

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY
Toronto, March, 1989
Adar, 5749

This year The Schvester - a Toronto Jewish feminist group whose name means "Sisters" in Yiddish- has chosen to celebrate IWD by marching in solidarity with Israeli feminists and with our sisters in Israel, who are working against the Occupation, against patriarchal militarism and for the construction of a peace-embracing world.

We particularly honour NASHIM be'SHACHOR - Women in Black - who gather every Friday before the Sabbath in the streets of Jerusalem, Tel-Aviv and Haifa in silent protest and public mourning against the occupation and against oppression everywhere. With all feminists who work against militarism, their protests are ignored if not reviled by much of the mainstream /malestream and so-called alternative organizations and media. Why? Are Canadian/feminist organizations and our media complicit in this silencing?

As Jewish Canadian feminists who believe that all children, all women, all people must have a secure home/land, we call upon all feminists to support antimilitarist actions and to do so without silencing the actions of our Israeli and Jewish sisters.

We share with you some of our sisters' thoughts.

In the wake of the recent increase in violence and repression in the occupied territories, we feel compelled to raise our voices in unison, as women, against the present government policies...We believe that people seeking peace must begin to take responsibility for combating the violence immediately around them. The "Israel Women's Alliance Against the Occupation" hopes to use its power to prevent more killings and violence and to speak out for peace.

Lillian Moed, Jerusalem, April, 1988.

In the tumultuous Middle East, it is impossible to predict the future. But perhaps women from both communities will find a way to communicate with one another, above the noise of petrol bombs and Uzi submachine guns, and inspire their leaders to negotiate.

Reena Bernards, Lilith, Winter 1989.

Who can protest and does not
is an accomplice in the act.

from the Talmud

And in that other country
of choices made by others
that country I never chose
that country of terrible leavings
and returnings
in that country whose map I
carry on my palm
the forests are on fire:
history is on fire...

In a time of broken hands
in a broken-promised land
something happens to the right hand...

When the right hand forgets its
cunning, what of the other?
Shall we invent its story?...

from "Turning" by Adrienne Rich

I am no longer so optimistic about women working together to bring about
peace in the Middle East. But I stay committed to this journey of
dialogue with other women instead of falling into despair. I have no
other choice.

Lilly Rivlin, Lilith, winter 89/5749.

There are two people living in this country: Jews and Palestinians. Both
think it's their country and neither is going to leave. We don't believe
in expelling people, or occupying territories or in one people using
force to rule the other people. We believe in equality in all levels.
Jews and Palestinians should find a way to live together in equality, on
the national level, as well as culturally and socially.

Nava Sonnenschein, Nave Shalom/
Wahat al-Salam/Oasis of Peace village.

שלום, שוועסטר