

SWS/p29 2236/55

24.6.73

# Annual Report

for the South Australian Branch of the Union of Australian Women, held in the AMWU Conference Room, 264 Halifax Street, Adelaide on SUNDAY, 24th June, '73

Since our last Annual General Meeting there have been two major occurrences affecting our organisation. The first is the ending of the Vietnam war with the signing of the Peace Agreement in January of this year. The whole world rejoiced and as an organisation we were particularly happy for our sisters and the children of Vietnam for we had opposed the war since its inception in 1964. At the time public opinion was against us but as the war continued, with its atrocities and barbarities more and more people came to question it and there is no doubt that the actions of people throughout the world assisted in making the USA sign the agreement. In Australia the actions of the Maritime unions in banning US shipping etc. following the US bombing of North Vietnam in December undoubtedly had a tremendous effect.

In November of last year, the people of Australia chose to elect a Federal Labor Government and with this came an end to Australia's participation in the Vietnam war and the conscription of the young 20 year olds. We called for the election of a Labor Government in these elections recognising that there were many positive aspects in the Labor Party's policy in relation to women and the family. The government has already shown its appreciation of the problems of women and among the positive actions it has already taken are:-

- \* the reconvening of the Arbitration Court and acceptance of submissions by the unions for equal pay for women workers
- \* paid maternity leave for women in the public service and guarantee of continuity of service
- \* the appointment of Elizabeth Reid as woman adviser to the Prime Minister.

Plans are in hand to increase the number of child care centres, which not only means the building of more centres but an increase in the number of teachers for the work and facilities for them to be trained. At present the government is planning to introduce a free medical and health service with some virulent opposition from the Australian Medical Association. As an organisation we have called for such a health scheme from our inception and we will need to work very hard to ensure that the scheme becomes a reality. To this end we will hold a Special Luncheon with Guest Speaker Dr. Richie Gun, MHR, on Wednesday, 1st August at Willard Lounge in Wakefield Street, Adelaide. Dr. Gun will outline the government's proposals on the scheme and this can mean a better understanding by our organisation so that we can act in the most effective way to ensure that the scheme becomes a reality.

While recognising that the Labor Party does not necessarily have all the answers to the needs of women the facts show that it is more mindful of them than the Liberal government and able to act. However, our organisation has the task of ensuring that the government is aware of the needs of working women and the wives of working men, not being afraid to voice our opposition when wrong things are done but also applauding and assisting to develop a good and positive approach to the needs of women and the family.



PRICES CAMPAIGN:- The recent actions of our organisation over increased meat prices and the national boycott on meat received publicity and recognition throughout Australia. The influence of the campaign with people far removed from the UAW was widespread. Because we are a national organisation our influence is far greater on the community at large.

Monopoly companies are profiteering at the people's expense. To cover their greed, they spread the falsehood that current price spiralling is caused by wage rises. However, the Arbitration Commission grants wage rises on the basis of previous cost of living increases. Yet companies use those very wage rises to bump prices up to protect and, indeed, expand their profits. Apart from this, surely our experience as women shows that the wage packets available are just too inadequate to meet the cost of living. Prices go up whether wages rise or not. For example, the recent bus fare rise, the rise in meat prices and indeed many other food price increases have all occurred without any wage rises taking place. The real culprit is big business and its endless drive for the greatest profit.

It is because we recognise this fallacy that we are opposed to any question of freezing wages and prices as an answer to increased costs. Experience of workers in England and the USA have shown quite clearly that such measures only result in a lessening of the living standards while the manufacturers can invariably find a way to increase their profit. We call for Federal Price and Profit Control and for a price freeze as an interim measure to hold the situation until such price and profit control can be instituted. In the meantime the Federal governments Prices Justification Tribunal can have some positive results if enough pressure is brought to bear on the government and our submissions and discussions with government members "on aspects of consumer affairs that could have a bearing on the budget", will be a start in the right direction.

We need a great mobilisation of our members and friends to keep a list of prices, when purchases were made, where, and then to check the list regularly to ascertain increases. This kind of practical information can give us the day to day happenings in the prices campaign with which to hit the monopoly companies. At the same time we need to have research work carried out in conjunction with the trade unions and other organisations to give factual material on how the monopoly companies get at the consumers. Such material can answer the lies and misrepresentations of big business.

PEACE:- In the period up to the ending of the Vietnam war we were continually active in our opposition to the war. Since the signing of the Peace Agreement we have been pleased to be part of the organisations who have welcomed delegates from North and South Vietnam where gifts were exchanged. The need to be ever vigilant over the Vietnam-Indo China war situation is evidenced by the Vietnamese delegations material showing how the USA is trying to hinder the full implementation of the Agreement.

Through the Council Against Nuclear Tests we have been able to play a prominent role in actions to stop the French Tests. Some thirteen organisations are represented on the Council including the trade unions, women's, youth, religious, community and political groupings. A demonstration held in May as part of international actions against the tests saw some 500 people take part.



Our Secretary, Mrs. B. Miller, addressed the Rally following the March in which she was not only able to highlight the damage caused to the young and yet unborn children but was able to underline the overall need for world disarmament now and for France and China to sign the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty as another step towards disarmament.

Nationally, the UAW, along with other women's organisations, supported the two young mothers from Sydney in their visit to Paris, with their young babies, to take part in the international actions against the tests. Unfortunately we here in Adelaide were not able to organise support for the women due to lack of time.

It is anticipated that on the 20th and 21st of July an international delegation from the World Peace Council will visit Adelaide as a lead up to the Moscow Peace Conference to be held in October. Our organisation has based itself on the need for man to settle his differences over a conference table and that great harm is done to the family in the course of any war and for this reason it has continually striven for a world at peace. International situations are complex but nevertheless we need to strive constantly to understand the problems and play our part in settling them. Such action can take many forms from a resolution, petitions, demonstrations, deputations and participation on state, national and international discussions. The action of women on peace questions have played a big part in the anti-war movement since the 2nd World War and if the forces of peace are to win the day then our actions must continue and involve even greater numbers of women.

UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL YEAR FOR WOMEN, 1975:- At our last AGM we called for a UN International Year for Women and now we are pleased to say that these actions will take place in 1975.

Nationally our organisation has published all of the resolutions, conventions and declarations passed at the UN in regard to women and here in SA some two hundred and fifty copies have been ordered. The recent Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union conference of Working Women distributed a copy to all of the delegates for example.

A meeting held in Melbourne recently, under the auspices of the UN Association, formed a Committee and set out preliminary plans on celebrating the IYW in 1975. Our National President, Mrs. Freda Brown attended from the UAW, together with representation from other national organisations.

Aims of the national functions to mark IYW are:-

- 1.(a) Consideration of Women's Changing Role in Society including understanding the reasons why women's role has changed - Projecting the emerging role of women and what changes should be encouraged.
- (b) Specific Discrimination Against Women including the Compiling of instances of discrimination: legal-cultural-employment Reasons for discrimination - How to eliminate discrimination.
- (c) Comparison of Women's Role in Other Societies and an exchange of ideas with International community.



2. Administrative Functions of National Committee for IYW to include a

Survey of Women's Status and Participation in the Life of the Community including the spheres of education, profession, economic and public life.

Special means will be taken to Educate the Public to Awareness through educational institutions, via the mass media, public meetings and discussions, film screenings and articles.

The recent Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF) Bureau meeting held in Havana, Cuba at which Mrs. Freda Brown was again in attendance, special emphasis was placed on actions for the IYW. The WIDF will issue an Appeal To Women of the World to celebrate 1975. It will organise a World Congress of Women in 1975 with the WIDF's own Congress being held following the World Congress of Women. It should be noted that these are two separate Congresses.

In May we were able to play a small part in highlighting an aspect of discrimination against women in the employment field. Local government bodies were granted special sums of money from the Federal government late last year to help overcome unemployment problems affecting the community. It was brought to our notice by Port Adelaide Councillor, Mr. Ron Connolly that neither the Council nor the Commonwealth Employment Bureau offered women for the jobs on the council. This work involved the chipping of weeds on footpaths, sweeping gutters and footpaths and generally speaking involved light manual work. The Mayor of Port Adelaide objected to women being offered the job on the basis that it would make our community have a 'peasant atmosphere' and that really 'women's place was in the home anyway'. Publicity was given to the UAW in opposing the Council's and the Employment Bureau attitude on the matter and as a follow up our Secretary, Mrs. B. Miller was interviewed on Channel 2, This Day Tonight programme. The main points emphasised were that as long as work was not physically harmful there should be no reasons why women couldn't do it and that all work was dignified. The interview was applauded by a large number of people who saw it and as a consequence a woman is now employed on the Port Adelaide Council on EQUAL PAY with her male counterparts. We understand that women are also employed at Port Pirie.

One of the ways in which we can assist the 1975 Year for Women is in the collection of material on the various aspects as outlined above. A special sub committee to work on this would be the most effective way to carry it through. This would need women who could research the material and bring it forward for discussion through the branches and other appropriate ways.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE:- In September of this year our National Conference will be held in Sydney. Representation at the Conference will be based on 1 for 20 members, membership to be taken as at the end of December prior to the Conference. On this basis we are entitled to four (4) delegates and today's meeting will elect our delegates and proxies. It should be understood that the Conference will welcome observers also, and we hope that some of our women will want to take the opportunity by paying their own fares and participating. Only delegates will have the right to speak and vote.



We will also elect our three (3) State representatives on the National Committee today. Our State representatives will also attend the Conference as will the National Committee representatives elected at the last National Conference. In our case we <sup>have</sup> two such reps.: - Mesdames Mitchell and Loyden. So all in all we have nine (9) delegates entitled to go from SA. This will cost a minimum of \$270. (Second class rail concession fare is \$30 each approximately.) We will need a big effort to send our delegates away but knowing our women we are sure that the response will be such that all nine will be able to go.

Our present State representatives are Mesdames Flintoft, Goss and Miller. In order to ensure full representation at Conference in case of sickness etc. it is proposed that proxies for State representatives should be elected in a separate ballot after the actual reps. have been elected.

The National Constitution will be discussed at the National Conference and SA has sent ideas forward on the reformulation of the constitution based on the needs of our organisation. These ideas together with those from other sources, will be thoroughly discussed throughout the organisation in time for presentation at the Conference.

INTERNATIONAL DAYS:- This year we celebrated International Women's Day with a Dinner. A wide spectrum of Adelaide community and trade union life attended the function at which Dr. Helen Caldicott was awarded the IWD Woman of the Year Award for her work in opposition to the French tests.

After a long break we finally managed to have a public celebration for International Children's Day. In conjunction with the SA Bunyip Children's Theatre we were able to take over the theatre for the afternoon with the puppet show "Gulliver in Australia". By circulating organisations including women's, youth, kindergartens and the trade unions we were able to have a wide participation on the day. Children of "Parents Without Partners" together with boys from the Glandore Boy's Home were our guests at the show. Proceeds from the function went towards the Mother and Child Research Centre in Hanoi. We have welcomed the financial support from the Seamen's Union, the Seamen's Women's Committee, members of the ship "Accolade" and the Amalgamated Metal Worker's Union who gave generously to ensure that the underprivileged children of Adelaide could participate and to also swell the sum of money to go to Vietnam. Together with the trading table and ticket sales (over 200 people attended) some \$100 will be sent to Vietnam.

RELATIONS WITH OVERSEAS ORGANISATIONS:- Last year we sent a large parcel of wool to the women of Angola and we have had a letter indicating they require more wool to finish the garments they have proudly been able to knit for their children. The Waterside Workers Women's Committee made a generous donation to send more wool and we have also contributed to the purchase of same. The women personally have written their thanks to us and through the WIDF Bureau meeting the women expressed their thanks again.

We have also sent cards of greetings to those many women in South Africa who are under detention because of the apartheid act. We were delighted to



get a reply from one of them.

At today's meeting we will be honoured to have Rhodesian Nationalist Leader Mr. Eddison Zvobgo who will tell us of conditions in his country, Zimbabwe. During the course of his visit to Adelaide a Vigil will be held on Parliament House steps on TUESDAY, 26th JUNE, commencing at 8.30 a.m. and going through to evening when participants are invited to come to the Public Meeting in the Napier Theatre. The Vigil is to draw attention to the racist policies of South Africa and is at the time of South Africa's National Day. The media will be present first thing in the morning as will Mr. Zvobgo and we urge our members and friends to make every effort to attend during the course of the day.

We have received publications from South Africa, New Zealand and Cuba. We are now regularly getting the terrific magazine of the Cuban women and a letter from them indicates they want to know more of our work and to continue to have friendly relations with us. A report of their work is due any time now.

Through Mary Hunter of New Zealand Voice of Women organisation we have received their News Sheet and an outline of their work. We look forward to continuing this exchange too.

Material is constantly coming from both North and South Vietnam keeping us informed of actions there. We need someone who has the time to read their publications and collate material for presentation in our News Sheet. The same applies to the 'busy' news sheet which comes from "Women Strike for Peace" in USA.

We continue to get publications, greetings and messages from countries such as the USSR, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia etc. We appreciate this exchange greatly and look forward to its continuance. Of particular value to us from a state and national point of view is our affiliation with the Women's International Democratic Federation. This keeps us in touch with women from some 100 national organisations throughout the world.

WORK WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS:- Throughout the year we have continued on various committees in conjunction with other organisations to achieve a particular aspect of our programme. This has included the Council Against Nuclear Tests, mentioned earlier in this report, the Council to Stop Offensive Advertising, Child Care Centres in conjunction with the Kindergarten Union etc., and the Equal Pay Council.

The Equal Pay Council has ended its functions following the Arbitration Court's decision to recognise the principle of equal pay for equal work. This decision meant that the terms of reference of the Council had now been fulfilled and the gaining of equal pay generally remained the task of the trade unions and similar bodies. In May, therefore, the affairs of the Council were wound up and all of the files handed over to the Archive Department of the Flinders University.



We have maintained our affiliation with the United Nations Association and have welcomed the continued affiliation of the Waterside Worker's Women's Committee. We note with pride the election of WWF Women's Committee member, Mrs. Flo Wallace, to the position of President of her union, the Storeman and Packers Union. It is the first time that a woman has achieved the office in a blue collar union. Our sincere congratulations to Flo.

During the course of the year we have worked on various campaigns with various trade unions. We look forward to a strengthening of our work in this direction.

BUILD THE UAW:- One of the most important needs of our organisation is to build it numerically. Our organisation directs itself to the needs of working women and the wives of working men. We recognise that to involve these women in organisation is not easy. Unlike their counterparts in the professional and upper income groupings they are not able to pay someone to look after their family needs while they involve themselves in organisation. If a woman from this sector of the community wants to work for the aims of the UAW it requires a great deal of tenacity. But involve these women we must if we are to develop the overall struggle of men and women to achieve a higher living standard, a world at peace and a better life for all children.

We have our regular monthly luncheons with good guest speakers. We need to build attendances at these by involving our own personal friends and neighbours. We have to realise that many women will generally support our aims but will not want to become wholly committed to our organisation but their participation in attending luncheons, make up something for our fair or trading tables, donate to the overall work and so on is all important.

With the change of government Federally, we have to reassess our ideas on the many issues which the government has or is planning to fulfill in line with our policy. Later on today we will hear Mr. Chris Hurford speak about the government's plans and this will help clarify our needs.

This coming year we should endeavour to work more closely with the WWF Women's Committee and the Seamen's Women's Committee. The combined efforts of our organisations will assist considerably to develop the work of all.

Our publications can be a help here too. We need to use them to introduce women to our organisation and this applies as much to our state News Sheets as it does to our national publications. The use of our leaflets on various topics can also help.

In thanking the work of the Management Committee and the membership generally we can go forward to build our organisation to involve those many women who are so concerned about peace, standards of living, equality of women in all spheres and for a better world for children.

B. Miller, SA UAW Secretary  
on behalf of the Management  
Committee, 1972-73.

\*\*\*\*\*