were cut to fit the personality of their leader, their programme is vague, if they even have one. Associations of democratic forces, on a wider basis, are not always maintained after the fall of the dictator, against whom they lined up. The ADEMA (Alliance pour la Democratie au Mali) has succeeded, FORD (Forum for the Restauration of Democracy) in Kenya is falling into pieces.

Women are represented in these parties either only poorly, or not at all, even though they managed – as in the case of Kenya – to convince female candidates to stand for election. It appears that they are opposed to this type of politics, the "politique politicienne" as it is called in the French-speaking area. I found one exception in the Republic of Niger, where a small party of "Greens" (Rassemblement pour un Sahel Vert) was very popular with women and women hold a quarter of the positions of leadership. Women in the ANC have also made their mark: at the party political conference in April 1991 in Kimberley it was decided that 30 per cent of the seats in all ANC committees should be filled by women.

Can it be that women are reticent to join parties because they have a different understanding of politics? A German political analyst, Birgit Meyer, who has researched into this topic for years, has discovered that men are primarily interested in institutionalised parties or government politics, while women have a concept of politics which transcends the institutional: for her environmental protection and social justice belong just as much to humane politics – and therefore democracy – as a multi-party system. Can it be that this observation also applies to the attitude African women have of politics?

I would like once again to cite Professor Wangari Maathai as an example that this assertion appears to be confirmed. Her fight against the construction of a skyscraper on the grounds of the very popular Uhuru Park, a recreational area for many of the population of Nairobi, is equally as political as her attempt to form a joint platform for the opposition parties.

From this the following three conclusions can be drawn:

1. In order to satisfy the political understanding of women, democratization must not be limited to the introduction of a multi-party system based on the market economy, but must be concerned with the whole society in all its forms. This must also definitely involve the incorporation of grass-roots groups and interest groups and professional associations.
2. In order to achieve "sustainable democracy", politics must be carried out in such a way that not only the political but also the social, economic, environmental and cultural results of measures are balanced and this for all population groups and at all levels. It is only in this way that it can be avoided that women feel the negative effects, for example, of liberalisation measures.
3. In order to achieve lasting democratization and with it the political stability of the continent, the major environmental tasks must not only be thought over and tackled at the national and regional level but also at the continental and international levels. In concrete terms, if as a result of the so-called structural adjustment programmes, the major part of the population in Africa becomes even poorer and thereby

women on an above average basis, then it is nonsensical to cultivate the idea in the western metropolis that a development policy taking account of women will be in the position to improve the situation of women in the Third World. There can be no democracy if the fundamental economic problems are not tackled at the international level. It concerns here the real world economic system and not structural adjustment programmes which are only one of its instruments. That appeals of this nature are not heard, does not in any way mean that they are superfluous. The call of Rosa Luxemburg to be a woman, socialist and realist and to believe in utopia is more compelling than ever today.

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Women in South Africa Shape Democratic Change

The status of women in South Africa is similar to that elsewhere, in terms, for example, of their low legal and economic status. But what is peculiar to South Africa is the layer upon layer of oppression and differentiated patriarchy. I became aware of this when challenged by Western feminists: "Why are you in the African National Congress (ANC) and not in a women's movement?". It was easy to answer: "Should women be fighting to be equally oppressed as black men?". But working through the implications of that answer meant trying to come to terms with the interrelationship between class, national oppression, race and gender. This again helped locate oppression of women in its political, economic and social context, and not as something that could be isolated into the social sphere.

Layers of oppression on women

Racialism and exploitation characterised apartheid – historically rulers of South Africa have manipulated gender relations to retain power – and in particular controlled the mobility of African women. At the turn of the century, for example, the labour of black men was needed for mines, building, railways and for construction. The system of cheap labour is peculiar to South Africa. Men are drawn off the land to become migrant workers, while women remain on the land to produce food and look after children. Men are paid low wages – on the basis of a single person's wage – as the family is being looked after and fed by subsistence agriculture. So women's labour has subsidised the development of the mining industry in South Africa and the vast profits of mining houses. To make sure that women remained on the land, alliances were made with patriarchal elements among the African people. Headmen and Chiefs had to authorise the movement of women from the homesteads to the urban areas.

This had its modern day counterpart under apartheid. Women's mobility was once again controlled and a total bar was placed on movement from rural to urban areas. So men came into "white" South Africa to labour, while women – "superfluous appendages" – were removed to rural slums (homelands) to stay and look after the old, sick, handicapped and children. As a result, the social costs of labour and reproduction shifted to the homelands and white South Africa had its cheap labour and political control. Thus, apartheid openly systematised gender oppression and gave it legal form – women to the domestic sphere in poverty, dependent upon male breadwinners, with their role confined to being breeders of future generations of cheap labour.

African women are not the only group of oppressed women in South Africa. Those who came to settle in South Africa came from patriarchal societies in Europe and Asia. Not surprisingly, South Africa was and is a patriarchal society, affecting all women in our country, irrespective of race or ethnic origin. Black women are often described as "chattels". If that be so, then white women have been "pets". They have been pets not in their own right, but through their relationship with white men – as mothers, daughters and sisters – they shared white privilege. However, white women are absent from positions in industry, economic affairs and politics. A white woman is subjected to the exercise of her husband's marital power over her property. The law has only recently been changed, and many marriages remain unaffected.

Women are still absent from high office and responsibility. The Broederbond – meaning the "brotherhood" – has run the National Party of De Klerk and all of the power structures of the Afrikaner people. Now that South Africa is in transition, there is a period of uncertainty, when men, in particular, are feeling threatened, and this is manifested in greater levels of violence against women. Amongst all sections of the community, the levels of rape, wife abuse and random violence has increased significantly.

Yet for women this period is not all bad:

- Amongst the democratic / anti-apartheid movement there is a very genuine commitment to democracy. Within the country there is a

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lively debate about the nature of democracy – a factor which divides us from the National Party and the Government. While there is no "feminist perspective" in the debate, it does allow women to participate and become involved. We can use the commitment to democracy and expand it to encompass women.

- We have an awareness of structured oppression in our society, and the majority of men have first hand experience of it. The notion that we have to examine all institutions in order to remove racism and vestiges of apartheid is familiar. So women can use the opportunity to reassess and examine institutions and remove sexism.
- We can draw upon many examples of oppression under apartheid and proposed remedies as analogies in our debates. There is, for example, acceptance that we need affirmative action for blacks in order to redress historical imbalances. This is a small step towards acceptance

that affirmative action is necessary to redress historical gender imbalances. It is also often argued that we must respect people's culture and traditions. In a debate within the ANC leadership, women posed the question: "If the Afrikaners said it was their tradition that Blacks are inferiors and should be subordinated, and that Black and White should be segregated, would the ANC accept, respect and allow such traditions and customs to prevail?". The answer was obviously no, and so it was not difficult to gain acceptance for the notion that customs and traditions that subordinate women should not be supported and protected.

- It is impressive to note that since the ban on organisations was lifted two years ago that women's issues are on the agenda. The main reason for this, is that participation by women in the liberation struggle has allowed women to put through very advanced policies, especially in the ANC, which is a major player in any solution. These policies include:
 - * Integration of women's emancipation into the liberation struggle; an issue which has to be addressed separately and now.
 - * Definition of the problem as gender oppression and not simply as discrimination against women.
 - * The ANC recently established a Commission on the Emancipation of Women. This was an expression of the ANC's beliefs that the responsibility for emancipation rested on the whole organisation, both men and women.
 - * In May this year, the ANC's economic policy was amended to take into account the contribution of unpaid labour. It was agreed that economic planning had to take account of unpaid labour and the ANC committed itself, once in government, to progressively introduce an additional set of national accounts that will reflect the value of unpaid labour. We are now examining how this can be implemented, and are examining ways of quantifying unpaid labour.
 - * These positions gave women a headstart – but essentially it is the activity of women that has placed their concerns on the national

agenda. They created a climate which did not allow men to ignore women.

The Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) which is the main negotiating forum, committed its 19 participatory political organisations to establish a "non-racial", "democratic" and "non-sexist" South Africa. This characterisation of the future state of South Africa is very important. If we can carry it through into the Constitution, it would allow women to challenge almost any law or practice as non-sexist and therefore unconstitutional.

While having agreed on non-sexism, all the political organisations (including the ANC) however forgot their commitment when it came to appointing their delegations to the working groups for the negotiations. Very few women delegates were appointed and there was an outcry. Eventually, a special Gender Advisory Committee was established as part of Codesa. Its task was to advise on the gender implications of the issues before the negotiators. Men did not really understand what was involved, until the Committee's reports were produced e.g.,

- * In the definition of political intimidation was added sexual harassment in political organisations and attempts by husbands to prevent wives from voting or engaging in political meetings etc.
- * Consideration of citizenship qualifications had to be defined by treating male and female citizens as independent and equal in every respect. We believed that we had a unique opportunity to incorporate non-sexism into the transformation of our society, and use the doors opened by Codesa.

Women have come together to form a National Coalition that includes political organisations from the National Party, Democratic Party, Inkatha Freedom Party, ANC, Pan Africanist Congress(PAC), Azanian Peoples' Organisation (Azapo); groups such as Rape Crise; disabled women's organisation, girl guides, rural African women and Afrikaner women on the land; executive and business women etc. The Coalition has deliberately limited its scope to setting up the right framework, as we

are aware that there is much that divides us, and if we force unity, the coalition will fall apart.

The objectives of the Coalition are to engage women in the constitutional process, to ensure effective equality for women in the Constitution, and to formulate a Charter of Women's Equality that will be part of the Constitution. We have discussed the question whether we want separate rights for women – but would that not put women in a ghetto? Some of us feel that there should only be "human rights" which belong to all citizens. Our Charter should therefore address the issues that prevent women exercising human rights, and hence it would be a Charter of Women's Equality.

The process we have chosen to formulate the Charter is also very important – almost more important than the product. We are determined that no-one should prescribe to women what their needs are – no lawyers, elite women or International Conventions. Our process is to elicit women's self-defined needs.

Our field workers will engage in dialogue with women – in focus group type discussions – and ask what women want changed. Prior to this we shall engage in public education programmes on the issues. After women have expressed their views, we shall have to process the data, identify issues for inclusion in the Charter and feed the information back to the women and into the national debate. Men are particularly in need of education. If we want our Charter to be part of the Constitution, then it will have to be adopted by men as well as women.

Apart from a Charter, our process is going to bring great advantages:

- * It will educate women in democratic processes.
- * It will lead to a lot of additional research that will benefit women – in particular a mapping of our country in terms of where women are, languages, literacy, education etc. Due to apartheid such basic information is not available.

We will also build up an incredible data base of women's self-defined concerns and needs and their priorities, for use by future policy makers and women's organisations. Most importantly, the process will empower women. For the first time, women will have been asked what they want and with the knowledge that what they say will be taken seriously. When faced with these problems, they will become aware that the changes in our country should have meant changes in their lives and so strengthened they will seek solutions in that context.

Major problems will remain, as we will only have dealt with the framework, but it will facilitate an advance. It will also facilitate the basic restructuring of our institutions – the reshaping of politics and the redefining of economics – so that we do not try to get women into pre-shaped institutions, but instead begin the changes that make these people shaped themselves. What strengthens us, is that not only are we in the majority in our country, but we are also the majority of the voters. Political parties will respond if they know – No women, no vote.

Women, Political Power, and Development in South Africa

Women have played a very important role in the development of progressive organisations in South Africa. Since the beginning of this century, women resisted the extension of passes to African women. This struggle reached its climax in the fifties when 20,000 women marched to the government headquarters in Pretoria to protest against passes. Women also played a key role in land struggles and organising around "bread and butter issues" at the grass roots level. At the leadership level, women were very under-represented and this situation is only beginning to change now.

After the lull in our struggle that followed the banning of organisations in the eighties and the repression of the seventies, women played a major role in reactivating the struggle against apartheid in the early eighties. In the Western Cape, the United Women's Organisation (UWO) was the first non-racial community-based organisation that worked to unite women against apartheid. UWO assisted many other organisations like youth and civics to start organising. UWO was also one of the major players in the launching of the United Democratic Front (UDF) and provided almost all women leaders for the UDF executive.

The United Women's Organisation changed its name to the United Women's Congress (UWCO) and started self-help projects and crèches, as well as actively campaigning against apartheid oppression. In 1987, UWCO spearheaded the relaunching of the Federation of South African Women that focused more on women's oppression and united a number of women's organisations. When the African National Congress (ANC) was unbanned, UWCO became the ANC's Women's League and grew fast. We are now part of the Women's National Coalition, working for a women's charter that will contain the demands of all women in South Africa. We will use the charter to campaign for women's rights and political power.

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As a result of our long struggle for rights and dignity, women's issues have finally been placed on the political agenda in South Africa. Even De Klerk is now talking about non-sexism and the UN Declaration of Women. But, before women will have real power and control over their own lives, we have to become a much more effective political force. We aim to do this in the following ways:

1. We have to built strong organisations that can represent and unite a broad spectrum of women and make them a force that politicians cannot afford to ignore.
2. We have to consult women about their problems and their demands and raise awareness about women's oppression to motivate and mobilise women.

3. We have to educate everyone in our society so that men also recognise the oppression of women and learn to respect and value women as their equals. We cannot afford to leave our male comrades behind or to make enemies of them.
4. We have to train and empower women so that they can take their rightful place in leadership at all levels of society with confidence.
5. We have to fight for basic rights and legal protection for women.
6. We have to challenge and confront sexism and fight for freedom from all forms of oppression. This means we have to use weapons like affirmative action.

The area of development is another crucial one. There is no awareness about gender and the specific problems faced by women in the kind of "development" that has been done in South Africa. In rural areas, up to 70% of women are illiterate, while less than 50% of men are. The people most affected by the government's policy of changing the rural reserves into prisons for the poor are women. They are the ones who are starving, without health care, without land, without schools, without clean water and energy. They have to scratch an existence from barren drought-stricken land without any of the state support that white farmers enjoy.

Most health services and projects only reach a small percentage of these women and it is only really the state's population control programme that even tries to. In most villages there are no medical services and people have to travel far just to see a nurse.

When development needs are assessed, women's work is not counted. For example, it is not considered economically viable to electrify the rural areas, yet women spend 3 hours a day gathering wood and water. Because women are not seen as economically productive, they are not targeted for planned development. The buzz word is growth and the thinking about how to achieve it is urban, male and skilled.

This attitude is very short-sighted. We are neglecting 50% of our human resources – which is in fact our most valuable and renewable resource.

Women have to be part of any decent development. They are still the ones who hold our society together, who teach our children and who produce most of the food we eat. Without training and resources spent on women, we will not only keep women oppressed, but will further impoverish our whole society.

The kind of international development offered to our country on a large-scale will not achieve these goals. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have a history of funding that has not enriched the South, but has led to more money and natural resources going to the North. We need development that will build our capacity to look after ourselves without on-going dependence. For women, this means that we have to assist women with basic things like getting access to land, to loans and subsidies, to technical advice and support, to education and skills, and ultimately to political power.

In our country women have no power now. From the white parliament to the village councils, women have no say. Sexism will take years of education before it will die out in our communities. Women have to be given power in the form of economic power to help us fight for political power so that we will have a say in everything that affects our lives. This means, for example, that women in the rural areas will be in a better position to negotiate things like grazing rights if they own cattle of their own.

But it is not only rural women who suffer. At all levels of the economy, women are paid less, have less power and do more of the dirty work. Affirmative action where women are recruited will not address the basic sexism that keeps women down. Women's problems have to be taken into account and catered for – things like child care have to be provided and women must not be penalised for having children. Training women has to become a built-in responsibility for all employers and special care must be taken to see that women benefit.

We have a long way to go to reach real emancipation and those who want to help will be doing us disservice if they ignore these concerns.

From the Women's Decade to Multi-Party Era: Women's Political Participation in Kenya

The 1985 Nairobi Conference to close the United Nations decade dedicated to women of the world, in many ways marked the beginning of the awakening of the Kenyan society to the fact that the issue of women's empowerment was central to the achievement of the triple goals of **Equality, Development, and Peace**. It is true, however, that during the ten year duration of the Women's Decade (1975-1985) the Kenyan government had adopted a "Women in Development" (WID) policy position and created and/or promoted national machineries to develop and coordinate programmes for women. But there it could be argued that Kenya was merely complying with 1975 United Nations' resolutions that demanded of all member states to make changes and introduce policies and programmes geared towards accelerated advancement of women, especially by creating national machineries to serve women and strengthen the existing organisations. This argument notwithstanding, in the post 1975 era, the Kenyan official development policy position changed from one that was completely gender blind to one that at least acknowledged that women are an important element in the development process and should be integrated in that process. However, long after the end of the Women's Decade, government action on the question of women remained at the level of high sounding rhetoric, consisting of sweeping and vaguely worded statements of government commitment and intention.

It has, therefore, been quite rightly argued that the major achievement of the women's decade was the proliferation of women's groups and organisations that rose from 4,300 groups with a total membership of 156,892 in 1976, to 16,500 groups with a total membership of 630,000 by 1984. By early 1988, there were about 23,000 women groups with 1.4 million members. However, research into the activities and performance of these organisations has revealed that they did not succeed in empowering

women.¹ Government interference in their activities, especially the co-optation of top women group leaders, and the social welfare orientation of these organisations, conspired to make them toothless bulldogs.

Gender based discriminations against Kenyan women in almost every aspect of life, remained rampant throughout the women's decade. Discriminatory laws and practices remained in place on such matters as: inheritance, marriage and divorce, custody and maintenance of children, employment related benefits such as housing allowance for married women in public service and maternity leave. Discriminatory practices and punitive action for women and girls who got pregnant while undergoing government sponsored educational programmes, physical and psychological violence against women and the manipulation of common and customary law to deny women their basic rights on such issues as burial rights of a dead spouse,² are but a few examples that demonstrate the powerlessness and the suppressed nature of the womenfolk in Kenya. This is also a clear illustration of the continuing pervasiveness of patriarchy and male chauvinism in Kenyan society.

While the women's movement in Kenya remained weak throughout the decade, and government action largely unresponsive to women's issues, the end of the women's decade conference, saw the emergence of a new awareness and self-assertiveness among Kenyan women, both individually and in groups. For example, women started coming out more aggressively to challenge the institution of polygamy. There were also some positive indications of women asserting their rights on matters of forced marriages, which previously were common among some Kenyan communities. Other women began to assert their reproductive rights and yet others, especially women in professions such as law, media and academia, began organising awareness raising seminars, workshops, educa-

¹ Mazingira Institute, *A Guide to Women's Organisations and Agencies serving women in Kenya*. Nairobi, Mazingira Institute, 1985, p. 286.

² A classic case is that of Wambui Otieno's 1986/86 protracted legal tussle over the burial rights of her dead spouse. For more details, see Nation Group of Newspapers Publication, *SM: Kenya's Unique Burial Saga*: See also, *SM: Wambui's defeat is a defeat for Women*. in *VIVA* June 1987, pp 16-17 p. 36.

tional tours and public poster campaigns, to publicize the situation of women and to educate women about their rights.³

Despite these emerging changes in attitudes among women and evident desire on their part to uplift their subordinate status, the political environment remained quite undemocratic and generally hostile to any forces that challenged the status quo, whether on gender relations or any other issue. And as already noted, despite the dramatic expansion of women's groups and organisations during the women's decade, Kenyan women did not succeed in developing a cohesive and strong women's movement that could lobby for the advancement of women in the country.

³ Maria Nzomo: "The Impact of the Women's Decade on Policies, Programs and Empowerment of Women in Kenya" Issue: "A Journal of Opinion" Vol. XVII/2, 1989, p. 14.

In my view, therefore, the powerlessness of women in Kenya and their total inability to advance their status, derives to a large extent from the undemocratic structures of the Kenyan society and politics, that are best epitomised by the gross under-representation of women in key decision-making and policy-making positions, as explained below.

The Marginalisation of Women in Politics and other Public Decision-Making Positions

Kenya's record of women's participation in politics and other public decision-making posts is pathetic by any standards. In the Judiciary, for example, the first woman judge of the High Court was appointed in 1982, almost twenty years after independence; the second one in 1986 and the third in 1991. There is still no woman to date who is a member of the most supreme court in Kenya – Court of Appeal, despite there being some vacant positions. For the first time in 1983, two women were appointed to head two of the many public parastatal organisations in the country and fifteen others were appointed in 1986, seven as heads and eight as members of boards of parastatal bodies (Daily Nation January 17, 1986:1). During the same year (1986), President Moi also appointed two women to senior diplomatic positions. One was appointed to become the first woman High Commissioner in charge of Kenya's Diplomatic Mission in Britain but was recalled in 1992, and redeployed as Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. The second one was appointed as Kenya's representative to the Nairobi United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), replacing another who had earlier resigned from this post. In 1987, the President appointed the first ever woman Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. (Daily Nation June 2, 1987:1). No other major appointments have been made since, although from time to time a "token" woman is appointed as a member of the many ad hoc boards and committees that are regularly set up.

In the political arena, it was only in November 1969, six years after independence, that the first woman was elected into the National Assembly and one more was nominated to sit in that august legislative body, along with eleven male nominated members. Between 1969–1974,

of the total elected Members of Parliament, women formed 0.5% and 8% of the nominated members. Except for the period 1974–1979, when women's representation improved slightly, the general trend has been one of women's marginalisation in political decision-making at the national level. Indeed by 1991, out of 200 elected and nominated Members of Parliament, there were only two women elected MPs. Of the two women MPs, only one sits on the front bench as an Assistant Minister for Culture and Social Services, alone with 69 men assistant ministers. Indeed, since 1974, when the first woman was appointed to the front bench, the position of assistant minister is the highest position a woman has ever held in Kenya's National Assembly. Furthermore, there has never been more than one woman holding this post at any one time. More significantly, the lone woman assistant minister has consistently been appointed to serve in the "soft" Ministry of Culture and Social Services.

Within the ruling Kenya African National Union (KANU) party hierarchy, women have had even more difficulty participating at the national executive level; save for the lone woman who has since 1989, held the position of Director of Women and Youth Affairs at the ruling party secretariat and one woman party branch chair elected in early 1992. Indeed, women's status in the political party hierarchy has consistently been relegated to that of mere rank and file members or officials of the powerless.

Women's Wing

My own assessment up to 1991 is that, the few women in key decision-making had not used their decision-making platforms to influence national policies in a manner that benefitted other women who had not such a platform. None of these women, for example, had ever made an appeal to the government to remove the many legislations that discriminate against women in property ownership, employment, inheritance, marriage and divorce. The increasing violence against women, including numerous cases of child rape, is an issue one would have expected women in positions of authority to raise and to insist that the law be changed to make rape a capital crime and not a minor offence, as is currently the case. Perhaps, because most of these women leaders had been

presidential appointees in a single party political system, they feared victimisation that could result from being critical of government legislations and practices that discriminate against women, especially when they as individuals were beneficiaries of the system. Furthermore, they must have been aware of the various instances where the government had issued stern warnings to women who had tried to make very modest demands to the government in favour of women.⁴ As for the token women in a male dominated parliament, their numbers clearly worked against any efforts they may have made in pushing for gender related policy changes.

However, since the restoration of multi-party politics in December 1991, the political situation has changed significantly enough to accomodate some freedom of expression, association and assembly of not only political parties, but also various interest groups with a vested interest in the new democratisation agenda. Women have become one of the most vocal pressure groups, and are lobbying very hard for gender equity and social justice, especially in political representation as explained in the next section.

Women's Political Participation in Multi-Party Politics in Kenya: January 1992 – October 1992

In the current transition to multi-party democracy in Kenya, a high premium has been placed on political empowerment as a means of achieving other goals associated with the advancement of the status of women. The argument here is that if women are in key decision-making and policy-making capacities in large enough numbers, they would, for example, exert decisive influence to ensure the removal or repeal of laws that discriminate against women at the social and economic levels and they would participate in designing development policies that mainstream, rather than marginalise and disempower women.

⁴ Maria Nzomo: "Women, Democracy and Development in Africa" in Walter Oyugi et al eds. *Democratic Theory and Practice in Africa*, Nairobi and Portsmouth, N. H., Heinemann. 1987, p. 124.

Since January 1992, women's lobby groups and organisations have been mobilizing and strategising to ensure that in the forthcoming general, civic, and parliamentary elections due in February 1993, women constitute a critical mass of, at least, 30–35% of the total legislative body. One basic strategy to achieve this goal is to sensitize and make women, who form the majority of voters, more conscious of the power of the vote and the merits of casting their votes for committed women rather than for men. The other related strategy is for women's political pressure groups to encourage and build confidence in those women with the necessary political will and commitment to contest for political office in the forthcoming multi-party civic and parliamentary elections.

Non-partisan women's pressure groups are already at work to provide necessary moral and advisory support to women candidates, to increase the latter's chances of being elected into political office. For example, in July 1992, The National Committee on the Status of Women (NCSW) which has been the main lobby group spearheading this particular struggle, organised a national training workshop for women candidates bringing together about 60 women candidates who have already declared their intention to contest political office. The purpose of this workshop was to enhance the capacity of women candidates to win the forthcoming elections by providing them with a forum whereby they could exchange ideas and experiences, and learn from experts on electoral laws and politics, the pertinent issues and strategies necessary to win elections. Among the issues addressed at this workshop included: (i) electoral laws and procedures especially the very complex nomination procedures that women are generally unfamiliar with, (ii) the art of public speaking, taking into account that many African women are not socialized for public speaking, (iii) fund-raising techniques and resource management, given the critical role finance and proper management of the campaign plays for a candidate to win and the fact that women are highly disadvantaged as the majority of them are poor and are not independently wealthy and (iv) campaign strategies and issues, that a woman can exploit to enhance her chances of winning an election, in a political environment coloured by male values and standards. Besides the 60 who attended the workshop, many more women candidates are expected to join these 60 before the end of 1992, in order to attain something close to a critical mass of women in the next parliament. (Daily Nation, July 12 &

18, 1992:2; Standard 12 July 1992). In the meantime, the women representatives from all over the country have endorsed Prof. Wangari Maathai as the women's choice for a presidential candidate in the forthcoming elections.⁵ This is, in itself, an indication of the seriousness and ambition behind the Kenyan women's struggle for political empowerment. But to sustain this momentum and achieve the political objectives of the women's agenda, there is need to build and support a common lobbying forum or pressure group that can in turn serve to enhance the capacity of women candidates to win the forthcoming civic and parliamentary elections.

My assessment of the current political situation is that, although women have organised various pressure groups with the major objective being to advance women's political participation, there is yet to emerge a well coordinated strategy, common vision and cohesiveness. Kenyan women's struggle for empowerment has tended to be constrained by the absence of a strong women's movement and by the emphasis on social welfare objectives and neglect of economic and political empowerment goals. It is of greatest urgency and importance now to create unity in diversity between the numerous women's groups, organisations and individuals. Only if women adopt a common strategy, informed by a common vision, can they effectively lobby for adequate representation in decision-making positions and influence change in the policies and structures that perpetuate their subordinate status.

Conclusion

It can not be overemphasised that the new democratisation process under way in Kenya could again marginalise women, just as the earlier struggle for independence, unless women themselves seize this opportunity to challenge and seek fundamental changes in their subordinate status, by penetrating the decision-making centres of power and control. Women must, therefore, ensure that they attain high level and adequate political and public decision-making representation by committed women and

⁵ See for example, Sunday Standard and Sunday Times, Nairobi, July 19, 1992.

gender sensitive men of their choice in the envisaged democratic arrangement. This is the only way women can be assured of influence in the designing of future national development policies and programmes. It is also the most effective way of ensuring that laws that discriminate against women are repealed or removed from the statute books altogether.

The Philippine Women's Movement: In Search of a Feminist Identity

Corazon Aquino's assumption to the Presidency in 1986 was heralded by many as the dawning of a new age for the Filipino woman. For the first time in the country's history, a member of the female sex had taken hold of the reigns of political power. That this took place in a society heavily laced with machismo, makes the achievement noteworthy. That the road to power meant riding on the crest of popular insurrection and overthrowing a dictator, makes it unforgettable.

It is precisely the drama surrounding Aquino's rise to the highest office in the land that further perpetuated the false consciousness that women command respect and enjoy considerable status in society. It was as though the Aquino presidency marked the zenith of women's empowerment in the Philippines. Any discussion of women's participation in the struggle for democratic change in the Third World will have to be placed within the context of a class-divided society on the one hand, and the existence of a broad popular movement that is significantly differentiated along ideological lines, on the other. It is in relation with existing ideological forces that the issue of an autonomous women's movement must be discussed.

In attempting to share the experiences of Filipino women, the scope of this paper will be divided into three parts: 1) a summary of the women's situation; 2) an overview of the history of women's struggle from the 1920's to the 1970's; 3) the role of non-government organizations and external funding in strengthening women's advocacy; and 4) the limits and possibilities of a **feminist** women's movement in the Philippines.

Situationer: A Critical Re-examination of a Myth

Women in the Philippines suffer the same burdens that their sisters from other parts of Asia, Africa and Latin America endure. Be it on the issue of economic marginalization, subordination, multiple burden, gender stereotyping or violence, the Filipino woman is not spared from the pains of discrimination against, and exploitation of her person.

Yet, the belief that women occupy a high place in society has been drummed in the minds of many generations of Filipinos. Women's access to educational opportunities, increased participation in the economic and political spheres, high visibility in various areas of socio-cultural life. All this has helped to create the myth that the Filipino woman has no need for a women's liberation movement as, indeed, she has already been liberated. This myth is strengthened by the conventional view that, as the holder of the purse strings, the woman exercises unchallenged dominion over the household. Such a condition supposedly makes her assume a position equal in importance to that of the husband, as is echoed in the Filipino maxim: "the mother is the light of the home" (while "the father is the pillar of the family"). The Filipino wife is presumed to be a pampered one – all she needs to do is manage the hearth while the husband sweats it out in search of food and other means of sustenance for the family.

To shatter this myth about women's equality in the Philippines, one only has to look at certain facts. As of October 1991, we find that there are about 12.9 m. women comprising 47% of the estimated 27.64 m. – strong total labourforce in the Philippines. (Not accounted for in this figure is the over one million–strong Filipina overseas contract workers, who earn their keep as domestic helpers and entertainers in the Middle East and in industrialized countries like Japan, Germany, Italy etc. As it is, sex–based salary differentiation negates the significant contribution of women in the economy.

Research conducted in March by the Department of Labour and Employment's Institute of Labour Studies reveals that, generally, women workers earn only about PhP 0.37 (US\$ 0.01) for every peso (US\$ 0.04) that the men earn. The salary gap widens as the position reaches the

executive and managerial levels, where women receive only PhP 0.15 (US\$ 166.44). On the other hand, rank-and-file women in large companies receive a monthly average of PhP 4,256 (US\$ 170.24) while their male colleagues gain PhP 5.939 (US\$ 237.56) on the average. (Jiminez-David, 1992).⁶

Even as Filipino women in the formal sector are shortchanged income-wise as a result of sex-based discrimination, their sisters in the countryside are in an even worse position. Peasant women have always functioned as invisible laborers, their work in the fields seen only as an extension of their housework and therefore without commensurate value, monetary or otherwise. But even where financial compensation is present, the female agricultural worker receives only PhP 0.09 (US\$ 0.003) for every peso gained by the male.

If the Filipina is marginalized economically, so is she relegated when it comes to the political life of the nation. The table below shows the comparative standing of women in the area of formal political representation, under the Aquino administration and the present Ramos dispensation (see table on page 50).

In evaluating formal political representation of women in the Philippines, it is important to note that the majority of those who are able to assume leadership positions come from the upper class, and belong to existing political clans whether by consanguinity or by affinity. For instance, the four women senators serving under the Ramos government all come from economically and/or politically powerful families.

As for the participation in electoral processes, statistics from the Commission on Elections show that in 18 out of 22 elections held from 1947 to 1988, women have had a consistently higher voting turnout, compared to the men. The average rate of women voters is 79.29%, which is higher by 55 percentage points than the average turnout rate of their male counterparts. As a recent study noted, the figures on voter turnout tends to suggest that the higher degree of participation rate of

⁶ Jiminez David, Rina 1992: "Unequal Pay for Equal Work". Philippine Daily Inquirer (September 3).

Elective Posts	No. of Seats	No. of Women Representatives	
		Ramos	Aquino
Senate	24	4	2
Congress	202	21	19
Cabinet	20	1	3
Governor	73	4	4
Vice Governor	73	5	9
Provincial Board Member	626	68	62
City/Municipal Mayor	1,578	178	118
City/Municipal Vice Mayor	1,578	235	102
City/Municipal Councilor	12,406	n.a.	1,305

Source: Tancangco, Luzuiminda G. 1991: "Women and Politics in Contemporary Philippines". Philippine Journal of Public Administration. Vol. XXXIV, No. 4 (October).

women in elections is due to the fact that "voting is the only mode of formal participation open to all Filipino women" and that the electoral candidacy is "reserved for privileged women" (Tancangco, 1991:339).⁷

In terms of legislation under the Aquino administration, only one per cent of all laws enacted directly address women's issues. A sample of these women-oriented laws and their limitations are as follows:

⁷ Tancangco, Luzuiminda G. 1991: "Women and Politics in Contemporary Philippines". Philippine Journal of Public Administration. Vol XXXIV, No. 4 (October).

- Women in Development and Nation-building Act – commands government agencies to set aside a substantial portion of overseas development aid for women-oriented projects, and to encourage women's participation in all of the agencies' activities. Unfortunately, this law carries no sanction in case of non-compliance.
- Anti-Discrimination-Act-penalizes sex-based discrimination in pay, promotion and training. However, the law is silent on the wage differentials between so-called "masculine" and "feminine" types of jobs (e.g. between female sewers and male cutters in a garments factory). The law is also not able to address discrimination in hiring.
- Social Security for Reproductive Work – entitles spouses devoting full time to housework and children rearing to social security coverage (if they want to). But the housewives are still dependent on their husbands since the law mandates that contributions will be deducted from the salary of the spouse who works outside the home, and only with his consent. (Dionisio, 1992).⁸

On the issue of violence, a 1990 study conducted by Lihok Pilipina (an NGO based in the Visayas and Mindanao) on wife-beating in one province alone showed that, based on police reports and hospital records, six out of ten wives are beaten up by their husbands every day. Data on domestic violence is difficult to obtain as the issue is considered a private one. Much remains to be done in this area, not only in terms of research but of advocacy as well. At this point, the woman has no legal recourse in the event that she is victimized domestically.

On a social scale, the extreme poverty besetting the majority of Philippine society has inflicted the most severe and violent effect on women. At home and abroad, hundreds of thousands of Filipinas have turned to prostitution as a means of survival. In Japan alone, there are around 90,000 Filipino women working as entertainers. Here in Germany, many Filipinas victimized by sex-trafficking -- whether through illegal recruitment or the mail-order bride system -- have ended up as prostitutes, illegal at that. Elsewhere, stories of woe regarding Filipino women

8 Dionisio, Eleanor R. 1992. "Women under Cory". Sunday Inquirer (March 15).

working overseas abound. Last year's Gulf War, for instance, was made all the more unforgettable because of the many instances of Filipina overseas workers being kidnapped and raped by Kuwaiti soldiers.

All these are enough to debunk the myth that the Filipino women are on a par with men in their society. But given these realities, how have women taken part in the struggle for democratic change in their country?

The Women's Movement: Conception and Infancy

As one study of the history of the Philippine women's movement notes, the participation of women in political struggles may be classified into three waves (Angeles, 1988).⁹ The first wave began in the colonial period, during which Filipino women actively involved themselves in anti-colonial resistance. Many of them led small armies of combatants, even though official history relegates these women revolutionaries to having performed traditional roles within the liberation movement (Tancangco, 1991:325). Under the Americans, upper and middle class women sought to imitate their sisters in the United States by launching a Philippine version of the suffragette movement in the 1900's. The efforts of various women's groups during this period bore fruit with the eventual granting of women's suffrage rights via the 1937 plebiscite.

However, the suffrage movement, while a considerable stepping stone in raising the issue of women's exclusion from political processes in the colony, did not raise other concerns besides the women's right to vote. Neither did it advocate issues related to class politics. Led as it was by women of the bourgeoisie, the movement reflected the aspirations of the upper and middle classes, thereby divorcing itself from the lives of the majority of poor women who viewed the right to vote as worthless in an elitist and foreign-controlled political system (Angeles, 1988:28).

9 Angeles Leonora C. 1988: "The PKP and MAKIBAKA Revisited: Women's Liberation in Theory and Practice." *Kasarinlan: Philippine Quarterly of Third World Studies*. Quezon City: Third World Studies Center. Vol. 3, No. 4 (2nd Quarter).

The class nature of women's involvement in political change took a different turn during the interregnum brought about by the Japanese occupation. Here, women from the lower classes joined the armed resistance even as their privileged sisters sought refuge in the United States and elsewhere, away from the ruin and severity caused by war. This situation turned out to be brief, however, as the postwar period saw the retreat of these lower class women to their domestic chores, and the re-emergence of upper and middle class women in the political scene. These women devoted these energies to social work, fund-raising and moral regeneration campaigns. Many of the groups established during this period were meant to be female counterparts of men's organizations, thereby performing mere auxiliary functions (Tancangco, 1991:326).

The rise of radicalism in the late 1960's spawned a vibrant student movement that not only spearheaded the revival of the national struggle against American intervention, but likewise sought to present a vision of an alternative society that would be the end-goal of the struggle for democratic change. It is from the ranks of these student intellectuals and radicals that MAKIBAKA (to struggle), or the Free Association of New Women, was born. Launched in 1970, MAKIBAKA was the first women's association that attempted to situate women's liberation within the context of the struggle against foreign domination and class oppression. Thus, the birth of MAKIBAKA marked the second wave of the women's movement, this time integrating the issue of gender into the larger issues of class oppression and imperialism. (Angeles, 1988:33).

However, it is this very attempt at combining feminist and class politics that stunted MAKIBAKA's chances of helping establish an autonomous women's movement. On the one hand, organizational priorities and rebukes from male comrades who saw the woman question as trivial given the demands of the times, and ideological blinders that resulted from an uncritical adherence to orthodox Marxism. On the other hand, it reduced MAKIBAKA to a self-professed feminist organization that failed to look beyond politics as a source of gender oppression.

Martial law, ironically, turned out to be favorable for women's organising in the 70's, as the immense degradation of the Filipina spurred campaigns against the trafficking of Filipino women overseas, the exploitation of

women workers in export processing zones, cases of torture and rape of women political detainees, and the like. However, even as the women's groups began to take an increasingly feminist character, the nature of women's participation in the anti-dictatorship struggle was such that, the different ideological forces comprising the Philippine Left -- national democrats, social democrats, socialists -- viewed the integration of women in the democratic struggle only in relation to the need for augmenting their respective mobilizable forces, without assigning "central significance" to the role of gender liberation in the struggle for national and social transformation. In other words, the women's movement was seen as a mere appendage of the larger national struggle.

By the start of the 1980's, however, one significant development that challenged the dominant thinking of mainstream political formations regarding the women's movement, was the setting up of PILIPINA (Movement of Filipino Women). An organization that had a clear socialist feminist orientation, PILIPINA was composed of individuals belonging to the social democratic and social camps, some of them even holding important positions within their respective ideological blocs. Yet, these women ensured that PILIPINA would remain politically and organizationally autonomous from the political forces that each belonged to.

Towards the twilight of the Marcos dictatorship and specifically after the assassination of former Senator Benigno Aquino in 1983, women's groups of various political persuasions and class composition re-emerged and shared the political center stage with other anti-Marcos organizations. Many of these women's groups, coming as they were from a wide array of groups -- from the politically and ideologically inclined, to civic associations -- decided to band together in an umbrella organization that later became popularly known as GABRIELA (General Assembly Binding Women for Reforms, Integrity, Equality, Leadership and Action). The coalition, set up in 1984, was the first attempt at unifying the women around a feminist agenda, even as political differences are recognized and yet disallowed to derail the effort towards the building of an autonomous women's movement.

Unfortunately, less than two years later, GABRIELA split over the issue of participation in the 1986 snap presidential elections. After hurling charges and counter-charges of manipulation against each other, at least half of the women's organizations decided to leave until only those closely identified with the national democrats were left in GABRIELA. What was originally envisaged as a *genuine coalition* of forces of women, became reduced to simply another association of organizations influenced by a single ideological tendency. On the other hand many of the original member-organizations that left GABRIELA later formed the more politically diverse Women's Action Network for Development, or WAND. (In 1991, the paths of GABRIELA -- through the Group of 10 network -- and WAND would meet with the setting up of a funding mechanism called Development Initiatives for Women Alternatives and Transformative Action (DIWATA).

Emergent Third Wave: The Making of a Feminist Women's Movement

The overthrow of Marcos resulted in many political activists deciding to set up non-governmental organizations or social development agencies as an extension of their commitment to democratic change, this time in the arena of development work. At the same time, the immense popularity of Corazon Aquino attracted huge amounts of foreign and local funding for development projects (Constantino-David, 1990:4).¹⁰ Women's groups benefitted largely from this.

On the one hand, many funding sources emphasized the inclusion of a Women-in-Development (WID) component in any development project. On the other hand, in 1987, on the initiative of the newly-installed government, over a hundred individuals came together from the academia, people's organizations and NGOs to collectively formulate the Philippine Development Plan for Women (PDPW). A companion volume of the 1987-1992 Medium Term Development Plan, the PDPW was a

¹⁰ Constantino-David, Karina: "The Limits and Possibilities of Philippine NGOs in Development." (Paper presented at the conference on Philippine Dilemmas: Dealing with Foreign Linkages at The Hague, The Netherlands.) Quezon City: Harnessing Self-Reliant Initiatives and Knowledge (HASIK), Inc.

landmark document in that the Philippines became only the second country in the world that set out a comprehensive policy statement on the role of women in nation-building (Constantino-David, 1990).¹¹

Thus, these two major developments at the outset of the Aquino era unintentionally planted the seeds of what is turning out to be the third wave of the women's movement, one that is increasingly feminist in orientation.

This paper posits that, arguably, NGO's contributed much to the impetus that is currently propelling gender advocacy in the Philippines. While previously existing formations have not ceased in raising women's issues, it cannot be denied that women-oriented development projects have pushed to the surface other women's concerns that may not be directly political in nature but, nevertheless, are equally critical to the gender question: child care, livelihood development, campaign against domestic violence, etc.

Even the advocacy of feminist issues in traditionally chauvinist or ideologically – biased organizations like trade unions, peasant organizations and cooperative movements has been stimulated – to a certain extent – by the need to have a WID component. Since many of such organizations have partner NGO's that keep relations with funding agencies which place importance on women-oriented projects, women-specific projects inevitably assumed as much significance as traditional ones. Hence one will find a federation of women workers, for instance, which in the past simply subsumed gender issues under the larger cause of trade unionism but which is now incorporating a women's component in training and capability-building programs.

In addition, the tremendous popularity of gender advocacy in the developing world has encouraged the establishment of close working relations between women's groups that belong to different ideological forces and are otherwise divided over their respective political leanings.

11 Constantino-David, Karina: "The Philippine Development Plan for Women: Conception, Birth and Infancy." (Paper written for the Asia-Pacific Development Centre, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.) Quezon City: Harnessing Self-Reliant Initiatives and Knowledge (HASIK), Inc.

One such example, as has been noted above, is the coming together of WAND and the Group of Ten – where GABRIELA belongs as one of the ten member-organizations – in order to collectively manage development funds through a women-specific funding mechanism called DIWATA. Here, while political and ideological tensions inevitably remain, the two major networks of women's groups are afforded a venue for jointly pushing women's issues within their respective circles via the promotion of gender advocacy and innovative women-oriented projects. While there are other alliances of various women's NGO's and organizations, it may be said, that DIWATA is currently the de facto umbrella organization of women's groups in the Philippines, as it counts among its ranks "the majority of organizations and NGO's involved in the women's movement" (Tanada, 1991:3).¹²

These observations regarding the role of external funding and NGOs are not meant to disparage the efforts of Filipino women in advancing the cause of gender equality. It is simply an attempt at recognizing the peculiar turn of development under the Aquino administration that further strengthened feminist advocacy in some organizations, and compelled others who had previously dismissed the women's question as trivial, to do the same.

The Road Ahead

After all is said and done, what is more important about current developments in the Philippine women's movement is the fact that a clearly feminist orientation is emerging, even as the larger political and ideological questions are being tackled within and among the progressive sections of the women's movement. Even as the women wage internal battles within their respective political formations – in the hope that other comrades will finally recognize the "central significance" of gender liberation within the democratic struggle – these advocates are pursuing a determined effort at carving their own place within the democratic

¹² Tanada, Karen 1991: "Women's Coalition Processes: Beginnings and Reflections (First Draft)." Coalition Research and Exchange Project (Initial Report). Quezon City: Philippines – Canada Joint Committee (October).

struggle. One proof of such steadfast commitment is the ability of women to meaningfully work together, despite existing problems across the ideological blocs to which they belong.

Much remains to be done. Large sections of women remain excluded from political processes, whether in formal institutions or otherwise. The feminist movement in the Philippines is relatively young. As it gains more experience – and hopefully mature in the process – it will eventually make a qualitative leap in advancing the women's question, even as the struggle for social transformation continues.

Women and Development in Indonesia: Cases of Urban Women

Immediately after the colonial period, countries in South East Asia expressed a general commitment to constructing a "new society" with primary concern and priority to eliminate poverty and inequality. Development planners, in their efforts to achieve these goals, have embarked on a development approach taking western industrialization processes as their model. As a result, views with regard to gender roles and the status of women, current in western industrialized societies, have been taken as one of the important references in finding a suitable, if indeed desirable goal for their society as a necessary indicator and measure for their social progress.

Under that premise, it was very often the case that the unique potential of women to play their true, genuine and central roles in their society was not fully recognized. The development stereotype has been that women have been regarded as having the same interest and nature of participation as men. Moreover, women were regarded as dependent upon men and their specific needs are still, generally, not attended to in development planning.

Therefore, what was generally felt as one of the negative impacts of the development effort on women's potential was the widespread displacement of women from their true sources of power and influence in all sectors of society. One important impact of the introduction of capitalism in developing countries was its ability to undermine women's traditional spheres of power and influence, while at the same time creating new conditions for the further dependence of women on men. As a result of this introduction of inappropriate development ideology, with its corresponding values and practices, the traditional and unique role of women in societies in developing countries has been severely displaced. Compared to men, the role of women has been almost universally

altered, displaced and reduced, as development, industrialisation and modernisation proceeds.

The awareness of integrating women in the development process only later became popular, when planners realized the potential of women, regrettably however, as an abundant supply of 'less utilised' labour. Efforts to increase the economic contribution of women was meant not only to make fuller use of all available human resources, but also as a way of improving the society's quality of life and income distribution. Current discussions on issues of integrating women into development indicate that only limited success, if any, has been achieved. For until now, the position of women in South East Asia has not improved very much at all.

Perspectives for Women in the Development Process

Perspectives for women in the development process have, until now, varied on a wide-range of issues. Some writers examined the effect of economic development programmes on the status of women and argued that women's contributions to the production of goods and services had been ignored. Researchers are also concerned with the issues of women in poverty and women's productive roles. They point out that the relative importance of women's productive roles increases with poverty, as the survival of poor households are generally directly related to the economic activities of women in those households.

A lot of attention has recently been focused on the study of women and technology. Technology has been shown to be a potentially powerful force in promoting economic development. However, the positive impact of the adoption of technology, is not coupled with due attention to its social implications, and can be undermined by negative and unanticipated effects in the social sphere.

Much of the existing work on South East Asian women is descriptive and concentrates on the difficulty that women have in obtaining adequate resources and services. Studies of women tend to be focused on gender as an isolated issue. There is a lack of investigation into the conse-

quences of rapid economic growth and social change on women and on gender relationships. We do not know much about the reaction of women to these changes and how these changes affect them in terms of stress, conflict and contradiction, both at the macro and micro levels. In short, the effect of socio-economic dynamics and dilemmas of rapid change on women and their relationships has been poorly documented.

Based on the limited amount of available information, I would like to examine the consequences of the rapid economic growth on the situation of women and to reveal the reaction of women to these changes. The focus of my attention will be on the situation of women in urban areas.

The Situation of Urban Women in Indonesia

In 1990, nearly one-third of the Indonesian population lived in urban areas, distributed throughout the country. Half of the urban population were women. Evidence suggests that the toughness of urban life may fall particularly heavily on women. In discussing the situation of urban women in Indonesia, factors such as discrimination in employment opportunities and disparities in the level of compensation relative to men, their multiple role as workers and as women of the household are very important issues which must be addressed. The overall environment – social, political, cultural, economic and physical – also has a profound impact on her world and on herself.

Women in most communities in Indonesia have, throughout history, had well-defined roles in the family and sometimes in the community as well. Women are now experiencing an unavoidable, far-reaching and rapid change which is both planned and spontaneous. Given the attractiveness of some new options, changes are sometimes embraced with enthusiasm. In other cases, being able to meet the necessities of daily life involves changes which are only reluctantly accepted. The contest between change and continuity is dynamic, ongoing and never ending, evolving as people and the situation changes.

Change itself is not new. What is new and needs more attention is the number of changes going on at one time and the intensity of pressure felt

by society or the individual to accept the imperative to change. In urban areas, change happens very fast and often in a disorientated manner, compared to what might be taking place in rural areas. There are some indications that stress and hardship caused by this change falls particularly heavily on urban women. Social, economic, family, occupational and political changes all interact, triggering and responding to each other.

As women, they have been objects of government policy which assumed that their appropriate role in society was clear and trivial, and therefore their priority needs were also known. In both cases, the focus was generally defined as revolving around the household, supporting husband, raising children and nurturing society. As city residents, women's unique urban needs and challenges have generally gone unrecognized and unaddressed. In the national effort to meet the needs of Indonesia's vast rural majority, urban / rural distinctions were ignored in many aspects of public policy, planning and programming.

Women make up more than 50 per cent of the urban population. They constitute a substantial portion of the urban workforce, particularly in the less skilled and lower paid occupations. They manage the household and at the lower socio-economic level their financial contribution to family income is often a decisive factor in maintaining the well-being of the family.

Problems of urbanization and urban poverty affect people in almost every province of the country. Migration, both permanent and circular, has been and continues to be an important factor in the growth of urban areas. The pace of change in urban areas often outstrips the capacity of formal systems and regulations to manage and provide the necessary services, such as water, electricity, transportation, housing etc. Informal systems evolve and become a key mechanism for the production and distribution of goods and services needed by large sections of the population who fall within the category of the lower income group. The informal sector often plays an essential supporting role to the formal sector, being a source of cheap labour and location for low-cost piece-work processing of commodities.

The informal sector is particularly important as a place of work for poor urban women, who capitalized on its lack of rigidity in working conditions. On the other hand, precisely because of this, women are often exploited: they have to work under conditions of great hardship and have few avenues of appeal in the event of difficulties. The relative restriction on mobility makes them particularly vulnerable to lay-offs and they are only recruited as temporary employees.

Family responsibility for women in Indonesia is heavy. As in other parts of the world, Indonesian women are generally considered to be responsible for all aspects of household management and child-rearing. The multiple roles of women are generally grouped into three categories – the family, work and the community. Despite this "overburden", it was found that many women choose to join the workforce for economic reasons. The percentage is higher amongst the lower income group.

In addition to women entering the paid workforce, many find themselves compelled by obligation or social pressure to invest substantial amounts of their time to community activities. There is a compulsory wives organization for the wives of civil servants and there is also a semi-government organization called the "family welfare movement" which is primarily run by women. These concern, in particular, maternal and child health, as well as broader family welfare. In the urban setting, women are compelled to participate in community activities. It is becoming fashionable now that women become the preferred choice for officers of neighbourhood organizations.

Conclusion

From the previous pages, it has been shown that women are playing a central role in the true process of social change. The role of women is affected by the development process. Although central to their societies, women have often benefitted unequally from opportunities and the resources of development in comparison to their male counterparts. The decision-makers very often assume that women's interests are the same as those of men. As a result, special consideration of women is not considered as particularly necessary, because they can always be

included in various groups that the government plans, e.g. workers, farmers etc. Yet on closer examination of the reality of social discourse, one finds that women are different. This lack of concern for women at the planning stage has resulted in exacerbating several problems, such as an increase in women's work burden, more losses of existing employment opportunities and a significantly lower level of participation in the labour force in comparison to men.

One of the reasons why many governments neglect the role of women in the development process is because development planning is basically a political process. Because women are politically weak, in the sense that substantial leverage of women in the decision-making processes has not been achieved, their true voices have not been significantly heard in the process of formulating policies affecting women. It is uncommon that the interests of women are explicitly considered in either the economic or political aspects of development planning. Women's interests have been overshadowed by broader allegiances and other interests.

The process of integrating women's issues into development planning has been slow and the national machinery for the organization of women has been relatively ineffective. While there has been some progress and some change in the status and participation of women, the effort to include women tends to remain compartmentalized and isolated from the mainstream of development itself.

The integration of women's issues into development plans, when it is successfully fought for, provides no guarantee that there will be follow-up in terms of the successful implementation of women-oriented development processes. Plans must be formulated based on the reality of women's lives and society's perception of the importance of the role of women. Attempts must be made to consider information on the sexual division of labour in work roles outside the usual measured labour force participation rates. Besides paying attention to quantitative data, national development plans must be designed to respond to qualitative information, dealing with the needs of women in their multiple roles. Policy makers must no longer assume that women and men are identical. They have to appreciate also the notion that different groups of women

will not automatically benefit equally from a well meant political decision.

In the urban economy, where women face problems of poor prospects for regular employment, and many disadvantages, the strategies available to planners to deal with this problem is not so easy. One of the reasons is that the economic problems in urban areas are also entrenched in the broader political and ideological context. The obstacles facing women in the informal sector, for example, are not only their lack of employment alternatives, but also the fact that they are unorganized and unprotected and that attempts at organizing these workers have met with hostility from many sections of government. Protective legislation for women in this sector needs to be initiated, because women working in this sector are not protected by any form of regulation pertaining to their working conditions, on wage levels and benefits given to them and the nature of employer and employee relationships. Moreover, very often some women are also involved in what has been classified as illegal activities within the informal sector. Planners can reduce the excess by liberalizing and reducing the burden of illegality of some informal activities in which many women are engaged and generating their income for their livelihood.

Strategies Used by Women for Gaining More Political Power in Argentina

The way in which the world is going to change and how the international equilibrium will be shaped will depend to a large extent on what happens in Eastern Europe. But it will also depend on other regions of this planet where just as far-reaching changes have taken place. This is the case in Latin America: it is enormous in terms of population, territory, natural resources and raw materials. It is characterized by sharp contradictions – misery, illiteracy, drug-trafficking, pollution – but, at the same time, the continent has been experiencing economic and political developments in recent years that have restructured the profile of the continent. Especially at the political level, deep changes have taken place. At the beginning of the 80s, eight out of ten countries on the continent – among them Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay – and almost 90% of the population, were living under military regimes.

Today, military dictatorships no longer exist in any of these countries and each one is on its way towards democratic transition. There can be no doubt about the fragility of these democracies that are exposed to many risks, with explosive demographic, economic and social contradictions and that are generally led by ruling classes that were educated and grew up under the old regimes.

One thing, however, is certain: gradually, an awareness is growing, not only in all strata of Latin-American society, but also in political circles in Washington, that it is only possible in a democracy to deal with the contradictions not only left unresolved, but even aggravated by dictatorships. In the context of this new political direction, an analogous, far-reaching process of economic and financial restructuring has been initiated with the objective of containing inflation, of reducing the external debt, of stimulating foreign investments in Latin America and of starting a "process of modernization".

The ruling governments are trying to achieve these objectives by applying the severe and detested guiding rules of neo-liberalism. In Argentina, the dramatic reduction in the annual rate of inflation – from November until today to a monthly 1.6% – was achieved by extremely severe measures: a 50% reduction in social expenditure (education, health, social security); a 16-year consolidation of government securities (a real "confiscation" of middle-class savings); freezing of wages and drastic reduction of all types of aid; unlimited opening for foreign capital without the appropriate framework of regulations and privatization of the principal service enterprises, which nevertheless keep their monopoly position. Similar processes have taken, or are taking place, in Chile, Uruguay, Venezuela, Paraguay, Bolivia and Brazil. In this context, the objective of this study is to comment on the ideas and experiences of feminist women from the beginning of the democratic transition up to the adoption of the "quota regulation" as an approved mechanism to open the way for women to enter into public office. These experiences have developed together with the strategic conviction that a larger presence of women is of basic importance to the process of democratization expanding the limits of the system and representing an opportunity for a new discussion of economic modernization with a more human face.

Women Demand Positions of Influence: The Case of the Political Party "Unión Civica Radical"

Since 1983, a process of raising consciousness with respect to the nature, organization and joint struggle of radical woman has taken place. The aim is to participate in the decision-making sectors of society. This phenomenon runs parallel to the growing "women's movement" in Argentina since the beginning of the democratic opening.

In the Unión Civica Radical (UCR), this evolution can be divided into three phases. The first one, from 1983 to 1987, with its initial attempts to create a special place for women, is characterized by the mobilization of women, especially in pre-election periods. At that stage, no alternative ideas concerning women's issues had been worked out and the demands were confined to the "private" sector (family, health, leisure, education, culture etc.).

María José Lubertino und Nuria Nuñez

The second, much shorter phase was from 1988 until the middle of 1989. It was determined by the collective perception of discrimination, a growing consciousness of being a woman, the contact with other women's organizations, conceptual differences between the "old" and the "new" discussion and the construction of an organization with its inherent power conflicts.

The third phase, which was even shorter, comprised the period from 1989 until today. In this phase, the acceleration in the rate of change became evident. Nearly all women with representative offices or with some influence of their own were incorporated in this process, regardless of internal policies. The "male" way of policy making, which we ourselves are pursuing – was questioned. We tried to reach the different groups of women, beyond their political or strategic differences in approaching the issue, we agreed upon strategies, tactics and actions and brought the discussion out onto the street.

What we would like to point out as a historical milestone in that process is, on the one hand, the "collectivization" of consciousness-raising and, thus, of actions, whereas before there were only processes of raising consciousness of individuals and scattered actions.

On the other hand, the permeability and exchange of views with other women's groups, whether with the "feminist movement" or with the "women's movement" and the identification of common interests with other women in politics with respect to specific women's issues is of vital importance. The progress achieved seems to be irreversible. However, the further development of this progress will depend on the maturity and coherence of women's action.

Within the framework of the third phase, in the strategic area the discussion began on the "quota system" and whether it would be accepted by the majority of women, and, in the ideological area, on the "demythologized" adoption of feminism by most women. Finally on 6 Nov. 1991 the Chamber of Deputies adopted a law concerning the quota system, following tremendous pressure from women's groups in particular Red Latinoamericana de Feministas Politicas. In any case, even though we are well aware that it is only one of the first steps, we have to keep a watchful eye on the actual application of the law.

This year on June 28th, the first national elections in which the quota regulation was applicable were held and the electoral lists of all parties complied with the new regulation. However, as these elections were senatorial elections for the Federal Capital, the offices concerned were honorary, because they were for delegates. Early next year, elections will be held to vote for offices with real political power and we shall see what happens then. In any event, the majority of women will have to decide whether the lists are to be contested if the quota regulation is not complied with.

On a party level, the National Assembly which met this year, was a constituent assembly and elected the new office-holders characterizing the changed political landscape of the country. The new president is supporting our claim and, in a vote by acclamation, the general assembly approved a declaration on this issue. However, an amendment of the

Charter is not scheduled before the end of the year. Nevertheless, the women of San Juan achieved the reform of their status at provincial level by establishing an obligatory quota of 33% of women for all electoral and party offices. In the Federal Capital and in other districts of the country, similar reform projects are underway.

The "Quota Regulation" and its Reasons

We want to point out the following achievements which played a decisive role in the beginning of the project and in accelerating its progress towards the realization of our aims concerning the political participation of women:

- a) "feminization" of women in politics
- b) contact to comparative experiences
- c) association of women in politics coming from different parties
- d) massive mobilization of the women's movement
- e) understanding of the problem, political vision of the future or information campaigns of men in politics.

The historical moment when the required conditions for this debate were created was the return to democracy in 1983. Not only because of the return to normal functioning of institutions and therefore, the absolutely essential functioning of the political parties, but because of the atmosphere of community which was starting to gain a hold in everyday life in these years and because of the role of women during the fight against dictatorship and the return to democracy, which led to an actual participation of women in political parties, hitherto unknown on such a scale.

Moreover, democracy provided the necessary basis for contact and relationships between women in politics on a national and international level, for establishing contacts between women of other social organizations and different cultural sectors and for a collective mobilization to achieve their common objectives.

Regardless of this progress and irrespective of individual cases, there was a qualitative change in political women as a group: their "feminization", which allowed them to achieve a sense of consciousness of being women over and above their different ideological and political beliefs. This joint sense of consciousness laid the foundation for realization of the extent of discrimination against them and led to an intensive analysis of the reasons for it and possibilities for their elimination. This was the motivation for them to show their numbers and their real importance. They became aware that they had no voice in places where critical decisions are taken. So they changed their manner of speaking, the subject matter under discussion and started using new practical methods.

This process of "feminization" of women in politics did not start automatically with the democratic opening, but as a result of later contacts with Argentinian feminists and political women from Europe and from other Latin American countries. As a result of the initial representation crisis of the political parties, this process accelerated and we began to reflect on the issue of power, to which feminist theory can contribute interesting analytical elements.

The "feminization" of women in politics must not be idealized. This process does not yet include all women in the political arena. Moreover, it is neither a homogeneous phenomenon nor is it complete (if it can ever be completed). In spite of this, a sufficient number of women are involved and with sufficient weight to render them an entity. However, it has to be continually strengthened to increase the number of women with feminist consciousness, which boosts our potential for change and for perfecting our new political practices in coherence with our ideas.

In this framework, the approval of the quota regulation has to be considered as a necessary instrument for the acceleration of cultural change, but in itself, although it has opened the way to other, more fundamental discussions, it is not enough to act as a banner under which all political women can unite and as a "spearhead" for penetrating the patriarchal system due to one important weak point: the important thing, which of course is very obvious, but not easy to achieve, is to recognize and respect differences and to live with them for mutual benefit, to

redefine the areas of "public" and "private" and to return the ethical dimension to politics; finally, to extend the boundaries of democracy.

As a counterpart to change in the work of women in politics, when their ideas became apparent and their demands concrete and made public, the male reactions were neither simultaneous nor homogeneous. The crucial point is to question the distribution of the areas of power; there were no gracious concessions; especially, if it is not possible to show that adaptation also has implications for the recovery of ground lost or historically exclusively assigned to women, which they do not view as an advantage, as these areas continue to be culturally excluded from the hierarchy.

Nowadays, the places for political decisions have withdrawn tending to move out of sight of representative procedures and escaping from the participation of the people. An attempt has been started to reduce political issues, impoverishing and restricting the role of politics to a confrontation of only a few interests. The essential characteristic of the political cycle in the United States of America, in Europe and also in Latin America is neoconservatism. Together with its negative impact on the achievements of the working class and the hopes of progress in the Third World, this process has increased social inequalities. It has banished women to marginal areas which are growing greater and greater and has strengthened the machismo or its comeback in those countries where it seemed to have been defeated.

Our different gender has been utilized to emphasize sexual division into social roles. It is no accident that in the United States of America as well as in Europe, essential laws such as the regulation concerning the voluntary interruption of pregnancy or sexual abuse are attacked and deprived of their significance.

This neoconservative politics, however, is nowadays exposed to deep contradictions determined among other things by the fact that the changes in the feminine identity at work and in the area of procreation require concrete alternatives. Neoconservative politics can and must be restricted and defeated. We have to oppose it from the start. This demands a process of transformation. We believe that our presence as

women in this fight is essential for an equitable growth process with a new quality, because it is characterized by our identity. To this end, too, we emphasize the necessity and urgency of converting the individual and social strength of women into a political strength, thus confirming the alliance of women and their visible presence in society and in politics.

Concluding Discussion

Democratic change and social reform processes taking place in many parts of the world provide new opportunities for women to truly shape democratic change. This was one of the conclusions reached at the international workshop organised by the International Department of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES) in Bonn on October 21/22, 1992.

At the end of the two day brainstorming session, women experts from Africa, Asia, Latin America and Germany drew several important conclusions. Firstly, the realisation that problems facing women are not restricted to a specific country but are a worldwide phenomenon. Secondly, these common problems can be better solved through cooperation and solidarity between women throughout the world. Thirdly, that women have a different understanding of the concept of power and regard democracy, too, in a much broader sense, encompassing not only politics but also social and economic affairs – indeed, also relationships within the family. Fourthly, that women must continue to press for increased participation in all forms of decision-making and gain a greater say in every aspect of life, be it political, economic or social. It is only in this way that women can actively contribute to fashioning a better and more just world.

Participants attending the workshop repeatedly stressed the need to intensify international cooperation between women's groups. In this respect they particularly welcomed the initiative of the FES to organise such a workshop. It was also further questioned whether a similar seminar could be held next year and several participants also suggested the need to establish working groups.

Through Networking We Can Help Achieve Further Change

Brigitte Adler, a member of the German parliament, stressed the need for women to be involved everywhere, because women's affairs concern all aspects of life. "We need networks, she said, so that we can remain in touch with one another and continue to learn from each other." The workshop had shown, she said, that women from the Third World and from industrialised countries face the same problems. "Women's issues, she argued, can be solved in one world." In view of the enormity of the tasks involved, Brigitte Adler warned against trying to solve all issues in an isolated manner. She suggested the need to consider distributing various tasks amongst women's groups – a factor which would require intensified networking. "One thing is clear, she said, we should not leave this topic of democratization to elites who try to instrumentalise parliaments; we must intervene everywhere." Many other participants also stressed that solidarity is more than just a word. Women can learn from one another and thereby solve problems which go across national boundaries.

The Problem of Finance

How can networking and women's projects in this field be more effectively financed? Nuria Nuñez, director of the Instituto de la Mujer in Santiago de Chile, pointed out that it is very difficult to obtain financing for this type of work. While funding is available for "traditional" women's projects, women's projects in the political sphere are not regarded as being politically interesting in Germany, she said. Taking up the question of funding, Dr. Carola Donner-Reichle from the German Protestant Association for Cooperation in Development (EZE) pointed out that non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are increasingly concerned with women's issues. If official development aid is not forthcoming, she strongly advised women's groups to approach the NGOs.

Lobby Work Required More Than Ever

On the economic front, Dr. Ludgera Klemp, in charge of women's affairs in the international department of the FES, warned that the model of neo-liberalism is increasingly gaining acceptance in many countries. Neo-liberal market policies and the restructuring of state budgets lead, she said, not only to substantial deficits in the educational field, in the basic health services and to a generally unjust distribution, but also to a global redistribution of work which increasingly burdens women. Few experts and politicians question, she said, the repercussions of these policies on the rights of women, the food situation of children and the development of female employment opportunities (e.g., the destruction of jobs in the fields of health and education and the increase in the number of women working in the free trade zones). As a result, women must actively elucidate their needs and press for reform. Intervention and lobby work is required more than ever.

Helping the Youth

How can younger women be more directly involved in the process of shaping democratic change? One participant reported that she had been involved, a few years ago, in the "model" United Nations. This model of the UN General Assembly involves school children from all over the world. While many mixed delegations and some solely male delegations attend such sessions, she reported, that in her own experience, no solely female delegations had taken part. How can women, therefore, encourage young women to become involved and help shape their own views on gender issues? Many participants felt this to be an important point for consideration. María José Lubertino Beltrán stated that many years ago in Argentina a group of young women were instrumental in shaping the feminist movement. Today, further consideration is being given to this question and it has been noted that young women have a "resistance" to developing gender consciousness on account of the "socialisation process". There is a tendency for female and male youth to act together but a 'youth women's association' has been formed. "We think this is a risk group in terms of double discrimination, both youth and women." In the Philippines the younger generation also played a very important role

during the student movement of the sixties and seventies. Christina Valte, however, noted a general trend of conservatism amongst young people in countries which were previously radical – the United States, European countries and also the Philippines. "The younger generation have to define for themselves how they want to contribute; this must be determined by the students themselves", she said. Dr. Maria Nzomo also felt that the problem of youth should be tackled more consistently. "From the Kenyan experience, youth is going through a crisis. We have a responsibility to act as a model and involve them in activities and help them organise their own organisations."

It was a lively two-day debate which strengthened international solidarity. Women from the North gained the impression – which they verbally expressed – that women from the South are 'one step ahead of us'. The realisation that women's problems concern not just one country but transcend national and indeed continental barriers strengthened the participants conviction that women's networks must be increased. As Frene Ginwala said, we are operating from a common base and from the understanding that women in politics must operate from organising women in the broadest sense. "How lucky we have been, in a sense, in South Africa that we have come late to democracy and so we have this opportunity to restructure society, rather than patch it up, which other people are having to do."

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