

## Annual Report 2005

The Coalition of Women for Peace engages in a prodigious amount of activity to promote its goals of peace, justice, and equality. Some highlights of 2005:

### Outreach to “the unconvinced”

♣ **Centrists.** Some 2,000 Israelis participated in “Reality Tours” to the Separation Wall this year, where trained guides conduct tours that expose the participants to the bleak consequences of occupation. Meetings with Palestinians during these tours help put a human face on the Other. There is increasing demand for these tours among diverse audiences – even groups of soldiers have participated!

♣ **Russian-speaking immigrant women.**

Immigrants to Israel from the former Soviet Union hear many racist views in the Russian-language media in Israel, but this project brings them a progressive voice. In 2005, we provided lectures and discussions – in Russian – about current affairs, bringing 150 women to weekend seminars [photo right] or sending speakers to community centers, neighborhood clubhouses, youth groups, and other venues.



♣ **Youth.** The Coalition co-sponsored a Youth Activist Camp for the first time last summer, in which 70 teens (aged 15-19) learned about a wide variety of social and environmental issues and participated in tours of the Separation Wall and disadvantaged areas of Israel. These youths were exposed to inspiring activists, and many have since become empowered to activism themselves.

### Advocacy

♣ **Separation Wall:** Together with other members of the Coalition Against the Wall, the Coalition of Women for Peace has campaigned extensively to halt construction of the Separation Barrier – through weekly nonviolent demonstrations in Bil’in, tours of the wall for many Israelis who have never seen it; and a national and international campaign.

♣ **“And what about the Occupation?”:** Coalition women took to the streets to publicize specific issues – ‘welcoming’ Condoleezza Rice to Israel with our demands;

a joint campaign with Ta'ayush to protect the Palestinian villagers of Nu'man, whose lives have been made untenable by occupation policies; and efforts to prevent the destruction of Palestinian homes in Haifa and near Jerusalem. The Coalition's Media Project ensured that all this received wide media attention.

♣ **Tali Fahima Campaign:** The Coalition led the public campaign to halt the political persecution of Tali Fahima, a young woman accused of treason and providing aid to a terrorist. Thanks to the public campaign, the state was forced to put Fahima on trial, and the charges turned out to be much less serious, ending in a plea bargain. Throughout the campaign, the Coalition contended that Fahima was being treated harshly because of her sympathy with the Palestinian cause, not her actions, and that the Security Services were also driven by class, ethnic, and gender biases. The government's retreat on the most serious charges seems to bear out this contention. The Coalition kept this case in the news by intense media work that was based on public petitions and dramatic demonstrations [photo above – activists wear masks of Fahima outside the court].



♣ Our **Reframing Security** campaign was launched in 2005, aimed at demonstrating that security is more than having a strong army, but must be the product of a broad range of humanist activity – ensuring that society cares for its poor, reduces violence, protects its natural resources, and co-exists in peace with its neighbors. So far, this campaign has included two major conferences, extensive media work, and a colorful poster placed in schools showing the expanded concepts of security – freedom, human dignity, justice, health, etc. [photo left].



♣ **The Legal Collective** is a new, autonomous project given oversight by the Coalition. This is a group of mostly women lawyers who provide legal aid to Palestinians in the Israeli military court system in the Occupied Territories. They also work toward a Palestinian justice system that would be independent of the Israeli military court system in the territories. The Legal Collective takes on individual cases, holds public education seminars, and provides legal briefings for journalists. Two recent seminars: “The judicial framing of the Israeli occupation – an international perspective” and “The right to representation in criminal law in Israel”.

♣ **Young Women's Forum:** This new forum brings together progressive young women – Jewish and Arab, most in their 20s – under the banner “Politics and a Vision for the Third Millennium”. The groups give participants a forum for empowerment, vision-building, and action around the question – how can this generation imprint its understanding of democracy and justice on Israeli society?

♣ **Solidarity with Palestinian women:** ► On International Women’s Day, the Coalition held a joint demonstration with Palestinian women, actually entering the walled-off city of Qalkilia (where Israelis are prohibited from entering). ► In cooperation with ASWAT-Palestinian Gay Women and Isha l’Isha, the Coalition hosted Palestinian women activists at a “Fight Burnout Party” in May. ► We also arranged for Tulkarm women to enter Israel for a joint meeting with Israeli women in June. ► And in July, we organized a “fun day” for 300 Palestinian children.

## Ending Racism

♣ Abir Kopty [photo below], a Coalition activist and Palestinian citizen of Israel, was a frontrunner in a reality TV program that sought to encourage a new generation of leadership in Israel. When Abir lost because of her refusal to stand during the playing of Israel’s national anthem, the Coalition generated huge media publicity about the Jewish symbols of the state and discrimination against Israel’s Arab citizens, thereby catalyzing a public debate about the non-inclusive nature of these symbols.



♣ In May, a public hearing was held at Haifa University entitled “The Demographic Problem of Israel” – meaning its Arab population – with the participation of senior Israeli academics and military men. In response, members of the Coalition, joined by Ta’ayush and Mossawa, generated loud protest and drew considerable media attention to the racist perspective of the event.

## Social Justice Activities

♣ The Coalition helped organize and run the *student struggle* in April, which demanded more funds for education, and helped show the problem of privatizing schools. In Haifa University, a feminist Palestinian student group was established with Coalition help. At Oranim College, a Coalition woman (from the Russian group) ran for head of the Student Union. Her campaign, supported by Coalition women, enabled us to raise many issues with students about “what is security”, the effects of privatization, the planned education reform, the plight of the Palestinians, and the “occupation of women”.

♣ The Coalition is an active member of the *Forum Against Unemployment*, which advocates extensively for more just economic, social, and environmental policies. This Forum took an active role in seeking to prevent the privatization of government institutions, particularly the education system. It was instrumental in organizing demonstrations of the major labor unions in Israel to protest government economic policies. The Forum also organized two conferences demanding government attention to poverty, education, and health. We believe that these efforts were part of the rising swell of public opinion demanding fairer social and economic policies.

## Public Education Events

♣ The annual June *Activism Festival* was held in the neglected city of Lod. In addition to helping organize the Festival, Coalition women conducted 6 workshops there on issues of peace, social justice, and human rights. [Photo right, a workshop on “Russian Feminism”.]



♣ *Speaking engagements:* Throughout the year, Coalition women appeared 30 times in public venues on a variety of issues connected to women, the occupation, and the social-economic situation. When Cynthia Enloe, the well known scholar of militarism and gender, came to Israel, the Coalition organized a talk by her in Haifa, in cooperation with Isha L’Isha: the Haifa Feminist Center.



♣ The Coalition’s *Raging Grannies* – women over age 65 who write and perform political satire in song [photo, left] – appeared frequently at political events and 3 times on national TV, offering a biting but humorous critique of government policies.

## Mainstreaming Women

*Knesset legislation:* The Coalition joined the successful campaign of Isha L’Isha to pass the Knesset bill mandating the participation of women in national decision-making, including peace negotiations. Thanks to our Media Project, the importance of this law received extensive public exposure in the media.

*Implementing 1325:* The Coalition organized the signatures of 22 Palestinian and Israeli women's organizations on a document calling upon Condoleezza Rice to press for the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1325 – the first time, as far as we know, that a consortium of Palestinian and Israeli women's organizations signed a joint statement.

## *Capacity building of member organizations*

♣ *Fundraising:* In 2005, the Coalition raised a total of \$221,640 for its member organizations and others with which we are ideologically affiliated<sup>1</sup>. These programs range from empowering young Arab women to exposing militarism in Israeli society.

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<sup>1</sup> Women in Black, TANDI, Ahoti for Empowerment of Mizrahi Women, Bat Shalom, Noga Feminist Journal, Machsom [checkpoint] Watch, New Profile, and Aswat: Palestinian Gay Women.

♣ Coalition member organizations work hard to give each other support and *visibility*. In December, we published a full-page ad in *Ma'ariv* [photo right] describing each organization and inviting women to join us in our work.



♣ **Media support:** The Media Project of the Coalition serves not only the Coalition, but also our member organizations, gaining critical media exposure for their views and activities:

- ▶ We organized 3 workshops to train organizations in basic media skills: strategic media work, how to publicize an event; how to write press releases, op-eds and letters to the editor; and how to create and convey effective messages.
- ▶ We provided assistance to 4 member organizations that sought media exposure for specific activities. The largest of these was the massive Women in Black conference, which gained impressive local and international coverage, even though it was competing for media attention with the Gaza disengagement.
- ▶ We did the crucial media work for 4 major campaigns of the Coalition itself (all more fully described above).
- ▶ We won extensive coverage for events run by the Coalition, such as demonstrations and conferences.
- ▶ We placed over 20 op-eds and letters to the editor in the major newspapers and internet news portals in Israel. Also, 17 interviews conducted with Coalition women were aired on the major TV, radio, and newspaper channels.



♣ The Coalition was the main organizer of the *international Women in Black “activist conference”* held in August [photo left]. The conference brought over 700 participants from 40 countries to the region, including a dozen women from regions in conflict (Chechnya, Colombia, D.R.Congo, etc.). As a result of this conference, hundreds of participants from other countries have become active or increased their commitment to ending war and violence in the Middle East and elsewhere.<sup>2</sup>

♣ **Website:** The Coalition runs a 3-language website – Hebrew, Arabic and English. This website not only gives information about activities of the Coalition and its member organizations, but also provides web pages to member organizations that do not have their own, and links to those that do. Exposure to the website currently averages more than 11,000 “visits” a month. Visit us at [www.coalitionofwomen.org](http://www.coalitionofwomen.org).

<sup>2</sup>Through August 2005, conference plenaries can be viewed at <http://web11.mediazone.co.il/media/wib/130805/>

## *International Outreach*

**Visitors:** During 2005, the Coalition made presentations to a total of 879 individuals visiting Israel from other countries, exposing these politically involved internationals to our programs and views. (This does not include the Women in Black conference.)

**International conferences:** Coalition members spoke at conferences in many countries, presenting our programs and views (Geneva, Istanbul, Paris, Rome, Malaysia, the Mediterranean Civil Forum in Luxemburg, the Mediterranean Social Forum in Barcelona, and the World Social Forum in Porto Allegre).

**Email list** – Our e-mails now reach over 4,500 readers throughout the world. This list has not been “bought”, but compiled over the years by people who ask to subscribe.

## *Awards*

♣ In 2005, the Coalition was awarded the Memorial Peace Prize given in Catalonia, and named for Josep Vidal I Llecha, jointly with the International Solidarity Movement, for our “contribution to the creative and nonviolent transformation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict”.

## *How to Make a Contribution – some options:*



- ❖ Write a check (any currency) to “Coalition of Women for Peace” and mail it to P.O.Box 10252, Jerusalem, Israel 91102.
- ❖ For a US-tax deduction (minimum \$100), make out a check to “New Israel Fund”. Write in the memo line that it is for the Coalition of Women for Peace, and mail it to NIF, 1101 14<sup>th</sup> Street NW, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, Washington, DC 20005-5639.
- ❖ For a UK-tax deduction (minimum 70 GBP) make out a check to "New Israel Fund", write on the memo line that it is for the Coalition of Women for Peace, and mail it to New Israel Fund, 25-26 Enford Street, London W1H 1DW.
- ❖ For a Netherlands-tax deduction, deposit into the bank account of Stichting Ontwikkeling Mondiaal Leiderschap, Javakade 162, 1019 RW Amsterdam, account 697683222, writing on the memo line: “Education program of the Coalition of Women for Peace”.
- ❖ For a Swiss tax benefit, make out a check to "Neuer Israel Fonds Schweiz", write on the memo line that it is for the Coalition of Women for Peace, and mail it to NIF-Schweiz, Postfach 425, CH-4010 Basel. Or deposit to Postscheckkonto 40-37333-1.
- ❖ Or from anywhere, you can make a wire transfer directly into our bank account:  
Israel Discount Bank, Hamoshava Branch #062, 21 Emek Refaim St., Jerusalem, Israel.  
Beneficiary: Coalition of Women for Peace.  
Account Number: 967017-512400. Swift Code: IDBLILIT 062.  
From Europe: IBAN No. IL 011062 967017 512400.

*Thank you for your support – it is oxygen to our movement!*