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"INTO THE SUNLIGHT OF A NEW DAY" - THE BELIEFS AND WORK OF TWO WOMEN PEACE ACTIVISTS IN THE VANCOUVER AREA DURING THE COLD WAR

by

Marcia Elizabeth Toms

B.A. (Hons), Simon Fraser University, 1972

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS in the Department of WOMEN'S STUDIES

Marcia Elizabeth Toms 1993

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

November 1993

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ABSTRACT

Women of European ancestry have participated in social movements for hundreds of years, even before they achieved enfranchisement early in the twentieth century. The peace movement in particular has enjoyed the significant involvement of women. Initially inspired by strong Christian tenets and comprised of an expressly Christian membership, the Euro-American peace movement became increasingly secular in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. During that time, as it grew to political maturity and began to exercise some social influence, the mixed-gender movement spawned several women-only peace associations. Such associations provided venues for the analyses, leadership and organizing talents of women who viewed peace as the vital underpinning of a just and good society. In general, these activists held that their socially-cultivated maternal sentiments and behaviours especially qualified them as peace-makers. Further, in these groups women developed and refined universal political skills that advanced their political status as women. Even while employing certain domestic traditions evolved largely in private, patriarchal family contexts, women peace-makers publicly challenged Western patriarchal traditions of militarism and war.
In British Columbia, a Canadian province with a history of primary-industry labour militancy and varied, persistent, self-defined progressive groups, a women's peace tradition began in 1921, persevering through World War Two and beyond. This thesis describes and analyzes the beliefs and work of two Vancouver-area women peace activists during the Cold War period.

Sheila Young and Mildred Fahnri assumed major roles and responsibilities in the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, the Fellowship Of Reconciliation and the Voice Of Women. This examination concentrates not only on motivations but also on methods used by Young and Fahnri to establish networks and relationships, organize events and achieve and exercise leadership. Insofar as they represent socialized gender norms in their era, Young and Fahnri demonstrated beliefs and practices consistent with the ideology of maternalism. The claim is made that their pioneering work, personal tenacity and political optimism proved crucial in perpetuating a viable women's peace practice in British Columbia.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge sincerely the patience and kindness of Dr. Veronica Strong-Boag and Dr. Susan Wendell who helped me to strive for depth and sensitivity in this thesis. Additionally, I would like to thank the women and men of Vancouver’s diverse and vibrant peace activist community who spoke with me and, often, gave me invaluable pamphlets and documents. I learned much from them as I drank gallons of tea and made new friends. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the unconditional support and encouragement I have always enjoyed from my mother, Doris Maude Powles Toms who taught me to love books and to believe in an ethic of community service.

This thesis is dedicated to the memories of Sheila Young and Mildred Fahrni, optimists and organizers always.
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<tr>
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<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AEC</td>
<td>Atomic Energy Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BCPC</td>
<td>British Columbia Peace Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAVA</td>
<td>Committee for Aid to Vietnamese Civilians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBC</td>
<td>Canadian Broadcasting Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCF</td>
<td>Cooperative Commonwealth Federation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCND</td>
<td>Canadian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCW</td>
<td>Congress of Canadian Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFOR</td>
<td>Canadian Fellowship of Reconciliation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CND</td>
<td>Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COW</td>
<td>Children of the World</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP</td>
<td>Communist Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPC</td>
<td>Canadian Peace Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CUCND</td>
<td>Canadian University Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAO</td>
<td>Food and Agriculture Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOR</td>
<td>Fellowship of Reconciliation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRG</td>
<td>Federal Republic of Germany</td>
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<td>GDR</td>
<td>German Democratic Republic</td>
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<td>Abbreviation</td>
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<tr>
<td>HCA</td>
<td>Housewives Consumers' Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICY</td>
<td>International Cooperation Year</td>
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<tr>
<td>IWA</td>
<td>International Woodworkers Association</td>
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<td>IWSA</td>
<td>International Woman Suffrage Alliance</td>
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<tr>
<td>LPP</td>
<td>Labour Progressive Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>LSR</td>
<td>League for Social Reconstruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>NATO</td>
<td>North Atlantic Treaty Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>New Democratic Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>NORAD</td>
<td>North American Air Defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAL</td>
<td>Peace Action League</td>
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<tr>
<td>PPMCC</td>
<td>Peace by Peaceful Means Coordinating Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRC</td>
<td>People's Republic of China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCM</td>
<td>Student Christian Movement</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUPA</td>
<td>Student Union for Peace Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TUWPC</td>
<td>Trade Union Women's Peace Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UC</td>
<td>United Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNA</td>
<td>United Nations Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Economic, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>VDLC</td>
<td>Vancouver and District Labour Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Name</td>
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<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>VOW</td>
<td>Voice of Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>VPA</td>
<td>Vancouver Peace Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VPC</td>
<td>Vancouver Peace Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VTLC</td>
<td>Vancouver Trades and Labour Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCARH</td>
<td>Women's Committee Against Radiation Hazards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCPA</td>
<td>Women's Committee for Peace Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCTV</td>
<td>Women's Christian Temperance Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WIDF</td>
<td>Women's International Democratic Federation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WILPF</td>
<td>Women's International League for Peace and Freedom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WPC</td>
<td>World Peace Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YWCA</td>
<td>Young Women's Christian Association</td>
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: HISTORICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The involvement of women in peace movements antedates the nineteenth century emergence of the movement for women’s rights. Even before publication in the late eighteenth century of political tracts identifying the oppression of women or the rise of groups determined to overcome this oppression, some European women sought to realize what they came to define as the overarching social reform - lasting peace. From their perspective, an end to violence and war, to the conflicts that flawed social life, would facilitate the achievement of an harmonious, protective society. They joined Reformation Era Christian pacifist sects, then mixed gender peace groups, and, finally, after 1815, women created autonomous women’s peace organizations. Initially, these women were bound together by a primarily Protestant Christian faith. A strong body of theology, anchored in sixteenth and seventeenth century Mennonite, Anabaptist and Quaker beliefs, defined the character of Euro-American peacemaking (Brock, 1972). These radical Protestant roots stretched to embrace peace strategies as diverse as the creation of pacifist-communalist enclaves, the withdrawal of cooperation with the state or, quite simply, the quiet resistance of individuals. Further, the militant,
reforming character of early Protestantism combined with the immediacy of rebellion against the many constraints of Roman Catholicism to allow women Protestants a measure of freedom of worship and of expression they had not enjoyed since the earliest years of Christianity.

Indeed, in Europe, women tended to benefit from a greater scope for spiritual and temporal authority when Christianity was in flux, notably during revival and renewal movements (Ruether & McLaughlin, 1979). During such times, dissenting women have proclaimed their spiritual authority through social actions. Often, these actions have seemed to be altruistic and frequently they have been in conflict not only with dominant religious and sexual norms, but also with the state. Among the members of The Society of Friends (Quakers), for example, women expected the right to preach as well as the moral and spiritual encouragement to act defiantly, albeit always nonviolently, in their relations with civil government on issues of bearing arms and war.

The impetus for pacifism as a way of life among Europeans, and later, among North Americans, is located in the foundations of Christianity and particularly in the literal interpretation advanced by Protestants of the New Testament's emphasis on non-violence (Brock, 1972). The admonitions of Jesus to "Love your neighbour" and to "Turn the other cheek," simple though they seem, form the wellspring of all Christian peace theory and activism. Consequently, the problem of reconciling the contradiction between the frequent reality of war and
the imperative of the Golden Rule has always engaged Christian thinkers and laypeople. As well, during the two hundred years of its first missionary phase, until the start of the third century of the Common Era, Christianity was marked by heterodoxy. The Christian movement included socially critical and sexually egalitarian communities, including the Gnostics, the Montanists and the Valentinians (Schussler Fiorenza, 1979), where women played leadership roles, and founded and promoted new meeting places, or "churches" (Pagels, 1981; Ruether & McLaughlin, 1979). Thus, women were involved in initial discussions that defined the guidelines of the original peacefulness of Christianity. Certainly, Christian communities in this era epitomize more than any others in history the ideals of equality, benevolence and fraternity (Eliade, 1984). By the fourth century of the Common Era, however, when the Church leadership debated the conditions of "just war," an orthodoxy which subjugated and excluded women had been established (Pagels, 1981). Nevertheless, Christianity continued to be marked by divisions, fragmentation and heresy. Many heretics - the Waldensians and Albigensians of the twelfth century and the Reformation communalists - advocated a mixture of class and gender equality in combination with pacifism. Thus, even as official, orthodox Christianity evolved to reinforce misogyny and frequently approve of war, it also inspired pacifist challenges. These challenges, actualized as social engagement or as social withdrawal, rest on two theological precepts: equality before God and social peace.
In the years between the consolidation of a radical Protestant peace legacy in the sixteenth century and the emergence of small, independent peace societies in the nineteenth, the foundation of the pacifist desire to eliminate the wickedness of war diversified. Within the context of an evolving democratic possibility in civil life, pacifism transcended sectarianism and pessimism and began to emphasize the power of individuals to act in the world to abolish war and regenerate social life (Ceadel, 1980). Certainly, after 1815 the composition of peace groups in Europe and America began to change and many, while still strongly influenced by Christian teaching, became less religious and more worldly, associating with other, socially-based reform movements. Among these movements were those dedicated to penal reform, child rescue, the abolition of slavery, and women's rights. This trend toward secularization included the establishment of autonomous, women-only peace societies and a focus, shared with other reformers, on national and international political and social questions. Thus, the background of women's pacifism, while born of Christian spiritual values, branched out to embrace a range of worldly concerns.

In the post World War Two peace movement, women have been increasingly visible as leaders in local, national and international secular and religiously-inspired peace initiatives. In this era, too, the peace crusade has again been embraced by the hierarchy of institutionalized mainstream Christianity. Dr. Lois Wilson, former moderator of the United Church of Canada, and a President
of the World Council of Churches in the 1980s, is one example of this recreated
connection. There is a lineage, although fractured and indistinct, that binds
present-day feminist pacifists to women followers of early Christianity.

The history of this lineage, from the early Christian women who resisted
the imposition of patriarchy and orthodoxy, to those involved in small but
influential pacifist religious sects four hundred years ago, to the twentieth century
evolution of mass, women-led secular groups, is vast and only partially-tapped.
Peace, so commonly a lost cause, is never so popular as war. Further, the field of
peace history, in common with that of history in general, remains controlled by
male scholars who remain preoccupied often with the "martial sex" and who have
tended to marginalize women, their interests, projects and exploits. Jill Liddington
(1989) suggests that in Britain even peace historians have served the social
movement of feminist anti-militarism poorly, preferring instead to note the
personal struggles of individual conscientious objectors - those men who, as a
matter of conscience, refused to go to war. Sara Ruddick (1989) proposes that
"Peace, like mothering is sentimentally honoured and often secretly despised."2
Too little is known either of the antiquity or of the rich, complexly contradictory
heritage of women's autonomous peacemaking or of their impact within mixed-
gender peace organizations. The subject is further complicated because there are
two distinct but intersecting domains of women's peace work: the moral and the
institutional.
As moral guides in the arena of public action and political life, women peacemakers have been inclined to refine and sharpen socialized qualities generally believed to be particular to women. Such attributes are frequently understood in relation to one another and defined as maternal. Among them are the aptitude to demonstrate care for others irrespective of political allegiance, and the will to preserve relationships because of their intrinsic value and social necessity. In other words, the desire to help, to care for, to save, and to mediate are seen as common features of the ways women of European ancestry have learned to respond to violence and suffering. This disposition, understood as one element of a moral code developed through women's social experience, although well-documented as a distinguishing feature of most women's social movements, has only recently received critical scholarly attention by feminists (Gilligan, 1982, 1987; Noddings, 1984; Ruddick, 1989).

On the other hand, considerable scrutiny by both female and male scholars has been accorded the institutional aspect of women's peacemaking. Institutional peacemaking is that which finds expression in formal campaigns undertaken by established associations. This scrutiny has evolved, however, primarily as part of broader examinations of other reform movements, most importantly, of the fight for women's enfranchisement. As a result, the history of the struggle by women who regarded peace as the overarching social issue has been subsumed and underdeveloped. An additional problem is that most studies concentrate on the
nineteenth and twentieth century British and American movements. Only very recently has the history of peacemaking in Canada engaged the active interest of scholars, and only in 1988, with the publication of Thomas Socknat’s *Witness Against War*, has a partial national history been available. Although women have been innovative and exemplary peace leaders in Canada, much work is required to develop the history of their peace activism.

The question of historical method is a critical one, only partly dealt with by the recognition that history has been, until relatively recently, written from the point of view of men of the dominant class and ideology (Harding, 1987). Thus, because women have been excluded from and rarely recognized as "makers" of history, history itself has been incomplete and reflective of only part of human experience. The simple solution to the problem of rendering previously invisible women visible is, initially, to add "exceptional" women to history, and thus to demonstrate that such women were present in numbers significant enough to merit recording. "Great women" thus compete with "great men" for key roles on the stage of history. Then, in order to address the issues of class, ethnicity and colonialism, a subsequent task has become the inclusion of women from non-dominant classes and from among colonized groupings. There is, however, more to creating a complete women’s history than merely recovering and remembering legions of women, elite and otherwise. Numbers alone will not do.
As Gerda Lerner (1986) suggests, what male historians have written about, and what has therefore come to define what is historically valid, has been that which men have accomplished, experienced and judged to be significant. Further, "Throughout historical time, women have been largely excluded from making war, wealth, laws, governments, art, and science." Feminist historians are therefore faced with two interrelated challenges. The first is to recognize that because women's life histories and experiences are different from men's, what women value in life and judge to be significant will also be different. The second is to look closely at the varied, resourceful and distinct techniques women use in the home, society and politics both to challenge and to maintain the status quo. In this second endeavour, the sources providing information about how women work and how they feel and think about that work, are those sources which illuminate women as social agents in areas of life that have not always been public, official, visible, or dramatic. Therefore, personal letters and notes, journal entries, interviews, and personal collections of political memorabilia enrich more traditional written sources such as newspaper reports and organizational documents. Cards and letters, among other artifacts, are recognized as offering important insights. From this recognition may be written a history which will transcend traditional androcentricity by its inclusiveness and multi-dimensionality. Therefore, to do justice to the reality of women as agents of history, and to write history to include women's responsive and conscious role, historians need to attend
not only to counting women but also to the particulars of what women have done, and how they have done it, regardless of "what men did . . . ."  

This thesis examines the beliefs, organizational commitments and activities of two key women in the Vancouver peace movement from the early 1950s through the early 1960s. The aim is both to sketch in a small but vital panel of the picture of Canadian women's peace activism and to bring into focus the unique methods, sometimes particular to women, that these activists used. The women, Sheila Young and Mildred Fahrni, manifest the common qualities of a commitment to maternalism, an expertise as organizers of friendship-based political networks and a genius for emphasizing optimism. Young and Fahrni, born in 1896 and 1900 respectively, carried a women’s peace tradition from the inter-war years, through the Cold War and into the present day. Each was a member of the socially radical Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), in addition to holding membership in other peace, social justice and religious groups. Their activism extended through the height of the Cold War when they founded or joined various "new" peace groups. Fahrni, for example, was an early member of and organizer for the Vancouver branch of the Voice of Women (VOW), in its early years a predominantly liberal and middle-class organization. Ideologically, Young and Fahrni are representative of discrete beliefs, albeit on the left of the political spectrum. These stretch to include social gospel Christianity, social democracy and pro-Communist sympathies. The pair also shared common
middle-class backgrounds and lifestyles, as well as European ancestry. Neither
Young nor Fahrni had children. Childlessness facilitated particular elements of
their organizing. Specifically, it enabled both to travel extensively for long
periods of time. While Fahrni at various times during her adult life worked for
wages and Young did not, another common feature of their capacity for activism
was the economically supportive role played by their husbands. Additionally, their
husbands provided emotional support and at least tacit approval of the peace
projects they undertook. The private lives of Young and Fahrni appear to have
been relatively stable, materially comfortable and encouraging to political activism.

The work of Young and Fahrni was carried out during some of the darkest
and most bleak days of the Cold War when hope that peace would prevail was at a
premium. Nonetheless, they used their talents - tempered in the fire of immediate
need - to speak, write, lobby, and petition for the elusive goal of world peace.
The nature of their work - striving for an imperceptible ideal - and their optimism
rendered them vulnerable to the trivialization borne historically by women's
political groups. They were reviled as naive or as dupes of foreign governments,
their loyalty was questioned, they tolerated red-baiting. Despite such obstacles,
the two persevered, demonstrating tenacity, as well as the exceptional qualities
otherwise ordinary women may demonstrate when faced with extraordinary
circumstances. This individual commitment to "carry on" is especially noteworthy
since the women's peace movement developed cyclically, rising and falling, often
dramatically, in numbers and in influence. Usually there was little measurable success upon which to predicate future plans. While Young and Fahrni were continuously involved from their induction, there were many periods when they certainly experienced the isolation and futility of those dedicated to causes popularly regarded as lost or hopeless.

As important as each is as an individual leader, these two are perhaps even more consequential as representatives of the legions of unnamed Canadian women who walked, licked stamps, operated gestetners, kept minutes, sat on hard wooden chairs, and made tea for peace during the Cold War. For, while the names most often in the headlines were those of men - Dr. Jim Endicott or Lord Bertrand Russell, for example - the post World War Two peace movement's backbone, guts and fingers were female: women made the peace movement, shepherded it through the trials of McCarthyism, Cold War crises and the Vietnam War, until, in the 1980s, the peace crusade achieved mass approval in Europe and North America.

Of particular note is the extent to which peace activism both characterized and became identified with Vancouver during this period from the 1940s through the 1980s. When, in March of 1985, the "Women Negotiating for Peace" conference was held in Vancouver at the Young Women's Christian Association, the women upon whom this thesis concentrates were participants. Sheila Young participated in the group studying "Poverty and Militarism," and Mildred Fahrni in
the discussion of "Security, Peace and Development." They were joined by long-time colleagues, including Irene Foulks and Rosaleen Ross in "Women in the Media," Mary Thomson in "Women In Politics" and Carolyn Kline who attended "Women In Health."

As individuals and as members of interlocking networks, these women embodied a wide and deep peace legacy. They represented at this conference not only a living connection to the past, but also vibrant personal evidence that their work during the Cold War, while eliminating neither nuclear weapons nor regional conflicts, had not been entirely in vain. "Their" movement persisted, and, while it had suffered serious setbacks, including numerous internal divisions, by the early 1980s it was larger, more socially diverse and more widely spread throughout British Columbia’s population than it had ever been.

Indeed, British Columbia had been fertile ground for social activism since the late nineteenth century. The labour movement, rooted in dangerous resource-extraction industries and ideologically influenced by class-conscious early leaders from Great Britain and the United States, emerged stronger and more articulate than others in Western Canada (Robin, 1989). From 1900 to 1937 the province witnessed numerous militant strikes, a General Strike as a protest against the murder of labour leader Ginger Goodwin, relief camp activism spearheaded by the Workers’ Unity League, occupations of public buildings by the unemployed, and the beginning of the On-To-Ottawa Trek. Socialist ideas flourished in the early
twentieth century when the Vancouver-based Socialist Party of Canada boasted the regular attendance of 1,500 people at its Sunday meetings in the Empress Theatre. Socialist Party meetings became especially animated after the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) strike of 1903 (Roy, 1980).

In Vancouver, single women property owners had always had the municipal vote. In 1912, married women were enfranchised. Women’s electoral activism until then focussed on schools and parks, their social concerns engaged them in traditional women’s "helping" fields such as hospital auxiliaries and welfare work (Morley, 1974). By the 1930s, socialist and peace activist Helena Gutteridge had established a foothold for women on a City Council long-dominated by the wealthy. She strengthened the reputation of Vancouver women in public life as "strong advocates of social reform . . . and usually somewhat left of centre." Early in the century, philanthropic projects engaged the efforts of church groups. The Methodists, Presbyterians and Salvation Army helped immigrants, those in slum areas and destitute workers.

Despite the vigorous presence of Marxists, labour activists and the socially conscious on the civic scene, racism, particularly a strongly anti-Asian sentiment, threaded its way through Vancouver life from the city’s founding. In 1907 the Asiatic Exclusion League marked its first month’s anniversary with a riot against Vancouver’s Chinese population. This bigotry escalated in the 1930s with attacks directed by white merchants against the Japanese. Other conservative and
reactionary political ideas grew also. The CCF’s arrival in 1933 prompted hostility from newspapers and business. Roy (1980) claims that Vancouver’s Non-Partisan Association (NPA) was established in the 1930s to prevent the CCF from gaining control of city hall. In 1935, Vancouver’s right-wing business elite, encouraged by Mayor G.G. "Gerry" McGeer, organized a Citizen’s League whose aim was to oppose strikes and union organizing and to warn of the evils of communism. The CCF’s swift rise in provincial electoral strength through World War Two eventually pushed its most astute opponents, guided by W.A.C. Bennett, to create a permanent rightist coalition under the auspices of Social Credit to contain "the left" (Blake, 1989). During the "Bennett Era" from 1952 until 1972, "the 'free enterprise versus socialism' slogan became part of every election campaign as a device to discredit the CCF" and, as a consequence, to polarize political life. Thus, while attitudes favourable to social reform and the peace movement persisted in the province and the city, so did hostile forces. Those forces spoke most vociferously during the Cold War.

The thesis begins with a review of the significant literature on American and Canadian pacifism and its representation of the work of women. Included in this first chapter is a brief history of the growth of autonomous women’s peace associations and an analysis of maternalism, the most important ideological motivation for women’s pacifism. Indeed, the ideological thread which connects Young, Fahrni and their sister activists is maternalism, the notion that women
possess, whether by nature or by nurture, a predisposition to care for others, to preserve relationships, to eschew violence, and to hate war. Maternalism, although never explicitly elaborated as an ideology by these women, motivated them, bound them to other women and helped define the language of their public conduct. Through the systematic, although seemingly informal, use of traditional women's tactics for maintaining and extending friendships, these two and their colleagues kept autonomous women's peacemaking alive in Vancouver during the Cold War.

Chapter Two provides an overview of the founding mothers of the WILPF in Vancouver and establishes the setting for post World War Two women's peace activism in British Columbia, especially in terms of introducing individuals, organizations and events. The third chapter focuses on the life and work of Sheila Young and her relationship with the WILPF. Chapter Four discusses Mildred Fahrni, her commitment to absolute pacifism and nonviolence, and her work in the FOR, the WILPF and the VOW. VOW is presented as an example of a revitalized, middle class maternalist approach to mobilizing women. The thesis concludes with an evaluation of the effectiveness and the significance of Vancouver's maternal pacifists and their organizations.

To recover most fully and most personally the stories of these women, Mildred Fahrni and a small number of peace movement friends and activists of long standing were interviewed. Sheila Young, who died in 1989, is presented
through her own writings and the eyes of friends and co-workers. The intention, a
difficult one to fulfill, was to have, as much as possible, the women and their
voices appear present and tangible, speaking about their ideals, their actions and
their feelings. The sources used in this thesis are diverse - oral and written - and,
to a certain extent, they are cobbled together by memories, by the recollections of
the women themselves and the reminiscences of their friends and colleagues.
These are fallible, often incomplete and contradictory, certainly altered by time
and perception, but nonetheless, a valuable lens through which to picture the past.
Problematic of course is the possibility that those interviewed will paint with
uncritical strokes, and will diminish or ignore the disagreements, debates and
factionalism which certainly are integral elements of the women’s peace stories.
Here the writer faces a related difficulty. While these women and their associates
worked together and established friendships, they were not always friendly with
one another. Friendships strained, jealousies intervened, political convictions
altered, and new alliances emerged. Consequently, more traditional sources,
among them organizational documents and newspaper articles, are used to achieve
some distance and political context. Letters, notes, cards, personal memoirs and
papers, as well as pamphlets and newspaper articles and reports complete the
sources used.

In order to contextualize peace activities in Vancouver and internationally as
accurately as possible, all editions of The Pacific Tribune from 1948 through 1963
were examined. The Tribune was the weekly British Columbia paper of the Communist Party of Canada. It reported and editorialized regularly on the various events and leaders of the peace movement, even when these were organized by or representing groups other than the Party. This detail about peace and its advocates is seldom available in the mainstream news media and has been invaluable to the writing of this thesis.

A Review of the Literature

Peter Brock has written extensively about the philosophical and theological roots of Christian pacifism in both Europe and the United States. His major works, especially Pacifism in Europe to 1914 and Twentieth Century Pacifism, concentrate on pacifism as an expression of tendencies inherent within Christianity, and particularly on the rise of pacifist factions from among the ranks of the impoverished and the disadvantaged. Unfortunately, women are largely invisible in his text. Certainly, he refers briefly to certain well known women leaders, Americans Jane Addams and Jeanette Rankin among them. Otherwise, despite the important organizations and initiatives undertaken by them from the 1830s until the present day, Brock ignores the role of both religious and secular women pacifists. His Pacifism in Europe to 1914 (1972) is nevertheless helpful to this thesis because in it he draws a critical distinction between pacifism - the belief that all war is absolutely wrong - and pacifism - the belief that all war is irrational
but that in certain instances, some wars may be imperative to eliminate a "greater evil." This distinction is valuable in the discussion of ideological differences among individual women, as well as in examining the turmoil within organizations such as WILPF before and during World War Two.

The most comprehensive general studies of the peace history of the United States have been produced by Lawrence Wittner (1969; 1984), Merle Curti (1936; 1973), Charles Chatfield (1971; 1973), David Patterson (1976), Charles De Benedetti (1978; 1980), Christina Phelps (1930), and Roland C. Marchand (1972). In the work of each of these scholars women activists are treated with varying degrees of seriousness, usually making only limited appearances, never assuming the central positions that they actually played. Chatfield, Marchand and Patterson, the social reform historians, integrate the women peacemakers into the broadest possible reform landscape, a very crowded backdrop indeed. In this context, the leaders, members of a privileged elite, are most clearly visible and stand in for the rank and file members, who are nearly invisible. As well, women's peace activism is presented either as simply an adjunct to the other social reforms deemed necessary to elevate and purify American society or as an attachment to the struggle for the franchise. Women's pacifism receives no independent examination. This view tends to interpret the motivation of the leadership as an amalgam of charitable sentiment and thinly-disguised self-interest. More accurately, however, women peacemakers, while perhaps intent on safeguarding
their own class privileges, or on obtaining the vote, were also inspired by a seemingly altruistic yearning for the greater good. Despite the pressing reality that they enjoyed no political rights, women seemed to assume willingly the responsibility, the right and the duty to try to make the world a sweeter place (McClung, 1914). They also reaped the rewards of emotional satisfaction, the expression of their ideals in organizations and the elevation of their individual status in the public domain.

In a refreshing interpretation of the reform agenda, Chatfield in For Peace and Justice: Pacifism in America, 1914-1941 (1971) suggests that, although most of the prominent American women peace reformers of the early twentieth century belonged to the elite of society and did not question the patriarchy, among their numbers were outspoken social critics. A radical feminist influence was clearly present within the movement. These radicals articulated a structural critique of warfare and posited a sophisticated vision of social change. Upon this foundation were built groups such as the American Women's Peace Party and the WILPF. As well, Chatfield doubts whether there was any homogeneity of belief among women peacemakers, whom he characterizes as representing a wide spectrum of ideas, from conservative to liberal Quaker pacifist to anti-fascist socialist. In particular, he identifies the socialists and the social feminists as fiercely committed activists determined to influence the conduct of American political life. He places them at the centre of American peace activism from 1914 through 1941.
David Patterson maintains that the most prominent among the leadership of the entire American movement placed their hopes for a peaceful world in legal or legislative plans, in government and government agencies, and in the power of individual politicians. The suffrage pacifists, he suggests, were absolutely convinced that the road to peace lay through women’s enfranchisement, into the ballot box and straight along to the halls of government. For them, the vote alone was the key to peace; other social changes were secondary. Marchand (1972) suggests that women and men peace workers alike were compelled by a missionary zeal to re-create the United States as a model of order, cleanliness and class harmony for the rest of the world to emulate. While granting that women reformers possessed sharp political judgement, De Benedetti (1978) criticizes them for failing to acknowledge that their issues - the vote, employment opportunities, a measure of social liberation, for example - had been served rather than hampered by World War One. In general, then, the social reform historians of the 1970s see conservatism and a desire to assert social control underpinning the strategy of most peace activists, including women. Missed entirely, it seems, is the understanding that a challenge to patriarchal structure and ideology occurred when women insisted on a public voice and embarked on public campaigns in an era when they could claim no political rights. Moreover, although the route to reform is fraught with the danger of rendering the status quo only marginally more palatable, reformers may also expect to gain the ability to pass more effective social
legislation, more power to do "good work" and increasing influence to challenge structural injustices. In a directly related vein, some women reformers, including two post World War One legislators, American Jeanette Rankin and Canadian Agnes Macphail, argued against militarism by linking expenditures on arms with a reduction in expenditures on social services (Black, 1989).

Although emphasizing most strongly the impetus among peace reformers to impose order and harmony, the reform historians do credit women with building and broadening the American peace movement beyond its nineteenth century religious borders. Further, while judgements of the political effectiveness of the movement vary, the consensus is that the peace women engaged in serious political debates and decision-making in a diverse and resourceful community of women.

Christina Phelps, in The Anglo-American Peace Movement in the Mid-Nineteenth Century (1930), produces a sobering account of the weaknesses in peace programmes, taking aim both at their attempt to achieve too many objectives and at their failure to understand the interlocking military and industrial structure which prospered from armament manufacture. Phelps argues that often, sheer power of belief has blinded peace groups to these and other shortcomings of their analysis and programs. Although applied to a movement in its infancy, the critique advanced remains generally relevant, useful to analyses of the platforms of many subsequent mixed gender and women's peace groups. Despite this cautiously radical viewpoint, Phelps does not consider women's peace activities in
her work, although she does report that Queen Victoria received favourably a volume of peace essays presented to her by the American Peace Society. A single monarch is not, however, an adequate representative of the legions of women peacemakers active in this period. Clearly, despite Phelps' radicalism, she takes male pacifist experience as the norm and, consequently, ignores the contributions of women.

The work of Lawrence Wittner (1969; 1984) and Merle Curti (1936; 1973) is, in contrast, exemplary because, although neither takes a feminist approach to history, each scholar places women peacemakers in sharp relief, focussing on their key contributions to the continuity and popularization of the peace cause in the United States. Curti acknowledges the significance of women's peace work from 1815 through 1936, situating it in the context of an assertive, self conscious response to social conditions. In *The American Peace Crusade 1815-1860* (1973) he suggests that women in general were more open-minded than men and so were amenable to the pleas for peace and "brotherhood" heard from pulpits and read in broadsheets and pamphlets after the War of 1812. These women put their sensibilities into action. Curti notes women's participation in the Massachusetts Peace Society (1818), and a female peace society (1820, Cincinnati, Ohio),⁹ 28 years before the founding of the American woman suffrage movement.

Later in the nineteenth century other women-only peace groups formed in Europe and the United States. One possible reason for this early creation of
autonomous women's groups was that "at that time women did not generally participate on equal terms with men in philanthropic organizations." Establishing their own groups would have allowed socially-minded women a forum where they might speak freely and participate fully. In Peace or War, The American Struggle 1636-1936 (1936), Curti takes time to evaluate the work of the American section of the WILPF from its founding during World War One until the 1930s, judging the organization to have been skillfully led and expert in the field of political pressure techniques. As well, and in common with Thomas Socknat's assessment of Canadian WILPF during the same era, Curti maintains that this group was influential out of all proportion to its relatively small numbers. It had mastered the arts of lobbying and petitioning. About the US organization in the 1930s, he writes that it "stood head and shoulders above other groups in the use of pressure devices."

Lawrence Wittner, in Rebels Against War (1969), charts the story of the American peace movement to 1960. This study provides an especially valuable background to this thesis as it examines the fortunes of peace activism during exceptionally onerous times, from the depths of the Cold War, when the peace movement was small and forced into a defensive position, through its increasingly bold rebirth from 1957 until 1960. In Wittner's judgement, a critical element in that renaissance was the independent involvement of women, particularly those who were new to any public activism, came from the middle class and became
involved primarily to protect their children's futures. In Canada, this sentiment is proclaimed in the earliest Voice of Women organizing statements. Many women came together initially to work toward attainment of a single goal - the cessation of atmospheric nuclear weapons testing. The fallout from such tests had irradiated American - and Canadian - milk products for over a decade. Wittner credits Women's Strike for Peace, founded in 1961 and the sister organization of Canada's Voice of Women, with considerable influence and the kind of fresh political energy required to rejuvenate the peace crusade. For example, seeking to rally sympathetic, "ordinary" women against nuclear weapons testing, Washington-area homemakers organized protest demonstrations in more than 60 cities in November 1961. This tactic - middle-class women coming out of their homes to rally for peace - was new, and during its evolution, the women invented a new and enduring peace movement slogan, "End the Arms' Race, Not the Human Race." In Rebels Against War, Wittner not only accords serious treatment to WSP, he also details the activities and fortunes of American WILPF.

While Jill Liddington has written the first comprehensive feminist assessment of the 170 year history of the British women's peace movement, The Long Road to Greenham - Feminism & Anti-Militarism in Britain since 1820 (1989), no comparable, complete histories of either the American or the Canadian women's peace movements yet exist. Frances Early, in a brief article, "The Historic Roots of the Women's Peace Movement in North America" (1986),
sketches an outline of the motivations, organizations and campaigns of notable early women peace makers. WILPF receives considerable attention and is characterized, along with the Women's Peace Society and the Women's Peace Union, as having "a socially radical vision of a new world order based on the principles of cooperation, non-violence, and equitable distribution of wealth and resources." Marie Degen, in The History of the Women's Peace Party (1939), and Barbara Steinson, in American Women's Activism in World War One (1982), have filled in some details of the early twentieth century picture. Tims and Bussey, writing a commemorative history of the WILPF, Pioneers for Peace: Women's International League for Peace and Freedom 1915-1965 (1980), provide a chronological and uncritical overview of the establishment, founders and varied campaigns of the oldest extant women's peace organization. That this last work is almost bereft of analysis and interpretive depth is unfortunate. The interrelationship of feminism, pacifism and social justice in the context of WILPF is a crucial watershed in the evolution of women's social activism which requires careful consideration and scrutiny.

Barbara Steinson's examination of the women's peace, war preparedness, relief, and suffrage organizations in the United States during World War One situates American women's political life within a wide realm. Her discussion of the work and beliefs of women who supported the war effort calls into question the notion that all women share an affinity for peace. Jean Bethke Elshtain in Women
and War (1987) has made similar points, discussing also the combative nature of some feminist arguments on gender, war and peace which advocate the "total victory" of the female principle and thus reproduce "the internal structure of inherited war discourse." Clearly, while women's socialized focus on caring for others may require an emphasis on protectiveness and non-violence, class, ethnicity, ideology, and particular historical circumstances play key parts in determining how that protectiveness is actualized and whether it is exercised non-violently.

Only since 1987, with the publication of Thomas Socknat's Witness Against War, has a comprehensive history of pacifism in twentieth century Canada been available. The scope of this work is necessarily limited and it concludes in 1945 - a logical end point for the first phase of pacifism - before the movement was forced to concentrate predominantly on the issue of nuclear weapons. Socknat discusses in detail the relationship between social gospel Christianity and the emergence and sustenance of pacifist ideology and activism in Canada. He also makes a reasonable effort to include women peacemakers as leaders, not only of their own organizations, but also as important within the mixed gender movement. Prominent pioneers such as Laura Jamieson, Nellie McClung, Agnes McPhail, Violet McNaughton, and Lucy Woodsworth gain in stature as a result of Socknat's treatment of their work. In terms of British Columbia, Jamieson is portrayed as the organizational catalyst and strategic genius of WILPF in the 1920s. Some of
the early "rank and file" stalwarts with multiple commitments, Mildred Fahrmi among them, also make brief appearances, thus demonstrating the overlapping layers of organizational and social involvement which constituted the substance of the peace movement in general. Still, however, Witness Against War, does emphasize the evolution of eastern Canadian pacifist sentiment and the picture of the specific actions of, for example, BC WILPF during the 1930s, is not as fully developed as it might have been. As well, Socknat incorrectly identifies the "founders" of the Vancouver Peace Assembly (circa 1947) as Norman Mackenzie, H.H. Stevens and Watson Thompson. While these men were involved at an early stage, the first founders were three members of the clergy, Mildred Fahrmi and Sheila Young (Young, 1983).

This problem of neglecting British Columbia's activists may be a result of a scarcity of information and of sources located provincially and only recently accessible. Socknat acknowledges that during the 1930s WILPF's national coordination was "in disarray" and that Laura Jamieson's leadership - by then more and more transferred to the CCF, was sorely missed. About WILPF on the national level, Socknat is unequivocal in his judgement that the organization was one of the most active and consequential in Canada before and during the Depression, it "remained dominant in post-war women's peace activities and a major presence in the Canadian peace movement in general."16 Further, he establishes that its evolving, increasingly sophisticated social radicalism drew its
most dynamic and able members into close contact with like-minded individuals in similar groups, eventually resulting in the formation of the CCF. He credits WILPF with a pivotal role in articulating an inter-war peace strategy, as well as with contributing to the foundation of the Canadian social democratic party. For a relatively small group, these were significant accomplishments. Important also were WILPF’s refugee aid efforts during World War Two. Of particular interest is Socknat’s explication of the organization’s work to help Canadian-Japanese internees, an activity that is seldom remembered and was publicly unpopular at the time.

The influence of Christian ethics and in particular of the social gospel in Canadian pacifism has been pivotal, as Socknat ably demonstrates. In "The Eschatology of Peace," a chapter of Richard Allen’s *The Social Passion: Religion and Social Reform in Canada 1914-28* (1973), the author discusses the sources of this peace thrust, an initiative enthusiastically adopted by some Canadian churches and Christians during the 1920s. While Allen specifically mentions the Women’s Institutes, the WILPF and the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), the details he offers about ideas and tactics are not developed fully enough to flesh out an understanding of the impact of these groups. Allen only hints at an important element of their working style with the comment that they "not infrequently undertook joint action for peace."17
Far more satisfying than Allen in her examination of the motivations and campaigns of Canadian church women in the inter-war peace crusade is Veronica Strong-Boag. In "Peace-Making Women: Canada 1919-1939," a chapter of Ruth Poach Pierson's *Women and Peace - Theoretical, Historical and Practical Perspectives* (1987), Strong-Boag concentrates on the interests of United Church (UC) women. Of primary concern is the work of the women in the UC’s Women’s Missionary Society, but the goals and principles of WILPF are also illuminated. In concert with Socknat, Strong-Boag suggests that WILPF’s social radicalism drew many of its members into the fold of the fledgling CCF during the 1930s. That explicitly political approach, cognizant of the "connection between conflict and oppressive political and social structures," allowed WILPFers to transcend the limitations of a single-issue focus. Further, they approached peace activism from an understanding of the structural inter-relationships in industrial societies where militarism and war-making were endemic.

Barbara Roberts begins to fill in some of the still-unpainted picture of the history of autonomous women’s peace activism in Canada in her survey article "Women Peace Activism in Canada," in Kealey and Sangster’s *Beyond the Vote, Canadian Women and Politics* (1989). She pays special attention to the WILPF and also deals, although somewhat superficially, with the Cold War and its impact on Canada, church pacifists and WILPF. Roberts’ article is most useful for its overview of women’s peace efforts and events before World War Two.
Unfortunately, it suffers from a total failure to address in any depth vital and public WILPF and VOW initiatives such as those to promote disarmament, to end nuclear testing, to collect baby teeth, to ban war toys, and, later in the 1960s, to end the War in Vietnam. These actions were undertaken during crisis-ridden years in the Cold War, and the details of their realization merit both description and analysis. In addition, while it is true that during this period Canadian WILPF’s numbers were small, the factors which kept especially the Vancouver branch alive at all require examination. Further, within a year of its founding in 1960, VOW was a significant national organization of 6,000 women with a nationally prominent leadership. This achievement stood in marked contrast to the extremely modest membership of WILPF. Yet Roberts does not attempt to explain either the forces which combined to create the relative success of VOW or the appeal of its early campaigns. Surely this is a serious omission, a necessity in an article on women’s peace activism in Canada.

Theoretical literature about women and peace has blossomed since 1980, with the resurgence of a new and broadly-based anti-nuclear peace movement. A strong influence within this movement has been feminism in its various forms and, as in the past, women also comprise the solid core of everyday activists. Increasingly, women have come into prominent leadership positions as peace activism has expanded and broadened its concerns, taking cues from and merging
strategies with, particularly, the environmental movement and the trend which identifies itself as "ecological feminism."

The studies of Carol Gilligan (1982), Caroline Merchant (1980), Sandra Harding (1987), Nel Noddings (1984), Rosemary Radford Ruether (1977), and Spretnak (1983), while not all specifically about peace, are useful for their identification and investigation of the evolution of "women's values" and behaviours in the context of patriarchal socialization. Of particular note, common to these works, is the researchers' claim that women in Western industrial societies appear to learn to place a primary significance on the task of caring for others and of associating their own "wellness" with the same in others. This task of active social concern involves a complex praxis: an uneasy unity of often contradictory values and behaviours, love, care, loyalty, anger, protection, permission, remonstration, judgement, and control. This praxis, and the theme of responsibility manifested as "caring for others" occurs consistently in the reasons given for their work by peacemaking women in the 1950s and 1960s. Sheila Young and Mildred Fahmri, in writing and in conversation expressed this motivation and, to varying degrees, regarded women as more suited than men to act effectively in an other-directed fashion, a quality each saw as necessary for peace activism. While strongly appreciative of women's "special talents," however, neither ever questioned the worth of mixed gender peace work or advanced criticism of men. Their choice to work in women's peace groups was
not a principled, ongoing commitment to separatism. It was rather a question of what type of peace organizations seemed to have the most potential not only for involving women but more importantly for maximizing and highlighting their interests and talents. In mixed-gender peace groups, women tended to be in the majority, but were underrepresented in the leadership. Further, Young and Fahrun believed that organizational work among women would serve the evolution of women’s role in Canadian political life by adding their voices and bodies to the numbers of the politically active.

The ideology of maternal feminism, or maternalism, has held strong moral and strategic sway within the women’s movement since its inception. Maternalism has also influenced the strategic outlook of the women’s peace movement, particularly in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. During this period, women peace activists were able to use the belief that women intuitively possessed "special" healing, unifying and diplomatic skills to advance the political agenda of reform. Without explicitly endangering the foundation of society - the patriarchal nuclear family - activists harnessed the revulsion expressed by many women against warfare into public advocacy. Clearly, of course, in an emergent vein, women’s activism did challenge both the moral and military authority of the patriarchy. In the first years of World War One, by the time European and North American women met in conference at the Hague to protest against the conflict, maternalism had undergone a partial ideological shift. Initially regarded as
comprised completely of inherent female qualities, by 1915 the maternal profile was regarded by many social activists as a result of socialization (Black, 1989). This shift did not alter the power of maternal feminism. It endured, and is strongly evident in the voices of women peacemakers of the 1950s and 1960s, who, with as much conviction as their foremothers, appealed to the leaders of the world to hold life dearly and to see all people as members of one family.

Perhaps the most critically sophisticated and politically useful re-thinking of the notion of women’s aptitude for peace and of the ideology of maternalism has been undertaken by American philosopher Sara Ruddick, especially as formulated in *Maternal Thinking, Toward a Politics of Peace* (1989). Her vision is far different from that of the nineteenth and early twentieth century maternalists, who rarely challenged either the patriarchal structure of the family or women’s position within it. In fact, this "first wave" of maternalists tended to valourize the role of mothers within patriarchy. The early maternalists held that women were inclined by nature to favour social purity, to embody moral superiority and to desire peace.

Paradoxically, the role of women within the patriarchal family had sustained those very qualities in women that would increasingly become useful publicly in advocating political reform - for temperance, child rescue and world harmony. Such qualities - saving, caring and helping - are powerfully articulated by Canadian suffragist Sonia Leathes in the following pro-suffrage speech which also encapsulates the maternalist credo:
For centuries the home was almost the only humanizing centre where the spiritual ideals of love and service were kept alive and handed down from generation to generation. . . . there should steadily manifest itself a new but ever growing desire, peculiar to women’s nature, a desire to assist the weak, to make dirty places clean and crooked places straight.

Sara Ruddick’s philosophy amounts to a radical feminist reconceptualization of Leathe’s traditional maternalism. Ruddick’s view is complex, rooted firmly in an understanding of the coerciveness of patriarchy. She aims to advance a way to make political sense of maternal thinking to inform and strengthen women’s social nonviolence and resistance to militarism. Transformation of maternal thought from a sentimentalized “gentle and forgiving” form, popularly regarded as unique to women, to a universal, assertive resource for peace will, she suggests, be accomplished through the agency of feminism. In this project of transformation, Ruddick relies on the social necessity and potential power of personal attachment as a fundamental element of truly collective, feminist peace praxis. While maternal work - mothering - is carried out within the damaging, oppressive reality of the patriarchal family, it uses techniques and expresses values with the potential to undermine patriarchal violence. Further, these technique and values, while refined largely by women, are not gender-exclusive. Love, attentiveness and attachment potentially challenge competition, abusiveness and warfare and are life affirming, preservative and protective of others. Ruddick convincingly argues for a powerful realignment, a new maternal feminism:

peacemakers create a communal suspicion of violence, a climate in which peace is desired, a way of living in which it is possible to learn and to practice
nonviolent resistance and strategies of reconciliation. This description of peacemaking is a description of mothering. Mothers take their work seriously and create a women’s politics of resistance. Feminists sustain that politics, devising strategies, celebrating strength, resisting violence and contempt.22 (emphasis added)

This formulation is, of course, ideal and Ruddick is, after all, a philosopher. Still, there is much that is instructive in this work, especially the validation of the learned maternal skills of women, so commonly undervalued in the Western world, and the cautious location of a type of nonviolence in the exercise of those skills. Ruddick concedes the point that not all mothers are "good" mothers and that not all maternal practices foster nonviolence. "Nonviolence arises out of maternal practice, even if only some mothers in some practices are effectively governed by its ideals."23 Ruddick’s objective is to use maternalism as the foundation of a politics of peace. Beyond asserting that maternal thinking is not exclusive and embodies potentially universal qualities, however, she does not suggest how it might be incorporated into feminist political strategies or how men might be integrated into the structure of child care. Moreover, while she asserts that social practice defines maternalism, Ruddick’s use of the term "mothers" is a generalization. She clarifies that mothering is enacted in different contexts, of violence and poverty, for example, but her work tends to obscure differences among women and to claim universality ("invariant and nearly unchangeable") for particular aspects of the maternal experience.
While most deeply rooted in the maternalism which antedates Ruddick's writing, there is nonetheless an important liberatory and anti-establishment reality embodied within the work of Young and Fahrni. This reality is composed of risk-taking and of challenge, of what Ruddick refers to as a politics of resistance. The form of the women's resistance was flexible, including such apparently benign activities as writing letters to newspapers and holding peace tea parties in public parks. Further, the resistance was a resistance which, while in appearance enacted within the limits of both tradition and the law, held out the promise of changed traditions and changed laws - where, for example, war toys would be illegal and the custom of glorifying war would be no more.
NOTES

1. The notion of the "just war" in the Christian tradition begins with Augustine and comes to include a variety of imperatives about what does and what does not constitute a "just war." That is, the question to be answered by theologians is, under what conditions may war be morally waged? Eventually, a list of seven conditions was developed to guide church leaders as they advised statesmen. See Jean Bethke Elshtain, Women and War (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1987), p. 150.


8. Jane Addams was a prominent American radical philanthropist, settlement house founder and advocate of women’s rights and peace. She was instrumental in founding the WILPF. Jeanette Rankin was an American legislator who voted against the entry of the United States into World War Two.


19. Among the Voice of Women's nationally prominent leaders were Marian Pearson (Mrs. Lester), Josephine Davis (Mrs. Fred), scientist Ursula Franklin and Quebecoise politician Therese Casgrain.

20. A concern for the welfare of others, often of children, persists in the statements of the four Vancouver peace workers. Their remarks also indicate that they were keenly aware that their opportunities to help others and to be effective in public life rested to no small extent on their relative material privileges as middle class women of European heritage.


23. Ibid., p. 176.
CHAPTER TWO

SETTING THE STAGE: SIGNIFICANT FOREMOTHERS AND THE PEACE MOVEMENT AFTER WORLD WAR TWO IN VANCOUVER

A General History Briefly Told

The story of women's peace activism is long, fascinating and, while riddled with contradictions and never achieving the kind of success it sought, inspiring. The peace movement's initial religious goal, to build the Kingdom of God on earth, required universal harmony, love and the protection of the weak. The appeal of these ideals was limited; so was the membership and public influence of the societies which advocated them. In 1820 a small group of American women had formalized their desire for peace and created their own association in Ohio. More followed. By 1852 women pacifists in England and America, "[the Olive Leaf Circles] were issuing the first international publication, Sisterly Voices."

Through the 1870s, female pacifists in Europe, among them Bertha von Suttner, Priscilla Peckover, Fredrika Bremer, and Herbertine Auclert, wrote, petitioned and organized independently, directing their efforts at ending regional conflicts. Von Suttner, the best known European pacifist of her era, is credited with persuading Alfred Nobel to create a Peace Prize (Boulding, 1976). During the bleak days of the 1870-1871 Franco-Prussian War, an article in the
"Englishwomen's Review" urged the abolition of war and the establishment of universal disarmament. In 1880, the Universal Alliance of Women for Peace was established in France, while at the same time a group of British women published a germinal pamphlet, "How to organize a local peace association in your neighbourhood." To hasten achievement of the goal of domestic - and world - harmony, the American Woman's Christian Temperance Union created a peace department in 1887. Three years later the World WCTU followed suit. In 1896 the International Council of Women established The Women's Universal Alliance for Peace (Early, 1986). Countless women, overwhelmingly of middle and upper-class origins, had, by the late nineteenth century, discovered that in the absence of political rights, peace activism, along with work for other reforms, offered a kind of social equality, providing social contacts and public status of national and, eventually, international dimensions.

In July of 1914, women in the International Woman Suffrage Alliance (IWSA) hoped to use their morally-charged political influence to avert an impending war. The IWSA had linked English, European and North American suffragists since 1904 in a flourishing organization increasingly engaged in a complex debate about women, children, suffrage, and warfare (Liddington, 1989). After the conflict between Austria and Serbia began, severa: IWSA activists, including Rosika Schwimmer and Chrystal Macmillan, met to consider a response. The maternalist tenor of this response - emotional yet measured - is illustrated by the following excerpt:
Powerless though we be politically, we call upon the governments of our several countries to avert the threatened and unparalleled disaster. Women see all they most reverence and treasure, the home, the family, the race, subjected to certain damage which they are powerless to avert or assuage.5

The women’s efforts were in vain. War did indeed come. With it, the impetus for women to work with other women in the cause of peace seems, ironically, to have been strengthened. In general, however, the international peace movement wallowed in disarray, suffering from the desertion of most European socialists. As well, key suffragists, led by Emmeline Pankhurst in England, soon supported the war effort. But the most tenacious of the peace activists did not retreat. Among those who carried on with greatest immediacy, defiance, and eventually a kind of success, were women. That success would be manifest not in the achievement of peace but in the creation of new networks and organizations, designed to address both the immediate emergency and more long-term political objectives.

On 29 August 1914, American women paraded in mourning in New York City; five months later they founded the Women’s Peace Party. In 1915, motivated by Jane Addams, an International Congress of Women met at the Hague. Out of this meeting grew the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom. In May 1919, prompted in part by an appeal from German women shocked by the harsh terms of the armistice and in part by plans initiated earlier at the Hague, the International Committee of Women for Permanent Peace met at Zurich.
The women who carried their hopes for peace into post-war organizing would, too soon, find that their idealism and best efforts were in vain. Nonetheless, the inter-war years were rich ones for the women’s peace crusade, a time when both organizations and individual leaders developed strength, public stature and a measure of political influence. Jane Addams, a founder of WILPF, won a share in the Nobel Peace Prize in 1931, donating the monetary award to “her” organization. Even through World War Two, when the harsh realities of fascism and violent anti-Semitism rendered pacifists bewildered and largely impotent, small bands of women, some who remained in WILPF and others in absolute pacifist groups such as the Fellowship Of Reconciliation (FOR), continued peacemaking efforts, taking up refugee-aid work and helping conscientious objectors.

In 1946, WILPF’s international leader, Addams’ successor, Emily Greene Balch, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Thus, as the Cold War dawned on a world weary of war, but still faced with the appalling evidence at Hiroshima and Nagasaki of new and terrifyingly destructive weaponry, women in their own organizations were uniquely placed to provide leadership in a new peace crusade. Moreover, those who had become activists before the war, such as Sheila Young and Mildred Fahmi in Vancouver, possessed not only a sense of heritage but also a spiritual and philosophical indomitability. These personal qualities would prove invaluable in the upcoming struggle - the obstacles to be overcome were so great
that the pragmatist, the traditionalist, the parliamentarian, would simply find too little encouragement in the peace endeavour. So, in the years after 1946, the field of peace activism was small and occupied by the idealists - some women, clergy and a tiny number of absolute pacifists who would never countenance war in any circumstances - and the ideologues - those within or with connections to national Communist parties. The historic commitment of this latter group to promote cooperation among national working classes fused with a newly-acute interest in ensuring the protection of the Soviet Union, their traditional reference point and model for social change.

**British Columbia: Fertile Ground for Peace Organizing**

Various Canadian peace organizations, most of them on the left of the political spectrum, had to navigate carefully the dangerous waters of the first decade of the Cold War. Immediately after World War Two they had introduced and then kept the related issues of nuclear disarmament and peace in the public eye. In particular, the Canadian Peace Congress (CPC) led by Dr. James Endicott took on a multiplicity of tasks; conferences, public speaking engagements, rallies, appeals, and petitions. Vancouver, with a history of labour militancy and a strong community of outspoken unionists, civic organizers, and CCF and Labour Progressive Party (LPP) politicians, saw much peace activity during these days. Among the most dedicated and hardworking activists were
women, although with some exceptions the public leadership of the mixed gender peace movement in the early 1950s tended to be male. Still, women were the vital, driving forces within each group and behind each event.

When there was canvassing to be done on street corners or door-to-door, women provided the legs. As a sympathetic reporter commented: "Women canvassers are showing the way in the British Columbia campaign in support of the World Appeal Against Atomic War, . . . ,"9 also known as the Stockholm Appeal. This campaign reached its zenith in the summer of 1955 when a Vancouver woman named Freda Hickie became BC's leading petitioner for peace,10 having collected 2,000 signatures. In a brief interview Hickie explained her inspiration: "I love my husband and my family and I want to protect them as well as all the people in foreign lands."11 This remark echoed the motivations expressed by many generations of peace-minded women who thought first of others. The unnamed author of the "Mainly for Women" column in the 2 June 1950 edition of The Pacific Tribune - the labour-oriented paper of the LPP - commented similarly about the many women speakers at the founding conference of the British Columbia Peace Council:

For it was love of life that moved them, and the determination that their loved ones, their husbands, brothers, friends, and particularly their children, should no longer be brutalized and murdered. Not one cried for themselves, for their own sufferings and hardships.12

Most of the Vancouver peace events of the 1950s were sponsored by the provincial arm of the CPC, the British Columbia Peace Council (BCPC). Peace
activities during the 1940s had been overseen by independent groups, including the CFOR, the WILPF and, on occasion, the Vancouver Trades and Labour Council (VTLC). The provincial peace council functioned as a coordinating coalition and participated in a network, eventually encompassing both national and international contacts that boasted an impressive leadership of academics, clergy and politicians. While recognized as worthy in their vocations, as members of national peace councils and the World Peace Congress (WPC), these individuals were perceived to share left-wing sympathies which, as the decade wore on, rendered them increasingly suspicious to the mainstream media and establishment politicians. An illustration of this tendency to rely on famous, generally male, personalities is provided by the well-known French scholar, Professor Frederic Joliot-Curie, who in 1955 was the president of the World Peace Council.

Groups other than the BCPC were also active in the province. Some operated entirely beneath the umbrella of the council, others did not but cooperated with it to organize conferences and demonstrations. Among the most important of the latter were The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), the Canadian Fellowship of Reconciliation (CFOR), the WILPF, the Canadian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CCND), and later in Vancouver, smaller groups such as the (Women’s) Committee Against Radiation Hazards, the Trade Union Women’s Peace Committee, and the Peace by Peaceful Means Society. Often, of course, activists belonged to more than one peace organization and many
were also involved in civic, trade union or provincial and federal party politics. Such overlapping commitments imparted distinct advantages, among these were diverse personal and political contacts, valuable experience in developing strategy, and an appreciation of the complexities of organizing. Further, involvement in political parties, principally the CCF and the LPP, provided peace activists with an electoral avenue for their policies and with an appreciation for the finer points of campaigning such as canvassing.

Within the interlocking milieu of peace groups in British Columbia in the 1950s, only the Vancouver branch of the WILPF could claim an unbroken history dating from the early post-World War One years. According to one of the chapter’s founders, Helena Gutteridge, there had been a WILPF in Vancouver as early as 1917, just two years after the organization was established in Europe. This date cannot be confirmed, however, as WILPF’s own records and many other sources report that the Vancouver branch was founded by Lucy Woodsworth, Laura Jamieson, Dorothy Steves, Kate Lane, and others in 1921. Mildred Fahrni also recalled 1921 as the beginning, when she became involved through her friendship with the Woodsworths. Whatever the date, WILPF had an enviable legacy, perhaps not in numbers of members, but certainly in variety of campaigns, sophistication of leadership and enduring international ties.

From its inception, the Vancouver section of the WILPF enrolled women members who were or who would become prominent, not only in the peace
movement, but also in a plethora of other social justice, women's rights and socialist causes. These individuals eventually came to exercise influence beyond either the WILPF or any other single organization. Such a woman was Helena Gutteridge: outspoken socialist, union organizer, pioneer women's rights activist, and, in 1937 the city's first woman alderman. Gutteridge also held the chair of Vancouver WILPF for two years. Sheila Young remembered Gutteridge as blunt, forthright and determined, a woman with wide-ranging interests who was admired by everybody. "One word comes to mind that sums her up - justice, she wanted to see justice done." Gutteridge herself had a sophisticated view of the responsibilities and political potential of women's role in public life. Her point of view did not exclude the occasional reference to women's "special qualities." For example, "she sometimes advanced maternal arguments, suggesting that the vote would help women take better care of their families and of the world at large." Gutteridge always demonstrated a tremendous faith in the power and sisterhood of women to bring about change. It could hardly have been otherwise, given her personal accomplishments and her total dedication to activism. Her views reflect an understanding that women would benefit as individuals from public life; their work would not only be for the purpose of helping others but also to enhance their own lives. As she pointed out, "... women are part of the larger community. They owe it to themselves to develop their abilities and to work for a better peaceful world."
Another founding member of WILPF’s Vancouver branch was Laura Jamieson, who is described by Linda Hale as having been its principal organizer in 1921. Jamieson was the WILPF corresponding secretary in 1925\textsuperscript{20} and was at least nominally active after World War Two, perhaps until 1952 or 1953. She was also involved in a wide variety of community, social justice, and socialist-oriented groups, including the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) after 1933. From 1939-1945 and then again from 1952-1953 she held the riding of Vancouver Centre for the CCF and sat as one of the very few women members of a provincial Legislative Assembly in Canada.

While the details of Jamieson’s life and work as a CCF politician and as an advocate for women in the context of parliamentary politics have been examined in considerable detail elsewhere, for a number of reasons her legacy within WILPF deserves some attention here. First, of course, she is identified as "a central figure in the Vancouver WILPF, by then the strongest and most active Canadian branch."\textsuperscript{21} "By then" was the 1920s, when a war-weary Canadian public was concerned not only about the unprecedented loss of life and the destruction of property during the Great War, but also about "the large national debt which had been incurred . . . ."\textsuperscript{22} Further, post-war unemployment, a surge of working-class militancy exemplified by the Winnipeg General Strike, and then, at the end of the 1920s, crushing economic depression, created a milieu ripe for radical activism. The peace movement experienced a surge in membership, as a "wide
range of individuals and groups, from liberal internationalists and social gospellers to students and feminists, began to forge a popular movement.\(^{23}\)

Laura Jamieson was both a feminist and a socialist and the Vancouver branch of the WILPF drew strength from her understanding of the social and economic causes of war as well as from her practical political experience. In Jamieson’s view, peace could only be achieved "when the cooperative spirit of peace-loving people replaced the aggressive, competitive spirit of the capitalist economic system."\(^{24}\) Using her skills as an organizer and the energy of her commitment to Christian humanism, Jamieson set about to focus the work of Vancouver WILPF and so to build that necessary cooperative spirit. She developed a lecture series, pageants and initiated a number of peace conferences. The latter were popular and well attended. "Vancouver’s second annual peace conference was staged in November 1929, with over thirty societies cooperating."\(^{25}\) Clearly, Jamieson’s leadership was a crucial factor in the inter-war vigour of WILPF.

Just as Helena Gutteridge knew and articulated the value of a public appeal to the nurturing qualities practiced by women, Jamieson appears both to have lived and believed the proposition that "Women’s special abilities . . . lay in private and public activities which required mothering skills."\(^{26}\) Sheila Young described her as "more the motherly type, not intellectual."\(^{27}\) Certainly that comment itself indicates the patriarchally constructed rift between mothering by women and
intellectual qualities that even leading WILPF’ers accepted as given and which many utilized readily in their campaigns.

Laura Jamieson, although dedicated to the cause of social democracy, was foremost a Christian humanist rather than a class-conscious radical. While she had been an active peace worker, she was not a pacifist. She supported the CCF decision to agree to Canada’s participation in World War Two. Nevertheless, in the early 1940s she remained convinced of the value of pacifism. When a number of her friends, including Mildred Fahrni, and a small number of other CCFers stood in opposition to the war, she defended them "when they were labelled 'disloyal and traitorous.'" 28

By the early 1950s, however, Jamieson’s attitude toward peace activism had changed. At this time the national leadership of the CCF was painfully aware of red-baiting and of the dangers to its electoral aspirations of individuals, leaders or associated causes being identified as "red" or communist. Accordingly, Jamieson "renounced the left-wing, Socialist Fellowship, led by Steeves and Cameron." 29 A newspaper account further reported that Mrs. Jamieson "struck out at the pacifists in the BC movement." 30 By this time in the Cold War the peace movement, and the CPC, had been associated by the media and the establishment with views sympathetic to the Soviet Union, and, by immediate extension, to communism. Jim Endicott fuelled this association when he accepted the Stalin Peace Prize in 1952 (Roberts, 1989). It appears that those CCF women interested or still active
in the WILPF were anxious, even desperate, to distance the organization from any hint of communist contagion. In this era of fear, "Laura Jamieson feared the RCMP would get the minutes." At some point, in either 1952 or 1953, the existing records of the Vancouver WILPF, including the minutes of meetings, were destroyed. While it is difficult to understand the logic behind such actions, the remarks of long-time Vancouver peace and community activist, Rosaleen Ross, are instructive: "In a lot of ways that’s how it was, a lot of people just didn’t keep records." In order to protect themselves and to ensure that their organizations could function in a hostile environment, many leftists, especially those from the LPP and traditionally militant trade unions, grew exceptionally cautious. As well, Canadian social democrats in the CCF struggled to establish national credibility and a foothold among middle-class voters. Its emphasis on an electoral strategy narrowed the CCF’s focus, increasing the dissonance between the legacy of socially-conscious radicalism and a future conceived largely in parliamentary terms. CCF politicians could ill afford even the hint of attachment to communist-identified causes, among which peace was the most significant.

The final member of the trio of women who were instrumental in establishing Vancouver WILPF and in seeing it prosper, wane, and, finally survive after World War Two, is Dorothy Gretchen Steeves. Characterized as clever, even brilliant, armed with a sarcasm tinged with coldness, Steeves was present at the founding of the CCF. She and Mildred Fahrni, accompanied also by Colin
Cameron, "shared a bumpy car ride to Regina with frequent tire blow outs." It was an arduous journey undertaken by an exceptionally single-minded and resourceful pair of women. This single-mindedness was reflected throughout her life in Steeves’ dedication to social radicalism and the undiluted values expressed in the Regina Manifesto.

In 1949, the national CCF had agreed to support NATO, a bitter pill to swallow for CCF pacifists such as Mildred Fahrni and Dorothy Steeves, who opposed the position. While this approval was rejected by the more radical BC provincial convention of the same year, many former sympathizers in the CCF were moved to keep their distance from the peace movement. Steeves, however, continued to take uncompromising stands in the struggle between "left" and "right" factions within the BC CCF during the 1950s. She remained committed to a radical socialist approach and joined the Socialist Fellowship, labelled "Trotskyite" by detractors and disbanded in 1951 after it was banned by the party’s national council. When the founding convention of the successor to the CCF - the New Democratic Party (NDP) - met in 1961, it too supported NATO, and Dorothy Steeves remained an outspoken opponent: "Dorothy Steeves (BC CCF) declared 'It is impossible to reform NATO,' and she pointedly asked, 'What do the colonial peoples think of the shocking colonial regimes who are allies in Nato?'"
In the 1950s, forthright individual peace activists were also suspect. For example, the ties of the CPC to perceived and actual "communist" groups, such as the old League for Peace and Democracy\textsuperscript{40} placed it on the agenda of red-baiters. The CCF severed its formal links with the peace movement in 1950 when the national office forbade members from participation in those groups with formal links to the CPC and the WPC.\textsuperscript{41} Involvement in religiously-based groups, including the Canadian Fellowship Of Reconciliation (CFOR) and the Quakers, remained acceptable.

The Burden of Crises - Pacifism and Political Considerations

1955 was a marker year for the activities of the peace movement during the Cold War. While it had survived World War Two and found a new, terrible nuclear enemy to face, the crises it confronted before that date, although dangerous, were not as potentially all-consuming as they became in the years between 1955 and 1963. In 1955 the Soviet Union and its Eastern European client states, the German Democratic Republic (GDR) among them, formed the Warsaw Pact military alliance, thereby formalizing the division of Europe into two camps, armed with both conventional and nuclear weapons and bolstered by a multi-national force of hundreds of thousands of troops. The western alliance, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), had been created in 1949 in part as a response to the acquisition and testing of nuclear weapons by the Soviet Union.
Immediately prior to the establishment of the Warsaw Pact, the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) had been rearmed by and admitted to NATO.

These actions, while predictable, had ignored an international campaign determined to prevent German rearmament and to protest against the expansion of NATO. In Canada, although only 12 CCF MPs voted against the German arms ratification, the CPC, led by Jim Endicott, took the principal role in a widely publicized national opposition campaign. The CPC's emphasis was on the "undesirability of rearming Germany's militarists" and so appealed to Canadian veterans. The Vancouver branch of WILPF as well as the local chapter of CFOR, led by Mildred Fahrni, were also active in the protest, sending letters to appropriate government officials. Fahrni wrote to Lester Pearson, then Minister for External Affairs:

I am writing to express my deep concern over the proposed re-armament of Germany, and would urge you to use your influence to prevent it. . . . I am particularly opposed to the move to re-arm Germany, because I think it will add to the threat of war rather than lessen it. . . . (It) will be a challenge to Russia to arm East Germany. 43

When German rearmament became a reality, Canadian peace workers turned their attention almost entirely to a long-term crusade devoted to banning the testing and manufacture of nuclear weapons.

In November of 1955, the CPC organized the "first Canadian Forum on Peace," a meeting attended by over 1,700 delegates and observers. By all accounts, this was a significant gathering; certainly the numbers alone are
impressive. Establishment politicians and the media, however, were inclined to dismiss both the event and the nascent campaign as reflective of only narrow, politically-inspired "left-wing" interests. This complete condemnation is too easy and far too simplistic. Among the featured convention speakers, for example, were Anglican and United Church clergy. Moreover, immediately prior to the Forum, the Saskatchewan legislature had unanimously passed a resolution in favour of the total prohibition of weapons of mass destruction.\(^45\) Thus, even as the chill of the Cold War persisted, a campaign which would gradually gain considerable public acceptance began. In Vancouver, this effort was already well underway. Since the spring, activists, led unofficially by women, had championed the Stockholm Appeal. As well, concern about the health effects of radiation-bearing fallout from nuclear testing mounted worldwide. British Columbians were alerted to this new danger when, in April, University of British Columbia professor of pharmacology and social activist, Dr. Jim Foulks, added his local voice to a growing chorus of international academics "demanding a halt to further nuclear tests because of the already apparent and still unknown dangers of radiation to humanity."\(^46\)

These related efforts, against nuclear weapons testing and for the abolition of those same weapons, would occupy the time and energy of the nuclear pacifists until the Limited Nuclear Test Ban Treaty of 1963. Following this treaty, escalation and growing public awareness of the Vietnam War added numbers,
especially from among the ranks of students, to the peace movement. The Vietnam War also altered the focus of peace activists from the danger of a potential war to the horrors of an actual war. Eventually, "Vietnam" succeeded in diversifying the work of peace activists who became concerned, among other things, about chemical weapons and the environment and the issues of imperialism and struggles for national liberation. Playing integral roles in the disarmament and anti-Vietnam War movements, both as individuals and as representatives of women's peace groups, were Sheila Young and Mildred Fahrni. Additionally, the mixed gender peace organizations, from the BCPC to the CFOR, counted among their most dedicated and hardworking members in the Cold War a core sorority of women. Rosaleen Ross, Muriel Bladen, Johnnie Rankin, and Elsie Dean of the Peace Council, Olive Johnson and Alet McLeod of the Canadian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CCND), Joan Carpenter of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), and Edna Gibb of the United Nations Association (UNA) were among these women. Some were members of the LPP-Communist Party, others were strict pacifists, still others liberals or social democrats. Despite their ideological differences, these women frequently worked together both under the auspices of the Peace Council and as individuals. As well, scores of women laboured for peace in a small number of multi-issue women's groups. Of particular interest in this thesis is the role played by women in three such organizations in Vancouver; the Congress of Canadian Women (CCW), the Housewives Consumers’
Association (HCA) and the Women's Committee for Peace Action (WCPA).
United by overlapping memberships, strong ties with the LPP-CP and an attendant concern with linking peace to economic and political inequality, these groups not only influenced the leadership of WILPF but also helped define the radicalism and persistence that has historically characterized Vancouver peace activism in general and its women's face in particular. Yet another women's peace group, the Women's Committee Against Radiation Hazards (WCARH), independent of the LPP-CP, focussed on the single issue of atomic radiation. It emerged at the end of the 1950s, engaged the energies of a keen group of younger women and anticipated the rise of the Voice of Women.

Organizations and Organizers: Networks of Women

The Congress of Canadian Women

The Congress of Canadian Women was established in 1947 in Toronto for the purpose of "promoting equal rights for women in both the economic and political spheres." It had ties to a new women's group, the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF), just emerging in Eastern bloc nations. Coincidentally, many socialist women, particularly those involved in the Labour Progressive Party (LPP) - the incarnation of the Communist Party (CP) during the period when it was banned by the federal government became members of the CCW. These women tended to have intertwined political
commitments and to be involved in trade unions (either as members or in "Ladies Auxiliaries" such as that attached to the International Woodworkers Association) and one or more social issue campaigns. Vancouver's Mona Morgan, for example, wrote a column in the Pacific Tribune and was active in civic politics, the LPP, the International Woodworkers Association (IWA) Auxiliary, the CCW, and the Housewives Consumers' Association. Her political and personal association with Sheila Young emerged from this latter commitment. Additionally, Morgan participated in the Peace Council. Indeed, it was from just such as intricately interconnected labour-communist milieu that the CCW drew its numbers and its ideological strength.

The women of the CCW were able to provide a radical economic analysis and a socialist orientation that, while blunted by Stalinist determinism, was nonetheless useful for its understanding of the systemic nature of war and militarism. This orientation had a negative side, however, as the association of the CCW with the LPP caused a constant barrage of red-baiting by the establishment, which referred to the women's group as a "communist front." Even as the traditional emphasis on class and economic issues of the LPP exercised a vital influence within the CCW, the group also shared a powerful ideological connection with independent women's peace groups which transcended usual left-right political definitions. This connection is located in the CCW's embracing of maternalism, a perspective immediately evident in a 1951 "Appeal to the Women
of Canada," written by CCW activist Ethel Genkind. Her remarks demonstrate the depth of the maternalist orientation and the extent to which such ideas had permeated even the most politically radical of Canadian spheres:

Women of Canada:
Let us defend peace, the happiness and security of our homes! How precious are our children. Our sons and daughters are growing up in a world where modern war threatens their very lives and the future of our country. . . . Mothers of growing sons read with horror the debates about lowering the age for enlistment . . . .

Thus, while the CCW certainly championed materialism - articles in CCW publications consistently referred to the links between economic structures, workers rights and the need for peace - the essence of the group's peace appeal idealized the role of women within the patriarchal family and sought to generalize that role as a force for peace. As Joan Sangster (1989) points out, the CCW's commitment to maternalism was of a dual nature. The organization certainly needed to try to mount a broad appeal to women. In that sense, it was not above using ideas that were politically expedient in post-war Canada. Still, the organization's position also "reflected earnestly held and deeply entrenched assumptions about women's maternal morality and their desire to nurture and protect their families."

The CCW women, and others who were involved in the CCF-NDP for example, often had experience in trade unions and were able to contribute organizational and strategic skills to the peace groups to which they belonged. In addition to trade union involvement, some women also were active in political
parties, the LPP-CP, the CCF-NDP, and in the case of VOW, the Liberal Party. Many women held positions or volunteered regularly in one or two groups and were formally involved in two or three more; each individual and each group thus widened the complex linkages of personal as well as formal inter-relationships.

Just as many early WILPF’ers had been founders of the CCF and active in the Student Christian Movement or the Fellowship for a Christian Social Order, so too, their Cold War sisters found time to do many things and to develop vital networks of women. Mona Morgan’s involvements have already been cited. Sheila Young also moved among the WILPF, the Housewives’ Consumers Association (HCA) and the BCPC. In the 1930s Mildred Fahrni’s dedication to peace provided the motivation for her joining the CCF. "For CCF women like Mildred Fahrni, Christian ideals were inextricably intertwined with pacifist ones, ... the new party had appeal because of its commitment to international peace."\(^{52}\)

Later, in the early 1960s, Fahrni’s involvements included the VOW, the NDP, CFOR, SERVAS and other organizations. These interconnections, realized initially in organizational settings, were strengthened and nurtured by other, less formal methods. Included among these were women’s attendance at tea and coffee parties, involvement in bazaars and garden parties and commitment to the co-operative work of organizing meetings, fundraising and maintaining continuity and communication within their groups.
The principal concern of nuclear pacifists, fear of imminent world destruction, also brought the political women into formal and informal relationships with women of primarily religious motivation, who emerged not only from the traditional pacifist ranks of the Quakers but also from the United and Anglican churches. The United Church had inherited a significant, although not universal, pacifist sentiment. "Of all the Protestant churches in Canada, the United Church was the one most profoundly affected by pacifism and . . . ultimately became seriously divided over the issue."53 The post-war revitalization of CFOR, in which Mildred Fahrni would play a central role, was initiated by two prominent Anglican clerics: John Frank and John Davidson (Socknat, 1987). On the national level, working and friendly relationships between religious and political women were established through the agency of the CPC, while provincial and regional peace councils, such as the Vancouver Peace Council, performed the same function at local levels.

The Peace Congress originated from and had strong ties to mainstream churches and many of its individual participants were church women, . . . Socialists and communists also made up a substantial proportion, but not necessarily a majority, of its membership.54

Especially during the Cold War, the relatively small numbers of activists in the peace movement and its related causes relied on these formal and informal bonds among individuals to ensure filled auditoriums, fleets of canvassers and petitioners, and financing for campaigns. Women were experts at creating, nurturing and consolidating these bonds, in part as noted above, through traditional
methods of women gathering together, and in part by transforming those methods into effective political strategies. The confluence of religious and political women further widened and solidified the peace network. There was, also, a kind of comfort found in this reciprocity, although it was not without difficulties. Women did not always agree, and friendships waxed and waned as did the willingness of their organizations to work with one another. Various international political events, such as the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 and the Sino-Soviet split of 1960 had local repercussions. Indeed, the reciprocity of the early 1950s was born in part of isolation, of the need for protectiveness and from facing the daily obstacles to success in an atmosphere generally hostile to "progressive" issues. Additionally, many women were convinced that women were better able than men to overcome ideological differences to work for peace. About the participants at a 1962 Voice of Women Conference Mildred Fahrni noted confidently: "... they overcame any ideological differences and stressed the things on which they could unite, rather than foundering on their differences, which might be a directive to other conferences."

The British Columbia Peace Council

The BCPC, the provincial incarnation of the CPC, grew out of a late 1940s clergy-dominated peace study group dubbed "The Peace Committee" by Sheila Young. Initially, the group was very small, as Sheila Young explained:
Early in 1947 I received an invitation to attend a meeting at the YMCA... called by three retired United Church ministers - Rev. James Melvin, Rev. Sibley and Rev. Allen, Mildred Fahrni and I made up the cozy gathering. 

Soon, the "cozy gathering" had become a working study group composed of clergy of social gospel and pacifist conviction as well as local social activists Dr. Norman Black, Watson Thomson and Nigel Morgan. Reverend Harold Allen of the original group embodied a long Christian socialist tradition and had been a key organizer and president of the League for Christian Social Action in the early 1930s. By 1948 The Peace Committee was ready to engage in public work. It organized or co-sponsored a series of public peace events, designed to attract a broad audience and relying on the popular appeal of well-known religious leaders. The first event occurred in June 1948 at St. Andrews Wesley United Church, the second, in December 1948, featured Canterbury's Dean Hewlett Johnson (known as the "red Dean") speaking at the Garden Auditorium under the auspices of the Canada-Soviet Friendship Society and the third brought Dr. Jim Endicott to the Pender Auditorium in February 1949. Endicott's visit also helped to promote the recently launched National Provisional Peace Council, which became the CPC.

The 1948 meeting at St. Andrew's Wesley was the result of the clergyman's Peace Committee's long-debated decision to go public and of a resolution passed unanimously by the Vancouver presbytery of the United Church. The preamble to this resolution referred to the determination of the United Nations (UN) to abolish war and contrasted this goal with recent actions by UN members. These actions
were the Berlin Blockade and Airlift, early Cold War crises which seriously endangered peace. Further, the church resolution advocated convening a "true parliament of men" (sic)\textsuperscript{60} to prevent the outbreak of a world-wide nuclear war. For the meeting, the church was filled to capacity, with those attending hearing four principal speakers, identified by the Pacific Tribune as "Elmore Philpott, noted columnist, Mrs. Ida Banns, prominent in the East Indian community, Birt Howler, president, Vancouver Trades and Labour Council, and H. Altman, well known Jewish lawyer."\textsuperscript{61} This choice of speakers reflected the concern of the organizers to represent publicly a broadly-based community of Canadian citizens actively interested in peace: women, unionists, non-Europeans, Christians, professionals, non-Christians. Such representation would thus personalize future peace appeals for many sectors of Canadian society, taking the movement beyond the labour-left and the historic peace churches.

A variety of post-war peace actions had been held in Vancouver prior to 1948 but most of them were on a relatively small scale and were directly connected either to the LPP or the trade union movement, as represented by the Vancouver Trades and Labour Council (VTLC) which later became the Vancouver and District Labour Council (VDLC). For example, May Day parades and rallies in the late 1940s often emphasized the theme of peace and post-war reconstruction, especially in Eastern Europe. With the large and successful St. Andrew's Wesley meeting, peace activism in Vancouver not only gained an umbrella organization,
the Vancouver Peace Council (VPC), also known as the Vancouver Peace Assembly, but it also took on a new character. Pivotal in that new character were three elements: first, a philosophical identification with the UN's 1945 resolution to eliminate the "scourge of war," second, a focus on the specific problem of atomic weaponry rather than on militarism or conventional weapons and third, a desire to move peace into the mainstream of Canadian politics.

During the period 1948 to 1950, the VPC indeed endeavoured to make peace a mainstream and civic issue by involvement in a variety of public events. At the Dean Hewlett Johnson meeting, for instance, 6,500 people "packed the Exhibition Gardens, Vogue Theatre, and University Forum . . ." to hear the "Red Dean" make an "impassioned plea for peace." This success was followed by a VPC rally at the Pender Auditorium in mid-December with speeches by two prominent, respectable citizens: Dr. Norman McKenzie, then president of the University of British Columbia (UBC), and Rev. James Melvin. Melvin, one of the original members of the Peace Committee, identified by Sheila Young as the first of its kind in Canada, continued to be a prominent member of the VPC until 1950.

To retain a well-known member of the clergy as an official was absolutely critical to the VPC's goal of expansion and political diversity. Indeed, by the time of the first British Columbia provincial Peace Conference in May of 1950, the VPC had grown substantially, but, although there was an ongoing concern to
involve women in the peace crusade and consequently "women and peace" themes and events were common, women as a group were neither represented at the provincial conference nor on any of the six panels\textsuperscript{63} which reported to the plenary session.

In 1950, the official leadership of the BCPC was dominated by women, who held five of eight leadership posts. In keeping with the tradition of the day, however, the highest profile positions - the Chair and first Vice Chair - were occupied by men. The second Vice Chairman was Margaret Apps, from the Alpha Peace Association in North Burnaby, third Vice Chairman was Mabel Darwin of the North Shore Peace Council and Risa Lowrie from the Vancouver Peace Assembly was Executive Secretary. The two Regional Directors were Sheila Young from Vancouver WILPF and Madge Hall, of the Victoria Peace Council, who was responsible for organizing work on Vancouver Island.\textsuperscript{66} It is true that despite woman's numerical dominance, only one of them emerged from a group with an agenda oriented to women. That woman was Sheila Young and the group was the WILPF.

Sheila Young's role in the establishment and expansion of the BCPC was of considerable importance. Not only was Young an original member of the "cozy gathering" of 1947, but also her election as BCPC Regional Director for the Lower Mainland gave her direct control over the organization's most populous and activist centre. By the end of October 1950, six months after being elected
Regional Director, Young was organizing peace work in the New Westminster area, where her major focus was on collecting signatures for the Stockholm Peace Appeal Petition - a task made both urgent and difficult by the outbreak of the Korean War. From this point until her health deteriorated in the mid-1980s, Young devoted all of her time to the peace movement. She worked to maintain the local stature of WILPF and to guarantee that its membership remained stable, she also threw her energies into strengthening the new BCPC and, in the early 1960s, to founding and nurturing the Peace Action League (PAL). In the case of WILPF, survival was due to a protective strategy devised by Young to guard against the divisiveness of "left" versus "right" battles and a further reduction in numbers, such as that in 1948-49 when a "red smear" split the branch. Quite simply, she kept the group small and its activities modest but ongoing: letter-writing, UN support work, small meetings, participation in various BCPC campaigns, the Stockholm Appeal among them, and making herself available as a public speaker. WILPF declined to embark on membership drives and preferred organizing small educational meetings, often in concert with other groups, to mounting mass rallies or demonstrations. In contrast to the prominent public profile the VOW would establish in the first year of its life, the Vancouver chapter of WILPF was virtually unknown outside of peace and leftist circles. In this circumspect process of preserving the branch Sheila Young became, in a very real sense, the incarnation of WILPF in Vancouver.
In addition to the ongoing presence of WILPF, other women's groups, or peace events which focussed on women, made appearances in the early years of the post World War Two peace movement in Vancouver. The organizers of these activities demonstrated by their choice of speakers and of venues a reliance on the critical element of friendship networks and the significance of social gatherings and a festive spirit in women's peacemaking. International Women's Day, 8 March, was marked in 1948 in Vancouver by an early spring "fete" with the theme "Women in the Struggle of Peace" at which the featured speaker was Sheila Young, identified as "president of the WILPF." In July, WILPF sought the aid of the VTLC in adding colour to the peace campaign by preparing "a peace float for the annual parade at the opening of the Pacific National Exhibition August 25." The Labour Council responded to this request by appointing two delegates to assist the women. Also in August, a special "Women for Peace Tea" was held by the CCW to mark a tour by A.A. McLeod, LPP member of the Ontario legislature for Toronto-Bellwoods. Sheila Young continued to press home the cause of peace in the autumn of 1948 when she addressed the Mount Pleasant and Burnaby chapters of the Housewives' Consumers Association at meetings in member's homes.
69

The Housewives' Consumers Association

The Housewives' Consumers Association, with branches in Toronto, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Regina, Edmonton, and Vancouver by 1947, was created by the CP in the context of its post-1935 anti-fascist Popular Front activities. The HCA "acted as a consumer watchdog for the Wartime Prices and Trade Board, then after the war advocated a new housing policy, urged the maintenance of price controls, and lobbied for the continuation of day nurseries."72 Widening the net of contacts and acceptable organizing tactics by the CP during the Popular Front era opened up the arena of work among housewives and a corresponding focus on domestic life for communist women activists. Adherence to the precepts of maternalism further paved the way for links with the peace movement and with autonomous women's peace groups. Mona Morgan recalled that she first met Sheila Young "at a luncheon prepared upon the return of delegates from the first Housewives' Consumers delegation to Ottawa in 1947."73 Young immediately asked for a HCA representative to speak to the North Vancouver Council of Women. Before long, she was speaking to HCA groups on the issue of peace.

In late October 1948 the Mount Pleasant branch of the HCA held a meeting in the home of Ina McLeod on Fraser Street at which Sheila Young spoke. Advertisements promoting the meeting in the Pacific Tribune referred to the practical work women could do in counteracting war propaganda and advocating peace. Appealing directly to women in their traditional roles as householders
responsible for "consuming," the Tribune invited "women who are concerned over
the government's rapidly increasing military expenditures, and consequent effect in
inflated living costs" to participate in the discussion. In Burnaby, the topic of
Young's speech was "Women's Fight for Peace," and, as a report later noted, those
at the meeting connected the responsibility of women for the quality of home life
with the responsibility of governments to enable women to be effective household
managers. A government which spent money on arms robbed its householders. In
order to provide adequate housing and enable housewives to purchase sufficient
food to feed their families properly, the gathering of Burnaby women advised the
federal government to develop a peace policy. The women stated that they
preferred butter, cheap butter, to guns and passed a resolution urging the federal
government "to revoke its present foreign policy and its plan of rearmament . . .
and utilize monies for the benefit of our Canadian economy."  

1948 and 1949 were years of optimism and energy for the fledgling post-
war peace movement. At the same time as Sheila Young addressed HCA
meetings, Burnaby and Vancouver women with connections to the LPP, the CCW
and, on an international level, with the Women's International Democratic
Federation (WIDF), announced a series of teas to be held to help pay the cost of
sending Dorise Nielsen to the WIDF Peace Congress at Helsinki in November.
The Women's Committee for Peace Action

The WIDF had been established in Europe in 1945 by women from the largely communist-led partisan movements, thereafter it was associated with state-sponsored women's groups in Eastern Europe and other Communist nations. The Lower Mainland women who organized the Nielsen teas soon founded the Women's Committee for Peace Action (WCPA), which was tied directly to the LPP and the CCW. In 1949, Viola Bianco, active in the LPP and its Vancouver East provincial candidate at the time, was the WCPA secretary - she was also on WILPF's mailing list. In late September 1949, the WCPA sponsored a meeting on the topic of "Greece Betrayed," at which Bianco and Tom McEwen, also from the LPP, were the principal speakers. Clearly, the Party and its women activists recognized at this time the value of peace work by and among women. This new attitude contrasted both with the CP's pre-war position, which was hostile to feminism and pacifism, and with the still-dominant party ideology which regarded socialism as the solution to all oppression - including that experienced by women - and the separate organizing of women as divisive within the working class. As the 1940s came to an end, however, the LPP and its allies, although still dismissive of absolute pacifism, put a priority on peace activism. Party leaders were anxious to work with women's and church groups, to widen their sphere of influence and to enlist support for various progressive causes. High on this latter agenda were anti-nuclear issues and the defense of the Soviet Union.
The WCPA's most well-known and outspoken campaigner was civic activist Effie Jones, LPP member, frequent Vancouver mayoral candidate and perhaps the labour-left's strongest asset in the civic milieu since Helena Gutteridge. A WCPA sponsored event in the late spring of 1949 in which Jones played the major role serves to illustrate that, while the tea party and the flexible, friendly and small-scale type of organizing it represents may appear politically marginal and certainly benign by traditional standards of male leadership, Vancouver authorities apparently thought otherwise.

During late May of 1949 the WCPA held a tea in Stanley Park where Effie Jones, who had just returned from a CPC meeting in Toronto, was the speaker. In order to enforce a park bylaw against making "orations or harangues," two city detectives attempted to disrupt the tea party and disperse the 40 women in attendance.78 Their efforts caused immediate protest, with at least one woman remarking that she had never heard of such a thing,79 and with Jones and a delegation of participants appealing immediately to the park superintendent. After a lively discussion, during which one detective remarked derisively on the quality of Jones' voice: "When Mrs. Jones talks, you can hear her two blocks away,"80 the superintendent permitted the tea party to continue and Jones resumed her talk. The two detectives "faded away" and the WCPA, secure in its initial victory, planned to begin "a protest campaign against the restrictive bylaw."81 Whether the attempt to ruin the tea had been merely a politically neutral concern to enforce the
park bylaw, or, more likely, motivated by the topic and the political affiliation of
the speaker, is unclear. What is clear, however, is that tea parties could and did
command attention and publicity and, furthermore, could be used to advance
issues, such as freedom of speech, of interest to peace activists.

As the 1940s ended and the 1950s began, a difficult era unfolded for the
peace movement in general and for women peace activists in particular. Whether
women were involved in mixed gender groups or in autonomous women's groups,
they faced a double dilemma at this time. First, the post-war drive to undermine
women's integration into the waged labour force by elevating the housewife
exerted a powerful influence, militating against the activism of middle class
women. Women as housewives were to be, ideally, politically uninvolved and
properly concerned with creating efficient homes using newly created and available
technology. Women peacemakers attempted to meet this challenge by embracing
the primacy of the housewife not only as an able homemaker but also as a
universally responsible caretaker, suited and willing to tackle a triple task: the
well-being of individual homes, of the wider community, and, ultimately, of the
world. While this approach had potential appeal for a very wide audience, a
second problem, that of ideology and allegiance, intervened.

By the early 1950s the peace movement in North America was publicly
perceived to be directly influenced by the Soviet Union and controlled by domestic
Communists or, in the cases of obviously mainstream groups such as those
involving United Church and Anglican clergy, to be too closely associated with "communist inspired" causes. Although McCarthyism was a phenomenon born and most virulent in the United States, it spilled over into Canada. Indeed, all the Canadian peace organizations, including those of Christian pacifist conviction, had felt the sting of red-baiting. When Jim Endicott accepted the Stalin Peace Prize, the image of the CPC was further tainted and its ability to influence "middle Canada" severely hampered. Vancouver WILPF, as noted, carried on as a mere handful of women during this period and, despite Mildred Fahrni's energetic and unassailable Christian leadership, CFOR also remained very small. The "housewives' crusade," represented organizationally by the HCA, also endured the "red" label. It was not so much the identification with the communist left which was disturbing because, of course, in the case of the HCA at least, it was accurate, but rather the explicit charges of duplicity and sinister hidden agendas levelled against various groups. The women who agitated for consumers' rights were accused by a writer in a Vancouver daily newspaper both of being manipulated and of manipulating: "Like so many other popular agitations, this . . . crusade . . . particularly in the West, has been subverted by the communists and their sympathizers."82

To a certain extent, particular Vancouver women's groups, such as the CCW, the WCPA and later, the Trade Union Women's Peace Committee (TUWPC), with close personal and organizational ties to the LPP and militant
trade unions, (the International Woodworkers Association, the Fishermen’s Union, the Carpenter’s Union, for example), enjoyed some advantages during this difficult period. Union halls were the favoured meeting places and union networks provided publicity for women’s peace events. Not only were the "left" women guaranteed a solid - albeit small - membership base, but also they tended to be politically realistic, even hardened, with a world view and expectations framed by a radical socialist critique of capitalism. This critique and its appraisal of the machinations of, particularly, American imperialism, placed anti-communism in an understandable context. Unfortunately, LPP-CP connected activists were prevented by the limitations of Party ideology from advancing equally necessary critiques of Soviet Communism, imperialism and weapons policy, or of the secondary status of women in the Canadian CP. Canadian Communists had never been as intellectually resourceful, independent or self-critical as many of their European comrades. This had a direct effect not only on their peace work but also on their handling of the 'woman question.' "The Party thus created an economistic and static Marxism that could not explain the more complex sexual and cultural manifestations of women’s oppression." For its women members, the elimination of capitalism would result naturally in the elimination of women’s subservience. Their model of both peace and women’s emancipation, too fragile to bear criticism, was the USSR.
The Women's Committee Against Radiation Hazards

A politically independent Vancouver-area women's peace group, important in setting the stage for the local establishment of the Voice of Women, was the Women's Committee Against Radiation Hazards. The fallacy of "civil defense" in the nuclear age prompted its founding in late September 1959 by Camille Mather, an active CCF member and Burnaby city Councillor. Mather "gathered around her some twenty mothers . . . , imbued them with her enthusiasm and concern about the nuclear danger facing all humanity, and got down to work."83 This work, in which Stockholm petitioner Irene Foulks soon became engrossed, concentrated on educating a public anxious for accurate information about radiation. Mather took initial responsibility and, according to Foulks,

... she educated us to the point where we could speak a little more intelligently about what radiation hazards were all about. . . . and we broke up into sections, each person taking an aspect of the subject and performing at a PTA or whatever club or group wanted to hear us.85

In addition to speaking at small Parent Teacher Association meetings, the WCARH tried to publicize widely the dangers of radiation, particularly of Strontium 90, addressing church meetings and appearing on radio and television. After only six months of activity the group had "interviewed MP's and MLA's, written letters to various government representatives, and developed a correspondence with similar groups in several other countries."87 It also marched to the Japanese Gardens, at UBC on 6 August 1960 to commemorate the bombing of Hiroshima.88
By the summer of 1960 the group of twenty mothers had grown into many committees governed provincially by an umbrella organization, the Council of Committees on Radiation Hazards. The Council sponsored its first large meeting at the Kerrisdale Arena on 5 August, the evening before the march to the UBC Japanese Gardens, with the primary goal to inform the public of the dangers of radioactive fallout. From there, its organizers hoped, an informed public would join the intensifying chorus of international voices demanding an end to nuclear testing. Featured speakers included Camille Mather and a host of academics, among them Dr. Jim Foulks (an expert in pharmacology), Dr. Hugh Keenleyside and Dr. George Griffiths. The radiation topic demanded the primary involvement of scholars and experts in the field, whose opposition to nuclear weapons testing lent both scientific credibility and political respectability to the cause. As Irene Foulks pointed out, "of course we knew it was important to get names of academics and churches involved. We did a lot of hustling around . . . ." The hustling bore immediate fruit. The meetings she and her colleagues sponsored and publicized reached many people. For instance, 2,500 attended the Kerrisdale Arena rally, a significant crowd for the period.

Subsequent events, including other well-attended meetings, one which brought Linus Pauling to Vancouver in December 1960, demonstrate that the issue of radiation hazards inspired a thirst for information based on the fear of an invisible, insidious enemy. The Pacific Tribune's report on the Kerrisdale meeting
pointed to this increasingly articulated fear of the "mystery" of radioactivity and of governments' failure to disclose the truth about the devastating medical consequences either of a future nuclear war or of the present fallout from ongoing weapons testing. A conspiracy of silence and misinformation seemed not fantasy but reality. Speakers at the Kerrisdale meeting branded fallout shelters - advocated by US and Canadian Civil Defense officials - useless and accused the US Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) of lying about the dangers of radiation. Of greatest interest and motivation to many fledgling women activists, speakers expounded on the health risks of radiation, stating that "Strontium 90 is particularly dangerous for children. Tests show that children's bones have seven times more Strontium 90 than adults."91

Since the start of atmospheric weapons testing in the mid-1940s, milk, the most symbolically pure and basic nourishment for children, had been tainted with radioactivity. A lapel button from the period depicts a nuclear explosion in the background overwritten with the slogan "Strontium 90 Causes LEUKEMIA - Stop the Tests."92 Knowledge, even frightening knowledge about the health risks of fallout, imparted to the Radiation Hazards women a politically useful kind of power. In an era when atomic energy was little understood by laypeople, these women created a solid footing of information from which to take action. Radiation fear and the bomb shelter issue had brought peace politics directly into the traditional sphere of women's work - the private home. While women might
have understood that providing safe lives for their children was always problematic, in the face of possible nuclear annihilation, the effort itself seemed futile. Anti-nuclear organizing around the specific issue of radioactive fallout offered both personal hope and a chance to reframe the boundaries of peace activism to include women who identified themselves primarily as middle-class housewives. In the WCARH and VOW, motherhood did not preclude involvement, rather, it was a qualification for action with authentic political purpose: exercising responsibility for the family of mankind. Indeed, Sara Ruddick (1989) asserts that the public visibility of mothers resisting violence and struggling to conceive peace transforms the meaning of 'motherhood.'

By the end of the 1950s, the vitality and grass-roots leadership of women in Vancouver's peace movement was solidly established. Established also was the importance of its oldest, most radical women's organization - the WILPF - and that group's most visible member, Sheila Young. As a myriad of peace initiatives took shape and were tested in practice throughout the decade, Young and her tiny band of women pressed for their unique vision of global peace accompanied by social and economic justice.
NOTES


2. Among these regional conflicts were the Crimean War (1854-1856), the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871), the Russo-Turkish Wars (1853, 1877), and the American Civil War. Of interest in the case of the latter is that many of the maternalist women leaders of the American peace and suffrage movements were neither neutral nor pacifist. They were active supporters of the Union (the Republic) in the conflict.


4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., p. 82. This quotation is taken from a statement issued by the IWSA. At the time one of its most prominent leaders was Carrie Chapman Catt, President of National American Woman Suffrage. The statement is included in Catt’s biography by Mary Grey Peck. Ironically, Chapman Catt soon renounced her avid pacifism to become a supporter of American entry into World War One.

6. While the pre-war rise of German Nazism and European fascism fostered the concurrent rise of peace groups determined to make an appropriate response, there was never agreement on the content of that response. Simply, the debate centred on the best methods to resist fascism. The ultimate choice posed was between nonviolence and the just use of violence to defeat a greater evil. By the late 1930s “the Canadian peace movement was reduced to a shadow of its former self” (Socknat, Witness Against War, Pacifism in Canada 1900-1945 [Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987], p. 190). Indeed, when Canada declared war on 10 September 1939, most Canadians, including most religious peace activists had come, uneasily, to terms with a military response to the aggression of fascism.

7. The Canadian Peace Congress was founded in 1948 as a socially radical peace organization by four Christian religious and socialist-communist leaders. Socknat, Witness Against War, pp. 289-290.

8. Reverend James (Jim) Endicott was a United Church minister and leader with a missionary background in China and a forceful and outspoken sympathy for the Chinese communist revolution.


11. Ibid., p. 12.


13. When interviewed for a lengthy Pacific Tribune International Women's Day biographical retrospective in March 1957, Gutteridge mentioned this very early founding date, but it is most certainly inaccurate.


16. Irene Howard, notes from an Interview with Sheila Young, 15 November 1983, in the possession of Carolyn Kline.

17. Ibid.


24. Ibid., p. 106.


27. Howard, notes from an interview with Sheila Young, p. 3.


29. Ibid., p. 141.

30. Ibid.


34. Howard, notes from an interview with Sheila Young, p. 3.


36. Mildred Fahmi recalled this journey fondly and humorously in a 14 May 1990 interview. She remembered the three returning to Vancouver and deciding to run in the next election for the purpose not of winning but so that "we would have a chance to talk to people." Electoral victory was secondary to the opportunity to propagandize and organize.

37. The Socialist Fellowship was founded in 1950.


41. Roberts, "Women's Peace Activism," p. 306, mentions some key CCF leaders who refused to adhere to this prohibition, including Tommy Douglas and Ontario's Rae Luceck, active in the Housewives Consumers' Association and later in the Congress of Canadian Women, both associated with the Labour Progressive Party. She left the CCF after being given the choice of abandoning the HCA or being expelled from the CCF.

43. Letter from Mildred Fahrni to Lester Pearson, 13 January 1955, Fahrni's private papers.


45. Ibid., p. 12.


47. Selected from a survey of the Minute Book of the BC Peace Council, courtesy of Rosaleen Ross.


50. A slogan which illustrates the connection made by the CCW between peace and economic well-being for workers, including housewives, is found on page 4 of the June 1950 "Women's Voice." Peace = Security = Abundance.


52. Joan Sangster, "Role of Women," p. 121.


55. Mona Morgan, interview by Marcia Toms, Vancouver, BC. Morgan also comments that her personal and political friendship with Sheila Young virtually ended when Young's pro-Chinese sentiments put her at odds with those of CP members in the early 1960s.


57. Sheila Young, personal notes in the possession of Carolyn Kline, p. 1.


60. Ibid.
61. Ibid.

62. Ibid.


64. Ibid.

65. Those panels were: Religion, Education, Labour, Youth, Culture, and National Minorities.


67. The task of collecting signatures on a peace petition during the first part of the Korean War was difficult not only because of a widespread association between peace groups and communism in North America and the suspicion that created, but also because North Korea, a member of the Soviet bloc, was seen as the aggressor in the conflict. Its action in crossing the border with South Korea seriously weakened peace activists' arguments about the peaceful intentions of the USSR.


73. Morgan, interview, June 1991.


76. Ibid., quoted in this article.

77. Dorise Neilsen, a former Unity Member of Parliament from Saskatchewan, had become a member of the Communist Party while still active in the CCF.
78. Pacific Tribune, 3 June 1949, p. 11.

79. Ibid.

80. Ibid.

81. Ibid.

82. Vancouver Sun or Province, "Housewives Cavalcade," in the possession of Mona Morgan, June 1949, p. 1.

83. In February 1962, the TUWPC sponsored a Women’s Conference called "Women Unite for Peace - Equal Rights," at the Fisherman’s Hall on Cordova Street. One of the topics for discussion was "Disarmament and Your Family Budget." (Pamphlet, in the possession of Mona Morgan.) In addition to support from the Fishermens’, Carpenters’ and Woodworkers’ unions, the Vancouver Peace Assembly’s (the same organization as the Peace Council) documents indicate support from the Electrical Workers (IBEW) and the Boilermakers as well as artistic help from Hal Griffin, well-known labour leader (United Fishermen and Allied Workers’ Union) and CP writer. (VPA News Bulletin, 30 October 1950, possession of Mona Morgan.) Many of these local unions had strong LPP-CP connections - that is their activists and many of their leaders tended to be Party members or actively sympathetic to the Party.


86. Interview with Irene Foulks, 1 June 1990.


89. Foulks, interview, 1 June 1990.


91. Ibid.


93. VOW BC Constitutional document, UBC Special Collections, VOW papers.
CHAPTER THREE

"A WOMAN WITH A GLEAM IN HER EYES"

SHEILA YOUNG AND THE VANCOUVER CHAPTER OF THE WOMEN’S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND FREEDOM

Sheila Young, the epitomy of Vancouver WILPF from the late 1940s until 1989, was born in England in 1896. Her family was wealthy, and those who knew her in Vancouver, including Carolyn Kline and Eve Ericksen from the WILPF, Mona Morgan from the HCA and the LPP-CP and Rosaleen Ross from the Peace Council, believe she received a good, private education and enjoyed all the advantages associated with British wealth and class privilege in that late Victorian era. About her personal life Young was intensely private. Although she is remembered as an entertaining story teller,¹ no one can recall her ever disclosing the precise details of her family life or her reasons for coming to Canada. Young did, however, give the impression that she had always been headstrong and had rebelled against her family, their lifestyle and the Church of England at an early age.² Indeed, throughout her very long life, an underlying consciousness of her advantages remained with her. "Sheila never lost sight of the fact that she was privileged. Her rebellion was one of conscience. She always knew what she was doing."³
This rebellion, at first an intensely personal expression, came to encompass Young's whole identity by later adulthood. She assumed socially radical views, as well as a way of life and values regarded as eccentric in the middle twentieth century. Her commitment to social justice and to alleviating personal suffering seems to have emerged first during the Depression. She apparently joined Vancouver WILPF in 1929 and, as "a self-taught social worker . . . clothed and fed and housed many of Vancouver's destitutes during the Depression." Sheila Young's radicalism and unorthodoxy were both in full flower by the late 1940s, when she became prominently active in Vancouver's housewives' and peace movements. Most importantly, she became, after the departure of Mildred Fahrni for Toronto and the national leadership of CFOR in 1948, the power at the heart of the Vancouver chapter of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

Young's eccentricities were a source of both amusement and mild irritation to her friends. They were, however, part of a long tradition of popularly-expressed political and social radicalism, and of movements for peace, for preservation and environmental balance, and for health. Sheila Young was a vegetarian, a believer in reincarnation, and such a critic of Western medicine that she refused to visit doctors. Instead, she advocated Theosophy, herbalism and naturopathy. At times her concern about her own health - and the health of others - seemed obsessive, or, at least, mildly irrational. For example, "She was
opposed to anyone wearing glasses." In order to maintain her own eyesight, she was in the habit of exercising her eye muscles, often while waiting at bus stops. She frequently and enthusiastically encouraged her friends to do likewise. She once took Rosaleen Ross to have her palm read at the Normandy Restaurant on Granville Street. According to Ross, "Sheila Young took it seriously." She was also mysterious about age and discouraged any mention of her own or other WILPFer's ages. Her rationale was political. Eve Ericksen recalled that "Sheila was very reluctant about age discussion. . . . she warned you never to reveal your age, . . . you lose credibility." From girlhood, when she rejected the Anglican Sunday School her parents favoured because she was not permitted to ask questions, choosing instead "to climb a tree on her father's estate and stay in the tree until she saw people coming out of the church," Young tried to create a lifestyle independent and critical of the prevailing modes of thought she deemed restricting and unhealthy.

That independence notwithstanding, she was always conscious of the impact of her personal presence. A small, dark-haired woman who was always impeccably groomed, Young is remembered as never attending a public event without a head covering of some kind, usually a hat. "She was a small woman. She was very thin. She had dark hair and we didn't too often see her without a hat, . . . ." Appearances were important to Young and her associates, not only because of the era in which they lived, when women always "dressed" to attend
public events, but also because of the credibility and aura of respectability that might be added to causes and occasions perceived as radical. Even outdoors in August, when others were more casually attired, Sheila Young set an unforgettable example, as Carolyn Kline recalls:

I have a memory of her sitting at a Nagasaki table - for years we had a Nagasaki Day programme - and she was just impeccably groomed. Her makeup on beautifully, and a straw hat, a yellow suit, a pale yellow suit, and she was just a picture sitting there, surrounded by her literature explaining Hiroshima and Nagasaki.¹²

Indeed, the photograph of an exceptionally young and vibrant-looking Sheila Young speaking at a 1953 BCPC conference shows her dressed in a well-tailored suit, wearing a small hat and speaking from the podium. She appeared, according to some, "rather vain,"¹³ keeping her hair very dark until the end of her life. At the same time, though, she is also fondly remembered for never ostentatiously displaying her personal material wealth. She owned an exceptionally large diamond, but never wore it. Mona Morgan recalls that "She just kept it in the safe. Never wore it."¹⁴ Apparently, Young chose not "to give the impression that she was a little bit above the average."¹⁵

Although she may have been self conscious about her class background, perhaps feeling that it might erect barriers, Young did not hesitate to form friendships with those in Vancouver’s radical-labour and intellectual-left community. She got on well with both Mona and Nigel Morgan, LPP and IWA leaders and activists. According to Mona, the three "were friends to the point that
we were invited there for Christmas Eve, . . . for sherry and Christmas cake."\textsuperscript{16} Such friendships were not always easy to sustain. In 1947, in the embryonic stages of the Peace Committee, Young was asked by its clergy-dominated membership (18 of the 21 members were clergy, only Young, Mildred Fahrni and Watson Thomson were outside the religious fold) to visit Nigel Morgan to request that he convince LPP members not to attend the Committee's initial public meeting, so that its political independence might be firmly established in the face of a hostile press. She recalled that Morgan greeted her warmly, with a smile, and listened carefully to her suggestion, agreeing to use his influence. It was not a comfortable task for Young, for she "knew Mr. Morgan, and respected him for his quiet, courteous behaviour when attacked by media . . . ."\textsuperscript{17} The aftermath of their discussion was unsatisfactory for the Peace Committee, as a number of LPP stalwarts attended.\textsuperscript{18}

Sheila Young also built an enduring friendship with Watson and Mary Thomson that was especially robust during the first years of the BCPC, when "Watson used to bring Sheila home for dinner when they were working together in the early 1950's."\textsuperscript{19} The Thomsons had been involved in cooperative living, as part of Watson's ongoing search for a synthesis between Christianity and Marxism, the personal and the political. Their home was the venue for regular, Saturday evening study sessions which had "a kind of a double purpose. One was being totally engaged with the world situation all the time. . . . the other was
personal growth."20 Their lifestyle, unique for the period, extended even to insisting that in these study sessions, an underpinning of the evolution of communalism, "men and women have different study groups for at least part of the time. Because they are different and they should have their base different."21

Young admired the Thomsons, deploiring the fact that Watson had been forced, as a consequence of his outspokenness, to leave his government position in Saskatchewan. She noted that his "wife and family suffered for his strength of will, but supported him through difficult years."22 Through this and other relationships, Sheila Young moved in a socially fascinating and politically fertile milieu during a period of general conservatism. Her ideas and practices, as well as those of her friends, were regarded as more politically suspect than harmlessly avant-garde or bohemian. Indeed, their views were inherently critical of Canadian society. Young worried about her friends and about the safety of those she worked to organize. Even before the onslaught of McCarthyism was felt fully in Canada, she reported in 1950 that her organizing in the Vancouver area on behalf of the BCPC was carried on cautiously, "in a silent manner, to institute discussion groups in houses . . . ."23 In such a suspicious environment, Young’s veneer of vanity might have proved useful protection against the certainty of persecution.
Without doubt Sheila Young projected an image of unusual strength that could be formidable. Mona Morgan remembered her powerful speaking ability and that:

... she had a rather forbidding way about her. There was a preciseness of speech, and a certain posture, she didn’t lean back in her chair - she sat upright; if she felt intolerant of something, she didn’t mind verbalizing it at all.²⁴

This rather brittle presence, undiminished despite Young’s small stature, combined with an equally strong intellect, and, as her personal struggle to maintain Vancouver WILPF demonstrates, a spiritual fearlessness. Carolyn Kline expressed the opinion of Young’s final circle of WILPF friends about the influence of these qualities: "I think we all respected her intelligence. And during the last few years, I learned to respect her inner strength."²⁵

Sheila Young was married, to David Young, an engineer employed by the city of Vancouver. When she first became well known as a political activist after the war, their home - or at least their mailing address, from which Young ran an herbal cosmetic business²⁶ and sent a constant barrage of letters - was the Shelley Building, in downtown Vancouver. In 1950 they moved to North Vancouver. Later, the Youngs moved to the west side of Vancouver, and the address became the mailing address of WILPF for many years, appearing in pamphlets and brochures. The Youngs had no children and David was uninvolved in politics, although supportive of his wife’s efforts. Apparently, he was some years older than Sheila. She seems to have been protective of him because of his occupation
as a municipal civil servant, which she felt might have been compromised by
association with her political work. Mona Morgan explained that "she just didn't
want to involve him at all. She kept that part of things absolutely private."27

By all accounts, Sheila Young was as tenacious politically as she was
private personally, sticking to commitments and issues with unyielding fervour,
just as she staunchly stood by her rather unorthodox religious beliefs. She seemed
unmoved and, at least outwardly, undisturbed by either criticism or disapproval of
her ideas and projects. Indeed, Young's often-hidden sense of humour could be
employed at the most serious of times:

And she used to make snide remarks, I shouldn't use the word snide, because
it wasn't really snide remarks, but almost comical remarks about those people
who looked at everybody who was concerned about peace or prices or any of
those questions, as . . . Communists, and who red-baited. And she said, "Of
course, they'll be red-baiting me too, . . . but I don't care."28

And, of course, she was red-baited, a result in part, ironically, of her
constant attempts to promote nonpartisanship. Whether she worked with entirely
autonomous coalitions and committees seemed irrelevant, for she noted: "But still,
I too was regarded as being a 'Commie.'"29

Self confidence and singularity of purpose propelled Young from
membership in the North Vancouver Council of Women, and the post-war
Vancouver chapter of WILPF, to the executive of the HCA,30 to the leadership of
the BCPC and, ultimately, to the guardianship of WILPF. Her personal struggle
was not only to remain active herself in the peace movement, but also to ensure
the preservation of WILPF as a functioning organization. It is in her capacity as a founder of the BCPC, as the local and provincial personification of WILPF, as a maternalist and nonpartisan that Sheila Young is of paramount interest to this thesis. In particular, her ideas about organization and her methods of approaching anti-communism, internationalism and relief work, and the role of women frame the following discussion. Her beliefs and strategies reveal not only threads of ideological coherence but also the incongruities which weave through all social movements. Young believed that peace required demonstrable caring for and cooperation with others on local and international levels. Accordingly, she promoted inclusion. At the same time, however, she chose to preserve WILPF not through expansion but by exclusion. Although adept at using her social skills to build carefully and then to nurture peace networks and multi-organization relief committees, she was not willing to welcome all potential colleagues into these networks. Those who really were not "suitable" - and who would likely have been uncomfortable - included working-class women and militant trade unionists.

Lobbying through letter-writing, a fairly passive but time-consuming activity, was a key element of Vancouver WILPF's Cold War strategy. Young took on this task as well as most others, among them forging contacts with other groups, lecturing, and representing WILPF publicly. Irene Foulks remembered that Sheila Young liked to deal directly with leaders such as Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau. She aimed to make an impression and she created a sense of WILPF as an elite and
select group. Her relationship with Communists was ambivalent and often problematic. On occasion, Young was despondent, even cynical, about the detrimental consequences that flowed from her attempts at nonpartisanship. For example, while admitting admiration for the zeal and dedication of LPP activists, she deeply regretted their eventual domination of the BCPC and the CPC. About the fate of the latter group she commented: "History tells us that the Congress, which had a promising start, became like other groups with preponderant communist members or sympathizers - ineffective in reality, though proficient in publicity."32

**Early Trials in Organizing**

Throughout the late 1940s and early 1950s, Young maintained a high profile as a British Columbia peace activist with a multiplicity of organizational interests. While assuming the leadership of WILPF, she was also a founder, leader and organizer of the Vancouver Peace Assembly and the BCPC. One of her principal concerns in her work with each of these groups was to create broad and representative organizations. Immediately before the provincial body - the BCPC - was established in May 1950, she observed that "it would be most helpful if we could get a broad section of men and women present."33 Professing to harbour little patience for particular interest groups or sectarian agendas of any kind, Young consistently referred to the ideals of cooperation and collaboration as
the foundations of effective organizations. Her words often seem tinged with a nonspecific religious faith, referring, for instance, to a power higher than A and H bombs and to the spirit of true reconciliation.\textsuperscript{34}

During this fledgling period, when the post-war peace community was struggling to establish itself, but still optimistic, Sheila Young employed her talent for working with dissimilar groups: academics, clergy, religious activists, social democrats, communists. In this she was true to the principles of WILPF, which aimed to bring "together women of different political and philosophical tendencies . . . ."\textsuperscript{35} She tried to encourage both individuals and groups to work together, mounting a one-woman crusade for inclusiveness. She attempted to extend her personal commitment to collaboration into a more universal form - as exemplary. She wanted to impact guidelines for political practice, seeking in the work of the BCPC to "avoid conditions that are not conducive to cooperation."\textsuperscript{36} Cooperation and consensus, the desirability of working with people of every religious and political persuasion, temporarily forsaking ideology, were admirable ideals, but difficult to carry out. Partisanship was a potent reality of political life, and peace groups could claim no immunity. Problems almost immediately challenged the prospects for a wide representativeness - for balance - in Vancouver's peace community.

The first leaders of the Peace Committee - a group of clerics, Sheila Young and Mildred Fahlri - searched for common ground to protect their association
from partisanship and divisiveness. About these early years, when the Committee was coming reluctantly to terms with the disturbing realities and problems of the Cold War, Young wrote:

During this "searching" process the international situation had seriously deteriorated. Better dead than red (was) commonplace . . . The propaganda machine was red hot. Where was the consulting spirit that engendered the charter of the United Nations?37

Subsequent local developments, among them the departure of many of the clergy from the young "Peace Committee," after having been "rebuked by their boards and/or individual Church members,"38 distressed Young.

Among those who resigned in 1947, even before the Committee went public, was a young United Church clergyman whose letter of resignation particularly upset Young. She recollected her feelings upon receiving his letter:

I recall being particularly saddened to receive a letter from a young minister of the United Church, who had previously reported strong disfavour by his Board of his affiliation with the committee. In the letter I only read regret at the choice he was forced to make - . . . to follow his conscience, or for the sake of his young family, bow to the dictates of Board members, who had decided that the danger of war was more Christian than seeking conciliation . . . with the communist leaders.39

Although regrettable, these first resignations were only minor setbacks, more were to come. In 1948, after its successful public launching at the St. Andrew's Wesley meeting, the Committee grew quickly, changing its name to the more formal Peace Assembly. The name was meant to indicate that the organization would be a true congregation, with members of diverse ideologies united in their desire for peace. Unfortunately, during the two years until 1950,
the attempts to sustain that ideal of diversity were largely unsuccessful. While the Assembly struggled to expand and to begin a public campaign, it also faced further internal stresses. It lost its respected leader, retired United Church clergyman Reverend James Melvin. In February he had written a letter to the editor of the Vancouver Sun on behalf of the Assembly, criticizing US President Truman for consenting to manufacture the hydrogen bomb. He called the decision an "immoral act," and further suggested that it dealt "a direct blow" to the efforts of the United Nations. His words were uncompromisingly damning of the United States: "We, therefore, consider the introduction of this deadlier bomb to be a violation of its obligation to the United Nations, and a betrayal of the peoples who looked to the United States for leadership toward lasting peace."40

This letter prompted a cruel and abusive editorial response41 which compounded previous hounding and attacks. So, after much personal agonizing, Melvin, one of the five original members of the Peace Committee which had begun so promisingly as a "cozy gathering," resigned his leadership in the Peace Assembly in April 1950. He had often confided in Young, despairing of his ability to go on.42 In a letter to him after his resignation, she confided in him, expressing her concern that, because he was gone: "Our chances to bring those to the right into the fold seem very remote at present . . . ."43 On 5 May 1950, Young too resigned from the Peace Council, possibly due to illness, leaving her positions as Vice President and Lower Mainland Organizer.44 By October,
however, she was back. It was an uncertain beginning for a new peace coalition and for a new decade.

**A Cooperative Ideal**

Despite bitter disappointment, Sheila Young remained committed to a cooperative, independent approach to peace work. In her view, this held the greatest potential for involving a wide range of people. She shared that perspective with Mildred Fahri and with Muriel Bladen, who joined the Peace Council in 1950. Together, Young and Bladen advocated a factual, unabrasive approach. Certainly, after Melvin's resignation from the Peace Assembly, and in the face of further "blasts" in the press, such a method seemed especially necessary.45 Facts, however, were futile as long as peace and communism were popularly synonymous and more blasts in the popular press seemed inevitable.

Despite this reality, Young refused to exclude LPP-CP members from peace groups. Her solution to the problem of perceived or actual domination by a single group was to enroll others in her coalition-building. In October 1950, for example, she sought Melvin's help in securing cooperation from Church people in promoting the Assembly's work. While acknowledging difficulties, she reiterated her confidence that the ideals of cooperative, independent work could prevail:

> We have gathered together many valuable helpers who are not afraid to work with the LPP but are not influenced in that direction. Also, as before, many of those belonging to that Party are most desirous of keeping the Peace work apart from party questions.46
Her ideals did not, however, diminish her pragmatism. She understood the political realities of Canada in the Cold War and she despaired that the first formally-elected executive of the Peace Committee included LPP members. "The result was a death blow to a vision of a "broad" Executive." She learned thereafter to keep a comfortable distance between WILPF and "the Party." Although she was cautious, she doubted that any WILPFers were also Party members.  

Burned by her experiences with the LPP, Young’s eagerness to work with a wide array of individuals and groups subsided in the mid 1950s. She made some difficult choices, which contradicted her ideals, but were based upon a pragmatic assessment of political reality. In either 1951 or 1952, largely under pressure from its CCF members, WILPF voted to discontinue its membership in the BCPC, although Sheila Young continued her personal involvement. In 1953 WILPF formally reexamined its position, noting that the Council had suffered a marked decrease in members in the previous four years. By 1955, demoralized and choosing to concentrate fully on WILPF, Young was ready to resign her individual membership. She realized that, regardless of her personal efforts to give it a wide appeal, the BCPC "had no influence with the government or public." Promoting cooperation and diversity was still desirable, but seemed pointless.

Young’s coalition-building spirit was only dampened temporarily. By the late 1950s a plethora of new peace groups had joined Vancouver’s peace
community. Among these were the Canadian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CCND), and the Committees Against Radiation Hazards. In addition to adding new highlights to the peace crusade, each realized a genuine broadening of the movement. They were not connected to either the Canadian Peace Congress or the LPP-CP. The CCND was popular with academics and university students, while the BC anti-radiation groups attracted interest from still more academics, particularly scientists, and young mothers. To Young and close colleagues, it seemed time again to try to build a formal way for peace groups to communicate and cooperate. To this end, Young helped to found the Peace by Peaceful Means Co-ordinating Committee (PPMCC) in 1960. It aimed "to conduct a broad, non-partisan campaign on behalf of peace and disarmament." Sharing executive duties in this new venture with Young were two members of the "friendly network" of peace activists that she cultivated so assiduously. These were Mildred Fahrni - at whose home the new group met - and UBC pharmacologist Jim Foulks, spouse of Women's Committee Against Radiation Hazards member and sister peace activist, Irene Foulks. Jim Foulks had, in Young's view, "done excellent public work in speaking of the dangers of radiation, despite the fact that most of the University faculty are afraid to say anything in public." The PPMC had laudable goals, realization of which "would require great tact and wisdom." Unfortunately, the Committee was short-lived even though it boasted an impressively diverse list of affiliates, including the CFOR, the BC Federation of
Labour, the Unitarians, and the United Jewish Peoples' Order. It failed, according to Young, because "the smear followed us."54

Vancouver WILPF - The Challenge of Anti-Communism

In 1946, when Sheila Young became Vancouver WILPF's leader, the international organization was only 31 years old, yet had influenced the peace movement and gained public notoriety out of all proportion to its small membership. Highlighting one cause while clarifying the relatedness of many others, it blended socialism, feminism and pacifism (Black, 1989), thus defying easy categorization as simply a peace group (Liddington, 1989). Its membership appeal, therefore, was limited. Similarly, combining internationalism with the pursuit of many objectives made Herculean demands of its membership. Sheila Young, reflecting on WILPF's dearth of conventional political success, maintained that its strengths lay in educational outreach and well-informed lobbying, rather than in numbers of members. Even so, Vancouver WILPF retained only a trace of its pre-war vibrancy and membership solidarity.55 Its continuation throughout the war years was in itself unusual, as other local and national groups, in addition to the international organization, were, according to Lawrence Wittner, devastated by the war. The situation grew so bleak that at WILPF's first post-war international meeting, delegates considered disbanding the organization.56 In the United States, the homeland of WILPF founders and Nobel laureates Jane Addams
and Emily Balch, the organization had lost one half of its membership with US entry into the war and after the armistice emerged "considerably weakened in membership and influence."\textsuperscript{57}

In British Columbia, this trend seems to have been broken. According to Young, the Vancouver branch had a large post-war membership. Indeed, "After 1946 when I started we built a membership of 100 . . . and had large meetings with the media attending."\textsuperscript{58} A mailing list from September 1949 contains over 200 names, including those of founders Jamieson, Lane and Steeves.\textsuperscript{59} By the early 1950s, however, membership and activities had declined considerably. Although no figures are available, it seems that the numbers of women involved throughout the depths of the Cold War never exceeded more than a couple of dozen.\textsuperscript{60} In fact, from the surviving correspondence and records - there are no membership lists included - only a very few names appear. Those noted are Sheila Young, Edith McDonald, Augusta Moreland, Evelyn LeSueur, Edna Gibb, Jean (or Jane) Angus, Mildred Fahnri, Mabel Parkin, and Jean Cole. Young herself later wrote that two politically experienced women, Helena Gutteridge and Mary Norton, a well-known British Columbia suffragist and women's rights activist who was "in the chair" at some time during the 1950s, remained active. The initial post-war decline in numbers and the subsequent stabilization of a very small group is attributable to three factors, McCarthyism, the desertion of CCF women and Young's strategy of containment.
McCarthyism in Canada, a phenomenon which both robbed peace groups of their peripheral or politically independent members, and prevented membership growth, exercised a deleterious influence on WILPF. As had the Peace Committee, WILPF became an object of distrust and a target for red-baiting. Sheila Young's explanation for this centred on fundamental elements of WILPF's ideology:

The WILPF had always promoted the cause of international understanding and cooperation, including that between East and West. As the Cold War deepened, this was reason enough, in the eyes of some, to condemn the organization, despite the fact that the WILPF was critical of both East and West bloc policies and conduct. Condemnation of WILPF as a "communist front" was not new. During the 1920s and 30s such attacks were common and WILPF leader Agnes Macphail had been branded both "unpatriotic" and a "dangerous person." Moreover, in 1940, WILPF was among 19 organizations named by H.A. Bruce in the House of Commons as subversive organizations (Powell, 1983). Post-war condemnation was more relentless.

By advocating cooperation and discussion with the Soviet bloc, WILPF became identified by the establishment as uncritically supportive of the Soviet Union, as "pro-Soviet." In fact, WILPF's commitment to nonpartisanship extended to the international level, where it advanced critiques of the policies and actions of both the USA and the USSR. Vancouver WILPF, for example, condemned each nation for the offense of nuclear testing.
Vancouver WILPF's vulnerability magnified because, true to its cooperative tradition, Sheila Young was generally willing to work with communists. In the face of strident anti-communism, the reality of Communist members in peace groups and coalitions such as the BCPC weakened their respectability, credibility and influence. Although after World War Two, LPP members were involved at all levels of the Canadian peace movement, this was a relatively recent phenomenon. Peace activism had, for many years previous to the war, been the domain of the "radical religious" and the social justice-minded left. In fact, until the Soviet-dominated Communist International (Comintern) decided in 1935 to abandon its attack against social democrats and other non-communist progressives to mount a united front against fascism, national Communist parties had criticized pacifists (Sangster, 1989).

After the war, that ridicule changed to active, respectful pursuit. A variety of immediate issues drove this new friendliness. Among the most pressing was the need for Communist parties to defend the Soviet Union and to prevent the USA from using nuclear weapons against it. So, in significant numbers, Party activists and sympathizers flocked to join the rank and file as well as the leadership of peace groups. Slowly, but inexorably, this involvement transformed the focus of umbrella peace groups such as the BCPC and the CPC from a general concern with promoting peace to a more specific attack on American foreign policy. While there was much to be criticized in that policy, too often, peace associations'
positions ignored transgressions against national integrity by the USSR and its nuclear policy - a practice of continuous expansion and "keeping up with" the USA.

In the 1953 Annual Report of WILPF Vancouver, Jean Cole wrote graphically of the poisonous nature of McCarthyism which prevented otherwise thoughtful people from understanding the need for peace. Thoughtful women were precisely those who WILPF strove to influence and involve. Cole's words also pointed to the relationship between red-baiting propaganda and the militaristic economic policies of the US.

Running like a tainted thread through the above policies we have the insidious immoral doctrine of McCarthyism, which has spread its tentacles of poison throughout the entire North American Continent, arousing a hysteria among the people (more particularly in the United States) and appears to have largely banished intelligent thinking, by substituting a neurosis of fear.\textsuperscript{62}

For peace movement leaders, this public association of peace with the pariah of communism occasionally reaped very unpleasant rewards. The benign volunteer task of distributing leaflets could become a criminal activity.

"Vancouver police attempted to enforce the anti-litter by-law. . . . Some members were actually arrested and taken to the police station on a charge of littering."\textsuperscript{63} Mona Morgan's 80 year old mother was knocked down in a Vancouver street while soliciting names for the Stockholm Appeal.\textsuperscript{64} Further difficulties included the arrest in Victoria, not of hecklers who had arrived to disrupt a Peace Council meeting where Sheila Young was scheduled to speak, but of the organizers of the
meeting. In Nakusp, in the Kootenays, Young and other members of her party emerged from a speaking engagement to discover that their tires had been slashed.65

Vancouver WILPF's numbers were further reduced by the desertion of many CCF women during and after the war. This desertion was certainly related to the influence of McCarthyism and was exacerbated when, in 1950, the national office of the CCF forbade membership in peace groups associated with the CPC. CCF leaders also attacked the movement (Roberts, 1989). A social democratic party with radical roots, the CCF was trying to come to terms with post-war political realities that had shifted rightward. At the same time, it fought its own internal battle with the spectre of communism.

The Canadian Peace Congress, its allies and its leader, Jim Endicott, were principal targets of social democratic fear. Sheila Young greatly admired Endicott, with whom she identified. Both advocated an inclusive, broad movement and she maintained that Endicott "did more for the peace movement than any individual in Canada."66 Young was certainly aware of and unfazed by his pro-communist sympathies. Rather, she was disturbed by what she perceived as the red-baiting engaged in by a prominent group of BC CCFers. She felt the sting of attack personally when this search for communist connections extended to the Vancouver branch of WILPF, after a small number of leading CCF women who had been inactive for some time, became re-involved:
In 1949 the red smear took over, and I and others were accused of being
Communist by the very founders of the League who, by the way, had not
attended for some years. . . . As a matter of fact we did not have one member
of the Party . . . .

Young perceived that WILPF had been labelled and condemned as
sympathetic to communism by the CCF. Her perception is confirmed by her
peace movement colleagues. Mary Thomson believed that the "CCF was
paranoid. They thought WIL was too left, even thought that Sheila was a
Communist." Rosaleen Ross also recalled the animosity between some CCF
women, particularly Laura Jamieson, and Young.

One direct cause of the "red" accusations levelled personally against Young
appears to have been leadership decisions she made during the Czechoslovakian
crisis which began with the Soviet Union successfully pressuring the Czechs to
withdraw from the Marshall Plan in late 1947 and to establish a Communist
government led by Klement Gottwald. The pivotal role of the USSR in this
development was regarded by many observers as unjustifiable interference, and the
repercussions influenced Vancouver WILPF. In her discussions in 1983 with
Vancouver historian Irene Howard, Young incorrectly identifies the crisis as
sparked by the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia. Nonetheless, her memory
sharpened to recall the internal problems the incident posed for WILPF:

. . . some Vancouver members wanted to send a resolution protesting the
Soviet action directly to Czechoslovakia. Sheila Young as chairperson
remonstrated - this contravened League regulations. All such resolutions had
to go through the International office. The framers of the resolution (who
were CCF members) then accused those opposed to their proposed action and especially S.Y. of being communist.\textsuperscript{70} (emphasis added)

After much debate and bitterness, the resolution was defeated. The accusations had not ceased, however, and the question of the communist sympathies of the Vancouver branch and of Sheila Young’s loyalty and leadership was raised at the League’s Congress. WILPF’s international leader, Gertrude Baer, proposed an examination by Congress participants of the correspondence from Vancouver. When this was completed, both Young and the branch were vindicated, at least in the eyes of WILPF’s international leadership and Sheila Young.\textsuperscript{71}

Accusations of communist infiltration wrought damage beyond debates within the organization and subsequent resignations. As noted in an earlier chapter, at some point in either 1952 or 1953, "some CCF woman destroyed the minutes."\textsuperscript{72} In her private correspondence, Young attested to this destruction by writing, in response to a request for early WILPF records, "There are no records."\textsuperscript{73} A following remark, identifying the woman responsible, has been crossed out. This action speaks volumes about the privacy and the protectiveness of Sheila Young. She declined to use the opportunity to highlight a wrong that she felt keenly on a personal level. Even though her organization’s ability to know and use its own history between 1921 and 1952 had been irreparably harmed, Young was unwilling to seek vindication or revenge by publicly naming the woman who disposed of the records, either at the time or years later. Rather, she
chose to protect WILPF, and likely the local peace community, from the pain and
difficulties a public denunciation would certainly have aroused.

After this protracted internal struggle, Young responded to "the red smear"
which had fractured Vancouver WILPF with a carefully considered retreat. She
practiced caution and containment. This was the third reason for the small branch
membership after 1953. Women with strong ties to the CCF had gone, while
women in the LPP satisfied their desire to engage in peace work through either the
BCPC, the Congress of Canadian Women or the Women's Committee for Peace
Action (WCPA) and later, the Trade Union Women's Peace Committee
(TUWPC). In any case, Young was predisposed to a politically perceptive but
nonpartisan membership. She did not encourage trade union militants or LPP
members and had no alternative but to draw from a small constituency of
politically independent but still-knowledgeable women to guarantee WILPF's
survival.

Only by the protective tactic of "circling her wagons" could she be assured
of WILPF's continuation in difficult circumstances which had taken their toll on
other old, established peace groups. Carolyn Kline, Young's successor as the
leader of Vancouver WILPF, claimed that "During the McCarthy period Sheila
went out of her way to keep WILPF very small." Further, she determined to
devote her considerable energy primarily to that organization, preserving it and
defining very narrowly the type of peace work it would undertake. Reflecting
upon this strategy, Kline suggested that Sheila Young was solely responsible for WILPF's survival: "If it had not been for Sheila during the McCarthy period, we would not be sitting here talking about WILPF in British Columbia. There is no doubt, she held it together, herself."

Young admitted that there were unpleasant and long term consequences of the divisiveness which had so altered WILPF. She wrote that the red scare "Split us terribly, but we carried on." Although some of her old colleagues remained, and a very small number of women, among them Joan Jennings, joined the group in the late 1950s and early 1960s, it was Young alone who "lived, ate and slept the WILPF, ... ." Again, in Kline's view, this organizational commitment was sustained by Young's ideological singlemindedness, "her absolute faith was in disarmament. We had to have universal disarmament or there would be no future."

But even this singular commitment to an ideal and an organization did not preclude Young feeling resentment and betrayal as a result of her experiences. In Mary Thomson's view, "There were bitter feelings." Kline believed that Young was conscious both of being regarded as "too radical" and of the danger of the "ongoing attack. ... Sheila never recovered from that. It was very hard for her to accept strangers, because, who knows, they might be McCarthy people." The ideal of a large, friendly, broadly-based membership ready to cooperate with all other groups appeared to be an impossibility. There was, thus, a distinct
advantage to keeping Vancouver WILPF small, with a modest agenda concentrating on letter writing, education and quiet lobbying. In the end, acrimony, factionalism, splits, and disintegration would be avoided and WILPF could work with a select group of already-proven friends and allies. If Young harboured bitterness, she also grew resigned to the realities of political partisanship. This is evident in her articulation of the lesson she learned from experience with the CCF's attempt to destroy WILPF: "One should never trust Social Democrats too far, at least that is the lesson of history." 82

An Ideal in Action - Internationalism and the United Nations

Regardless of the setbacks to cooperation she experienced on the local level, Young, and through her, WILPF, pressed tirelessly for world cooperation through the UN during the 1950s, an era when it, too, seemed to lack effectiveness as a bridge between ideologies or as a force to end oppression. Nonetheless, in 1955, Vancouver WILPF presented a Brief to the Canadian government urging "that Canada use her utmost influence to have inaugurated, within the UN, a Plan for Universal "cooperative coexistence" which, . . . would establish a sincere basis for world freedom." 83 Later, in 1962, she begged Dean Rusk and Andrei Gromyko, joint chairmen of the Geneva Disarmament Conference, to introduce trust and reconciliation into their discussions. 84
Young was so acutely conscious of the potential of the United Nations to promote international connections that she undertook a personal crusade to champion its work. She regarded it as the organizational embodiment of the spirit of a peaceful world, referring frequently in her letters to the UN charter and its ideal of a cooperativeness that could transcend particular belief systems, nationalities and geographic boundaries. Since the 1920s WILPF had looked favourably at legalistic proposals to outlaw war (De Benedetti, 1978) and Jane Addams supported plans for world government. Support for the UN amplified that tradition. In a speech delivered in June 1953 to a ‘Citizens’ Conference on the Role of the United Nations, Young was irrepressibly enthusiastic:

As an integral part of the rising tide of humanity sweeping forward towards that new tomorrow, envisaged in the formation of the UN, there are no longer puny individuals. There are but persons capable of bringing into effect the high ideals of equity, justice and peace.85

Mary Thomson remembered WILPF requesting that the Vancouver Sun introduce a United Nations column and that Sheila Young followed up the request, which was not granted, with "a personal interview, which was just her style."86 Young pressured and converted her friends. Largely as a result of Young’s urging, for example, Thomson became involved in the United Nations’ Association, eventually travelling to New York to attend special sessions on disarmament.87

In order for the UN to be effective, it had to be complete, to represent all of the world’s peoples, and so, WILPF advocated Canadian diplomatic recognition
of the Peoples' Republic of China (PRC) and its inclusion in the UN. WILPF believed that while the PRC - the most populous nation on earth - remained outside the UN, its potential for initiating and formalizing cooperation and compromise would be circumscribed. The Canadian government's refusal to normalize relations with the PRC appeared to WILPF both economically short-sighted and unduly influenced by the foreign policy of the USA. In the mainstream public sphere, the Korean War and McCarthyism doomed the recognition of China as an unpopular cause. Nevertheless, WILPF maintained a letter writing and lobbying campaign, taking heart from even the smallest hint of progress. In a Vancouver branch report to the 14th Congress of WILPF in 1959, Young mentioned that encouraging signs were visible in the Canadian political milieu:

Another encouraging development is the intensified drive for the recognition of China. . . . this springs largely from the need to trade . . . There is also common acknowledgement among thinking people, that the seating of the New China's representatives in the United Nations is an essential step to a genuine and lasting agreement on the basic issues of peace and freedom.88

For WILPF members, peace and freedom could not coexist alongside injustice and economic deprivation. In fact, these persistent realities were root causes of violence and warfare. The March-May 1954 edition of "Pax et Libertas," the international WILPF bulletin and newsletter, featured an article by an official of a major UN agency, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Executive Council President Josue de Castro. In the article, "Hunger and World
Economic Inequality," De Castro referred to the tense human relations that arose from international inequality and deplored the reality that too few people were working for world unity. Only from such unity, as well as from fostering goodwill among people, could peace be realized, and peace required worldwide political, social and economic equality. Fostering goodwill was precisely what WILPF aimed to do.

Indeed, the realm of economic, political and social justice was the concern of two UN agencies - the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Economic, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) - which received favoured attention from Vancouver WILPF. UNESCO sponsored development programmes of "impartial assistance" and UNICEF concentrated on the plight of children victimized by various disasters - among them the devastation and displacement wrought by war. To publicize locally the work of UNICEF, Vancouver WILPF held a panel discussion - "The World's Children" - in 1954. Panelists urged the Canadian government to increase funding to UNICEF and other UN special agencies. Also in 1954, the Vancouver WILPF submitted a resolution to the 14th Congress suggesting that through the many UNESCO programmes vital "opportunities to build mutual trust and goodwill among nations at this precarious time in world history when under-developed countries seek genuine aid free from political implications" would evolve. In the view of its Vancouver members, WILPF, accorded consultative
status at the UN with various economic, social and justice-oriented agencies, could
and should make maximum use of its influence in that organization and in the
world community to publicize and participate in agency work.

In activities related to its support for the UN, the Vancouver WILPF’s
internationalism and its desire to provide useful, immediate help to people in need,
was manifested in a number of practical projects. Among these were work in the
Freedom from Hunger campaign launched by FAO in 1960, the UN’s World
Refugee Year. WILPF concentrated on fundraising, encouraging its members to
become actively involved. This campaign "led to the establishment of the milk
cooperative in India."92 Young judged this effort a success, writing that "this has
been a true self-help programme, the benefits of which will remain with the people
of the 380 villages for many years to come."93 Vancouver WILPF also
participated enthusiastically in fundraising to support a UN - initiated project to aid
resettlement of 32 refugee families in Spittal-Drau, Austria - the construction of
Jane Addams’ Refugee House. Young asserted that the vigour with which the
branch approached this particular project, created in the name of WILPF’s
founder, demonstrated its members’ optimism: "there is a valuable life-blood
generating among us, which, wielded by common concern and gratifying co-
operation, will carry us on through the ensuing year."94 She wrote these hopeful
words in 1959, when optimism among peace activists was a precious commodity,
difficulty to sustain but necessary in the face of a worsening international situation
marked by an escalating arms build-up, Cold War crises and continued nuclear weapons testing.

One of the tactics proposed by Vancouver WILPF to abolish such testing indicated the group's faith not only in the influence of international agencies but also in reasoned argument. Motivated by Young, the plan was to urge the League to petition the International Court of Justice at The Hague to declare nuclear weapons testing illegal under international law, a tactic necessitated by the lack of success of world-wide protests against the continuation of tests. While such a declaration would carry moral weight, the legal obligations of independent nations, their membership in the UN notwithstanding, were not bound by the judgments of the World Court; they could - and did - ignore its rulings. In this regard, WILPF may seem to have been naive in the face of the practice of international politics and the power of militarism. Within such campaigns, however, including the plethora of Stockholm petition appeals undertaken regularly by the peace movement, rested the prospect, not of a strictly-defined victory, but of a victory of principle. Should the World Court declare nuclear weapons testing illegal, opponents of such testing could claim moral-legal superiority, regardless of the response of those nations designated by the verdict. Indeed, the notion of moral superiority inherent in peace work appealed to Young and to bolster her claims she often included excerpts from WILPF leader Gertrude Baer's Moral Courage in pamphlets and brochures.
Under Young’s leadership, Vancouver WILPF’s internationalism extended the struggle against weapons testing to opposition to the creation of defensive alliances such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). In Young’s words NATO "was a direct violation of the principles of the League."96 In keeping with this position, at the League’s 15th Congress in California in 1961, Sheila Young reported on the Vancouver branch’s work to persuade the government of Canada to withdraw from the North American Air Defense (NORAD), another "defensive" alliance.97 The agenda of the branch in this campaign was to advance the notion that Canada should abandon her partisan foreign policy and embrace neutrality. From this position of independence Canada could provide leadership, most notably among smaller nations and middle powers, towards disarmament and cooperation. Vancouver WILPF urged Canadians to "base our decisions and actions of the highest principle known to mankind - that of the PRESERVATION OF SACRED HUMAN LIFE. We must speak up boldly, and persistently . . ." (emphasis in the document).98 Although national governments and the UN had significant parts to play in ending conflict and war, Young believed that legalistic and institutional methods alone would be insufficient. Enduring solutions rested on people.

While work to support the UN could claim some political respectability, criticism of French and then US policy in Indochina remained suspect long after Sheila Young began a personal crusade to end the war in Vietnam. When
Vietnamese nationalists resumed their struggle to achieve independence from France after World War Two, Vancouver WILPF "first protested against the French colonialists in Vietnam by a Brief to the government of Canada and a copy to the French government in 1948." In the mid-60s, when the war escalated, WILPF Vancouver escalated its responses. Horrified at the prospect of chemical warfare, specifically at the threatened use of napalm, Young's associate, Jean Cole, wrote on behalf of the branch to Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson, urging him to intercede with US President Lyndon Johnson: "We beg you to plead with President Johnson . . . that Canada cannot and will not support the use of these dreadful weapons in Vietnam or any other country." 

Not content with mere letter-writing, Young gathered some of her old friends from the PPMCC, including Mildred Fahrni, to create a "street-level" anti-war presence. Together, they founded the Vancouver weekly Vigil for Peace in Vietnam. Soon, the group of activists created a formal coalition, the Peace Action League (PAL), largely inspired by Young. The member organizations of the PAL were FOR, VOW, Quakers, BCPC, WILPF, and CCND. Those attending the Vigil stood silently every Saturday from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. outside the Hudson Bay Company at the corner of Georgia and Granville, Vancouver's major downtown intersection during the period. Young approached the silence of the vigil with great seriousness, looking askance at her colleagues who felt the urge to talk, whisper or communicate with passersby. Such stoicism could not have come
easily to any of the participants. When they began the vigils in 1966, public concern about the war was minimal and harassment of those opposed to it was usual. Young’s preferred tactic was to stand stalk-still. \textsuperscript{103} This preference again reflects the moral context in which Young lived and acted on her political and peace movement convictions. Very clearly, she regarded herself - and her colleagues - as exemplars whose presence and demeanor in public figured prominently in the effectiveness of advertising for or persuading the uninvolved of the rightness of the cause. She could be critical of her compatriots, both for their differences with her about strategy in the vigils and about their political inclinations. She insisted on the silent vigil; others, including Rosaleen Ross, were more flexible. \textsuperscript{104}

Active internationalism, significant personal resources and financial independence motivated Young to take numerous trips abroad. Among her destinations were the international WILPF headquarters at Geneva and, in a more politically sensitive context, the Peoples’ Republic of China and Vietnam. Young’s travel, paid for personally, \textsuperscript{105} further merged the political and the personal. To some compatriots, the trips appeared spiritually motivated. Irene Foulks remembered that "every year she would disappear on some holy trip." \textsuperscript{106} Kline recollected that Young did not choose her visits as might a tourist, they were purposeful and not necessarily safe: "She was an independent world traveller who often visited the trouble zones of the world." \textsuperscript{107}
While WILPF’s complex understanding of the interconnectedness of world problems was one of its chief strengths, as was its dedication to institutionalizing internationalism in the UN to facilitate peaceful conflict resolution, this demanding vision also limited the group’s effectiveness. Young herself noted in 1959 that the campaign to recognize the Peoples’ Republic of China had gained support mostly among "thinking people." She further reported that, although attitudes seemed to be changing, Canadians had demonstrated years of lethargy "with respect to international affairs." In later correspondence, she commented that WILPF’s focus on education presupposed an erudite, politically knowledgeable membership whose task was not to increase its own numbers but rather to elevate the quality and quantity of debate about peace and to formulate convincing strategies to inform others. Lobbying public officials worldwide through letter-writing was a WILPF focus, and a test both of members’ skills with the written word and their resilience in the face of usually discouraging reactions. The issues pursued in letters were many, perhaps too many, albeit always either directly or indirectly relevant to the overarching motivation of achieving harmony and peace. They ranged from advocating the abolition of capital punishment to requesting a re-trial for Morton Sobell (convicted of treason in the United States along with Ethel and Julius Rosenberg) to attempting to prevent German rearmament. Trying to make sense of the complex interconnections among these issues, as well as assimilating foundational information necessary to understand them, seemed to be a full-time
job. Women who concentrated on working for wages or caring for their children simply did not have the time to get involved.109

Relief Work and Child Protection

During the Vietnam War, Young’s internationalism transcended peace vigil and lobbying. As a consequence of her concern for the victims of war, she became involved in relief work. She collected money for the purchase of material goods, particularly prosthetic devices, initially for Vietnamese civilians through the auspices of the Committee for Aid to Vietnamese Civilians (CAVA), which was established in 1965 by Young and Kay and Allan Inglis, who became its leaders. Later in the 1960s, Young began to collect a variety of items specifically for Vietnamese children. In this endeavour, she demonstrated explicitly the maternalism that was an implicit aspect of her approach to peace activism. For her, the offering of relief was both a political and an intensely personal task, one that integrated the emotional horror felt at the knowledge of suffering with a practical response to that horror. She had been so impressed by the richness of compassion for children expressed by contributors to the CAVA appeal that she was moved to organize the Children’s Committee of Canadian Aid for Vietnamese Civilians.110 In a very short time the work of the committee spread throughout the North American continent, involving hundreds in collecting or sewing children’s clothing. The work became so precisely organized that the committee sent out
patterns for shirts and hats. In this undertaking, which eventually grew overwhelming, Young was founder, organizer and, finally, distributor. "Her living room was turned into a packing house, with twenty five or thirty packing cases at a time being processed." Fortunately, her resourcefulness had located a corporate source - Woodwards - for the packing cases, which volunteers then adapted to particular specifications. After the Vietnam War ended, Young quickly transferred her compassion to other young victims of war in Southeast Asia, founding and administering an agency, Medical Aid for Children of Cambodia, out of her home.

Young’s personal concern for Southeast Asian children was connected in philosophy to a belief in the rights of children and in action to two important WILPF traditions. The first, a campaign to eliminate cadet training in Canadian schools, had gained prominence in the 1920s and 1930s, continuing on a muted level after World War Two. The second tradition, protests and lobbying against war toys, evolved into an ongoing, highly publicized concern, eventually taken up by many other groups, including VOW. In 1947 or 1948, Vancouver WILPF announced that it was planning a Cooperative Toy Fair for December as part of its campaign against war toys. At this fair, educational and entrepreneurial interests would merge: "We are anxious to develop in the minds of parents a greater awareness of the advantages of encouraging children to play with educational toys in preference to miniature war weapons."
The war toy issue was infinitely suited to WILPF's ideals and to Sheila Young's temperament. It appealed to emotions, to intellect and to the political task of social reform. The crusade aimed to abolish not only the political and socioeconomic but also the psychological causes of war. Indeed, the League viewed war toys as inherently dangerous, provoking the desire to kill and breeding enmity and unfriendliness among children. Such protests were in keeping with the spirit of pacifist maternalism, which not only highlighted the role of women in peacemaking, but also viewed women as most suitable for safeguarding the welfare of children. In this regard, Young was unequivocal, she had "faith that 'womanly powers' can lead to the attainment of peace." A 1952 pamphlet, "An Appeal to All Parents," urged mothers and fathers to abandon war toys. In the matter of persuading the Canadian parliament to deal with war toys, however, despite ongoing cooperation with Vancouver's Chief of Police "in seeking a Federal ban on toy guns capable of conversion to violent use . . ." there was no success. In her report to the 1955 Congress of the League, Young was forced to conclude that "There is little public sympathy for prohibition of toy war weapons, which are disgracefully predominant." Such bitter disappointment did not curtail WILPF's efforts, still prominent at Christmas in 1960, to encourage parents, especially mothers, to purchase toys which would "develop 'co-operation and goodwill.' . . . to 'prepare the innocent minds of your children for a peaceful tomorrow . . . .'"
Another of Vancouver WILPF's ongoing child advocacy campaigns advocated the redress of the grievances of Kootenay-based Doukhobours (particularly those in the Sons of Freedom sect), and was carried on in the company of old friends, including Mildred Fahrni and Jim Foulks. In 1953, members of a Kootenay-area Doukhobor sect, The Sons of Freedom, gained national notoriety by their reaction to the forced education of their children. By January of 1954, 35 children were being "held by the government at New Denver."¹¹⁹ By May of 1956, 50 more children had been taken into government custody "because their parents refused to send them to provincial elementary schools."¹²⁰ The Freedomites' reaction to internment of their children included sabotage, nude parades and house burnings. Branded by some journalists, including Vancouver Sun columnist Simma Holt, as "terrorists," the Sons of Freedom endured blanket public condemnation during the 1950s. In 1955 Sheila Young began to correspond with the BC Ministry of Education, questioning the wisdom of its actions in interning Doukhobor children to ensure their formal schooling. Young queried the sense of such methods, pleading for both the children and their mothers, eventually urging BC government minister Robert Bonner not to "victimize innocent children."¹²¹ In that same year, 1962, Fahrni's CFOR and WILPF were joined in their longstanding concern for the Doukhobors by UBC academics and student activists. They formed The Reformed Doukhobor Defense Fund. At this group's inaugural meeting, Young took notes, remarking
that many of the participants were very young, a signal, along with the emergence of new peace groups, that the local landscape of activism was changing.

"The Womanly Powers"

Sheila Young’s appeals on behalf of children echoed the protectiveness and sense of maternal responsibility that mark all of the League’s work. in the best tradition of nineteenth and early twentieth century maternalists, Young was convinced of the efficacy of women-led pacifism to save the world. She believed that only by learning to live in peaceful coexistence would humanity be saved, spiritually and physically, and that such saving required active peacemaking, not merely peacefulness: "genuine, enduring world peace demands global protection of each race and individual." Women’s key role in this endeavour of protection was possible in part because of certain intuitive qualities of womanliness. Many of these qualities were personified for Young by the determined women who deliberated together peacefully in the midst of war at the 1915 women’s conference at the Hague. About this conference, which gave birth to the WILPF, she wrote:

It was a glorious example of womanly insight and determination, and a challenge to all women to concentrate collectively their maternal qualities to the onerous but essential task of cleansing the world of the inhuman violence of war and social inequality.123

Young’s faith in the womanly powers notwithstanding, she both criticized and expressed disappointment in women when they failed to meet her expectations.
Beginning in the mid-1950s the peace movement undertook a world-wide information and protest campaign directed against the hazards of atomic radiation. In this effort, WILPF mounted a special plea to mothers, who were urged to help stop atmospheric nuclear testing and so ensure the future health of their children. This campaign and its specific appeal was less successful than Young hoped it would be. In 1959, she remarked that:

While women's organizations, both national and provincial, have protested their continuation, the majority of mothers remain apathetic to the possibility of deadly radiation hazards, and perhaps take comfort from governmental and scientific assurances that "the danger level is not yet reached."124 (emphasis added)

This comment indicates the complex nature of Young's maternalism. It may have seemed sentimental and uncritical at times but she was sensitive to the variety of societal tensions which created divisions among women, many of whom were reluctant to reject violence, its implements, and war.125 Young recognized, for example, that nationalism and patriotism are powerful cultural forces, equally evident in the world views of women as in those of men. Such ideas were based on ignorance and could be addressed only through an educational programme. The Vancouver branch's work throughout the Cold War attempted quiet educational agitation and publicity, circulation of letters and literature, including a "Message to Women," briefs and wires forwarded to the government, small meetings and panel discussions. Young spoke on the radio and was interviewed in the press. Vancouver Sun columnist Mamie Maloney, identified by Young as
sympathetic, wrote several articles about WILPF and peace during the mid-1950s. Always, Young expressed an optimism in the effectiveness of this educational work that bordered on credulity, or indicated a determination to read into the world situation signs of hope evident to few others. In 1989, as a "new" peace movement reached its height, she suggested that many of the millions of women "sewing seeds of peace have heard the message of the leaders of the WILPF, and have not lost faith or shirked responsibility . . . ." Certainly, such new women peace activists had tapped into WILPF's legacy, but very few of them were conscious either of the historic or contemporary role of the organization.

Sheila Young chose to work for peace primarily with a women's organization. She also clearly believed that women were uniquely suited to nurturing, protecting and saving. She did not, however, feel comfortable identifying herself with the wave of North American feminists who became politically active during the Civil Rights and anti-Vietnam War movements. Her women's politics may have more closely resembled those of many women leftists of her generation, many of whom regarded the 'new' feminism as essentially middle-class and divisive, disruptive to unity among people working for various related causes. The 'new' feminists, initially defining themselves as women's liberationists, vowed to instigate sweeping social-structural changes to ensure equal rights as well as to effect sexual emancipation. Tension developed between women peace activists - CP members and others - who defined themselves as
caretakers of home and hearth, motivated by the desire to protect their children, and those who advocated equality "out there in the world." Mona Morgan implied that Young shared her own views: "I think she agreed with us on the question of the Women's Movement." Included in those views were a conservative approach to gender relations and an unwillingness to challenge patriarchal structure and attitudes, particularly in the sphere of "private life," the primary, unvalued responsibility of women. In her later years Young professed an adamant opposition to abortion and expressed grave concern about the evolving political direction of feminism in industrial societies. In a series of comments to Deborah Powell, who wrote about WILPF and VOW in 1983, Young expressed the view that women in western nations had the wrong priorities.

Young's sympathies rested, instead, with the women of the developing nations, whose interests she tended to counterpose to those of the women of the developed world. She came to believe that "today's feminists" were not involved in truly useful campaigns, "By contrast, the women from underdeveloped countries are concerned with basic problems of health, food, shelter." Young's attitude emerged as a product of three influences.

Young was swayed first by the tentative, post-war re-establishment of WILPF's ties with its former members in the Eastern bloc. Many of them were involved in the Women's International Democratic Federation, an expressly Communist organization (Boulding, 1976). Although some national sections of
WILPF, the British, for example, kept a discreet distance from close ties with the WIDF (Liddington, 1989), the Vancouver chapter seemed eager to forge post-war links particularly with Soviet women, who by 1949 would play a leading role in the WIDF. (Its 1949 Congress was held in Moscow.) After an open forum in Vancouver in December 1947 on "Our Relations with Russia," WILPF passed a resolution "to send a message of friendship to the women of the Soviet Union . . . in the hope of contacting women's groups willing to unite with those of other countries in the work of world peace and freedom." 132

In the aftermath of war's destructiveness in Europe, particularly devastating in the Soviet Union, WIDF members were concerned fundamentally with reconstruction and economic security through peace. They argued that women's own interests, mainly defined by motherhood, were dependent on the obtention of world peace (Sangster, 1989). National liberation movements, generally backed by the Soviet Union, achieved independence throughout the 1950s. In a Pacific Tribune article commemorating International Women's Day in 1961, Mona Morgan wrote admiringly of the struggles of women in "colonial lands" who were "proving a powerful new force in the world." 133 In Morgan's view, they were in a strong position to provide leadership to the women of Canada, "an awakening new force." 134 Across the boundaries etched by colonialism, there was, however, a common bond, as Morgan pointed out: "The perils of nuclear war are becoming known to all. Action is the need. An action by half of humanity possessing the
universal power of mothers would help create a world without war." This notion, emphasizing and politicizing rather than attempting to alter the inevitability of motherhood, fit the older maternalist feminism with which veteran WILPF members were familiar and comfortable.

A second influence on Young's impatience with "today's feminists" was the prospective of supporters of the political outlook of the People's Republic of China who tended to see most members of industrial nations, regardless of class, gender or ethnicity, as privileged. Women of the developing nations who experienced a sharper style of oppression were, therefore, relied upon to provide political leadership to their more affluent sisters. After the Sino-Soviet rift in 1960, Young was increasingly attached to the pro-China network. She had championed the cause of the PRC for years, and had visited the politically isolated nation in 1965.

The third influence on Young's view of Western feminism was the combination of her personal experience as a traveller to the developing world and her relief work on behalf of South-east Asian children. These encounters, in turn, enhanced her protectiveness, a characteristic that marked her expression of maternalism. She seemed, for example, to be especially concerned with ensuring the safekeeping of "citizens of under-developed and newly independent countries," urging that all aid to them be channelled through the UN and that the exploitative tendencies of more wealthy nations be curbed.
Young’s criticisms of modern feminists did not prevent her preparing a
detailed brief on behalf of WILPF for the Royal Commission on the Status of
Women in 1968. The brief advocated full equality of opportunity between men
and women, and assurances for women of the right to work and to have access to
nursery schools and kindergartens. Of particular note is a focus on the special,
too-often ignored situations of indigenous, poor and older women, many of whom,
according to Young, lived in poverty and thus suffered a double oppression.

Vancouver WILPF: Uncertainty and Survival

In 1959, at the close of a decade that had been particularly trying for
WILPF and its allies in the peace movement, Vera Brittain - prominent British
feminist, socialist, pacifist, and life-long WILPFer - visited Vancouver. In Sheila
Young’s opinion, this event "provided the most stimulating highlights of the
year."138 Brittain’s pacifism had much in common with Young’s. Both were
predicated on the notion that the female principle was marked by "love,
compassion, forbearance, and tolerance, in short, with the instinct for peace."139
The stimulation and vitality of Brittain’s message seemed to Young to provoke
among the many visitors attracted to WILPF’s afternoon meeting a new interest in
the work not only of WILPF but also of the FOR and the Friends Society.140

Renewed interest came at a critical time, for during the period beginning in
July of 1958, the Vancouver branch of the WILPF had faltered. According to
Sheila Young's annual report to the Geneva office, some of its members - who, in keeping with her inclination never to be explicitly critical of individuals in writing, remain unnamed - questioned the wisdom of continuing to meet. In the wake of this uncertainty, both membership and morale dropped. In those circumstances, very little stood between the branch's continuation and its demise. Indeed, while external adversarial forces - the view that WILPF was communist, for example - were problematic, so too were external allies who proved to be potential competitors. Among these were the new Canadian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CCND), founded in 1958, and the Vancouver-based Women's Committee Against Radiation Hazards (WCARH).

Each of these new groups offered a single-issue focus with a broader, fresher appeal and a less demanding political agenda than did WILPF. The CCND's programme was simple - "Ban the Bomb." The WCARH insistence on an end to nuclear testing for health reasons sparked wide initial interest, especially among women who identified themselves as careful, health-conscious homemakers anxious to protect their children. Each group had grown quickly and CCND boasted a wide network and a well-known international leader, Lord Bertrand Russell, a founder of the CND. Their modern presence, and ideas attuned to the specific needs of the moment, contrasted with the image of WILPF, born in a different world, still adhering in Vancouver to a socialist maternalism that may have seemed out of step with the prevailing notions of the 1950s. Moreover,
while the strong personality of Sheila Young was ostensibly the glue that kept
Vancouver WILPF together, that same personal strength, actualized as judgmental
and exclusionary, could just as easily alienate potential members. While she
admired forbearance and tolerance as abstract attributes of the ability of women to
forge international peace links with one another, her own strengths as an organizer
were based on an impatience and persistence that could be intimidating. It was
difficult to keep up with Young or to measure up to her exacting standards. Her
once-wide circle of old friends from the early days of the Peace Council and
WILPF in the 1940s had grown smaller by 1960. Rosaleen Ross recalls being
snubbed, but never being sure of the reason.142 Perhaps it was Ross's long-
standing commitment to the CP and its favoured peace group, the Peace Council.
Young's friendship with Mona Morgan also cooled as Sheila became more
adamantly pro-China and CP members took the side of the Soviet Union.

Similarly, Young appears to have rejected VOW as an upstart when it
emerged in 1960, perhaps because her identity as an activist had become so
inextricably intertwined with that of the Vancouver branch of WILPF, which she
protected fiercely. VOW's nearly-immediate strong membership growth and
significant media recognition allowed it to challenge and supplant WILPF as the
source of the women's peace undertaking in Canada. Young claimed that VOW
took members "greedily" from WILPF143 and learned valuable but never-
acknowledged lessons from the older group, applying them perhaps too
painsstakingly. She suggested that WILPF was the wiser and more dedicated, the more fearless, organization: "The VOW in Vancouver were very cautious in their relationships, being conscious of the "red tag" the WILPF had obtained by persisting, through the years, to demand an end to all nuclear weapons . . . ." 144

According to Rosaleen Ross, Young never came to terms with the reality of VOW's prestige, and while she worked with VOW on occasion, in coordinating committees such as the Peace Action League, she always remained wary of it.

Young was also obliquely bitter about Mildred Fahrni leaving WILPF for the leadership of CFOR and then about her enthusiasm for VOW, which she joined immediately at its inception. Only in the 1980s, after Fahrni returned to the WILPF fold, while still retaining her membership in VOW and other groups, did Young soften, consulting with her on matters of WILPF's history. A general comment in Young's typewritten memoirs describing the "early days" of the Peace Assembly, the Peace by Peaceful Means Coordinating Committee and other groups is telling. She remarked that "Time mellows even the most stubborn heart." 145 Her own heart could be exceedingly stubborn, even as she struggled to be soft.

When responding to a request for information about the veterans of WILPF, Young wrote that:

the only living "veterans" are in homes or hospitals - with the exception of Mildred Fahrni who has returned, and whom I shall see next week . . . She does not recall very much of past WILPF. . . . she was not active for many years. 146
Vancouver WILPF did, however tenuously, survive the 1950s with Sheila Young at its helm. Whether it could have truly prospered under more patient and accepting leadership is tempting to consider. In any case, the visit of Brittain, blended with the knowledge that a new decade was about to begin, had, in Young's eyes, a revitalizing effect on the Vancouver branch. Further, she could not ignore the fact that the rise of new peace groups augured well for the future growth of the movement as a whole. She appeared resigned to WILPF's limitations, noting that: "WILPF was never large because it demands international perspective and thinking - few want to go beyond their province and their nation." ¹⁴⁷

WILPF created continuity, intertwined friendships and a source of independent pacifist stability in the Vancouver peace community. At teas, coffee parties, panel discussions, concerts, and bazaars, women met, exchanged information and planned. Moreover, a local model of a unique breed of women's peace leader emerged in Sheila Young. Feet planted firmly in pre-war maternalism, her style authoritative, optimistic, and intellectually expert, Young depended on a singular personal dedication and a strong public personality. Young wrote that she was "often in the public eye" ¹⁴⁸ and had spoken regularly on radio and television. ¹⁴⁹ Assuming leadership when narrowness of thought created personal hazards, Young's stubbornness and exclusivity fortified her. She was, as WILPFeer Eve Ericksen described, "a feisty old lady" ¹⁵⁰ and a private person,
difficult to know fully. "She had many facets... you never saw the whole story. She preferred it that way." Young regarded the exchange of personal stories as of little use, choosing instead to "get on with the project." Totally focussed on tasks and leadership, Young "felt that personalities and personal interests conflicted with the main idea... she just didn't let personal things interfere with her goals."

Despite impediments, Sheila Young persevered "with the main idea" that reason, cooperation and goodwill would save the world. Her own words, written in anticipation of the new decade of the 1960s, illuminate this sentiment:

In looking towards the future we recognize that old vexing world problems have yet to be solved; that change come painfully slowly; that years and years of intelligent collective effort are needed to bring the peoples of the world from the darkness of hatred, greed and fear into the sunlight of a New Day in human relationships. We therefore, though small in number, face the challenge of work which though not in vain may nonetheless result in little visible progress. But a transformation is taking place, and everything we accomplish tends to hasten the lessening of injustice and the love of power which must be replaced by mutual trust and international goodwill and cooperation. (Emphasis added)

While the ideals of worldwide trust, goodwill and cooperation would not be transformed into reality during Young's lifetime, her success may be measured partly by the living heritage of Vancouver WILPF. Although perceived as aloof, WILPF was also venerated (Foulks, 1990). It endured and added vitality to the early Vancouver anti-Vietnam War movement. Thereafter, Young and WILPF went on to participate in the mass-based peace movement of the 1980s. By securing a commitment to peace from an ever-fluctuating circle of friends,
acquaintances and correspondents, Sheila Young helped create conditions in
Vancouver which inclined its citizens to value the peace movement. Undeterred
by WILPF's perennial failure to achieve major peace reform objectives, she
stressed long term goals. Her vision of the New Day rested not on laws, treaties,
generals or prime ministers, but on people renouncing anger and fear to work in
collaboration.
NOTES


3. Ibid.


5. Ibid.


8. Ibid.


10. Ibid.


14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

17. Sheila Young, notes on Peace Assembly, p. 3, University of British Columbia Special Collections, WILPF, Box 5, Folder 7.

18. Ibid.

20. Ibid.


22. Young, notes on Peace Assembly, p. 3.

23. Ibid.


28. Ibid.

29. Young, notes on Peace Assembly, p. 3.


31. Young, notes on Peace Assembly.

32. Ibid.

33. Sheila Young, letter to Rev. Melvin, 8 April 1950, University of British Columbia Special Collections, WILPF, Box 5, Folder 7.

34. Sheila Young, letter to H.E. Livingstone Merchant, Sheila Young papers, University of British Columbia Special Collections.

35. Vancouver WILPF pamphlet, circa 1966, possession of the author.

36. Sheila Young's first report to the BCPC, University of British Columbia Special Collections, WILPF, Box 5, Folder 7.


38. Ibid.

39. Ibid.

41. Sheila Young, "Peace History." University of British Columbia Special Collections, WILPF, Box 5, Folder 7.

42. Ibid.

43. Young, letter to Rev. Melvin, 8 April 1950.

44. Sheila Young, letter to Risa Lourie, Peace Council resignation, University of British Columbia Special Collections, WILPF, Box 5, Folder 7.

45. Young, "Peace History."

46. Young, letter to Rev. Melvin, 8 April 1950.

47. Sheila Young, notes to Irene Howard, 1983, possession of Carolyn Kline.

48. Sheila Young, notes to Deborah Powell, 1983, possession of Carolyn Kline.

49. Young, "Peace History."

50. Ibid.

51. Ibid.

52. Sheila Young notes, University of British Columbia Special Collections, WILPF papers, Box 3, Folder 8.

53. Young, "Peace History."

54. Ibid.

55. Although Young claimed 100 members after World War Two, she also noted that pre-war meetings had been very large.


57. Ibid.

58. Young, notes to Deborah Powell, 1983.

59. WILPF papers, University of British Columbia Special Collections, Box 4, Folder 23.
60. Kline, interview, 21 May 1990.

61. WILPF papers, University of British Columbia Special Collections, Box 3, Folder 8.

62. Jean Cole, WILPF annual report, 1953, WILPF papers, University of British Columbia Special Collections, Box 3, Folder 8.

63. Irene Howard, notes on interview with Sheila Young, 1983, possession of Carolyn Kline.

64. Morgan, interview, 2 June 1991.

65. Howard, notes on interview with Sheila Young.

66. Ibid.

67. Ibid.

68. Thomson, interview, 14 May 1990.


70. Howard, notes on interview with Sheila Young.

71. Ibid.

72. Ibid.

73. Young, notes to Deborah Powell.

74. Kline, interview, 21 May 1990.

75. Ibid.

76. Young, notes to Deborah Powell.


78. Kline, interview, 21 May 1990.


80. Kline, interview, 21 May 1990.
81. Ibid.

82. Young, notes to Deborah Powell.

83. WILPF Brief re. the UN, 1955, WILPF papers, University of British Columbia Special Collections, Box 3, Folder 8.

84. Sheila Young, letter to Rusk and Gromyko, WILPF papers, University of British Columbia Special Collections, Box 3, Folder 7.

85. Sheila Young, speech on UN, WILPF papers, University of British Columbia Special Collections, Box 5, Folder 7.

86. Thomson, interview, 14 May 1990.

87. Ibid.

88. Report to the 14th International Congress of WILPF, WILPF papers, University of British Columbia Special Collections, Box 2, Folder 9, p. 1.


91. Resolution from the Vancouver Chapter to the WILPF International Congress, 1954, WILPF papers, University of British Columbia Special Collections.

92. Howard, notes on interview with Sheila Young, p. 3.

93. Sheila Young, report on Freedom from Hunger Campaign, WILPF papers, University of British Columbia Special Collections, Box 4, Folder 25.

94. Sheila Young, in Vancouver Chapter Annual Report, 16 June 1959, WILPF papers, University of British Columbia Special Collections, p. 1.

95. Vancouver Chapter, WILPF, draft resolution to 14th WILPF International Congress, Stockholm, July 1959, WILPF papers, University of British Columbia Special Collections.

96. Howard, notes on interview with Sheila Young, p. 3.
97. Sheila Young, WILPF papers, University of British Columbia Special Collections, Box 2, Folder 9.

98. Canadian Report to WILPF International, WILPF papers, University of British Columbia Special Collections, p. 12.

99. Sheila Young, letter to the President, Union of All Women of Vietnam, Hanoi, 1 May 1975, WILPF papers, University of British Columbia Special Collections, Box 3, Folder 7.

100. Jean Cole, Letter to Prime Minister Pearson, 5 May 1965, WILPF papers, University of British Columbia Special Collections, Box 3, Folder 8.


102. Source: Silent Vigil pamphlet, courtesy Frank Dingman.


104. Ibid.


106. Foulks, interview, 1 June 1990.


108. Sheila Young, report to 14th Congress, 1959, WILPF papers, University of British Columbia Special Collections, Box 3, Folder 7.


110. Howard, p. 4.

111. Ibid.

112. Sheila Young to friends, WILPF papers, University of British Columbia Special Collections, Box 5, Folder 4.


116. Sheila Young, Report to WILPF Congress, 1955, WILPF papers, University of British Columbia Special Collections.

117. Ibid.

118. Pacific Tribune, 6 December 1960, p. 8.


120. Ibid.

121. Sheila Young notes on Peace History, WILPF papers, University of British Columbia Special Collections, Box 3, Folder 8.


123. Ibid.

124. Sheila Young, Report to the 14th WILPF Congress, WILPF papers, University of British Columbia Special Collections, Box 3, Folder 8, p. 1.

125. This point of view was shared by other WILPF leaders, including Jane Addams, who wrote during World War One that "In every country there are many, many women who believe that War is inevitable and righteous, . . ." quoted in Cambridge Women’s Peace Collective, pp. 86-87.

126. Mamie Maloney, a Vancouver Sun journalist featured WILPF activities in a number of columns.


130. Kline, interview, 21 May 1990.

131. Howard, notes on interview with Sheila Young, p. 4.

132. Newspaper article, perhaps Vancouver Sun, WILPF papers, University of British Columbia Special Collections, Box 5, Folder 4.

134. Ibid.

135. Ibid.


137. Vancouver WILPF resolution to WILPF Congress, 1962, WILPF papers, University of British Columbia Special Collections.


140. Young, Annual Report of Vancouver WILPF.

141. Ibid.


143. Sheila Young, "Peace History."

144. Ibid.

145. Ibid.

146. Sheila Young, notes to Deborah Powell, 1983.

147. Young, notes to Deborah Powell, 1983.

148. Ibid.

149. Ibid.


151. Ibid.

152. Ibid.

153. Ibid.

154. Young, Annual Report of Vancouver WILPF.
CHAPTER FOUR
"THERE IS NO WAY TO PEACE - PEACE IS THE WAY"

MILDRED FAHRNI AND THE FELLOWSHIP OF RECONCILIATION,
THE WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE AND
FREEDOM AND THE VOICE OF WOMEN

Faith in the capacity of human beings to build the Kingdom of God on
earth, a kingdom characterized by perfection, equality, harmony, and love, marks
the social gospel tradition in Canada. Further, social action to build that kingdom
has been a powerful catalyst for the growth of pacifism. Thomas Socknat suggests
that:

The need to Christianize the world blossomed into a programme of social
salvation, in the course of which the Christian doctrine of peace became
inextricably linked with the hope of attaining the Christian social
order.¹

Mildred Osterhout Fahruni was born, raised to womanhood and schooled
throughout her life in this tradition of optimism and of an interdependent social
and religious creed. She came to pacifism from "absorption, osmosis, right from
the very early years of her life."² This absorption occurred first under the joint
tutelage of her father, Abram, a Methodist minister and J.S. Woodsworth, a close
family friend, also a Methodist minister as well as a socialist and outspoken
absolute pacifist. Woodsworth acted as Mildred Osterhout’s mentor and became a principal figure of inspiration in her life. When, in 1932, Woodsworth and others founded the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) in Regina, Osterhout drove from Vancouver to be present. Ten years later in 1942, a dying Woodsworth chose her to give the eulogy at his funeral. Osterhout’s close relationship with Woodsworth had initiated a circle of mentorship that was completed when she met Mohandas Gandhi in 1931. Already a social and political activist, after 1942, Mildred Osterhout’s life would be lived primarily in the service of others. She would be guided in this service by a personal creed of disarming simplicity: live in a way that expresses active good will and understanding, overcome enmity and create, through peaceful means, the conditions for peace.

Born in Rapid City, Manitoba on 2 January 1900, the second daughter of Harriet (Hattie) and Abram, Mildred Osterhout moved with her family to Victoria in 1914. The years in Manitoba had seen the death of the Osterhout’s first daughter and then, after Mildred, the birth of a son, Victor. The atmosphere in the Osterhout home was gentle, encouraging and uncompromisingly Christian, with an overarching faith in the social gospel (Knickerbocker, 1992). It was also demanding and, at times personally constraining, although Mildred had no experience of being scolded at home. School was a different matter. She was feisty and gregarious, recalling that "The first thing I can remember is being
slapped or perhaps whipped in school for talking too much." In Victoria, Osterhaut attended high school and normal school. For one year in 1918 she taught high school on Denman Island, and in 1919 began attending the University of British Columbia. While there, she began to question some of the fundamentals of her religious upbringing and to chafe at the strictness of her home life. When she became involved in the study of science, she also examined the Old Testament narrative, investigating literalism and the physiology of women and men by direct scrutiny. "I thought I'd just better look into this so, I very carefully counted my ribs, to see ... I found that I was quite normal ... ." In 1921, Hattie Osterhout died of cancer and Mildred, in addition to studying and activism, became the housekeeper for her father and brother. Finally, she graduated in 1924 with a Master of Arts degree in English and Philosophy, writing her thesis on "Habit as a Factor in Conduct Control." While a student at UBC, her nascent socialism was strengthened and given theoretical depth by Dr. Teddy Boggs, "a radical political science professor who tried to expose his mostly middle-class students to the realities of working-class life by encouraging them to hang around downtown labour temples."

Also during her university career Osterhaut became active in the Student Christian Movement (SCM), founded in 1921 by veterans of the Great War committed to abolishing the injustices that resulted in conflict. The atmosphere in her home, and the wide circle of family friends dedicated to both the social gospel
and to pacifist notions, had allowed her to be "in touch with people who were fairly committed to non-violence." Thus, membership in the SCM came almost naturally. Fellow progressive members of the group at UBC shared Osterhout's social concerns and its first chairman, Dr. H.B. Sharman, advocated a humanistic Christianity dedicated "to pursuit of the Good." In addition, the SCM's early external focus, was "very radical, . . . and involved with politics and community development." It complemented Osterhout's evolving socialist political sensibilities. She also became a university activist, joining the movement to construct a proper UBC campus. A mass student march and protest - the Great Trek - occurred in 1925. Mildred Osterhout was a marcher. She trudged from the site of the Old King Edward High School at 12th and Oak up Alma hill to the underdeveloped site: "We had the Great Trek, in which we all walked from the bottom of the hill, down the road, carrying a stone and got up and threw them all in a heap."

The early 1920s were exceptionally fertile for Mildred Osterhout and for Vancouver's radical social and political community. While the goal of limited woman suffrage had recently been achieved, there were other, perhaps more challenging tasks for radical women to tackle. Principal among these was the burden of making peace in a just and democratic world. And the world of the 1920s was, despite the armistice of 1918, neither peaceful nor just nor democratic. In response, the Vancouver chapter of the WILPF was established in 1921 by
women within Fahrni's social and political milieu. Primarily influenced by her friendship with Lucy Woodsworth, the wife of JS, Mildred Osterhout joined the fledgling group, whose members "gathered in homes in Kitsilano to discuss how changes could be achieved." The social changes demanded were wide ranging, and in order to accomplish the broad goal of a more peaceful world, the Vancouver branch took a vigourous and positive approach by promoting public education for peace. As membership increased, WILPF found more spacious quarters at Gordon House, a community centre donated to the city by the Gordon sisters in Vancouver's West End (Howard, 1983). The discussions held there, quite apart from the group's outwardly directed political actions, played an important part in the personal development of the participants. These discussions allowed women supportive opportunities to express themselves and so to overcome their timidity. Further, women became conscious of and strengthened by the overlapping networks of organizations represented. "Different people were active in different organizations and activities, so we could share with each other, and also kept closely in touch with the International." From this foundation of carefully-nurtured personal development and connections, key founding members, including Laura Jamieson, Dorothy Steeves and Helena Gutteridge, took political sustenance, going on to launch prestigious public careers as leaders of the pacifist, feminist and socialist movements in Western Canada. Two of these women - Jamieson especially, and Steeves, became important influences in Mildred
Osterhout’s life. This early experience in and commitment to WILPF added a fundamental principle to her belief system: an interest in women’s rights and the role of women in peacemaking.

By the time Mildred Osterhout reached her mid-20s, the ideological and religious influences that would shape both her lifelong political actions and her relationships with others were well defined. She would be an advocate for women, a radical socialist, although never a Communist, and unequivocal pacifist. To her friends and peace movement colleagues, she seemed possessed of a formidable moral strength and wisdom. Her mentors, Woodsworth and Gandhi, achieved widely-held reverence. As an elderly woman, their acolyte achieved high regard in Vancouver’s peace and social democratic communities. She was also written about and interviewed often and received citizenship and peace awards from the city. Frank Dingman characterized her as ever-gentle and forgiving: "Mildred is a person . . . so clearly unable to hate . . ." Certainly this quality - an apparently unwavering faith in people and their essential goodness - was at the core of what Osterhout wrote and spoke of during a life of peacemaking and internationalism.

From 1924 through 1930, Fahrni taught school at Queen Elizabeth Elementary and Langara Public School on Vancouver’s west side. Then, in 1930 she took the opportunity to study social work in the Department of Social Economy and Social Research at Byrn Mawr women’s college in Philadelphia,
Pennsylvania, on an international fellowship. While there, she studied child
guidance and worked with destitute families whose ghastly living situations
shocked her. She wrote of the "dust, filth, garbage in the streets. Dirty,
unshaven dejected unemployed slouching on the stoop. Thin, careworn women
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She needed a focus other than her work, and she missed the social
activism of her life in Vancouver. So, while in Philadelphia, Osterhout became
involved with Quakers, though whom she met Muriel Lester, prominent British
pacifist, leader of the FOR and social worker. Lester recruited Mildred. The
more experienced woman challenged the younger "to give some time, voluntarily,
working in the slums of England." Accepting the challenge, Osterhout travelled
to London to work with Lester, director of the Kingsley Hall settlement house in
the East End neighbourhood of Bow. "With an inheritance, Lester decided to build
a community and children's centre. She spent all her money on the building, so
had to staff the house with volunteers."20

Shortly after Osterhout's arrival in 1931, the community at the settlement
house received word that Mohandas (Mahatma) Gandhi would soon visit England
to attend the second Round Table discussions on home rule and independence for
India. He was encouraged by Lester to come to visit Kingsley Hall.21 He and his
entourage stayed for four months, living in the East End with poor and working
people, rather than in Cambridge. "He stayed at the centre because he wanted to
be near the needy."22 To do so suited his philosophy of denial and self-
effacement. At Kingsley Hall Gandhi "lay down his bedroll in one of the Spartan rooftop cells . . . ." He had an immediate effect on the young and idealistic volunteers and many became converts to his philosophy. Always accessible, he welcomed new acolytes. Mildred Osterhout joined them: "He always left the door open . . . It was the best of times. He got up at 4 am to meditate. Between 5 and 6 am were the walks, no matter what the weather. Maybe a dozen people would come . . . ."

She was deeply moved by the Indian pacifist. His impact upon her beliefs and his affirmation of her already developing absolutist convictions was profoundly significant. She eagerly embraced his strategy of nonviolence, adding method to her desire for peace. Gandhi also offered himself as an exemplar. "I think the most important thing in his life was that he lived what he believed. He had more courage than I have." Gandhi's courage was certainly an inspiration for Osterhout, especially when she was faced with having to take unpopular and often solitary political positions, as she did during World War Two. At times she felt alone, but tried to bolster her spirits by thinking about Gandhi. In common with J.S. Woodsworth, her earliest mentor, Gandhi's pacifism was absolute - peace was not only the ultimate goal, it was also the way. Nonviolence, no matter what the circumstances, was the only justifiable method of social protest, civil disobedience or response to violence. Thus, the notion of a "just war," developed early by
Christian theologians, held no credibility for Woodsworth, for Gandhi or for Osterhout.

Before leaving England, Mildred Osterhout visited Europe on a six week trip to visit child guidance centres. Her continental itinerary included an excursion to the Soviet Union organized by a Communist Party group at the London School of Economics. She had studied social work and psychotherapy there while volunteering at Kingsley Hall. Her short time in the USSR was fascinating, she experienced the excitement of a new nation in great turmoil and, soon after, she pondered the question of whether to join the Communist Party herself. Eventually she rejected the idea because "Their approach was not fully mine."27 Osterhout’s Christian pacifism was far too deeply ingrained in her personality, too profoundly a part of her political outlook and her method of working, for her to accept the Communist imperative of the primacy of class warfare or of the necessity of violent revolution. While always a socialist, and supportive of the struggles of working and colonialized peoples, she would never abandon her faith in moral suasion or her conviction that conflict, never justifiable, always replicates itself.

In 1932 Osterhout returned to her home in Vancouver, but not before she had vowed to save enough money to visit Gandhi at his Indian ashram. This task would take her six years, for in British Columbia, as in the rest of the industrialized world, the Great Depression was a crushing reality. Despite her academic achievements; a Master of Arts degree from UBC, a certificate from
Byrn Mawr, studies at the LSE - where she completed "a special project on the fate of delinquent girls". There was no teaching employment to be had.

I came home, full of beans and enthusiasm and I went to the School Board Chairman and said, "I'm full of ideas, I know so much about children's development and the problems and possibilities of helping them more in schools." The School Board Chairman said, "Don't you know there's a Depression on?"

There were, of course, other outlets for the returnee's talents that might make use of her compassion and her well-developed helping skills. Mildred Osterhout found work with the YWCA, and later, with Canadian Memorial United Church as a social worker. She helped establish housing for unemployed women and girls in the West End - the Unemployed Women and Girl's Co-operative Club - and worked with leftist community activists, including the poet Dorothy Livesay. The social ills of the Depression - which Osterhout confronted daily - stirred in her a desire to make the world a better place. Her Christianity promised a better hereafter but there remained the predicament of curing the evils in this life. So, Mildred soon set to work as a political activist in the new CCF movement, becoming a prominent member and candidate in BC.

A socialist future, as defined in the Regina Manifesto, seemed possible as thousands of Canadians became involved in CCF electoral politics as well as more militant endeavours. At the heart of this flowering of social activism were labour groups, the new CCF, the Communist Party, cooperatively-minded farmers, and a plethora of radical Christian organizations. Among these were the League for
Social Reconstruction (LSR), the Fellowship for a Christian Social Order (FCSO), the League for Christian Social Action (CSA), and the FCSO's "youth wing," the Christian Commonwealth Youth Movement (CCYM).30 With deep roots in this intertwined "socio-political radicalism and pacifism," Mildred Osterhout not only attended the convention which established the CCF, but she also had earlier become active in the Vancouver branch of the LSR. Soon after she joined "the Reconstruction Party, one of the founding groups of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF)."32 For the remainder of the 1930s, she "threw herself into political work, believing, with her CCF colleagues, that their party was about to bring in the new social order."33 Throwing herself into political work also meant embarking on political journeys - going on the hustings and actively campaigning, at first as much to organize as to win. Travelling with male comrades often introduced interesting problems, particularly when trips might go unchaperoned: "we said 'Well, we can't go off together, just a man and a woman. People are going to question this, we've got to show that it's an organization, it's not just a man and a woman going out on a jaunt.'"34

If Mildred Osterhout had been "full of beans" upon her return to Vancouver from England, she continued to gain substantially in confidence and bravado thereafter. In late 1933, she ran as a provincial candidate for the CCF in the Vancouver-Burrard constituency, taking "on the excitable, splenetic Gerry McGeer, the Liberal incumbent . . . "35 She was defeated, but made a name for
herself as a forthright and idealistic spokeswoman for socialism. Osterhout ran twice more, unsuccessfully, for the CCF in provincial and federal elections. Her luck changed, however, when she was elected to serve for a term on the Vancouver School Board in 1936-37. Her public profile grew as well; she produced and hosted a weekly radio show - "The Woman’s View," on CJOR from 1933-35.

By late 1938, Osterhout had saved enough money to visit Gandhi in India - just as the too-familiar trumpets of war ushered out both the decade and the Depression. The prospect of another war disturbed her deeply, but she took comfort as well as philosophical affirmation of her pacifist ethic from Gandhi.

As war clouds hung heavily over Europe at the close of 1938, I sat with Mahatma Gandhi and a group of friends watching the stars pierce the dark skies over Central India. As we spoke with foreboding of the future, Gandhiji said, "Though the whole world turns to violence, I will continue to plough my lonely furrough."36

Gandhi’s brave words notwithstanding, when Osterhout returned to Canada from India, she was ill-at-ease. Her experiences had changed her, her expectations for her life were uncertain and her father’s demands grew excessive. She felt the need to make changes in her personal situation as well as in the world, but remained tied to her father’s home. With the beginning of the war, however, arrived a series of other beginnings, both auspicious and ominous. Osterhout’s commitment to the CCF waned, although she did run as a CCF candidate in the 1944 provincial election. Her disillusion was fuelled by the support CCF MPs
gave to Canada's entry into the conflict. The lone exception was her friend and mentor, J.S. Woodsworth:

And I had the greatest respect for him because he stood up alone, in the parliament . . . And he was the only one in parliament who stood up to say, "No." . . . he never wavered . . . I often think he was the best Christian I've ever known.37

A personal shock followed the shock of war when, in the summer of 1940, her father died. But this shock - however agonizing - was also accompanied by a welcome and long-sought sense of freedom. Mildred Osterhout, age 40, would now truly become a woman in her own right.

An Independent Life

In August 1941, Mildred Osterhout took a momentous personal step. She married Walter Fahrni. Walter was a long-time family friend, a fellow member of the CCF and a marine engineer. Mildred had known Walter since both were children in Manitoba. He was eleven years her senior and had waited a long time for her to be ready to make a life with a man other than her father. Their marriage was, for the time, unconventional. They were both older, and although Walter shared Mildred's CCF politics, she was the outspoken activist, he, the dedicated supporter. He shared this supportiveness and willingness to stand back in the face of his wife's public profile with Sheila Young's husband, David. Walter Fahrni took his wife's activism "very calmly. But he was not the kind to stand up and make a speech."38 From their marriage until his death 17 years later,
Mildred and Walter would be apart regularly, she on various peacemaking tours and long-term organizing drives, he travelling around the world as a consequence of his occupation. They created a partnership where political commitments, especially Mildred's peace work, assumed a place of importance equal to their personal devotion. Theirs was an unusual arrangement, approved of by like-minded friends such as Mary Thomson who regarded Walter as "a prince," but resented by some of Walter's relatives "who felt that she neglected him for politics . . . ."40

Although the Fahrnis had no children of their own, they often lived cooperatively, with both adults and children. Undertaken with unbounded enthusiasm, these cooperative ventures first involved members of Vancouver's left wing community and, later, Christian radicals in FOR and relatives from the Fahrni's extended family.41 In 1946, when she was chairperson of the Vancouver branch of WILPF42 and deeply involved in FOR, the cooperative household included Mildred and Walter, Mary and Watson Thomson, Mary and Bruce Yorke, and their son, David.43 Only on rare occasions were the Fahrnis together for extended periods, so cooperative life proved a comfort. For eight months during Mildred's time in Toronto as the leader of Canadian FOR, Walter, "home" from one of his sea voyages, joined her. But their life together was relatively short. Walter Fahrni's death from a heart attack in 1957 was an unexpected shock. In her customary Christmas letter of 1958, Mildred wrote reservedly, yet
with a hint of her sense of loss and loneliness: "It hardly seems possible that Walter slipped over the border six months ago for he was so well up to that time and seems so alive still, as I feel his quiet presence around."44

**Pacifism and Internationalism**

Mildred Fahrni’s marriage in 1941 was followed in the spring of 1942 by an ominous event, the death of her first mentor, J.S. Woodsworth, on 21 March. Shortly before, he had asked Mildred to give the eulogy at his funeral service, entrusting the final remarks about his life to one of the few who shared his absolute pacifism and internationalism.

In these two related realms - pacifism and internationalism - Fahrni would find her own new direction. It would incorporate an absolute pacifism, her organizing skills and her concern for those in society less fortunate than herself. She would try, more than ever before, to live the Christian imperative to love thy neighbour. During the Depression years of 1932-33, when she spent a year organizing an unemployed women and girl’s club, sponsored by the YWCA, The Business and Professional Women’s Club and the University Women’s Club, she honed her networking abilities.45 She made further use of these abilities after 1941 when her primary commitment became nurturing and extending the influence of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. In the period after 1943, under the auspices of the FOR, she spoke and petitioned on behalf of interned Japanese Canadians. She
was among "A number of pacifists also worked directly with the Japanese Canadians in the relocation centres." In 1943, Mildred Fahrni moved to New Denver in the Slocan Valley of BC to teach the Japanese Canadian high school students being held there. Lobbying on behalf of the internees occupied the energy of numerous pacifists during the period, but such action was not popular with a Canadian public "which either remained silent or approved of the discriminatory measures."

Fahrni's principal commitment to the CFOR, in addition to her fundraising for various national and international causes and later, her leadership in the Voice of Women (VOW), defined her life during the post War and Cold War years. She left WILPF when she left Vancouver for four years, but not before helping Sheila Young to set the stage for the Peace Assembly in 1947 and agreeing to attend a 1948 WILPF international conference in Guatemala. Her devotion thereafter to CFOR was unqualified, and "From 1947 to 1951 she served as its national secretary in Toronto."

The Fellowship of Reconciliation had been created in England shortly after the outbreak of World War One by Richard Roberts, a Presbyterian minister and Henry Hodgkin, a Quaker. Also involved was Muriel Lester, with whom Mildred Fahrni had worked closely at Kingsley Hall. Rather than merely the absence of war, the founders of the FOR conceived of peace as an activity, a way of being. Peaceful living required a radical social analysis, constant personal struggle to
construct peaceful relationships in the world and faith. As to the "reconciliation" in the name, Fahrni suggested that the inspiration was the "statement in the Bible, 'I have given unto you the necessity of reconciliation.'"49 In order to make peace, the members of the FOR, and the members of society in general, would have to understand war, in all its terrible complexity. Fahrni was well-equipped ideologically and intellectually to contribute to that understanding. In brief, her view, reflecting FOR’s, was that war resulted from imperialism, the class system and racism:

> War makes more war - and you have to find the reasons. And they decided that there were three special reasons that violence arose . . . domination of one nation over another . . . poverty - and that we had to do something about our economic system. There were people who had too much and many who had too little. . . . the other [cause] was racism.50

While Fahrni was the secretary of CFOR, and living in Toronto from 1947 until 1951, the Cold War and a powerful post war, prosperity-driven apathy took a grave toll on the peace movement in general. CFOR did not escape this chilling diminishment. Its membership shrank, as did its finances. By October 1947, the year Fahrni moved to Toronto, the national journal Reconciliation had ceased publication.51 So, it was a substantially reduced fellowship that she oversaw as she "travelled across the country and back two or three times a year, visiting these different groups. . . . encouraging them to extend and build up their memberships. . . ."52 The philosophy of FOR and the red-baiting which had branded it a "communist front" (Socknat, 1987) made an increase in membership
unlikely. Without equivocation, its members advocated an uncompromising absolutism. Their appeal to love and reason enjoyed only limited appeal with a public convinced of the necessity of both the past war against Hitler and the ongoing "war" against communism. It was difficult to make the kind of commitment, to internalize the faith in humanity, that FOR demanded:

... so often people would say, "Well, I'm with you 99% of the way, but what if there's another Hitler?" What if? We always just said, "There are no "ifers" in the FOR." You have to commit yourselves to this principle, knowing that you'll never be able to achieve the goals perfectly yourself even . . . 53

This refusal to be deterred from her principles by the obvious realities and pragmatic considerations of political life is a constant feature of Fahrni's life.

As well, there is in her work, a dedication to a completely positive way of seeing, an unflappable, eternal optimism. It illuminates her writing and is evident from the recollections of friends in her interactions with people. Analytical writing, interviews, speeches prepared for various meetings, as well as conversational yearly Christmas letters to friends demonstrate this characteristic.

Not only was Fahrni prepared to care for the people of the world, but also she was prepared to see hope where others saw only despair. A visit to Germany in early 1950 both horrified and encouraged her. She was shocked by the destruction, but searched beyond it, noting that "Freundschaftsheim and the Friends Centres and the FOR Cells lightened the darkness here and there and built new life on the ruins of the old."54 Hints that all was not right with the world, such as the previous
reference to darkness, another to "these days of darkness and Strife" and still another during the Korean War: "how tragic that life is being wasted all around us, . . . especially through the terrible ravage of war" are rare. Typically, these comments are made reluctantly, reservedly, as though acknowledging the inhumanities and horrors in the world would somehow imbue them with power and undermine her own faith. More frequent, indeed, pervasive, is Fahrni's trust in human beings, in God and in goodness.

A drunkard on the steps outside curses the church and her priests. . . . but a little child slips in and says, "Does God live here?" Startled, we say, "Why yes, and in the street, and in your home, and wherever people open their hearts to him."

Such faith could not have been easy to sustain as the Cold War intensified. Crisis followed crisis in the international political arena, while within the Canadian peace movement tension developed over the apparent contradiction between support for anti-imperialist struggles and pacifism (Socknat, 1987). This tension was further exacerbated by the problems plaguing the Canadian Peace Congress. It "was attacked as 'Communist' by most of the political leaders of the mainstream parties, including the CCF. . . . The RCMP initiated smear campaigns and used agents provocateurs . . . ." The CPC was the most visible of the national peace organizations; others, including FOR, were far smaller and less influential. That fact did not, however, prevent CFOR, a CPC supporting group, from being similarly branded (Socknat, 1987). So, just as Sheila Young dedicated herself to
protecting and nurturing Vancouver WILPF during difficult times, Mildred Fahrni dedicated her energies to safeguarding the radical Christian pacifism of CFOR.

She drifted away gradually from her connection with WILPF - although she had been a member since 1921 - suspending her work after attending WILPF’s Inter-American Congress of Women in Guatemala from August 19-27 in 1948. As in most WILPF endeavours, the discussions at this conference were wide-ranging, focusing on the role of the UN, education, economic equality, and the problem of racism. Of key interest to Canadians was the challenge of developing effective methods to promote active involvement of women in the UN. When Fahrni returned to Toronto from the Congress, her commitment as the national organizer of CFOR took pride of place among her many interests, requiring all her energy.

By the time she came home to Vancouver in 1951, factionalism in the WILPF branch had concluded with the desertion of prominent CCF women and the assumption of leadership by Sheila Young. Young and Fahrni had worked closely together in the past, and would collaborate again in coalition-building, but Fahrni did not actively rejoin WILPF until the 1980s. Her ongoing work in CFOR was certainly one reason for this, as were her continuous international travels - to Latin America, Europe and India in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Another likely factor in her drift from WILPF was her close friendship with Laura Jamieson, who had become a strong critic of post-war Vancouver WILPF. Mildred and Walter Fahrni shared a cooperative house with Jamieson in the early 1950’s.59 This
cooperative became Fellowship House, the Western Centre for the work of FOR. Fahrni also retained her membership in the CCF and a strong friendship with CCF politician Grace McInnis. Both the party and McInnis were hostile to the "left" groups in the peace movement, of which WILPF was one.

An experienced social democratic campaigner, Fahrni was sensitive to the popular association of the peace movement with communism, and to the problems peace activists faced if they worked with communists. The CP's endorsement of one of her CCF candidacies in the 1930s had bestowed "the kiss of death" on her chances of winning the election (Melnyk, 1989). In WILPF, Sheila Young at first undertook a defiant nonpartisanship that meant willingness to ignore her compatriot's political allegiances. Fahrni, although briefly attracted to the Communist Party during the time she spent at the LSE, explicitly distanced herself - and pacifism - from communism during the Cold War. In an address to a 1958 Town Hall meeting in Vancouver, she approvingly quoted remarks by Lester B. Pearson suggesting that only spiritual and intellectual weapons, in addition to social and economic justice, could defeat communism. Her own concluding comments echoed this sentiment. "Pacifism is practical . . . It is the only constructive way of opposing communism, of overcoming evil, of establishing peace in the world."60
"Seeking to Bring Peace" - Love and Service
in an Era of Suspicion

Immersed in the small, albeit nation-wide community of CFOR, Mildred Fahrdni pursued with vigour and single-mindedness a series of projects to help others in the interests of peace. These projects - multifaceted and all-consuming - were carried out with an international sensibility in Canada, the United States, Mexico, and India. She seemed to thrive on risk, adopting the unpopular cause of the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors in the early 1950s. In 1956 she became personally involved in the black civil rights movement during a visit to "the Deep South" and in Mexico and India she worked in and raised money for orphanages, refugee centres and a boy's school. With energy and stamina Fahrdni confronted poverty and injustice on cross-continent journeys. To maintain optimism she drew on lived beliefs rooted in her Christian faith, enriched by an appreciation for Gandhian 'satyagraha' (soul force) and 'hartal' (noncooperation, often actualized in India as the general strike).

Fahrdni's faith did not entirely comfort her. A proselytizer of goodness, she tried to avoid self-righteousness, although she was not always successful. Amy Dalgleish, sister CCFer, peace activist and occasional FOR member recalled that she "had a great quarrel with Mildred. She insisted on saying grace. I objected." Dalgleish stomped out and a temporary rift opened between the two.
Fahrni's strategy to avoid complacency involved continually seeking to challenge herself and urging others to social action. Inaction unsettled her, compelling her own efforts to serve. After returning from a year-long trip to Asia in 1961, she wrote of her uneasiness:

Home, with a comfortable bed and a full larder, I feel restless at night and disturbed by day by the widespread inequality around the globe and the threat of war. I try to seek with others new ways of influencing the government to think in terms of extending life to deprived areas rather than dealing in weapons of destruction.62

Just as Fahrni tried to pinpoint her own restlessness, so she also suggested that human beings in general experienced spiritual restlessness in "scientific" societies which valued possessions and self gratification too highly. She detected a yearning among people for significance and for relatedness to one another "and to the heart of the Universe, whether you call it Spirit or God."63 Above all, she believed, human beings wanted to belong. A prerequisite for "world belonging" was peacefulness, rooted in "a religion that teaches cooperation and concern for others in home and school."64 This focus on the need for deep interpersonal relations and a sense of connectedness is one of the qualities which has always stood out as a marker of women's peace work.

Emphasizing love and understanding is commonplace in the writing and speechmaking of pacifists. Problematic is doing. Transforming rhetoric into effective practice is difficult where political life is organized adversarially and a tradition of approval of militarism prevails. Fahrni tried to make the
transformation of abstract love into active love integral to her personal life. When the objects of love were reviled in mainstream society, she worked to establish connections and friendly interrelations that she believed held the key to peace.

Her adoption of the cause of the Sons of Freedom Doukhobors and their struggle to retain custody of their children is a case in point. Mildred Fahrni’s retrospective solution to the problem of the children’s internment and the often-destructive response of their parents was characteristic of her willingness to "cling to the way of acceptance, loving and sharing . . .". She returned to her creed of building bridges and cultivating reconciliation:

It is easy to see what should have been done, and how bridges of understanding could have been built that would have prevented the burning of bridges of wood . . . but building them now is more difficult. Understanding will always be the first step with any problem whether it be new or old. . . .

Throughout the decade Fahrni maintained personal contact with the Doukhobor community. In 1955, at the height of anti-Doukhobor sentiment, when Sheila Young wrote to the BC government to petition for fair treatment for Doukhobor children, Fahrni visited the Freedomite community at Krestova. She took time again in 1959 to visit one of "her" families at Hilliers.

Yet another example of Fahrni’s search to understand the plight of others through direct experience and to strengthen "the oneness of mankind" was her demonstration of commitment to the US civil rights cause. In 1956 she visited the United States as a delegate to the National FOR Conference in Chicago. At this time the bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama, was in its seventh month, sparking
interest and sympathy among FOR delegates. Fahrni decided to travel to the south, "just as an onlooker, not going down there to work or live there but just to go down to see the situation." She had been told by southern FOR Conference colleagues, including Bayard Rustin, an advisor to Martin Luther King Jr., that she would never understand the civil rights struggle unless she undertook such a visit. What Fahrni came to understand through her own experiences was the pervasive and inescapable reality of segregation, which etched unbreachable lines between black and white people. Even the train trip from Chicago to Montgomery was imbued with racism's invisible but undeniable pattern. As the southern 'border' approached, a black companion with whom Fahrni had been sitting and chatting "looked at his watch and he said, 'Well, I have to leave you, we're just near the border and I can't be seen talking to a white woman." The impact of her encounter in Montgomery, where she stayed surreptitiously in a black boarding house, was equally dramatic. It altered her sense of self and her awareness of how the power of segregation insinuated itself into ordinary, unremarkable events. She recalled that:

. . . every time I moved down there, I was aware that I was a white person. And, if I were walking down the street and saw a black person that I'd seen before, one that was at the meeting . . . he would see me and he would walk over to the other side of the street. He couldn't be seen talking to a white woman.71

When she arrived in Montgomery, Mildred Fahrni met both Rosa Parks - the woman whose refusal to "stand up and go to the back of the bus" sparked the
militant phase of the civil rights movement - and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.,
whose home she visited. With King, Fahrni shared not only a philosophical
allegiance to Gandhian non-violence, but also membership in the FOR. The
organization had determined racism to be a key cause of war and, consequently,
was active in civil rights work. It had carried on such work in Canada since its
1944 national conference decided to establish a multiethnic race relations
committee to educate, publicize and write letters (Socknat, 1987). By the 1950s in
the USA, FOR's struggle against racism was acute and perilous, with new
obstacles emerging daily. Nonetheless, Fahrni believed that FOR had achieved
some small successes and had "been responsible for the removal of the color bar
in restaurants, theatres, hotels, swimming pools . . . ."72 Fahrni kept in touch
with King through Christmas messages long after their first meeting.

In order to educate British Columbians about the civil rights crusade and
"The Lines of the South," Fahrni submitted an outline to the CBC for a series on
the issue in early 1957. The CBC rejected her proposal. It had recently broadcast
a series on the subject and saw no need for another.73 The urge to inform others
about the civil rights movement and to take strength from its strategy of calm,
dignified defiance remained, however, an important motivation for Fahrni.
Clearly, something of the earlier inspiration she had experienced in the presence of
Gandhi was rekindled during her exposure to the southern crusade and to the
personality of King. After her visit she wrote of the determination and patience
she observed among the non-violent "Negro" resisters, qualities she remembered from the "Gandhi movement." The potent combination of Christian faith and non-violence convinced Fahrni that many of the people in the civil rights struggle were ready to give their lives and since that was the case, her optimism asserted that "victory will eventually come." In Alabama, activists with whom she had sung and prayed and marched exemplified to her both the prospects and the dangers of 'satyagraha' and 'hartal' in action. Although the CBC had rejected her, Mildred Fahrni was undeterred. What she could not accomplish over the airwaves, she fulfilled on the roadways. She went on the stump, travelling throughout Western Canada to spread the word about the power and travails of the emerging movement to end segregation. About its imminent success, she had absolutely no doubt.

**Children of the World**

In numerous letters and commentaries Mildred Fahrni identified children as the hope of the future and lamented that poverty and violence were the heritage of so many millions in developing countries. From the early 1950s on, she added their struggles to her considerable burden of care. Her own childlessness was irrelevant, according to her. Certainly it was convenient as she travelled and organized continuously. Remedy the plight of children in the post World War Two era was daunting: efforts on any but a global level, undertaken by governments or international agencies with substantial resources, seemed futile.
The impact of one individual or one small organization could only be minimal. In the face of overwhelming need pragmatic Westerners could safely leave the care of the world’s destitute children in the hands of large institutions, including the United Nations. Not Mildred Fahrni. Her practice of care for children grew from the roots of friendship. She relied on a vast network of personal contacts, the embryonic Unitarian Service Committee and her own working visits to children’s communities in Mexico and Asia. In her 1951 Christmas message she wrote of the relationship between poverty among children and war: "... I know that many children in India have nothing to eat but bark and roots, and others in Greece have only leaves and roots to eat. There is no hope of peace while there is such want."  

After recognizing want among children as a major stumbling block to the creation of peace, Fahrni prepared to address it immediately, practically and simply. In 1952 she began gathering clothing, food, toys, and cash for the Children of the World - destitute children overseas. That October, the youngsters in the cooperative Fahrni household also collected money for children when making their neighbourhood rounds on Hallowe’en night. Known thereafter as the COW, the acronym for the Children of the World, this home-grown charity with the unusual name became a persistent feature of holiday life in the Fahrni household. A wide network of relatives, friends and colleagues was urged to participate in feeding the COW. Fahrni solicited with typical elan, never allowing
prospective donors off the hook. Her Christmas letters to friends invited contributions: "And now, if you want to give a Christmas gift, won't you give it to the COW instead of to the Fahrni's?" 76

Shortly after introducing the COW campaign, using the agency of the FOR, Mildred Fahrni became an active patron of the Balagram Boys' School in southern India. There, the organization initially "adopted" six destitute boys. Her hard work as a promoter of the School and a fundraiser derived from "her totally international viewpoint . . . she was as concerned about those kids in India as she would be about some social problem around the corner in West Point Grey." 77 In a very short time the numbers of "adoptees" grew and Fahrni's promotional and fundraising methods utilized cleverly the traditional sociability and practicality of women's networking and charity work:

And, when I have a summer tea or anything that I can raise a little money, I take out those pictures and say, "I'm sending some money, next month or next week to the Balagram, if anybody wants to contribute, just leave a little change as you go out." 78

Soliciting funds through personal letters, hosting teas, hanging Christmas stockings for donations were the simple and informal methods of Fahrni's outreach. Yet, their simplicity belies their effectiveness. First, Fahrni succeeded in raising money and in establishing a continuous source of funds for "her" charities. Second, her financial appeals served to educate and inform her friends and colleagues, widening the pool of concern and involvement on behalf of children and peace.
Children's welfare further occupied Fahrni's practical peacemaking when she threw her energy into a Mexican refugee centre and orphanage - the Casa de Los Amigos in Mexico City - established by the American Friends Service Committee, a Quaker organization. Each year for 15 years, from the late 1950s through the early 1970s, Mildred Fahrni spent three months working at the Casa. This was a time she deemed "her holiday time" when she felt able to leave her many Vancouver commitments and her occasional work as a substitute teacher. Eventually, she assumed responsibility for planning, shopping, welcoming and "farewelling."79 Her other child-centred interests at this time included the Jal Bagat or "Children's World" in Dehli and Indian Children's Hostels sponsored by the USC. Fahrni's assessment of the objectives such ventures could hope to achieve was realistic. Yet within her realism remained idealism, and a sense of the importance of each individual person. At the Children’s Hostels,

... children rescued from the streets are being given good care and schooling. Some of them told me they were going to be doctors and lawyers, but if they can learn to be self-respecting and self-supporting in any way it will be a great achievement.80

Not all of Mildred Fahrni's peacemaking during the 1950s was directed toward international matters. While she travelled extensively during this period, she still found time to contribute to building the nuclear pacifist movement in Vancouver, through her leading position in FOR. FOR's Vancouver work was modest, centring chiefly on small meetings, rallies and conferences. Events usually emphasized the peacefulness required to make peace. At the centre of that
peacefulness was religion as a catalyst to social action, the notion of a "religious movement committed to nonviolence as a principle of life." Two examples from 1958 demonstrate strategies Fahrni used to forge this crucial connection between theology and action.

Under the auspices of the CFOR, marchers in a parade on 8 June 1958 carried placards not only advocating nuclear disarmament, but, more importantly, urging people to work "for True Christian Government." Fellowship activists insisted on absolute pacifism, and while this gave them moral authority it did little either to swell their numbers or to influence government policy. Pacifism did not, however, prevent CFOR from using audacious methods to secure public attention and to dramatize the issues at the heart of their cause. At an organizing meeting held to plan the parade, Mildred Fahrni outlined an immediate "plan of action" for the marchers as well as future events for the Vancouver CFOR. Among these would be pickets of "warships participating in Vancouver's centennial celebrations and . . . public burnings of war toys." The objective was to educate and inspire. Startling methods such as toy burning might hasten the shift in consciousness needed to stimulate mass opposition to atomic weapons.

Of particular concern to nuclear pacifists at this time was atmospheric testing and the consequent public health hazards of nuclear fallout. Equally worrying was Canada's membership in NATO, because, although the Canadian military did not possess nuclear weapons, NATO allies did. Only a few days
before the CFOR march, the CCF passed a motion at its BC convention calling for Canada's withdrawal from NATO. This was a heartening development. Local peace activists took further courage from anti-nuclear weapons demonstrations in Germany and from a great groundswell of anti-nuclear activism in Britain, culminating in the formation of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) in March of 1958 and the subsequent first giant Aldermaston march in April.

Also held in Vancouver in June 1958 was a conference chiefly organized by Mildred Fahrni and called to discuss "Peace Through Non-Violence." Its sponsors included two of the historic peace churches - the Society of Friends and the Union of Doukhobors - as well as CFOR and Vancouver WILPF. This conference was the precursor of the Peace By Peaceful Means Coordinating Committee, another effort to form a peace coalition in Vancouver and an undertaking which brought Mildred Fahrni and Sheila Young into collaboration again with UBC scientist Jim Foulks and with Unitarian minister Phillip Hewitt. Irene Foulks identified the committee as "Mildred's group" which never involved more than eight or ten people. Nevertheless, it generated an offshoot in Victoria, founded in late 1958 to advocate the improvement of relationships among nations and to renounce war as an instrument of national policy. Furthermore, the Lower Mainland group mustered the energy to organize yet another conference on Peace by Peaceful Means at UBC in February 1960. This gathering was attended by 200 people - a respectable crowd for the time - and provoked media interest. The conference
featured a speech by well-known Vancouver columnist Elmore Philpott, a peace supporter for years who, in Fahrni’s view, "gave a good talk." As a result, she participated in a panel on CBUT television, gaining a wider audience for her views.87

Despite Fahrni’s unquestionable intellectual qualities and political adroitness, she was not above some doubt about her personal appearance. She complained self-consciously that her nose was too long for TV and that it had looked terrible in a photograph in the Vancouver Sun.88 Such self-described insights into Mildred Fahrni’s personal worries and vanities are so rare as to be worthy of mention. Her apparent lack of ego and her principal concern for others defined the personality most familiar both to close friends and political acquaintances.

In 1960 Mildred Fahrni, world traveller and international organizer, reasserted herself as a local Vancouver peace leader. There was much to do - a meeting with radical American pacifist Scott Nearing followed the UBC conference. "And then a follow-up Committee on the Conference. One thing leads to another... instead of coming to a stop. I don’t know how I’ll get out of it all."89 It would have been completely out of character for Fahrni to have stopped her activities for a moment or to have slipped away even to rest. Indeed, in the spring of 1960 there were some small reasons for enthusiasm among the ranks of peace workers. Hopeful initiatives included the rise of new peace groups, a visit
by Soviet Premier Krushchev to the US and subsequent new Soviet disarmament proposals offered at the UN. In Vancouver, Fahrni remained busy in numerous crusades, although strongly moved by a local UN Association meeting on India, she longed to "start the fire, get rid of the 'things' and go." This call to India was one she had heeded regularly in her life since her first visit to Gandhi's ashram in 1938.

Fahrni put her itchy feet on hold in 1960. She stayed in Vancouver. Before Easter she took part in an East-West seminar sponsored by UNESCO while continuing to promote "Peace by Peaceful Means . . . getting more people interested . . . We have been giving out flyers at the theatre showing "On the Beach" . . . I think it made quite an impact . . ." The film, from the novel of the same name of Neville Shute, seemed to peace activists to be essentially pessimistic, advancing the notion that nuclear war was inevitable, thus promoting public apathy.

One of the trips Fahrni wanted to make was to England, to be in the CND Aldermaston March at Easter, but she had to be content with her own personal march to the beach and to "hope Vancouver will be ready to demonstrate 'next year' . . . or that it won't be necessary." In a way, her hopes were answered. "Next year," in February 1961, the BC Peace Council sent a letter "to Lord Bertrand Russell in support of his group's actions to prevent installation of US missile base (sic) in Britain." That same year, a march at the beginning of April
sponsored jointly by the UBC Nuclear Disarmament Club and the BC Committees on Radiation Hazards and emulating the British CND Aldermaston march, drew 600 people. By Easter 1962, the Vancouver peace community, led by the BC CCND and actively supported by the Peace Council, was ready to hold its own united Easter Parade with Easter-related peace slogans and, because weather permitted, a plane flying a large banner. It was, with 1,500 marchers, Vancouver’s largest Easter parade and first Easter peace march. This event brought Vancouver into the realm of the "new" peace movement, and, for the moment at least, the old-left dominated Peace Council willingly worked to plan actions with independent, newer groups such as the CCND, the Canadian Universities CND (CUCND), the Committees Against Radiation Hazards, and the newest star in the peace constellation, the Voice of Women (VOW). As ever, WILPF, CFOR and Quakers could be counted on to join in.

"The Opportunity to Build a Better World" -

A Woman’s Responsibility

In 1960 Mildred Fahrni added yet another organization to her long list of involvements, and with it, returned to an association with the autonomous women’s peace tradition that had lapsed when she left WILPF. The establishment of the Voice of Women in 1960 gave voice, stature and credibility to a newly-conscious sector of Canadian women. They were primarily middle class,
politically moderate and motivated to anti-nuclear action by a pressing anxiety about the welfare of their children and of the children of the world. Fahrni became a key VOW spokespersons in BC, travelling to conferences within Canada and abroad, giving interviews and working to establish a VOW in Mexico. Her enthusiasm for this new group was not shared by her colleague, Sheila Young. Although they had worked together for peace intermittently since the late 1940s and would continue to do so in the short-lived coalition, Peace by Peaceful Means as well as the more enduring Peace Action League, Young was not enthusiastic about VOW.

It is in the context of Fahrni’s work with VOW that her perception of the value and uniqueness of women’s peacemaking is most clearly illustrated. She did not consider herself a feminist, at least "not as a prime condition." She preferred instead to focus on the common qualities and interests of men and women, pointing out that "People are people, it doesn’t matter whether they’re male or female." This perspective owes much to her own faith in making common cause with all and in trying to erase differences among people. It is also grounded in the radical Christian vision of equality and social harmony which fashioned Fahrni’s socialism. Her pacifist critique of militarism did not automatically lead her to a feminist critique of gender relations, even within the peace movement. There, social structural gender inequalities were reproduced "up close" and could not have gone unnoticed. The rank and file workers tended to be mostly women,
while the publicly-recognized leadership was male. All the same, the gender
divisiveness and antipathy that she came to associate with feminism seemed
fundamentally at odds with her vision of women’s leadership responsibilities for
building peace, the Kingdom of God on earth and a new world order (Sangster,
1989). These beliefs were firmly in the maternalist tradition. She emphasized the
proficiency and obligation of women to care for others. As Fahimi asserted about
the women at an early VOW conference:

The women felt the responsibility of the tremendous task that they had
undertaken, and recognized the personal commitment not only to a cause but
to a way of life which meant living and demonstrating their love of the whole
human family, their willingness to identify themselves with the needs and
wants of others." (emphasis added)

Fahmi’s comment isolates key aspects of the dominant perspective among
women peacemakers of the time. In this paradigm, women willingly devoted
themselves to the peace cause in a way which differed fundamentally from usual
participation in male-dominated political life. The new women’s peace campaign
claimed to integrate personal interests with political activism and thus to be
creating a movement that in itself manifested peace. Implicit in this "way of life"
would be recognition and acceptance of diversity. International meetings of
women were world microcosms: "They came from varied cultural and political
backgrounds, motivated by various religions and philosophies." Far more than
merely subscription to belief in the desirability of peace, VOW’s way of working
would be predicated upon a vision of the possibility for peace that transcended
political allegiance. This same vision had motivated earlier generations of maternalist peacemakers. Fahrni believed that women could overcome ideology because they "weren't involved in the competition of countries."99 Certainly, nuclear weapons and the suspicion that militarism and the arms race were out of control appeared to render customary ideologically-determined, adversarial approaches to international politics obsolete. Mildred Fahrni was convinced that women were in a favoured position to build bridges. She located the source of that ability in maternal care: "Women have been more sensitive because they're mothers of children and have families to look after and so war is a dreadful thing."100

Certainly, for the "Voices" and their international guests at a VOW International Conference held in Montreal in September 1962, the sense of urgency and of impending nuclear war was palpable. Tensions of unprecedented seriousness escalated between the United States and the Soviet Union over the latter's siting of missile bases in Cuba. The assembled women understood that peace was mandatory for human survival and that traditional male methods of "peacemaking" - dichotomy, intimidation and, finally, negotiation based on domination - were doomed to failure. A message to the conference from British activist Dame Alix Meynell seemed to point the way forward:

Fear breeds the arms race and the arms race breeds fear. The world needs a moral lead, a change of feeling, Freedom from Fear. Yet feeling alone will not save us. Feeling must be directed by thought. It is greatly heartening to
know that Voice of Women in this important Conference are planning to turn feeling by means of thought into action.101 (emphasis added)

Feeling, thought and action represented an integration of heart, intellect and social commitment. Such an integrated method sought to counteract the dominant patriarchal definition of political reason and its rejection of emotion in traditional political engagement. This was the kind of political involvement that attracted Fahrni, indeed it was the kind of involvement and lifestyle that she had always advocated and endeavoured to create in her work with CFOR. Now, another opportunity opened to her, one where women assumed the burden of peace in a newly dangerous age. Unbridled optimism about the motives, capabilities and spirit of the first "Voices" is evident in two reports Fahrni gave upon her return from the VOW Conference. While optimism generally characterized her attitude, it was revitalized by the recent upsurge of interest in the peace movement in Western Europe and North America. VOW was but one of many new groups. She reflected on her own long and often frustrating struggle, where years were spent "knocking on closed doors, shouting into deaf ears."102 At last in VOW she saw "doors opening, . . . attention and response and . . . a great awakening of interest and concern . . . lifting us out of the apathy and despair of our generation."103

Another source of Fahrni's cheer and renewed vigour was the personal interpretation of politics she witnessed. Women seemed willing to stress what they had in common and to symbolize "in their own lives the attitudes of good-will and
concern that are fundamental to creating peace, . . . ."104 She was convinced that women were bound to one another across both physical and ideological borders by the common task of caring for the fundamental needs of life. In this spirit she quoted Margaret Mead: "We can no longer defend our children, unless we defend all."105 Interpreting the nuclear reality as borderless, where national divisions held little meaning suggested an understanding of the practice of peacemaking that Fahrni had advocated all her pacifist life. It was also vulnerable to criticism as idealistic and naive, as based on emotion rather than on realistic political analysis. Such criticism was expected. Pacifists were accustomed to these complaints. Absolute pacifists such as Fahrni were particularly inured to the allegation that their methods were ineffective and their goals doomed to failure. In 1962, however, with the membership of new, nonpartisan women's peace groups such as VOW in Canada and Women Strike for Peace in the USA expanding, women forged a new concord, and critics faced a fresh phenomenon, initially too broad to fit old labels.

At VOW's Montreal Conference, women divided into four groups. Each engaged in discussions on the practical machinery of peacemaking in one of the following areas:

1. Establishing the human family
2. Removing the obstacles
3. Extending the family bonds
4. Setting up better communications106
The women knew that they had energy, intelligence and commitment. What they needed to develop were techniques to accomplish their objectives. Initially, the theme of "family" framed their discourse. Participants attempted to view themselves less in national or ideological contexts and more in terms of their membership in a universal family. Their marathon conversations were not only politically productive but also intensely personal, "we were friends, sharing our personal interests, talking about our families and problems . . . but not descending to recipes and skirt lengths . . . at least not often." This thread of personalism as a valid and effective method of organizing was highlighted by conference participant Jaquetta Hawkes, prominent British archaeologist and CND executive member:

. . . the conference's most valuable achievement is in the linking up of women's organizations in various countries "in a personal way - the natural way for women. . . . "Personal contacts are very valuable," she said, "Any idea we have about what women can do can be communicated directly."  

Despite strongly felt personal attachments, maintaining solidarity was not always easy, and many women - those from the Soviet Union, for example - were torn on particular issues between their loyalty to the rediscovered notion of the "world family" and their loyalty to their governments. In fact, ideological issues were always a threat to the unity of both international group meetings and the Canadian VOW. During the early days, buoyed by the freshness of the organization, VOW was able to hold such rifts at bay. Given the personal histories and experiences of its leadership, the CCF commitments of Therese
Casgrain and the Liberal loyalties of Marion Pearson for example, as well as the varied political leanings of the members, however, cracks were bound to materialize sooner or later.

Although Mildred Fahmni did not identify herself as a feminist, her understanding of women’s reality extended beyond her own experience as a relatively privileged, socially active Canadian woman. She attempted to bring that understanding into her work for peace in Canada. Shortly after her return from a trip to Europe and India in 1950, she wrote an essay titled “Women of India.” The essay both described and interpreted a "typical" day in the life of an Indian peasant woman and contrasted that life with the more technologically sophisticated lives of women in Canada. Fahmni provided a detailed depiction of household tasks and also outlined contradictions experienced by individual Indian women. Not only were they the most honoured members of the home, with "authority being unquestioned but there have been great abuses meted out to women too."\(^{110}\) Among the specific abuses chronicled by Fahmni were child marriage and temple prostitution, as well as the more general, pervasive condition of poverty.

In part, Fahmni’s purpose in writing the paper was to highlight the role played by Indian women and their organizations in the independence struggle and in ongoing social change. She said that "Women have shared with men in the struggle for independence, suffering insults, abuse and imprisonment, finding their own emancipation in the national struggle for freedom."\(^{111}\) Additionally, she
sought to connect recent economic and political gains made by Indian women with the nonviolence and spirituality of Gandhi's leadership, suggesting that if the women of India "remain loyal to this way of love and active good-will they may yet lead the world out of the horror which faces it in modern war." In actuality, Gandhian self-sacrifice, powerful as an ideal, effective in the political struggle for independence and attractive to Mildred Fehrni on spiritual grounds, really offered little hope for emancipation to most Indian women. Indeed, Fehrni's focus on matters of the spirit, certainly facilitated by her own Christianity, tended to blind her to the shortcomings of pacifism, idealism and the real problems for women who lived with deeply ingrained oppression and abject poverty. While she never softened her critique of imperialism, she was inclined to expect over much of the women whose lives were circumscribed by it.

In this regard, Fehrni looked to the women of India as exemplars, as specially suited to model for the rest of the world the strategies and strength to abolish war. She wrote that: "While the whole Western world continues to put its faith in the sword . . . and the atomic bomb, India with a greater appreciation of spiritual power has shown that non-violence can be an effective weapon in overcoming wrong." Fehrni shared this admiration for the women of developing nations with Sheila Young. This perspective is yet another demonstration of their faith in others, and of Fehrni's desire to "recognize [that] the needs of other people are just as important as our needs for ourselves." While Fehrni's
tendency to sentimentalize and sanctify Gandhi, whom she deemed "saintly," is understandable; it severely diminished her capacity to see the limitations of his views and strategies. She remained utopian in her appraisal of the political power of nonviolence. In keeping with the complementarianism inherent in the construction of gender relations she accepted, she characterized Kasturbai Gandhi, the Mahatma's wife, as a helpmeet, never quite an equal,

a faithful wife trying to understand the beliefs and methods of her saintly husband, not always being successful for she said, "It is alright for Bapu to fast and maintain such a rigid self discipline. But he is a saint. He should not expect so much of us." However she too followed the way of love and truth . . . . 115

Also evident in Fahnri's writing about India is her maternalist hope that enfranchised Indian women would use the ballot to "tip the scales towards national regeneration, social justice and international goodwill."116

Fahnri's confidence in women's special talent for creating goodwill stretched from India to Canada and strengthened as she observed the emerging political consciousness within VOW. Among VOW women there was a fledgling faith in themselves as women. They continued to meet and talk personally in small groups, but they also branched out. The newspapers reported their conferences, their leaders enjoyed national recognition and met with Canadian political leaders and foreign diplomats. Members took up educational work and appeared in growing numbers at parades and rallies. VOW embodied activism. British CND leader Diana Collins remarked pointedly about the importance of
visibility and action while visiting VOW sisters in Vancouver. She would, she asserted, rather walk than talk for peace.117 Moreover, cracks in the edifice of patriarchal relations were beginning to show, although these inadequacies were identified rather hesitantly. Women peacemakers came to recognize the shortcomings of male traditions through their own practice: "Not that we were man hating feminists, but no longer would we wait respectfully for men to do something."118

Although Voices skillfully utilized conventional appearances of respectability, they wore gloves, hats and pearls (Foulks, 1990), they were also prepared to act publicly in ways that disobeyed the law and so redrew the limits of women’s peace activism. In November 1961, for example, Mildred Fahrni organized a Vancouver cenotaph eight hour prayer vigil for peace on behalf of VOW, CFOR and the Quakers. The Parks Board objected and Vancouver city officials banned the vigil. Fahrni was adamant, insisting that the vigil would proceed no matter what obstacles interfered (Pacific Tribune, 1961). Respectability did not preclude quiet defiance by Voices. They were also increasingly inclined to bring their children to peace protests. This challenged the prescription that mothers should be with their children at home, rarely heard and uninvolved in political events.

Central to Fahrni’s vision of a remade world was community. From her earliest work in WILPF, she had participated in efforts "to build up a sense of
community in our own thought . . . we’re all one, a part of a whole." She maintained that women were capable of the creativity and imagination within which a more peaceful future would flourish because of their relationship to children, suggesting that:

. . . we have a special contribution to make in our concerns for the future generation, probably because women are the ones that are taking more responsibility in looking after children, their own children and others. This is very important because they are the ones that are in danger and also have the opportunity of building a better world.\textsuperscript{120}

Women’s primary position in child care bequeathed to them the potential to pass along their desire for "a better world." This relationship was the key to socialization for peace. It was also an important constraint, preventing women from becoming as socially and politically involved as men or as childless women such as Mildred Fahrni. Thus, most women were not as willing as Fahrni believed they should be to act decisively to promote peace. She pointed this out in a \textit{Winnipeg Free Press} interview.

Mrs. Fahrni was asked if she felt too many women were apathetic about the world situation. "Yes. Women have not realized their potential for creative action. As long as danger is not immediate and complete and absolute, they resist accepting responsibility. They do not try to intervene in international affairs in spite of the fact that their children already suffering from the effects of nuclear testing, and will continue to do so."\textsuperscript{121}

Typically, Fahrni’s solution to the problem of apathy and unrealized potential was organizing and social action, "more peace workers and not so many peace wishers."\textsuperscript{122}
Upon Fahrni’s return to Vancouver from the September 1962 Montreal VOW conference her zealous sense of mission moved into high gear. She wrote infectiously of stirred consciences and imaginations. Immediately, she produced a list of “Information Publications” for members of Vancouver VOW. Soon, she set about enlisting other Voices to help plan the Vancouver contributions to International Cooperation Year, an initiative of the Montreal conference, planned for 1963 that would eventually win approval from the UN. Among the proposals were "‘Person to Person’ and Family to Family projects of correspondence, visiting and cultural exchanges . . ."\textsuperscript{123} and "‘SERVAS’ project "Open Door" homes needed across Canada."\textsuperscript{124} SERVAS, after the Esperanto word for serve, was founded in 1948 by students at the Askov Folk High School in Denmark. They aimed to provide homes for travellers and thus to build on the family level "the understanding between people which is basic to peace."\textsuperscript{125} SERVAS became a lifelong interest of Fahrni’s and she acted as a SERVAS host, helping to show strangers and travellers hospitality and kindness. She offered, in her words, "just a friendly gesture to people who are travelling."\textsuperscript{126} Friendly gestures fit nicely with her cooperative inclinations and were as motivated by her pacifist philosophy as by her kindliness. For example, Fahrni willingly opened the doors of her home during the 1960s and 70s to American draft resisters and deserters opposed to service in Vietnam. "Hippies" also enjoyed her hospitality, although she admitted that the gap between their views and hers seemed very wide indeed:
There is much of value in the revolt of the younger generation against conformity to the superficial and hypocritical in our civilization but it is difficult to understand their detachment from any sense of social responsibility.\(^{127}\)

As well as sparking a long-term organizing mission, Fahrni’s return to Vancouver in late September 1962 was complicated by more immediate problems. While VOW engaged in optimistic deliberations at its conference, the events that culminated in the Cuban Missile Crisis built around them a circle of despair. When the tensions escalated, VOW and other groups demonstrated to save the precarious peace. During the week of 21 October - the most troubled and dangerous of the Cold War thus far - the BCPC arranged a parade, the Communist Party organized rallies and daily pickets of all political and pacifistic stripes appeared in front of the US consulate. VOW cooperated with the CCND and together they demonstrated publicly on the very day when the crisis was most acute, when many Canadians believed that war was inevitable.

In front of the Vancouver Court House Tuesday [23 October] a large number of women from the Voice of Women and the Canadian Committee for Nuclear Disarmament, met and wired the heads of governments, including Prime Minister Diefenbaker, urging steps to save peace.\(^{128}\)

To most Canadians this effort would likely have seemed futile, had they known of it.

In 1963, with the Cuban crisis resolved, Mildred Fahrni was back on the road, travelling for peace and organizing projects for International Cooperation Year. As part of those activities, VOW’s national leader, Thérèse Casgrain,
visited Vancouver in February with Diana Collins. Both women met with local VOW members at a coffee party, and in an interview, Collins differentiated her peace work from that of her husband, Canon John Collins, also a CND founder and activist. "I deal with the moral and Christian side. My husband does the politics."¹²⁹ This remark characterized traditional politics as a public ritual separating women and men and undermining the moral task of creating bonds, deepening "personhood itself" and bringing forth community (Wildung Harrison, 1985). To achieve some unity between the moral and the political VOW infused mainstream political life with personal and relational concerns - those elements usually dismissed in the corridors of male power as "irrational," having little political relevance.

In the late spring, Fahrni attended a Portland, Oregon, Peace Conference and reported back to the BC VOW Third Annual Meeting in Vancouver on 4 May. In Portland she promoted International Cooperation Year, injecting into the proceedings a perspective consistent with an emerging Canadian nationalist peace position:

My feelings are perhaps stirred because I am a Canadian and it was the Canadian VOW which originated the idea and it is so nice for those of us who live in the Northern wilds to have something to boast about when we come to this country of the biggest and best . . . everything - even atomic bombs. . . . it is only when we involve great numbers of people at the base of the pyramid that we can hope to achieve a sense of unity in a great forward movement for peace.¹³⁰
Since the end of the war, Canadian peace activists had been particularly proud of Canada's refusal to develop or accept nuclear weapons. Early 1963, however, while especially hopeful on the international level for peace activists, was disturbing for Canadians concerned about the question of nuclear arms on Canadian soil. Among the signs of hope were the successful defusing of The Cuban Missile Crisis the previous October. This lent credibility not only to the peace movement, particularly to its informal world leader, Lord Bertrand Russell of the CND, who had raged publicly against the folly of nuclear brinkmanship, but also to the potential for diplomatic progress on arms control issues. Nikita Krushchev had garnered considerable, if grudging, admiration for appearing to be conciliatory during the crisis, thus enabling peace activists to promote cooperation between the USSR and the USA somewhat more easily than had been possible previously. Negotiations to limit nuclear weapons testing were not only underway, but also, the negotiators were making progress. In Canada, however, a disturbing sign for peace activists appeared when Lester Pearson's Liberal government reversed "an earlier stand against Canada becoming a nuclear power, Pearson said Canada should take nuclear warheads for its NATO forces . . . and leave control in U.S. hands." This pronouncement was profoundly unsettling, inspiring a popular crusade against nuclear weapons on Canadian soil and sowing discontent and discord within VOW. Eventually, Voices with ties to the Liberal Party left the organization. Those who remained grew steadily more critical of government,
engaging in anti-NATO protests and mounting their own demonstrations of a more militant nature than before (Roberts 1989). Soon, they came to deal personally and organizationally with the red-baiting so familiar to other peace groups.

In this same period, from 1963-65, cautious optimism about the test ban signed in October 1963 was further dampened by greater awareness of the conflict in Indochina, focussing particularly on the US role in Vietnam. In June of 1964 the BCPC organized a car parade where the three "suggested slogans" illustrated the expanding emphasis of peace activists in the province. These slogans were: "Stop the War in Vietnam," "Keep the Warheads Out of Comox" and "No Nuclear Base for Comox." Rather than concentrating only on demonstrations against nuclear weapons, this new emphasis extended the peace agenda to include Canadian nationalist sentiment, anti-imperialism and a new and very personal sort of internationalism. In the early winter of 1964, with the internationalist potential of ICY uppermost in her mind, Mildred Fahrni anticipated a new year:

I'm looking forward to 1965 . . . International Cooperation Year as a real challenge and an opportunity to increase the interest and activity in world peace. Programs for conferences, travel missions (my itchy feet tingle) and camps are under way. There are also local projects in "people to people" exchanges of art, films, correspondence, etc. through the "twinning cities" program.

Fahrni's anticipation of vitality, of many programs and initiatives in 1965 was justified. Although VOW's numbers had declined and it was forced to contend with deep political disagreements and anti-communism, it tried to remain lively and focused, embarking, as did WILPF, on a variety of related projects,
often in collaboration with other groups. In the wake of the Test Ban, urgency to "ban the bomb" subsided, and single-issue groups such as the CCND struggled to adjust. VOW’s ever-widening interests made it less vulnerable to irrelevance and its leadership seemed ready to address other problems. At a peace group Co-ordinating Committee meeting held in 1965 at the west-side home of VOW’s Laura Kirk, some of the elite, old guard of the Vancouver peace movement met to consider projects for the coming year. At this meeting, concern for confronting new issues - especially Vietnam - as well as for consolidating plans for pursuing the perpetual goal of disarmament was evident. Playing key roles in the discussion were Fahrni, representing FOR, and two other women peace leaders whose paths had been intertwined with hers for more than a decade, Sheila Young and Irene Foulks, now active in VOW. Fahrni, true to her role as a philosophically-minded pacifist, related FOR’s ambitious plan to sponsor a conference on the moral and technological implications of peace on earth. Foulks urged an ongoing emphasis on large and well-organized demonstrations and announced a "Christmas Parcel Project" for Vietnam. Young too, stated that the WILPF would be concentrating on the Vietnam situation as well as on recognition of China. She seconded a motion that proposed active support for "a spring march and/or meeting re. the Vietnam situation."

The world of Mildred Fahrni and the peace women was beginning to change. Their horizons, which had always been intellectually broad, would
broaden now in practice to embrace the contentious cause of peace in Vietnam as their primary work. Their experience as general "anti-war" activists would narrow and specify. Increasingly, too, they would have to confront the fractious issue of "just war" in the context of the struggle of the Vietnamese. Some VOW members undertook to knit for Vietnamese infants dark-coloured baby clothes as camouflage against US bombing. Others became partisans, supporting actively the Vietnamese National Liberation Front (NLF) in the conflict. Still others remained nonpartisan. By the end of March 1965, women from VOW and WILPF, joined by the Quakers, the BC branch of the CCND and the Student Union for Peace Action (SUPA) had held a conference which asked "Prime Minister Pearson to do what he can to have the US end hostilities in Vietnam, and to have the Geneva Conference reconvened to settle matters permanently." Thereafter, prompted by Sheila Young, some of the conference organizers formed a coalition - The Peace Action League (PAL).

Changes not only took hold of the peace agenda but also they altered the tenor and tactics of public demonstrations. Even in Vancouver, young people and students transformed the public face of the anti-war movement. While the PAL continued its quiet vigils on the Granville and Georgia street corner, parades and marches in the streets became louder, larger, occasionally unruly, often defiant, rarely evoking pacifist images. For Fahrni, such changes were not a cause for despair, although they proved a difficult adjustment for some of her colleagues,
especially those in the Peace Council. Just as she welcomed draft resisters and "hippies" into her home, she also welcomed the new energy evident in the peace movement. In 1967, after returning home from yet another VOW conference in Montreal, she wrote "The rising tide of protest over the war in Viet Nam gives hope where frustration threatens to paralyze."\textsuperscript{139}

Fahrni was never paralyzed. Her work in the peace movement consumed her but was, in her view, inadequate. She bore the burden of many who dedicate themselves to the cause of making the world a better place - the derision and cynicism of critics and the knowledge that injustice, violence and war endured despite her best efforts. Moral concern and Christian faith permeated her endeavours both to define and to live the future peaceful world, a world which eluded her except in her own hopes. Her faith was protective. She was less likely to succumb to despair, less inclined to modify her beliefs than were some of her more pragmatic comrades. She served loyally the social gospel and maternalist ideals she had embraced as a very young woman. Essentially, peace by peaceful means would flower through helping others. In Fahrni's words, her purpose was to "push the barriers of isolation farther back . . . as we seek to widen and deepen the community of love."\textsuperscript{140} While there are many things that seem too good, too optimistic and too sentimental in much of what she said and wrote, there is no doubting either her sincerity or her impact on others (Knickerbocker, 1992). Although the oppressive, damaging reality of gender relations which assigns to
Western women the principal, unvalued responsibility of caring for others is undeniable, the assumption of this role by Fahrni and like-minded women to counter violence with peacefulness, demonstrates its freeing, unifying potential. Fahrni actualized her belief in the necessity of service to others, as well as her pacifism, in order to defy and to change a world contemptuous and unmindful of both.

Fahrni’s actions as a woman peacemaker were marred by setbacks others would term either failures or disasters. The outpouring of protest against the war in Vietnam which she greeted with such enthusiasm subsided in the early 1970s. The war ended in 1975. At the same time, the women’s movement re-emerged with a re-defined feminism, advocating equal rights, equal recognition and asserting methods of political work explicitly critical of traditional male politics and implicitly critical of the ways of older women peace activists. As Liddington (1989) points out about this phenomenon in Britain, "Peace and nonviolence became old-fashioned words."141 Thereafter, the seasoned peace movement limped along for ten years, not as a movement, but as a small collection of small groups. CFOR survived, but it was always tiny, enjoying little influence, and marginal even within the peace movement. VOW shrank, although it too persisted. Fahrni must have felt anguish, but she was loathe to show it. Perhaps this was because "peace by peaceful means" was predicated on the belief that by serving others, one also serves oneself. So, even in Fahrni’s other-directedness there are kernels of
self satisfaction and sustenance. As well as living to care for and help others in
order to bring peace, Mildred Fahri lived to unsettle the consciences of those she
met:

. . . I never feel I’ve influenced people as much as I should but I’m trying to
get people to realize that they have more important things to do than just go to
movies and take holidays and look after themselves and have a good time. . . .
there are ways in which they can be useful and helpful and get a real
satisfaction out of it. But, I don’t want to give the impression that I’ve spent
all my time helping other people, because I don’t always succeed.142

She questioned her influence in a typically modest way, but she surely knew that
by living independently and unconventionally as a socialist, pacifist woman in an
era when both perspectives were heretical, she had set an example. She had made
the steps to activism for many younger women a little easier to take.
NOTES


4. Ibid.

5. Mildred Fahrni, updated personal resume, copy, possession of author.


11. Ibid.


14. Fahrni, unpublished memoirs of WILPF.

15. Ibid.


21. Ibid.


26. Ibid.

27. Ibid.

28. Fahrni, undated resume, copy, possession of author.


31. Ibid., p. 140.

32. Howard, "Mildred Fahrni."

33. Ibid.


43. Thompson, interview, 14 May 1990.

44. Mildred Fahni, Christmas letter, December 1958, copy, possession of author.

45. Mildred Fahni, undated resume, copy, possession of author.

46. Socknat, Witness Against War, p. 277.

47. Ibid., p. 276.


50. Ibid.

51. Socknat, Witness Against War, p. 289.


53. Ibid.


57. Fahni, Christmas letter, December 1950, copy, possession of author.


64. Fahrni, p. 2.


70. Ibid.


74. Mildred Fahrni, Christmas letter, December 1956, copy, possession of author.

75. Fahrni, Christmas letter, December 1951.
76. Fahrni, Christmas letter, December 1952.

77. Dingman, interview, 18 May 1990.

78. Fahrni, interview.


81. International Fellowship of Reconciliation, undated brochure, courtesy of Frank Dingman.


83. Ibid.

84. Irene Foulks, interview by Marcia Toms, Vancouver, BC, 1 June 1990.


87. Ibid.

88. Ibid.

89. Ibid.


91. Ibid.

92. Ibid.


94. BC Peace Council Minutes, 10 April, 8 May 1962, courtesy of Rosaleen Ross.

95. Fahrni, interview, 24 May 1990.

96. Ibid.

98. Ibid.


100. Fahrni, interview, 24 May 1990.


102. Fahrni, Report on VOW.

103. Ibid.

104. Ibid.


106. Ibid.

107. Ibid., p. 2.


111. Ibid.

112. Ibid., p. 6.

113. Ibid.

114. Fahrni, interview by Gzowski, "Morningside."

116. Ibid., p. 5.


120. Ibid.


122. Ibid.


124. Ibid.

125. SERVAS brochure, courtesy of Mildred Fahrni, possession of the author.


129. Moir, *Vancouver Sun*.


134. BC Peace Council Minutes.

135. Ibid.
136. Ibid., p. 2.


138. Vancouver Sun, 29 March 1965, VPL clipping file, Vancouver Public Library.


CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION: "ENTERING THE DOMAIN OF WAR"

... it is we especially, who in the domain of war have our word to say, a word no man can say for us. It is our intention to enter into the domain of war, and to labour there till in the course of generations we have extinguished it.¹

- Olive Schreiner -

The briefly-told stories of the work and beliefs of Sheila Young and Mildred Fahnri offer glimpses of each as leaders of Vancouver’s peace movement during its most trying time - the Cold War. Their work was shaped by strongly-held principles and undertaken in response to local, national and international situations. War, the threat of war, weapons testing, various injustices, poverty - each and all of these motivated the sensibilities and organizing that the pair undertook. In distinctly individual but related ways, each entered the domain of war and committed herself to ending it. In some respects, their efforts were not successful. The arms race did not subside, although atmospheric nuclear testing by three of the world’s nuclear powers (UK, USSR, USA) was eliminated. Wars did not end. No war but a Cold War encroached on North American and European soil, but regional conflicts of de-colonization and post-colonialism ruined large areas of the southern world. Peace movements, either women-only or mixed-gender, did not expand significantly and become strong electoral forces in

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Canada during the 1950s and 1960s. But if membership fluctuated and enthusiasm waxed occasionally and waned far more often, the movement as a whole did not die. Furthermore, in BC, WILPF and VOW, the women’s peace organizations of Young and Fahrni, survived, providing both the anti-Vietnam cause and the reborn peacemaking of the 1980s with a venerable legacy.

In the case of all peace activism, the measure of success must take into account more than whether or not peace was achieved. It must examine changes in social consciousness and values as well as the legislative reforms achieved. Certainly, the existence and continuation of peace movements challenges not only war and militarism, but also the ideology which constructs adversarial relations and domination as "normal" in political life. Where negotiation, compromise and consensus come to be valued as worthwhile in organizational interactions, domestically and internationally, peace activists may take heart. Canadian women have never achieved the level of integration into political and economic structures that allowed them equal opportunity to dominate, make war, or frame peace treaties. While Young, Fahrni and their colleagues did not accomplish many of the large goals they set for themselves, they did influence countless friends and acquaintances, they built and strengthened organizations and they helped establish in Vancouver a sense of the importance of peacemaking.

Further, in the context of intertwined class, gender and cultural realities, Young and Fahrni often engaged in social and political action differently from the
ways of the dominant gender. In both WILPF and VOW, women tried to merge social contacts and socializing with politics. Irene Foulks, active in the Women's Committee Against Radiation Hazards and VOW, remembered using the Unitarian Church in Vancouver for public meetings precisely because "they had ample space for over 100 people . . . and we could make coffee and we could have chit chats and get to know people personally." Mildred Fahrni was an expert tea-party campaigner. Activists in WILPF and VOW held knitting parties, teas, bazaars, and talked about children in the context of public, political life. They were dedicated to improving public life by infusing it with the practices of care and harmony that they believed should govern all relationships. They became adept at adapting women's domestic traditions to their organizing and fundraising requirements (Frager, 1989).

Often, too, women used familiar traditional political techniques, although almost always these techniques were employed outside the formal political process. Provincial legislatures and the federal parliament were not places where women pacifists (or often women of any kind) were represented. Nonetheless, perhaps because of an essential acceptance of the ideals of the societies in which they had been raised, where using reason and proper channels long enough were supposed to ensure success to those who persevered, they often functioned traditionally. They held meetings with speakers who were "experts," their organizations had formal structures and committees with chairmen, and they lobbied and wrote
letters to government leaders. Thus, even though they were excluded, they never entirely rejected the structures that excluded them. This was a legacy that had come to them from the founders of the Women’s Peace Party and the WILPF. Jean Bethke Elshtain (1987) contends that by their internationalism - both legalistic and spiritual - and their commitment to negotiation and reconciliation, anti-militarist women "located themselves within the larger frame of pacifist/just-war discourse." Furthermore, rather than refusing to play the game, these women tried to use persuasion and reason to change the rules.

The work of their foremothers in early pacifist sects as well as in the interwar period was largely ignored by historians, yet the women of Cold War Vancouver continued to try to have an impact on society and to be seen as active, conscious agents of change on the same stage as men. Moreover, they tried to alter the slant of the stage. Mildred Fahmi did not accept prevailing practices of international relations and "peacemaking," writing that "the means we use determine the ends we achieve." Sheila Young wrote frequently of the necessity of goodwill and trust. Mary Thomson spoke of developing sensitivity and "the ability to see the others point of view, which is crucial." Irene Foulks advocated education for peace as a profound ideological challenge to prevailing realities: "By peace we should mean peace in the expanded sense, not only freedom from war - but also freedom from those things that make for war, hostility, prejudice, urge to retaliate hurtfully, aggression, ignorance."
It was always a struggle to use peaceful means, to contradict the dualities of Cold War life, where citizens generally believed that it was sensible to use economic resources to produce war machines and to tell those who disagreed that they were cowards or to go back to Russia.

In addition to questioning the slant of the stage, Young, Fahrni and their sister activists questioned the composition of the players on that stage. They chose to work in women's peace groups for two reasons. First, they believed in the maternalist notion of women's "special abilities." Largely because of what they perceived as universal child rearing responsibilities and nearly universal political marginalization, they took it as true that all women were potentially crusaders for peace. Irrespective of class or culture, they thought this combination of absorbed interest in children and exclusion from making either laws or wars accentuated the sensitivity and carefulness of women. Each willingly admitted that conditions were not always favourable to the development of that potential. Still, however, their faith in women as the peaceful gender, while seeming to be borne out by women's general absence from making war, was not really justified. Canadian women did not become overwhelmingly committed to the peace cause during the Cold War. Those who did were always a small, if vocal, and generally privileged minority. These women became involved largely because of the power of moral arguments, framed in expressly altruistic terms. They certainly were not
motivated by a desire to change the world and make it peaceful in order to benefit themselves as women.

The second way that the peace women questioned the composition of the players on the stage grew in part from the involvement of each within mixed-gender peace and/or other social movements. They had been schooled in the necessity of building up and protecting the movement in general and their own groups in particular. At the same time, as in other progressive movements in Canada (Kealey, 1989), they were generally denied the stature, the formal recognition and the capacity to be leaders within these mixed-gender groups. Still, most had learned their lessons well and they hesitated to complain or to "rock the boat" of peace. Sustaining organizational manifestations of harmony and balance was as important as changing social awareness. These women did this in two ways. When faced with dissonance and factionalism during the years of anti-communism in Canada, Sheila Young chose a cautious form of activism to protect Vancouver WILPF. It seemed to VOW member Claire Perry, for example, that Young was "possessive about WILPF and didn’t seem to want people to join."

VOW, more bold and confident, sought to create a large organization by involving women who were moved by moral outrage but were unaccustomed to activism and unfamiliar with political life. Thus, they promised to women the creation of conditions within these organizations - WILPF and VOW - which, as Mildred
Fahrni remarked, would stir and nurture "the imagination and conscience of women to significant action." 9

This difference in strategy points to a significant difference between the organizations. While each was based on the activism of middle-class women, WILPF was not only older and more experienced but also more deeply radical, making related intellectual and political demands on its members which presupposed a sophisticated view of the world. VOW, on the other hand, was interested in the mass involvement of women, especially those defined as "ordinary housewives." Although its goals became complex and long-term, at first its purpose was simple and immediate: to stop the threat to the health and future of the world's people by uniting women in a campaign of concern.

As public figures and leaders of the Cold War women's peace movement in Vancouver, some visibility has been accorded Young and Fahrni in this thesis. The backdrop against which they actualized their beliefs, the specific campaigns they undertook, the strategies they used, and the kinds of organizations within which they worked, are fairly clear. By piecing together information from secondary sources, newspaper accounts, organizational documents, personal essays, cards, letters, and interviews, a sense of what happened, how and when, as well as the thoughts of the principal activists has been achieved. Far less clear, however, is a true sense of the two as private women. This is the case partly because, either in writing or when interviewed, each underemphasized the
importance of the personal and the private. Young believed, for example, that private life bore no relevance to her peace activism. In a memorial tribute to her, Carolyn Kline wrote that the members of WILPF had each known different parts of their compatriot, which at her wake, they put together like pieces in a puzzle. Fahrni, on the other hand, took pains to live in a very public fashion. Indeed, she appeared not to have a private life in the usual sense. Her home was always filled with friends and boarders, her living room a continuous meeting place, her back garden a site for teas and fundraising. Indeed, her lifelong project had been to merge the Christian pacifist conception of love with active peacemaking in the context of communal living. Reaching the Gandhian ideal of overcoming the appeal of the material world required infusing her private self with an entirely public persona, and that is the Mildred Fahrni evident in this thesis. A more solitary woman remains elusive.

Similarly, their relationships with one another, how they got on, what they argued about, whether they were friends as well as colleagues, how they viewed their marriages, have been difficult to discern. Occasionally, in memoirs, correspondence or interviews, one mentioned the other, but all the women interviewed tended to be circumspect when speaking of one another. They were occasionally critical, but generally in a qualified manner. Above all, they preferred not to talk in detailed concentration about the past, although they were happy to respond to questions and to recall specific events. They preferred,
instead to talk about the present and about what they continued to do as peace workers. They persisted, also, in exhorting younger activists to participate in their still-unresolved struggle.

The legacy Young and Fahrni left to the peace movement in Vancouver, and the importance of WILPF and VOW, has been little known, half-buried. Although young women flocked to anti-Vietnam groups in the late 1960s, and, often attracted by ecofeminist thinking, to the vastly expanded peace movement of the 1980s, few knew of their foremothers. Liddington suggests that in England during the 1970s, "Feminism sprang up again with scarcely any knowledge of its anti-militarist past."10 In Vancouver, the same was true. There were many differences among the older maternal pacifists and their younger sisters enthusiastic about women's liberation. Age was only the most obvious. More significant was the new feminism of many of the younger women. They opposed war, certainly, but they also opposed the very premises of patriarchal culture. They questioned individual male violence, they questioned the foundations of the traditional family, they questioned the value of childbirth and childrearing. Perhaps most importantly, they refused to accept the notion that women were inclined to be caring, peaceful and compromising. Despite these differences, the two groups did have points of intersection within the peace movement; opposition to nuclear power, to Cruise Missile testing, to colonialism, among others. Those points converged at the intergenerational "Women Negotiating for Peace"
conference in Vancouver in the spring of 1985. Organized by VOW, it brought women in their sixties, seventies and eighties, among them Foulks, Young, Fahrni, Rosaleen Ross, Mary Thomson, and Carolyn Kline, together with much younger women. They talked about poverty and militarism, religion, education, health, the media, and politics, parenting for peace and security and development. They saw peace as predicated on the achievement of a myriad of reforms, they viewed women, perhaps for different reasons, as having a particular responsibility to negotiate for peace. This was a familiar discourse.

The labours of Young and Fahrni, therefore, bore fruit by linking the peace-minded women of the nineteenth century with those of the twentieth, by pioneering specific campaigns, against war toys for example, which persist, and by being - against all odds - optimists. In many conversations near the end of her life, Mildred Fahrni spoke enthusiastically about the future: "Mildred will often say, we've made wonderful progress. Peace is now something a lot of people feel is the road to the future." The optimism and tenacity of these women are all the more remarkable because they seldom received recognition for their efforts, even within the peace and progressive community. Frequently, they suffered rudeness and derision in the political arena. Always, they worked within the restricting conditions of patriarchal structures which not only systematized and validated militarism but also oppressed them as women. Nonetheless, they "had their word to say" and, in the end, allowed no man to say it for them.
NOTES


2. Irene Foulks, interview by Marcia Toms, Vancouver, BC, 1 June 1990.


6. Irene Foulks, VOW educational document, May 1968, courtesy of Irene Foulks, p. 3.

7. Fahrni, "Who Wants Peace?"


11. This information is summarized from a list of conference topics and participants. Possession of the author, who was also a participant and workshop leader in Women and Education.

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