



Women in Motion

Keynote Address

'We Accuse': The Women's International Democratic Federation Commission to Korea in 1951 and its Consequences.

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On June 25, 1950, the Korean War broke out. At the request of two high-positioned Korean women, the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF) in May 1951 sent an International Women's Commission to Korea, with the aim to investigate the war atrocities allegedly committed there. The WIDF, established in Paris in 1945, was the largest international women's organization. Its members were left-feminist and politically motivated women who wanted to end war, fascism, colonialism and racism and who regarded women's rights as a precondition for a better world.

The International Women's Commission that visited Korea consisted of 20 women from 18 countries, representing the Americas, Europe, Asia and Africa. The women were from different political backgrounds, including the British Labor Party or non-party affiliations. Their shocking report, called *We Accuse*, and the subsequent publicity had an enormous impact worldwide. The American government was furious and took measures against the WIDF and individual Commission members in Western countries.

In my paper I will discuss the work and composition of the International Women's Commission, its report, and the global reactions and consequences, both for the WIDF and individual members.

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