

International Political Science

Mushakoji Elected IPSA President

Kinhide Mushakoji of the United Nations University in Japan was elected president of the International Political Science Association (IPSA) at its World Congress held in Paris July 15-20, 1985. Mushakoji succeeds Klaus von Beyme of the Federal Republic of Germany.

At his speech in the closing session of the meeting, Mushakoji said that political science has a special mission to help face world crises. He called for a "resurgence of the political in the high sense of the term" and said that we must take into account the complexity of society and not develop overly simplistic models.

The next IPSA Congress will be held in 1988 in late August in Washington, D.C.



Kinhide Mushakoji

As the Congress physically moves from Paris to Washington, IPSA will be engaged in an "intellectual pilgrimage" as well, according to Mushakoji. He suggested that political science in Europe is different from political science in the U.S. and said that IPSA members would be "looking for a meaningful dialogue with our colleagues in North America" whom he characterized as post-behavioralists.

The three goals for the 1988 Congress, said Mushakoji, will be to identify global issues, to become more aware of the fact that global problems require local solutions, and to stress the importance of the state, government and political institutions.

Mushakoji selected Harold Jacobson of the University of Michigan to serve as chairperson of the Programme Committee for the 1988 Congress. □

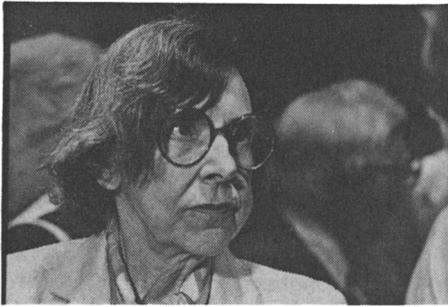
Forum '85 and the United Nations Decade for Women Conference

Victoria Schuck

Two Conferences Held

The greatest number of women ever to assemble from around the world gathered in Nairobi, Kenya, last July for two meetings to mark the conclusion of the United

Victoria Schuck was APSA's representative at the Nairobi Forum '85. She is a former professor of political science at Mount Holyoke College, former president of Mount Vernon College, and is now a Visiting Scholar in the Department of Political Science at Stanford University. She was a member of the Tribune in Mexico and a member of the planning committee of the American follow-up, the Houston Conference.



Victoria Schuck

Nations Decade for Women—more than 4,000 including 2,020 delegates from 157 member governments for the official World Conference and 13,503 registered representatives from unofficial non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for Forum '85. Nearly 60 percent of the Forum came from Africa and the Third World.

Historical Notes

Two preceding conferences, one in Mexico City and one in Copenhagen, had set the stage for Nairobi. The Decade 1976-1985 with the theme, "Equality, Development, Peace" had been proclaimed by the UN General Assembly following the recommendations of the World Conference on the UN Women's Year in Mexico City in 1975 represented by 133 governments. Its World Plan of Action set minimal targets for 1980 directed toward equal participation of women in world development and peace, calling for more literacy, more women in policy-determining positions, and more recognition of the economic value of women's nonpaid work. The United States refused to sign the accompanying declaration of Mexico because the U.S. opposed the Declaration's advocacy of a New International Economic Order and its condemnation of zionism.

The second, a mid-term World Conference in Copenhagen in 1980 represented by 144 governments undertook an evaluation of progress in the Mexico Plan and developed another Programme of Action for the second half of the decade emphasizing the subtheme of the Decade adopted by the General Assembly,

whose key components included employment, health and education. As this conference progressed, it became increasingly politicized and embroiled in the controversy over whether women's rights could be isolated from the political context of the UN including such divisive issues as the Middle East, South Africa, and the world economic order. Most of the Programme could have been accepted but some of the paragraphs ran counter to policies of the U.S. and three other nations, leading them to vote against the document; 22 others abstained. How to avoid such a failure in 1985 conditioned the U.S. delegation and became a pervasive concern in the Nairobi Conference despite the presence of the three distinct voting blocs—the Western, the non-aligned Group of 77 and the Eastern countries—and the contentious politics of the United Nations.

Non-governmental organizations were invited to send representatives to both the Mexico City and Copenhagen conferences, but they were to meet separately from the official delegates representing governments. In Mexico City, women from NGOs met at the Centro Medico, miles apart from the Conference, listened to speeches, attended a few panels and dared to write drafts for the World Plan of Action. They were an inexperienced group who had no prior briefings and did not know one another, and they returned to their homes full of questions about UN practice and behavior.

In Copenhagen the same conflicts and differences in perceptions of women's issues appeared in the meeting for NGO representatives as in the World Conference. Should the Forum, as the NGO gathering was called, consider issues in the larger political agenda or more narrowly defined such as health, reproductive rights, and the rights on the feminine agenda? Language of the Forum was harsher than government language. In the Forum, American Jewish women were verbally and almost physically attacked. Jewish women were traumatized dealing with Third World issues in general. As a result, the U.S. for a number of years refused to contribute to the UN fund for women to mete out punish-

ment for what had occurred at the Copenhagen Forum.

Forum '85

On July 10, Forum '85, the NGO group in Nairobi began its 10-day meeting a week before the World Conference began. The number of participants exceeded the wildest expectations of the organizers. Attendees besides the registrants swelled the figures to 15,000. (Mexico City's NGO Tribune had 6,000 and Copenhagen's NGO Forum, 8,000.) Among them were lawyers, academics, social workers, parliamentarians, students, doctors, members of coalitions, judges, celebrities, western feminists, researchers, working-class women, religious fundamentalists, emerging politicians, village leaders from rural areas and farm women who had saved for the price of a bus ticket. Organized by an international NGO planning committee with offices in Geneva, New York, and Nairobi and having an open-ended "agenda" unencumbered by official policies of governments, the Forum was designed to afford an exchange of information ranging from the personal to the political.

At a stirring opening, 6,000 women jammed into the main hall of the Jomo Kenyatta Conference Centre to hear the welcome of Dr. Eddah Gachukia of the Kenya NGO committee and several keynote speeches. Dame Nita Barrow (Barbados), the Convenor, an international organization activist and prominent church woman, talked about her dream of "Woman-time" and "a new day" at the conclusion of the Forum. Knowing that unity would be unlikely, she pleaded for understanding. Filipino Leticia Shahani, the Secretary-General of the Conference, reviewed the results of a survey of the Decade's achievements and failures. And Kenneth Matiba, Kenyan Minister of Culture and Social Services, speaking for his government, expressed the hope that women would come up with strategies for action. Concluding by transposing a civil rights phrase, he stated, "As I've come to think of myself being in a relevant ministry—we women of the world shall overcome."

Optimism and excitement went with the

move to the campus of the University of Nairobi for the remainder of the sessions. Panels and workshops on the themes of the decade plus "emergency situations" the world-over constituted the core of the Forum—1,305 sessions in university classrooms and in nearby buildings. Of these 1,200 had been approved by the organizing committee; the rest were generated spontaneously and authorized as space permitted. (One Forum member would remark later, "You couldn't think of an issue without someone's wanting to organize around it.") Titles of sessions varied from Women's Rights in Iran and Integration of Gender Issues in Development to Violence against Women and Nuclear Awareness. Notable was a five-day series on Women, Law and Development organized by OEF International, an American private voluntary agency, led by professionals from Third World countries. They reported on efforts to change discriminatory laws and make legal resources available to low income women, then strategized for the future.

Throughout, thousands of women checked past security gates into the university for the 100 or more workshops daily. Schedules were published, and the newspaper, *Forum*, struggled to print changes and calendars of accompanying cultural events, exhibitions, the "film-forum," displays, and rural visits.

A dozen political scientists from the U.S. contributed to panels and workshops. Those going to Paris for the International Political Science Congress had early meeting dates in the Forum. Topics covered were Women and Natural Resources, Women's Roles in the Political Arena, Designing an Electoral System for Women's Maximum Legislative Participation, Women in Higher Education, Advancing Careers in Public Service, Reconciling Conflict Images of Peace, and Worldwide Comparisons of Women in Local Public Service, a panel I led.

In our APSA-labeled workshop on local public service, participants concluded that women were at lower levels of responsibility, with less power, lower salaries and less prestige than men. In some countries women had no role at all in local government, for example, Tanzania; in others women were well repre-

sented, for example, Finland, where women constitute 20 to 40 percent of local office holders. In countries where there were few women, the women felt isolated and had difficulty motivating themselves. Looking toward the future, participants mentioned three specific strategies: limited terms of office, proportional representation and strict finance rules to equalize resources among candidates.

Political Issues and Finale

Political issues involved external, intra-forum, and World Conference relationships. As to the external, relations with the Kenya government reached crisis proportions on three occasions. In each, the Forum "overcame." Hotel room shortages led off. Eviction notices by government order went to occupants at first-class hotels to make way for incoming officials attending the World Conference. Cries that the decision exemplified the second class status of Forum women made banner headlines in the Nairobi press. Women banded together. Small enclaves of occupants negotiated by proposing to "double, triple and quadruple up" while complaining to the American Embassy and gaining support of the President of Kenya. The order was rescinded. Several American political scientists fresh from conflict-resolution study had a hand in resolving the problem.

The two later crises were resolved by Dame Barrow. When the government threatened to close down the Peace Tent over the rowdy confrontations, she said, "Close the Tent, and I will close the entire Forum." The Tent remained open. When movie censorship prevented the showing of "Laila and the Wolves," a film from Lebanon, hundreds of women were ready to march in protest. Kenya opposes demonstrations. To Barrow, censorship was out of the question. Nevertheless, if the women insisted on marching, she requested that they leave their Forum badges behind. Then Barrow offered an alternative, to be permitted to continue negotiations all night if necessary. Both sides accepted. The film was returned to her. The marchers dispersed.

Inside the Forum and drawing the large audiences, a clash occurred between Israeli and Arab women over the West Bank and Zionism. While the furor in Copenhagen between developing and developed countries was not repeated in Nairobi, American policy was regularly labeled imperialistic. Also, there were strident debates between Iranians and Iraqis over the protracted war between the two countries, along with heated exchanges between Moroccans and Polisar guerillas over an area of the Sahara. Twice the police responded to calls from NGOs. Then the blue-and-white-striped Peace Tent, in reality one large and two small tents located on the lawn of the quadrangle near the education building, furnished the ambience for discussions without interruption and the important functions of mediation and conflict-resolution. (The Peace Tent was a project of Feminist International for Peace and Food comprised of American, Western European and South American women from non-governmental organizations who had met in Geneva the year before; they had wanted "to make sure that peace would not be forgotten in Nairobi.")

Meanwhile the 1,839 Americans attending the Forum argued about questions dividing the country at home: family planning, right to life, lesbianism, and rights of minorities. People at the Forum accused the American delegation at the World Conference of "double-talk." An "alternative delegation" turned up in the form of 35 community activists and advocates of the poor funded by the Ford Foundation terming themselves the "Leadership Delegation." Upon hearing a rumor that the official delegation was going to boycott the Conference, they issued a press release that the alternates would take the Americans' place, because they did not "represent real women in the U.S. anyway." (Apparently *Pravda* alone printed the story.)

Since only representatives of the 169 NGOs having consultative status with the UN's Economic and Social Council had accreditation to the Conference and they, principally as observers, petitions from those who were not accredited became the common mode of com-

munication. A Woman's Coalition for Nairobi, a multiracial group of Americans, delivered a petition signed by 1,200 Americans urging among other things a reduced military budget, equal pay, and the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination against women.

Whatever the catalogue of disagreements and anger that often engulfed media stories, there is an almost untold story of the maturity, discipline and commitment of Forum members to a change in the status of women. An understanding of the commonality of experiences transcended culture, nationality, ideology, race, class, creed, language. Perhaps the numbers in Nairobi will constitute the critical mass in the international community needed to change the status of women and may be the greatest effect of the Conference in the long run.

A new unity and a renewed world movement seemed to appear July 19 at the

finale of the Forum in the "grand court" of the university. Crowds gathered for a cultural event with music, song, and spontaneous remarks. It took on the note of a rally to call another conference in the post UN Decade. Dr. Gachukia appeared and spoke of the Nairobi spirit of non-confrontation saying that problems of women cannot be limited to a decade. There ought to be a review and appraisal every five years to evaluate what has happened. Secretary General Shahani coming from the midpoint of the Conference caught the new vigor to remind members that "It is all up to you to complete the blueprint." She knew that they knew they were not the centers of power in their government but they had a chance to get there if they took it. □

Editor's Note: This is the first of a two-part series on Forum '85 and the UN Decade for Women Conference.

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