

Only Woman in the Room: Beate Sirota-Gordon

Friday, April 16, 2010

6:00 PM

**Wilson Hall room 214
Washington University**

Reception to follow



**Image: Beate with GHQ staff
members in 1946**

Born in 1923 in Vienna, Beate Sirota-Gordon, the daughter of renowned concert pianist Leo Sirota, toured Europe and Asia with her family, before they settled in Tokyo where she quickly picked up Japanese, in addition to English, Russian, German and French. When WWII broke out in the U.S., Gordon used her fluent Japanese to translate intercepted radio messages and write propaganda for the U.S. government. After the war, she returned to Japan as the first civilian woman allowed back during the Occupation. She worked at General Headquarters, helping to draft the new Japanese constitution in secret. Aged only 22, Gordon wrote the section devoted to women's rights and the family, and translated during negotiations with the Japanese government. As the title of her autobiography says, she was *The Only Woman in the Room*.

Join us in a discussion with the only woman asked by General MacArthur to join the drafting committee for the post-WWII Japanese Constitution. Gordon's influence was instrumental in giving Japanese women equal rights.

Sponsored by East Asian Studies and the History Department at Washington University,
Japan America Society of St. Louis, Japan America Society Women's Association of St. Louis,
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