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The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) has been working since 1915 to unite women worldwide who oppose oppression and exploitation. WILPF stands for equality of all people in a world free of racism, sexism, and homophobia; the building of a constructive peace through world disarmament; and the changing of government priorities to meet human needs.

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Authenticity Through Relationships

By Mary Hanson Harrison

Former WILPF US President (2014-2019)

My father would stand back on his heels, hands in his pockets, gaze admiringly at someone and state, “Now, there’s the real deal.” I should add here that he was born in Missouri, the “show me” state. For me, his assessment always marked a sense of authenticity and a more trusting kinship with that person.

In the following pages, you will find WILPF members’ voices from the far away shores of Accra, Ghana, to the white pine woods of Vermont; from the ravaged earth and waters of Ogoniland, Nigeria, to the hills of Appalachia...global narratives with individual perspectives. Their stories have common threads woven within them, of patriarchal systems, violent governments, and exploitative corporations, of repressive laws and sexist practices. Yet their stories tell us of resistance and resilience and nurturing relationships. As such, they speak to the vision and mission of WILPF US. In this issue of *Peace & Freedom* are the indispensable and comprehensive discussions and actions that tie our values and work together as a feminist, global, grassroots movement. All of which are the real deal!

Right now, United States citizens are looking toward the 2020 elections. WILPF US’s strategic responses to this current administration’s life-threatening policies are imperative! The Green New Deal (a nod to FDR’s historical New Deal) and Sunrise Movement bring demands for legislative reform. Headed by New York Democratic Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Massachusetts Senator Ed Markey, the Green New Deal has finally moved media to talk about interconnected environmental threats to our survival.

Collaborating with like-minded movements and organizations like these increases the WILPF US presence in our communities and nation, and strengthens our own initiatives. WILPF US initiatives, both long-term and short-term, such as UN CSW63 Practicum/Local2Global (see p. 18), Women’s Peace Initiative (see p. 22), Peace and Planet Before Profit, ONE WILPF Calls, the Human Right to Health and Safe Food, and End All Wars, are carrying on our more than 104 years of standing up for women’s rights and the humanitarian concern for all peoples. We are looking to members to join the work we are doing in these crucial and transformative initiatives.

With the US presidential elections looming, WILPF US has the added bonus of our headquarters being located in Iowa.



Participants in the Ghana Congress Workshop “Sisters! Keep the Seeds in Your Hands: From West Africa to the US Heartland,” co-organized by Ayo Ayoola-Amale of WILPF Ghana and Mary Hanson Harrison. Women the world over continue to work together on issues of food and indigenous seed sovereignty.

The presidential hopefuls have already been hiring staff here since early January. With Iowa as the first caucus state, WILPF US members here will be at the beginning of the long, arduous campaigning process. We will be able to question the candidates face-to-face, perhaps enabling us to see who the real deal is! We ask members to send candidate questions as soon as possible to info@wilpfus.com. We will collate your responses and send structured lists of questions out to you via the eNews and branch listservs.

Inside this issue you will also meet our inspiring new board president Darien De Lu. Darien is fluent in Spanish, which will enhance our relationship with our Americas Region. At the same time, three of our board members’ terms were completed: Marybeth Gardam, a brilliant and tenacious Development Director; Laura Dewey, a determined and clear-thinking Nominating Chair; and Dixie Hairston, an essential partner and insightful leader of the CSW Practicum/Local2Global. They will be sorely missed. We do have a new at large member, Nancy Price, who will add her wisdom to our decision-making.

As I leave my presidency of WILPF US, I look back on the past five years and reflect on the relationships that we have built, locally, nationally and internationally. These human connections are a defining and lasting commitment to true peace; they put theory into action. I’m deeply honored and proud to have served with an outstanding and persevering WILPF US Board. I give many thanks to those donors who contributed to our sustainability, all of whom helped us thrive! The women of WILPF are friends, debate partners, and faithful and energetic agents of change. I thank you all from the bottom of my heart. You are the real deal indeed!

"Stay Open, Enjoy Activism!"

Says New WILPF US President

By Wendy McDowell

Looking back, Darien De Lu realizes that she's been an activist in one way or another since she circulated a petition in junior high to keep a favorite TV show on the air. Though this first foray was small, she considers herself fortunate to have grown up in Sacramento with parents who instilled in her the importance of "caring about justice issues and taking action around them." She recalls "one early, formative experience when I was in sixth grade and my parents took us to a vigil for the Reverend James Reeb, who had been killed in the South in the Civil Rights Movement."

WILPF's newly elected president has been arrested several times for civil disobedience, but she says it's not the arrests themselves she remembers, it's the shared experience with other activists.

One protest that opened her to the power and potential of collective action occurred in the early 1980s. "I was involved in civil disobedience actions and was one of hundreds of people arrested in the anti-nuclear reactor movement at the Diablo Canyon power plant in California," she explains. "Because so many people were arrested, we had a lot of folks in the detention places they found to put us all in. Among the jailed activists were practiced groups of wonderful organizers from the Bay Area who facilitated work in group decision-making, forming and working with affinity groups, and teaching workshops."

"Even in jail, we held a workshop on psychic numbing around nuclear war issues," she says. "It was the combined experience of confronting authority and the idea that yes, we can be arrested, and we can take some control in the situation. When the prison authorities gave us instructions, we had great people saying to us, 'let's receive their instructions, discuss them, and decide what we want to do.' We worked to set the agenda. This was important for me to witness."

At the same time, Darien has no illusions that bringing activists together will always result in unity. "Another formative experience was traveling with the WILPF International Peace Train from Helsinki, Finland to Beijing, China in August 1995," she says. "There was the experience of going through so many countries, hearing presentations by local activists in each place—learning about their issues and giving our responses—but there was also being on the train with about 200 other activists and seeing the challenges in group dynamics."



One thing you might not know about new WILPF US President Darien De Lu is that she "loves amphibians and reptiles. They just grab me." Asked why, she replies, "I think they help us understand other ways of being besides ours that are real and legitimate."

It helped me understand that peace activists aren't easy people to work with!"

"A lot of peace activists are angry—rightly so—but sometimes we take that anger and aim it at our allies rather than our opponents," she observes. "As an activist myself, I try to keep that in mind." Darien always looks to "find a way for that anger to express itself constructively. Anger is a source of energy, so how do we put that energy to a good end?" And she wants to focus her own energy as WILPF's president on finding ways for activists to work together. "I want to build on the ambitious work that others have set before me of building up a beloved WILPF community," she says.

Connecting and Singing

Because she is equally interested in organizational theory, and "in the human connection part, the emotional side of activism," she wants to foster face-to-face relationships among activists. "That's what makes activism work!"

"Howard Zinn once said that we may or may not get what we want in terms of our political goals, but we should be able to enjoy working toward those goals with other good people. That really is one of my major goals for WILPF, that we can find enjoyment in our political work. To keep activism up, it's got to be fun in some way, and the fun will be in our delight in our fellow WILPFers."

"Certainly, in my life, face-to-face, human connection with other activists has been crucial to keep me going,"

she shares. "I so enjoy being with the wonderful women of WILPF, who are inspiring and encouraging and wise—most of the time!" Another activity that sustains Darien is singing. "People who know me well know they can't shut me up!" she says. "Singing is actually healthy, and singing with other people has the added benefit of releasing endorphins. And singing has played an important part in activist movements."

Darien also loves to work in her garden and appreciates animals, and says, "feeling how glorious this Earth world can be, and that I want to keep the plants, animals (and of course humans) going, that's a strong motivator for my ongoing activism and is available every day."

The other thing she says "keeps me happy and healthy" is bicycling. "My early martial arts studies made me fearless, even on a bike on city streets," she jokes. Darien believes that "taking good care of yourself is a responsibility of an activist," and this is especially important given the unique challenges faced by women activist leaders.

"It has been a sad phenomenon in political activism circles to attack leaders, even when much of what they do is positive," she notes. "Leaders should be constructively criticized... but attacks on leadership, especially among women, have become almost characteristic."

"I'm very concerned about supporting and developing leadership in WILPF," she explains, "and for an organization like WILPF, collaborative leadership is fundamental."

The Wisdom of WILPFers

"In our sexist society, women are often discouraged from speaking up and sharing our ideas," she says. "WILPF is a safe place where we can share our wisdom, but part of our wisdom needs to be learning when to speak and when to be silent, and that can be hard to discern."

Because a lot of WILPFers are older, she says, "we do have the wisdom gained through experience." She considers this both a limitation and a strength for WILPF. "I want to encourage WILPFers to share that wisdom without that being a stop sign to new ideas," she asserts. Darien herself loves learning new ideas and concepts, so she encourages others to value staying open and "entertaining possibilities."

Darien appreciates the criticisms around WILPF's lack of racial diversity that the organization "has been struggling with for decades." Under her leadership, she says, "I would like to see branches continuing to do regular trainings related to white privilege, white fragility, and other diversity issues." She goes on to say, "This is a hot issue for very good reasons. The society we live in has malnourished us with racism."

"What we can do is to be conscious of the racism that is part of America today and work to address it," she continues. "We don't have to feel kneejerk guilt about it; what we need to do is to acknowledge it and change for the future."

For Darien, issues of racial and economic justice are directly linked with the issues WILPF is most known for: militarism and US military spending.

"Freedom is closely related to justice, because if you don't have justice you don't have freedom," she explains. "As long as we have such a hugely disproportionate piece of our national budget being spent on the military, those parts of people's lives that are related to justice—such as reasonable access to health care, housing, education, and even equality in the justice system—all of these are not going to be able to move very far because they don't have the funding needed."

"Probably one of the most fundamental kinds of justice is access to reasonably paid, meaningful work, so that people's lives have meaning and a level of decency," she continues. "It's very difficult to rise up against military spending because, on the one hand, a lot of the lower paid jobs in the rank-and-file military are in parts of the country and parts of the population where good or better jobs are hardly available. And the higher-end jobs in the arms production and research industries are very well paid. We support conversion to green energy, but many of those jobs are not well paid."

"Coming to terms with the day-to-day effects or benefits of military spending is not easy but it's necessary if you are going to be influential in talking to people to make change," she notes. This is why it's important that WILPF is non-partisan, she says, so that it remains centered on the issues important to all people.

While clear-eyed about WILPF's challenges, Darien chose to step into this leadership role because she wants to build on WILPF's many strengths. "Our long history gives us a depth of experience and the discussion of key ideas over time. Our international nature gives us breadth that very few peace and justice organizations in the US have access to, and gives us an international awareness that tends to be lacking here. And our structure, in which we have branches that do the work, gives us a level of local connection and a reality check. Also, WILPF in prior political movements had a reputation for trustworthiness, which is something I hope to continue."

"For me, good leadership addresses the whole person: the emotional, the spiritual, the psychological, and the physical, as well as the intellectual," she explains. "We are whole people and we need our whole person-ness to be effective in our political work."

Developing an Environmental Peace Diplomacy

By Dawn Nelson

*WILPF Environment Working Group Convener and
WILPF-US Earth Democracy Member*

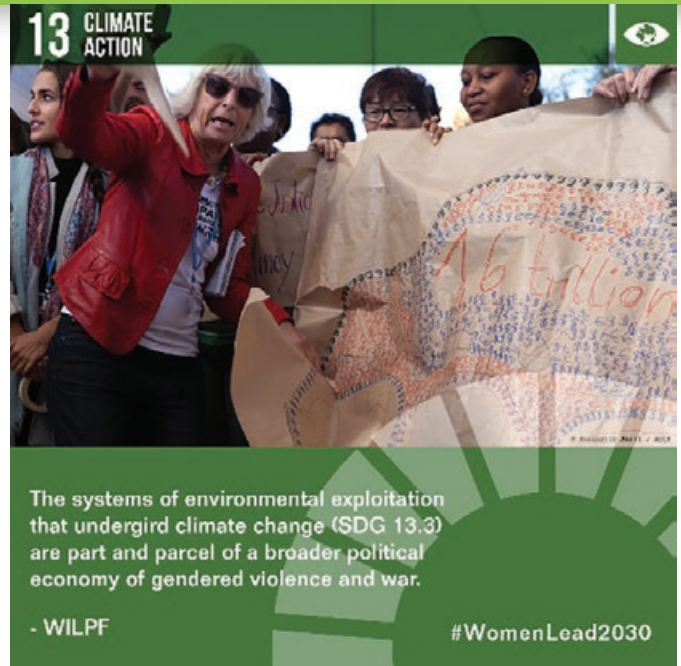
The 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals may seem lofty, or perhaps tangentially related to peace work, but I argue that these goals are germane to peace building. It is by walking a path towards environmental sustainability—a sustained, peaceful environment—that we begin to deepen social relationships that can in turn strengthen the peaceful, inclusive institutions (Goal 16) that are fundamental for establishing long-term peace. An environmental peace diplomacy, if you will.

The 2018 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development focused on transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies, where 46 nations contributed voluntary national reviews (VNRs) on progress towards the 2030 Agenda Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The 2018 SDG review was on water (Goal 6), energy (Goal 7), cities (Goal 11), responsible consumption (Goal 12), forests (Goal 15), and the means of implementation (Goal 17).

Several ministers emphasized the pressing importance of peacebuilding if there is to be any measurable success of the 2030 Agenda, insisting that peace is absolutely essential for any sustainable development to occur at all. Many states highlighted the need for inclusion and equality of women and girls, showing promise of national-level leadership on human rights and gender justice. New York City contributed the first of its kind voluntary local review (VLR), a tangible representation of striving to meet Goal 11 for resilient cities. Alas, a hopeful US example of progress on the SDGs and 2030 Agenda! An idea for the more ambitious WILPF Branches could involve encouraging their communities to create VLRs with Cities for CEDAW in mind. But what do the SDGs mean for localities?

A closer look at any of these goals reveals a finer-grained, local relevance. For example, SDG 6 is focused on ensuring the sustainable management and availability of water and sanitation for all people. The first target of the goal, target 6.1, is that by 2030, we should strive to achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all people. Examples from my own home state of Michigan illustrate the environmental racism experienced by communities of color who are disproportionately impacted by degraded environmental quality, including control over and access to water.

Numerous research studies show that low-income communities and communities of color experience the bulk of envi-



ronmental burdens. What we have learned in the US over the last several years since the tragedies in Detroit (water shutoffs) and Flint (lead in drinking water) made national news is that our water infrastructure throughout the entire nation needs an overhaul. Where is this money for an overhaul of infrastructure going to come from? So many planners, engineers and politicians lament the astronomical costs of infrastructure. The obvious answer, however, is that it comes out of the military budget and is reallocated. This is the purpose of the PeaceWomen Move the Money Campaign,¹ to advocate that we shift funds towards a political economy of peace. For every trillion dollars on war, imagine what we could do instead if it were allocated to building peace.

Investing in sustainable development is an investment in the peace economy, where we build and improve on the infrastructure that we need, rather than destroy it with an economy of war. Relying on the SDGs as guideposts in this process helps us get closer to the overarching goal of peace and justice.

Furthermore, Goals 7 (energy), 11 (cities) and 12 (responsible consumption) begin to frame how we live our lives and build our human societies. Perpetuating fossil fuel energy intensive cities is not responsible consumption, nor is it resilient or sustainable, as we are well aware. When we invest in renewable energy, we begin to change the equation altogether. Renewable energy, such as solar and wind, remains at the heart of an economy of peace and environmental justice. This is a truth you will hear ringing throughout the climate justice movement.

There is another idea that we have heard before, one relevant to the upcoming HLPF 2019 review on SDG 16 (peaceful, inclusive institutions). Just before the US war against Afghanistan began in 2001, Ohio Representative Dennis Kucinich introduced legislation to establish a US Department of Peace.

Imagine, an entire federal department devoted to peace work! We must not lose sight of what peaceful institutions should look like and be. We may be in the midst of a political maelstrom, but soon enough it will come time to turn the tide and steer humanity steadily back on course. We must be ready for these opportunities.

In December 2018, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Parties (COP24) took place in Katowice, Poland.² A delegate from WILPF Italy, Giovanna Pagani, attended and observed the process, engaging with the Women and Gender Constituency to represent civil society and advocate for gender equality. The Women's Environment and Development Organization, convener of the Women and Gender Constituency in the Katowice talks, made it clear at COP24 that the rise of macho-fascism is a clear and present danger to the global community.

These observations will inform future feminist engagement in the environmental policy arena. COP25 is now less than a year away. Soon, the UN Environment Assembly will meet in March 2019 for their Fourth Session (UNEA-4) in Nairobi, Kenya. These assemblies bring many opportunities for civil society to engage within and across transnational networks.

There are two key opportunities to rally around the SDGs this year when the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development convenes in 2019 at the United Nations headquarters in New York under two auspices for review—in July under ECOSOC, and again when the General Assembly reconvenes in September.³ A review of progress on climate change (SDG 13) and peaceful institutions (SDG 16) will be on the docket, along with inclusive education and economies (SDGs 4 and 8), and review of the means of implementation of the entire agenda (SDG 17).

The next several years bode well for women to engage in these processes and with allies. Find your SDG rally goal and build grassroots alliances that shift toward an economy of peace. Hold a town hall meeting and invite elected political officials to the table, along with communities most impacted by environmental burdens. Connect the dots between SDGs, Cities for CEDAW, climate change mitigation and adaptation, resilience and sustainability, and ask your elected officials what they plan to do about it. Request that they engage in the development of a national voluntary review of SDGs, and that they invite the public to comment on this process.

The WILPF PeaceWomen team has designed an SDG Media Toolkit that includes talking points for each sustainable development goal to help you begin advocacy efforts.⁴ The diplomatic peace work of women in WILPF is all the more urgent and pressing to steer global efforts on climate change, human rights, peace, and environmental sustainability.

If you would like assistance in your local environmental advocacy efforts, please contact me at dawnsoffice@gmail.com.



NOTES:

¹ <https://www.peacewomen.org/WPS-Financing>

² Read the COP24 Reflection Blogpost: <https://wilpf.org/reflections-on-cop24-now-is-a-time-for-feminist-action-across-continents/>.

³ Read the 2018 HLPF Reflection Blogpost: <https://wilpf.org/addressing-root-causes-through-accountability-on-the-2030-agenda/>

⁴ SDG Social Media Toolkit: <https://bit.ly/2SaahgT>

WILPF International Launches Environmental Peace Education Initiative

The Ghana Congress session on “Environmental Work” was presented by Margrethe Tingstad, who explained that there is a dependency between sustainability and peace and security. “Sustainable development is the development that meets current needs without compromising the needs of future generations,” she affirmed, “and when we talk about sustainability we are referring to social, economic and environmental sustainability.” But it also goes the other way around: peace and security is required to reach sustainable development.

There are many factors at play – water and food security, land and water distributions, colonialism, the Sustainable

Development Goals, political economy, values and beliefs, militarism, etc. All of these areas, and more, are potentially contributing factors to instability. We also know women are disproportionately affected. WILPF members are on the ground and have contacts with local women, so we have the knowledge in order to engage with the environment in a meaningful way.

Margrethe announced the launch of WILPF's Environmental Peace Education Initiative through small grants to support the work of Sections and Groups in their work for a lasting peace, and enhance their capacity to engage in collaborative work with other organisations and networks. The Congress was also informed that WILPF has applied for membership with the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP).

Atomic Appalachia

The Sickening Results of Weapons Contamination in East Tennessee

By Linda Cataldo Modica
Erwin Citizens Awareness Network

We always knew something was wrong in Erwin. Maybe it was the secrecy. Maybe it was the barbed wire. Or the armed guards. Or the commando exercises at the shooting range.

Or maybe it was the cancers. “The mountains keep things in,” you know. So, we didn’t mention “the C word.” Or we went out of state, some of us, for treatment. Driven out, really, since our docs in Erwin were under a lot of pressure from the company.

Or maybe it was the trucks dumping at the Bumpass Cove landfill after dark. Or the rumors and stories heard at friends’ homes and at church, or from perfect strangers who found your number and gave you a call. Or maybe it was the threats to “outside agitators” to “get out of town” or to “check your rearview mirror.”

Then there were the questions. So many questions! Where did all that missing bomb-grade uranium go? Why was the FBI called in? Was it stolen? Did terrorists take it? Or was it diverted to Israel for that country’s weapons program? Or is it “just” material unaccounted for—that innocent-sounding acronym, “MUF”?

There’s a mountain between our home and Erwin. But for other folks in our nuclear neighborhood, their porches look out onto the companies doing the contaminating. The first is Nuclear Fuel Services—NFS for short—in Erwin, Tennessee.

NFS is a 62-year-old radioactive chemical operation owned by Babcock & Wilcox. It is the sole supplier of reactor fuel to the Navy’s nuclear submarine fleet and, as such, is essential to the maritime prong of the nuclear triad. Since its founding in Erwin—midway between Oak Ridge and the Savannah River Site—this corporation has functioned as a “mini-DOE,” as one former NFS employee once told us.

By “us” or “we,” I mean Erwin Citizens Awareness Network. ECAN for short. We’re a community group incorporated by me, Barbara O’Neal—an Erwin native and the smartest, toughest activist and government document analyst I’ve ever worked with, and by Trudy Wallack—a downstreamer whose property lies along the Nolichucky River into which NFS discharges and one of ECAN’s most elegant spokeswomen. We’ve also had the help of Sue Kelley, who tirelessly synthesized and organized hundreds of NRC reports for ECAN. All of



Delegates from the Christian Peacemaker Team’s Stop-DU Campaign prepare soil core collected off site from Aerojet for shipment.

us, together with Chris Tipton, Ann Harris, and Park Overall, constitute what the NRC calls “The Wall of Women.”

In Atomic Appalachia, the Nolichucky River meanders through our region. It is the source of municipal drinking water for the residents of two counties downstream of NFS, while wells and springs provide the city water pumped by Erwin Utilities. NFS set up its secret operations along the river. In a bowl, really. The streets of the old town of Erwin rise up from NFS so that the company’s short stacks are at grade with people’s homes and yards and churches. The geology is complex and constantly changing. Sinkholes open up sporadically, making groundwater flows unpredictable. Springs and creeks abound, including on NFS’s site. Fault lines crisscross the town.

This old railroad hub existed long before NFS. So did the modest homes on Washington Street, and Banner Hill Spring, where folks traditionally collected mountain spring water. It was next to Banner Hill Spring that NFS built its plutonium processing facility in the mid-1960s. It was, in part, because of that spring—and the Wall of Women—that the US government declared NFS a “public health hazard.”

We made the feds hear us. Not for ourselves, but for our kids and our neighbor’s kids. Around 2005, a baby was born with cancer and it made big news in Erwin because he had to be taken to St. Jude’s Hospital across the state in Memphis.

Also about that time, county economic development types were working to bring a uranium enrichment plant to Unicoi, a town just up the road from Erwin. A brave business owner opened his doors for community meetings and mothers came out. Their kids were in school near NFS and they asked what would happen if uranium hexafluoride was released by the new factory. Would the emergency drill used in Erwin work? Would stuffing wet paper towels around the classroom windows help? “No. Sorry,” the scientist said. “A cloud of UF₆

will burn everything in its path, and even melt the windows of the school. Just a whiff of UF6 will eat up their lungs.”

The sad truth is that Erwin’s kids don’t only live under a cloud of fear. NFS ultimately bought out and demolished most of the homes that abutted its fence line, NFS continues to spew Plutonium out of its stacks and rains down on the town of Erwin Uranium-234, 235, & 238, Thorium-228, 230, & 232, as well as Technetium-99.

Should any children play in the creeks or swim in the Nolichucky downstream of NFS, they would be subjected to Americium-241, Cesium-137, Neptunium-237, radioactive sodium and lead, Radium-224, Technetium-99, 5 isotopes of uranium, 4 of thorium, and 4 isotopes of plutonium—a veritable bath of poisons. (This list is from NRC reports on NFS’s radioactive effluents.)

Plumes and Rampant Cancer

There’s another military contractor in Atomic Appalachia: Aerojet in Jonesborough. This supplier of depleted uranium (DU) weapons to the US Army has also contaminated our environment and the bodies of workers. Thanks to a Christian Peacemaker delegation of CPT Stop-DU campaigners, I met a man who milled DU into penetrator cores at his offsite workshop. This man could no longer stand straight because of the neurological damage he suffered from DU exposure.

The neighbor across the road from Aerojet has seen a lot, too. He told us of how an iridescent plume blew out of one of Aerojet’s stubby vents one morning, how it rose up about 90 feet, how it floated behind the factory, and then disappeared from sight. He watched from his front porch as people in hazmat suits covered the roof vents. He saw that workers didn’t come in for days. Parking lots were empty. When he called the company, the state, and the NRC, no one would even admit that an accidental release had occurred.

Bottom line: both of these military contractors dump weapons waste into our air and lungs, into our recreational and drinking water, and—either directly or through fallout—onto the land where our kids play, our gardens grow, our pets hang out, and our livestock graze.

It will come as no surprise to you, then, to hear that cancer is rampant in Atomic Appalachia. In nuclear neighborhoods like mine, kids aren’t living long enough to play Little League or go to their first dance. Take Washington Street in Erwin, for example. Thanks to an 80-year-old lady who went door-to-door along the street where her sister died of non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma, we know that every third home in her neighbor-



Up until recently, Erwin was a place where radiation-warning signs hung within feet of backyard kiddie playgrounds. The tenants with the kids who used this playground were evicted after NFS learned that they had spoken with a documentary crew.

hood has had a cancer case or cancer death. The mother, father, and two sons who lived in the home closest to NFS all died from cancer.

Armed with unimpeachable data derived from 193 environmental samples that CPT helped us collect, ECAN made presentations to the National Academy of Sciences, to the Chairwoman of the NRC, and to NRC staff. We proved that NFS had contaminated 95 river-miles of the Nolichucky all the way to where the river empties into Douglas Lake. We insisted that NFS be included in the new study of cancer incidence around nuclear facilities—and we got it! We argued that NRC should finally do an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) on NFS’ decrepit operations and not extend its license—and we failed miserably. After the government granted NFS a 25-year license extension, the NRC pulled the cancer study, whining that it would “cost too much.”

So, if you needed proof that the arms trade is all about money—“money that is drenched in blood, often innocent blood,” to quote Pope Francis—I’m here to testify to that fact loud and clear.

I’m also here to plead with you—especially WILPF members and branches. Please help end the sacrifice of our children, our innocent Appalachian children. By building support for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, by getting more mayors to become Mayors for Peace, by advancing public education by energetically speaking out against the trillion-dollar nuclear weapons modernization plan, and by advancing the Ban Treaty Petition, WILPFers can be such a force for good. Wherever you live, bond together into your own “Wall of Women” to fight the destruction that is being visited on our people and our lands for the sake of the arms trade.

As a mother, and on behalf of Jonesborough and Erwin moms who fear for their kids’ lives—or mourn their loss—thank you for doing all you can.

My Visit to Ogoniland

Long-term Oil Contamination Has Destroyed Nigeria's Breadbasket

By Barbara Taft

Chair, Greater Phoenix WILPF

Following the WILPF International Congress in Accra, I flew to Nigeria to meet up with Ogoni journalist Ndume Green and visit Ogoniland, in the Niger Delta region, an area contaminated by Shell Oil's exploration and drilling. The Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) invited me to witness how the lack of cleanup since Shell left in the mid-1990s has devastated this region. Ogoni have had to migrate to support their families because they are unable to farm and fish as they did before. What follows are excerpts from the reports I sent home from that trip.

My first morning, three carloads of us drove out of Port Harcourt and into the heart of Ogoniland. The land there is lush, with crops like bananas, yams, coconuts, grapes, dates, potatoes, etc. This was once the breadbasket of Nigeria, but not today. The plants bear fruit, but soil and water have been contaminated from oil spills and are toxic. A land once rich enough to feed the whole nation now imports these foods. The people who live there eat locally-grown food, and drink the contaminated water at risk to their health and life.

We met with the committee planning to commemorate 23 years since Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight others were hanged for demonstrating for a clean-up of the Ogoni environment.¹ We visited Ken's hometown and gravesite, where they will build a memorial mausoleum, library, and museum about the struggle. I was welcomed everywhere and told that people are counting on me to deliver their message. We hope to get a network of people behind their struggle, to unite groups interested in human and civil rights, as well as in environmental issues.

In the evening, back at the hotel, we spoke with the King of Bangha, HRH King Suanu Baridam, who invited me to visit his palace. I was told I would see contaminated sites, a school, and perhaps a hospital, over the next two days.



This group commemorating Ogoni Martyr's Day is counting on me to deliver their message and inspire collective action.



In the "masquerades," local Ogoni people dress up to celebrate the successful yam harvest. Unfortunately, the yams contain benzene, a known carcinogen, because of soil and water contamination by Shell Oil.

Abandoned Projects, Empty Hospitals and Schools

Empty hospitals and clinics, schools without students or teachers, things only half completed. This is the story of Ogoniland. Add to that roads with holes large enough to swallow a small car, soot on everything, and food poisoned by the environment in which it is grown. Our visit to the devastated region was eye-opening. People encounter daily frustrations here. Perhaps most frustrating is that the oil revenue could fix all these problems, but the money made from taking these resources has not gone to those committed to repairing the damage done by oil exploration and drilling.

We visited a government-built clinic. Staff told us they receive shipments of medical supplies regularly and log them in, but the health problems of malaria, fever, arthritis, etc., persist. Flare-offs from the drilling operations emit benzene, causing lung diseases, paralysis, polio, bronchitis, pneumonia, etc. The facility has stood unused for seven years, a layer of soot on everything. The entire community has been without electricity or clean water, because the government abandoned the project.

Next, we visited a large hospital complex where the buildings have fallen into disrepair. It was like visiting a ghost town. Only security guards, lizards, and a few spiders inhabit the complex. Again, the project was abandoned when money ran out.

At the palace of HRH King Suanu Baridam, I was invited to speak to tribal elders. We talked about the need for international cooperation to get funding released for cleanup, help heal people, and create educational opportunities. The King then took us to a large school built to accommodate children of the region. This project, too, was abandoned. It sat vacant and unused. Like everywhere else, a layer of soot was on everything.



The women of the village of TeYork were singing and dancing to celebrate my visit.

Refugees in a 'Dead Zone'

Often, we were stuck in traffic on damaged roads behind diesel trucks spewing toxic smoke. Even when we weren't caught in this noxious traffic, it still smelled and even tasted as if we were behind a diesel truck. That's the nature of living in an area where oil drilling has taken place but the clean-up has not.

Most of us in the US take for granted we will have electricity and fresh water. Not so here. I have been in half a dozen villages where these things simply don't exist. In the village of TeYork, we walked to Kaani Cottage hospital. Money was raised for the foundation, now overgrown with plants. The one building stands roofless, empty, with no electricity or water. One room is operational, used by a nurse whose only function is to vaccinate children. There is a great need, especially, for OB/GYN care. Every woman I met was ill, but the closest functioning hospitals are in Port Harcourt, about 30 miles away over incredibly bad roads. By the time the patient can get to care, if he or she can afford it, their chance of survival is severely diminished.

My final day we visited the most contaminated areas of Ogoniland, the worst being in the ancient village of Goi. All of the residents had been evacuated due to pollution hazards. The river once teemed with fish. Oil has contaminated the water and surrounding soil, making it a dead zone. The paramount chief, who took us to the contamination site, said all of the people we met were refugees, living in a village not their own. And despite the contamination, people still consume fish from contaminated waters, and eat food grown in contaminated soil.

Earlier that day, we met with HYPREP (Hydrocarbon Pollution Remediation Project), an official government group tasked with implementing the recommendations of the UNEP (UN

Environment Program) report. They have a billion dollars of funding, and have functioned for about 16 months. HYPREP representatives say they are doing a slow, methodical analysis that will lead to a recovery program, and that they will begin with providing fresh water, sorely lacking in most areas. When they say that their plan is to operate slowly, this makes us fear the money will be spent on consultants and salaries, and the cleanup will never reach the people.²

How Can We Help?

First, let's help connect students in Ogoniland (and perhaps in Nigeria in general) with youth in other places where similar contamination has been rampant, especially with youth in indigenous tribes living in areas where drilling has begun or is expected to begin. Environmental information can best be passed from these other young people to the Ogoni youth.

Next, we plan to move from educating about the issues to action, which means we need you to join as we move toward creating a wave of support for cleaning up Ogoniland (and, of course, other contaminated sites). We work regularly for peace and justice, but all that work will mean nothing if we don't take better care of our environment. If we destroy Mother Earth, we will destroy all life, and then peace and justice will be of little use, with no one here to enjoy it.



An oil-contaminated stream in Ogoniland; people bathe, wash dishes and clothes, and even drink this water.

NOTES:

1. I first learned of the Ogoni when Amnesty International (AI) worked on the case of Ken Saro-Wiwa, a journalist who led the movement to get Shell and the Nigerian government to clean up the environmental disaster caused by drilling. We were still writing letters when Nigeria put Ken and eight others on trial, convicted and hanged them. (WILPF was also working on the case.) Some Ogoni immigrants living near me continue to attend local AI meetings. About three years ago, they invited me to serve on the board of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP).
2. Government corruption has siphoned money from funds meant to clean up the contamination in the past. The mostly-completed schools, clinics, and hospitals I visited were all abandoned when funds ran out due to "skimming" from allocated money. This is why I join many others in doubting that this latest clean-up promise will be fulfilled.

Burlington Branch Hosts Two Atomic Bomb Survivors

By Marguerite Adelman

Member, Burlington WILPF Leadership Team

Like many WILPF Branches, Burlington (VT) WILPF has been struggling to attract young people and to get them engaged in our work. We've tried many strategies, but none have been effective. We always end up with the same true-blue activists. This year, we decided to take our programs to the places youth spend a majority of their time: high schools, colleges, and universities. Thus was born the idea for *Hibakusha Stories: Testimonies of Atomic Bomb Survivors and Today's Nuclear Weapons*.

The inspiration and instigator of this WILPF project was Maho Takahashi, a Japanese woman who recently moved to Burlington. Members of WILPF met Maho and her husband Casey in the winter of 2017 at a WILPF and Society of Friends celebration of the Nobel Peace Prize being awarded to ICAN. Since 2003, Maho has worked for Peace Boat, a Japan-based international organization that sponsors educational global voyages for peace and, like WILPF, is a key member of ICAN.¹ Maho has written that she "is inspired by the voices of the Hibakusha who open people's eyes around the world."

Maho, a member of Burlington WILPF, worked with WILPF members Marguerite Adelman, Betsy Nolan, and Robin Lloyd, and with John Reuwer of Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR), to organize our *Hibakusha Stories* educational program. Planning began in December 2017 and required that Burlington WILPF get supporters, find schools interested in presentations, and raise approximately \$10,000 in grants or donations. Grant writing began immediately and funding came from a wide variety of sources.² Project supporters were Hibakusha Stories, Youth Arts New York, PSR, the Peace & Justice Center, UVM's Center for Cultural Pluralism, Vermont Action for Peace, and Seven Days.

The mission of the Hibakusha Stories initiative is to pass the legacy of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to a new generation of high school and university students to empower them with tools to build a world free of nuclear weapons. Hibakusha Stories has provided programming to more than 32,000 students and facilitated staff development for NYC high school teachers in disarmament education in collaboration with the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs.

As part of this program, Vermont students, teachers, and community members had a unique opportunity to meet and hear first-hand testimony from two Hibakusha (atomic bomb



Students and teachers, along with members of the Hibakusha Stories team, pose with Yasuaki Yamashita and Shigeko Sasamori (seated center) following the presentation at St. Michael's College.

survivors). The average age of Hibakusha is now over 80; many of these survivors will not be with us for much longer. So this opportunity was billed as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Shigeko Sasamori and Yasuaki Yamashita experienced the devastation of nuclear weapons and are very concerned about the plans of the Trump administration to develop new types of weapons. Both exude a love and compassion that touches young people. They don't believe in hate. They want youth to be happy, have long lives, and to never have to experience the devastation of these weapons first-hand.

Shigeko Sasamori was 13 years old when the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. Hearing the sound of a plane, she looked up to see a B-29 flying overhead—seconds later she was knocked unconscious by the blast. When she came to, she was so badly burned that she was unrecognizable. Shigeko repeated her name and address over and over until she was finally found by her father. In 1955, she traveled to the US as part of a group of young women known as the Hiroshima Maidens. While in New York, she underwent numerous plastic surgery operations. Her story is featured in Steven Okazaki's award-winning film *White Light Black Rain*. Shigeko resides in California.

Yasuaki Yamashita was 6 years old when the atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. He was living with his family in a typical Japanese-style wooden frame house. "Suddenly, we were blinded by an intense light," he describes. "My mother pushed me to the ground and covered me with her body. We heard the roar of a great wind and flying debris of the house collapsed on top of us. Then there was silence. Our house was 1.5 miles from the epicenter. My father was recruited to help clean up the destruction. At the time we didn't know about the dangers of radiation that would later cause his death."

Yasuaki, an artist who currently lives in Mexico, reflects, "I feel that it is important to keep alive the memory of the

suffering, devastation, and death that nuclear weapons can cause in the hope that no one will ever use them again. I worry because each year there are fewer and fewer people still alive who can speak about this memory from personal experience.”

Education for Action

From September 18-20, 2018, Shigeko and Yasuaki spoke to over 3,000 high school students, college students, teachers, and community members in Chittenden County (VT). High school students and teachers at Burlington High School, South Burlington High School, Rice Memorial High School, and Champlain Valley Union High School, along with college students and teachers at St. Michael's College and the University of Vermont (UVM), participated in this educational program. The program at UVM was open to the larger community with closed captioning and sign language. In addition, the two-hour UVM program was taped by local public access and can be viewed online at <https://bit.ly/2VA2YgT>.

Each school held a large auditorium presentation, which began with Dr. Kathleen Sullivan of Hibakusha Stories and Robert Croonquist of Youth Arts New York setting the context for Shigeko and Yasuaki's stories and providing an introduction to nuclear disarmament education.³ This was followed by Hibakusha testimony, and each event ended with questions and discussion. Resources for nuclear disarmament education were compiled and made available to the schools. WILPF and PSR have been following up with educators since these events to develop long-term relationships for peace education.

An important part of all these presentations was to give students and community members ideas for direct action. Sullivan and Croonquist shared ideas, and Burlington WILPF elaborated on its long-range plan to get City Councils to pass



Shigeko Sasamori, seated, talks to students at St. Michael's College after the "Hibakusha Stories" presentation.

resolutions supporting the UN Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty, signed by 122 nations at the UN last summer, and to Step Back from the (Nuclear) Brink. Members of Burlington WILPF and PSR met with City Councils in Winooski and South Burlington, getting them to pass the first two resolutions in Vermont.

WILPF members hoped that these City Council resolutions could become a "doable action" that would engage many of the students, teachers, and community members who heard the testimonials of Shigeko and Yasuaki. Lots of names were gathered on petitions passed out at the university presentations, and WILPF and PSR will be reaching out to students and community members across Vermont asking them to bring a resolution in support of the UN Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty to their City Councils. The goal is to get at least ten City Councils across Vermont to pass resolutions and then to approach the Vermont State Legislature in 2019 to garner its support of the resolution.

Described as the largest peace education program in Vermont in over 30 years, *Hibakusha Stories* touched youth and teachers in myriad ways. At every presentation, the Hibakusha received a standing ovation. Audience members were often in tears. And students came up to hug and thank Shigeko and Yasuaki for coming to their schools and sharing their stories and experiences.

Teacher and Student Testimonials

Here's what teachers had to say about the program:

- It was amazing to hear personal stories about what we read in textbooks. This was a powerful presentation for both teachers and students alike!
- An hour and a half wasn't long enough! I think the majority of our kids could have listened longer. Both presenters had so much to say and with such power of words.
- Thank you for taking the time to prepare such an amazing experience for students and teachers!
- We had a great conversation in class today!

Students expressed the impact of the program in these words:

- When you listen to a survivor talk, you are listening a story being told. You are witnessing an oracle of warning. You begin to grasp the situation, what these weapons can do and how they can cause mass destruction without firing a bullet. A talk like this must be cherished

Continued on page 21.

Nothing Without Women

By H Patricia Hynes



Photo credit: IntegritMedia.

"The days when one could claim that the situation of women had nothing to do with matters of national and international security are, frankly, over..."

—Valerie M. Hudson

On the eve of World War II, the iconic writer Virginia Woolf responded to a male attorney's question about how to prevent war. To prevent war, she replied, women must be educated and able to earn a living. Only then, not dependent on fathers and brothers, can women possess "disinterested influence" to exert against war. Your question, she went on to tell him, is "how to prevent war." Ours is, "Why fight?"

Peace and the security of nations are powerfully linked with the equality of women, though it is the rare power broker—be he a diplomat or military liaison—who acknowledges this. I participated in WILPF's Triennial Congress in Ghana. Our conference opened with a few minutes of silence to honor the great Ghanaian statesman, peacemaker, and former Secretary General of the United Nations Kofi Annan, who died that morning. Annan was one of the rare leaders who recognized the link between feminism and peace, as he made clear in 2006:

...There is no policy more effective in promoting development, health and education than the empowerment of women and girls...and no policy is more important in preventing conflict or in achieving reconciliation after a conflict has ended.

Annan's words embody the core message of this Congress. My interviews—with western women prior to the Ghana Congress and with African women and a few men during their sessions on feminist peace in Africa—reinforced the mounting conviction that *the fate of nations is tied to the status of women*.

WILPF members from the war-ridden Democratic Republic of the Congo fully grasp this conviction. Wearing traditional clothing with electrifying color and patterns emblazoned with "rien sans les femmes," (literally "nothing without women"), they elaborated to me, "We mean everywhere throughout the world. If women are not involved, nothing of critical use to the world will happen."

A team of researchers, including security studies experts and statisticians, has created the largest global database on the status of women, WomanStats, which compares the security and level of conflict within 175 countries to the overall security of women in those countries. Their findings are profoundly illuminating for global security and world peace. The degree of equality of women within countries predicts best (better than degree of democracy; better than level of wealth, income inequality, or ethno-religious identity) how peaceful or conflict-ridden their countries are. Further, democracies with higher levels of violence against women are less stable and are more likely to choose force rather than diplomacy to resolve conflict.

Violence against women is an invisible foundation that underlies local, national, and international politics and security. It "has a causal impact on intra- and interstate conflict," WomanStats researcher, Dr. Mary Caprioli, told me. Her colleague, Dr. Valerie Hudson, reframed their central study finding: "Increasing gender equality is expected to have cascading effects on security, stability and resilience" within a country and internationally.

At the structural level of governance, the glaring absence of women in government as well as in international bodies such as the UN (at every echelon, particularly the highest level), robs women of power and, consequently, robs the world of security. Currently only 20 women hold the office of Head of State or Head of Government, a mere 6.3 percent versus 93.7 percent male international leaders. No doubt, the paucity of women in US governance is correlated with the maternal mortality rate—the highest among industrial countries; with rampant sexual harassment exposed by the MeToo Movement; and with the United States' dismal rating on the 2018 Global Peace index—121 out of 163 countries ranked.

What difference do women bring to issues of power and national security? Nearly 200 women in politics surveyed in 65 countries agreed: "Women's presence in politics increases the amount of attention given to social welfare, legal protection, and transparency in government and business." Four-fifths of them expressed that women in government helps to restore citizens' trust in government.



Guy Blaise Feugap

Studies of women in leadership in public and private sectors have concluded that women in high-level positions and on boards deal more effectively with risk, focus more strategically on long-term priorities, and are more successful financially. Experimental studies of women and men negotiating post-conflict

agreements have found that all-male groups take riskier, less empathic, and more aggressive positions. All-male negotiations also break down more quickly than do negotiations that include women. Further, men are more satisfied with decisions that are made with women involved than with all-male groups.

Given this, *why aren't women equally represented at every peace negotiation* (as the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 calls for), from Afghanistan to Israel/Palestine to the Democratic Republic of the Congo?

The convener of the Ghana peace conference, lawyer and mediator Ayo Ayoola-Amale, underscored the critical potential and impact of women in peace negotiations. "The Liberian 2011 Nobel Prize laureate Leymah Gbowee, together with Christian and Muslim women, pressured warring parties into the 2003 negotiations that eventually ended years of horrific war in Liberia," she told me. "Research has shown that where women's inclusion is prioritized, peace is more probable, especially when women are in a position to influence decision making. The reasons for this are not far-fetched: women constantly bridge boundaries and build alliances for peace, they promote dialogue and build trust... Women take an inclusive approach whether it is stopping conflict, contributing to peace processes, or rebuilding their societies after conflict or war."

The director of WILPF Cameroon's communications and disarmament programs, Guy Blaise Feugap, explained to me the taproot of his commitment to feminist peace. "In my family, there was much domestic violence. Since I was young, I wanted to work against violence against women and on behalf of peace. Micro inequalities grow into macro inequalities; and I had the conviction that women are necessary for my country's development and the construction of peace. Women are excluded from high level decision-making and I am committed to working for their inclusion." A teacher of French and English, he has also written two novels with this core theme.

Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge, former member of Parliament and Assistant Secretary of Defense in the post-apartheid South

African government, has turned the crucible of her experience into a lifelong commitment to equality for women in political decision-making. "The end of minority white rule," she told the WILPF audience in Ghana, "did not end patriarchal, militarized rule. You enter office to change government, and government changes you. Being elected to office is not enough; women and men of integrity must transform government."

Nozizwe laid out a strategic plan of action which included building the progressive feminist movement, particularly focusing on young women; using our electoral power to elect "gender sensitive women and men of integrity;" working to "transform political parties so they promote women and feminist leadership;" and "demanding greater transparency" in the financing of elections. Rien sans les femmes—nothing without women—infused her stirring opening speech.

Peacemaking within and among nations needs strategic and strong allies, yet nearly half of the human race is overlooked. "Enough of paper talk," protested many African women speakers, exasperated by the exclusion of women from national peacekeeping and post-conflict negotiations, ignoring UN resolutions that have urged women's inclusion.

Women have won gains for their equality and human rights without weaponizing their battles. Consequently, women have a history of strategic intelligence that governments and international bodies, such as the UN, urgently need, given ominous trends. Among these are the Trump administration's goal of unleashing the US global arms trade from policy restrictions; the decline in peace in this decade as measured by the Global Peace Index; the decline in democracy, with one-third of the world living in backsliding democracies in 2018; the stagnation of women and young people gaining high government positions; and crushing income inequality.

Unless societies transform themselves with an analysis of the status of women's equality and act decisively to empower women, they will persist as repositories of male ambitions, male privilege, and male power. This toxic mix—as women's experience and empirical evidence demonstrate—dooms the future of national and international security.

The Congress ended on a celebratory note. Traditional drumming and dancers drew everyone to their feet and into dance lines. "Arise women of Africa, women of the world," intoned one speaker. "Let a few hours here in Ghana resonate through Africa and the world." Feminist peace in Africa is on the move.

A longer version of this article was published in Truthdig on September 25, 2018. Reprinted by permission.

Courageous Women I Met at the 32nd Triennial Congress

By Barby Ulmer

Afghan women told their story. One of them, Jamila, lost two family members the night before they were to leave for Congress. The women couldn't get yellow fever shots or a Ghana visa in their own country, and the important date of Eid fell during the Congress. But they found ways to overcome all that because they felt it was so important to get to the Congress. The solidarity was so important to them, and also the adoption of Afghanistan as a national section.

They wanted to make sure people understood that the Taliban has demanded negotiation with the US, not Kabul, whom they feel is only a puppet of the US. Negotiate with the puppeteer, not the puppet. They also said that there isn't a family in Afghanistan who hasn't lost at least, AT LEAST, one family member in the 17 years of the US war and the many years of the Russian war. Here in the US, we don't really understand what it's like to live in a war daily for years.

Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge was there, too, a good friend from South Africa whom I've known since 1975. She was an organizer of women under apartheid, working with the then-banned ANC, for which she was imprisoned for a prolonged period without trial. She and Jeremy, a white South African, married in Quaker meeting. Mixed marriages were illegal.

Nozizwe was one of a four-person delegation that negotiated the transition from apartheid and she served on the working group that drew up the constitutional framework. She was elected to Parliament and served 15 years, until younger women convinced her that she should let younger ones run. She stayed around to help them learn how the Parliament works.

Then Nozizwe co-founded "Embrace Dignity," a human rights organization that aims to abolish prostitution and stop sex trafficking and other violence against women and girls. They learned to make high-quality items made of fabric and leather. She's wary of political leaders in South Africa who become wealthy and repress demonstrations by workers protesting for better conditions.

From Uganda, Rosemary is also concerned about violence against women. She founded "Stop the Silent Suffering."



From left: South African politician and activist Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge; Sylvie Jacqueline Ndongmo, WILPF Cameroon President and Africa Regional Representative; and Libyan peace activist Rida Al-Tubuly (Libya is an emerging WILPF group).

This violence is pervasive all over Africa but of course it is also common around the world. So she's always on the lookout for women who aren't talking about it but are suffering in silence.

Palestinian Hanan Awwad said she never knows if she's going to wake up on her own in the morning or if she'll be awakened by the Israeli military breaking into her home. When she goes out there's always trepidation about what might have happened to neighbors. She led the workshop on Palestine, which was attended by a Norwegian, an Australian, a couple of others, and me. We found that a resolution on South Africa that was passed at the Triennial in Japan in 1977 would be appropriate for Palestine today. We wanted the Congress to urge the UN to admit Palestine as a full member so Hanan would have more opportunities to speak and urge action against the human rights abuses and violations of international law by Israel. We didn't get to present a summary of the workshop. But individual WILPF sections could still take this action. I had met Hanan before but was honored that she treated me like a long lost sister!

Amani from Lebanon works in the refugee camps for both Palestinians and Jordanians. She never knows if Israel is going to attack. She realizes that at least she's not there 24/7 like the refugees are. She works with other WILPFers who have

New Sections and Groups

The WILPF 2018 Congress welcomed five new Sections: Afghanistan, Chad, Kenya, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.

The Congress also welcomed eight new Groups: Argentina, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Ivory Coast, Niger, Sierra Leone, and Sudan.

The decision was reached by consensus.

gotten more than 100 Imams to commit to lead discussions educating men and boys not to use violence against women. She's the one who gave me the idea to have women sign the scarf with the Picasso peace painting. What a wonderful way to remember these dedicated women full of love.

Many women from all over Africa have fled from war to the UK where they joined WILPF. They've formed a caucus where they can follow what's going on in their countries and find ways to support women back home. Dr Mariam from Sudan is one of them, who founded the Voice of Darfur Women, another organization concerned with violence against women. Many women attended from the DRC (Congo) and they described their work forming the Congo Men's Network to educate men and boys that violence isn't the definition of maleness.

I call Ghana the land of smiles because they're always smiling—even the bureaucrats in Immigration & Customs! When asked, they all said, "because we're happy!"

The solidarity for all of the women present in Ghana was palpable. Before the closing ceremony I was able to thank the entire group (216, at least) and tell them that I was energized, inspired, and hopeful.

African WILPF Sections Inspire Us

By Darien De Lu
WILPF US President

Vivid in my memories from the International WILPF Congress in Ghana are the friendly faces and gorgeous apparel of the African WILPFers, women and men. Only later did we hear about the serious obstacles these WILPFers face in their work, ranging from violent attacks by extremists to political repression, drought, and flooding in their home countries to demanding family responsibilities. In their perseverance in the face of such difficulties, the African WILPFers reminded me of a Honduran campaigner for peasants' rights to land, Elvia Alvarado. When we in the US got discouraged by terrible new political developments, she urged us to dance and cheer up. In her political work, she understood that there was no time to lose in being immobilized by despair!



2018 WILPF Congress Attendees. Photo credit: Eileen Kurkoski.

The "Feminist Peace Movement in Africa" Forum took place two days before the Congress. In order to attend, many international WILPFers, including members of the US Delegation, made a special effort to be in Ghana early. For me, that forum was a highlight of the Accra events. African activists told us about their work, and we had the chance to go deeper in breakout discussion sections with our fellow activists from around the world.

WILPF is growing quickly in Africa. For the African sections and groups, being part of WILPF is important. As the WILPF group in Burundi says, "For us, being a WILPF member organization gives us strength and energy to keep going because we are a big family in which problems are solved...and progress can be made together."

African WILPFers are fully employing the new regional organization of International WILPF. In 2017, two WILPF African Regional Meetings helped build the WILPF presence in Africa. Four of five new sections adopted by the 2018 Congress are in Africa, and Africa has eight WILPF groups. (A group is a WILPF organization that does not yet meet all the requirements to be adopted at a Congress as a national section—such as at least ten members, a financial plan, and an elected board with officers.)

By contrast, the US is part of the Americas Region, in which we have six sections. We've had only one in-person regional meeting in the last five years. However, with the recent election of our Americas Regional Representative (Beatriz Schulthess, from Costa Rica), and her backup (US WILPFer, Jan Slagter) communication and activity in the Americas Region may increase.

New Governance Structure for WILPF International



The biggest change approved at the Triennial Congress was a new governance structure for WILPF's decision-making body, the International Board (IB). Margrethe Tingstad, Vice-President, and Lyn Lane, outgoing Convenor of the Standing Constitution Committee, presented the updated Constitution and By-Laws at Congress.

The new WILPF governance model replaces the previously small Executive Committee (ExCom). Thirty-six (36) National Sections will no longer be represented on the IB, instead there are six (6) regional representatives. The governing body is now comprised of eleven (11) members: one President, two Vice-Presidents, the Secretary-General, one Treasurer, and six members from regions, who are nominated by regions and endorsed by Congress. For regional representation, there will be one vote per region, with one regional liaison and one regional alternate.

"Governance structure won't solve communication issues across language, contexts, etc.," stated Lyn Lane, "but it will give us a stepping stone to work from." The roles and responsibilities of the new IB were outlined by Lyn as follows:

- The President provides political leadership.
- The Treasurer is responsible for the financial leadership of WILPF.
- The Vice-Presidents support the President and undertake such duties of the President as she and/or the International Board may delegate.
- The Secretary-General is the daily public spokesperson of WILPF and represents WILPF in its activities; she is responsible for the management of the International Secretariat, in all its offices, and for liaising with the National Sections

to strengthen their capacity to achieve WILPF's aims and principles in their country.

- Regional Representatives provide two-way communication between the National Sections in their designated region and the International Board; feed national and regional experiences and concerns into the International Board and report back on the international experience and concerns to the regional membership; on request by the President and/or the International Board, and in consultation with the respective National Section when issues of importance arise, contact the media on behalf of the International Board; report to the International Board on regional activities and their needs; encourage cooperation between regions.

Sections were also encouraged to create forums to strengthen communication and collaboration within and across Sections, such as has been done with regional forums in Africa and Europe, through online meetings, translation, and other initiatives to strengthen political work.

Members from Norway, DRC, Afghanistan, France, US, Colombia, Costa Rica, Germany, Spain, Sweden, and Palestine, as well as ExCom members, commented on the proposal. Some comments welcomed the proposal and the opportunity to address current gaps in governance. Others raised clarification questions. Three sections raised serious concerns: WILPF US (Mary Hanson Harrison), WILPF Colombia (Katherine Ronderos), and WILPF Costa Rica (Adilia Caravaca).

Mary Hanson Harrison spoke up and noted that some Sections had asked for more time for the delegates to Congress, who are the decision-making body, to discuss the reorganization plan. Only 45 minutes were allotted in the schedule. This concern was expressed by others, as well, and on the first day of Congress, Mary convened over 40 members to discuss their concerns.

At the formal voting session, Mary spoke for the allotted three minutes. Addressing the membership, she stated that the WILPF US Section dissented "not to win or lose, but to speak our piece." Mary stressed the need to keep the membership-driven foundation of WILPF as the deliberative body and to continue having one representative per national Section.

Mary raised concerns around cultural diversity, representation, communication, transparency, accountability, and inclusion. She stressed that it would be difficult to ask one person to represent all Sections and Groups in one region.

She expressed concerns primarily about the risk of narrowing the voices who represent the members by selecting only those who agree with the overriding decision-makers and leadership, while voices of dissent would not be heard or welcomed.

Continued on page 22.

A Pilgrimage of Anguish

Photos and Reflections by Jean Verthein



Left: Entrance to Elmina.
Lower left: Inside Elmina.
Below: An embedded ball and chain.

WILPF's International Congress at the University of Ghana in Accra left little time for extra travels. But I'd also come to Ghana to make a pilgrimage to the slave castles, especially Elmina.

Twenty of us bussed along the Atlantic to the whitewashed fortress. Along the way, we shared the many experiences motivating us. An African-American woman in my study group spoke about the daily racism she endures. At the Brooklyn Museum entrance, she and her husband were required by the white guard to show ID cards to enter, while whites in the same line were not. Another person recalled the maltreatment of returning Black World War II soldiers. We discussed how continued, harsh exclusions result in a full range of injustices for Black persons, including police killings.



In my childhood, my Irish-German father, a Social Democrat, and my mother, a Republican, drove us south. I saw anti-Semitic "Restricted" hotel signs and Jim Crow "Whites only" facilities. The shacks Black people were consigned to near the Greek-columned mansions where White people lived shocked me. Later, I marched for civil rights and

heard Martin Luther King speak, but I was frustrated about how little I could do.

Slave Castles Were Brutal Prisons

Between the fourth and twelfth centuries, the West African Ghana Empire dominated northwest Africa. This kingdom was renowned for its wealth in gold, its beautiful courts, and its expert warriors, hunters, and fishers. Ghana was an important trading center and cultural crossroads.

Elmina Castle was built by the Portuguese by 1481 to protect their gold, spice, ivory, and slave trades from European

rivals. Portuguese slave traders captured most slaves from 1502-1580. By 1577, the Dutch started expanding their slave trade and eventually took over this fort in 1637. In the mid-16th century, responding to the ever-growing demand for labor-intensive sugar, American slave traders starting shipping slaves to the "New World"—first to South America (especially Brazil), and then to the West Indies and the United States. More than half of the Atlantic Slave Trade took place in the 18th century; during this era, the British dominated the slave trade.



Elmina and fifty other "slave castles" were erected mostly on the Gold Coast of Ghana. In these brutal prisons, enslaved persons were held in chains and sorted by strength and levels of health. Many died from illness and dehydration. Some preferred to starve themselves to death. Others were force-fed with tongs

opening their mouths. Survivors were stacked in crates and shipped across the Atlantic.

The gloomy, dungeon-like atmosphere reminded me of concentration camps (a few years ago, I stayed in one outside Hamburg). To see the small, dark, putrid rooms and know that they were the holding pens from which millions of African slaves were dispatched was haunting. I would have nightmares about the guidebook images of human beings in crates in the unconscionably cruel practice of "tight packing" slaves.

My Protestant forebears included original settlers with William Penn in Pennsylvania, and Dr. Benjamin Rush, a signer of the Declaration of Independence (and supposed abolitionist!); both Penn and Rush owned slaves. The slave trade lasted for 360 years to the Americas and Europe. Visiting Elmina, I reflected on how the anguish continues to spin out through our deeply flawed US history.

*Jean Verthein is a WILPF member-at-large who served for several years as WILPF's liaison to the United Nations. She taught at Columbia University. Her timely book *The Last Gentleman in the Middle Distance* will be published in Fall 2019, one hundred years after the beginning of the rise of Hitler. The book's characters are coming of age in the German province where the Nazis first took power in Europe.*

Looking Forward to the 63rd CSW

Following a “Truly Impactful” 62nd

By Dixie Hairston

WILPF US At-Large Member

The US Section of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom partners with WILPF International each year to send a delegation of university and college students, as well as WILPF US members, to the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) at the United Nations headquarters in New York City. This access is made available through the UN Practicum in Advocacy and the Local2Global programs, and through WILPF’s consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

The UN Practicum in Advocacy has been a program of WILPF US since 2008 and is specifically tailored for university and college students looking to learn and expand their advocacy skills on the international level. The Local2Global program was formed in 2009 as a way for WILPF US to expand access to the UN among our membership, giving long-standing members the opportunity to advocate on behalf of WILPF at the CSW. Local2Global and Practicum participants can network with experts in their field, meet with peers, and develop a deeper understanding of WILPF’s work including briefings from Peace-Women, Reaching Critical Will, and WILPF International staff.

The delegation for the 63rd (2019) Commission on the Status of Women has been selected. Students from the following institutions will attend the CSW on March 11-16, 2019: Eastern Michigan University; Texas A&M University; University of California, Santa Barbara; University of Denver; University of Houston; University of Iowa; and University of Wisconsin.

WILPF US will also be represented by Mary Caponi and Mary Ann Koch, both members of the Des Moines Branch.

This year’s priority theme is “Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls;” with a review theme of “Women’s empowerment and the link to sustainable development” from the 60th (2016) session.

The week includes a WILPF-only orientation session and networking event, participation in NGO-CSW Consultation Day open to all civil society participants, daily briefing sessions with guest speakers, and access to all CSW events.

“As always, I’m looking forward to getting to know this year’s delegates. The delegation is unique each year in their perspective, expertise, and learning. It is a privilege to help the students and L2G participants navigate the intensity of the CSW,” said Dixie Hairston, co-faculty for the Practicum. “We have seen students go on to get internships, jobs, and consulting work from their Practicum. Our goal is to help students use WILPF’s access to CSW as a way to get involved with WILPF in the future and as a way to expand their pro-



fessional experience through the lens of WILPF’s work at the UN and beyond,”

“The UN Practicum is a really unique opportunity for outreach, mentorship, and mutual learning between longtime WILPF members and students who are already activists and advocates in their own right,” added Dr. Melissa Torres, Vice President of the WILPF International Board and co-faculty for the Practicum. “It’s been amazing getting to meet so many strong students and working with them to tie their work to WILPF’s goals of feminist peace and disarmament. As much as we guide them through this process and their first year as WILPF members, we learn just as much, if not more, from their varied lenses and advocacy.”

One student participant called last year’s CSW experience “incredible and truly impactful” and another said it “promoted my professional and personal growth.” Students commented that they look forward to using skills gained during the practicum to make change in their communities. “I hope to continue my involvement with WILPF, and to return to the United Nations again one day,” concluded one testimonial.

Last year’s WILPF participants were also impressed. “Being a WILPF Local to Global Delegate to CSW62 was an amazing, transformative experience,” said Linda Lemons (Des Moines Branch). “It was truly experiencing the Local to Global paradigm change, which is desperately needed to re-balance a long-lived model of patriarchy, power over, and violence.... I felt validated and empowered as a woman, as I brought my lived experience into a truly global community focused on standing for human rights, gender equality, feminine peace, and the building of relationships.”

Marguerite Adelman (Burlington Branch) praised the NGO workshops, including WILPF’s, and added, “Local2Global is an excellent way to build WILPF for the future. By introducing diverse younger women and men to WILPF, the practicum helps form connections and establish relevance as we look for ways to revitalize WILPF at the local, state, and national levels.”

To find out more about the Local2Global program, contact: practicum-mail@wilpfus.org.

A Wide-Ranging Board and Development Colloquy

By Jan Corderman
WILPF US Treasurer

On October 4-6, 2018, the WILPF US Board and Development Committee met in Des Moines for a three-day work session at the comfortable space attached to our office at the Friends House in Des Moines (use of the space is a benefit of our rental agreement with the AFSC).

Our productive meet-up included an office tour, a meeting with one of the leading Mayors for Peace in the US, and discussions on development planning, leadership with intent, and fostering inclusion and equity in our section.

Over lunch on our first day together we met with Frank Cownie, Mayor of Des Moines and one of the Vice Presidents of Mayors for Peace. Des Moines is one of the 7,701 member cities of this international organization, and in 2016, Cownie accepted the challenge to become a Lead City in the US. He noted that mayors are primarily responsible for public safety which led him to sponsor a resolution calling on the President to “in good faith, to participate in or initiate...multilateral negotiations for the elimination of nuclear weapons as required by the 1970 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.”

Another part of our time together was devoted to exploring our “WILPF US Office.” We not only toured our physical space, but Chris Wilbeck, our Administrator, took us through our other WILPF US Office in her presentation. Chris provided an overview of her work in servicing members, branches, and the board in the areas of dues and donations, bookkeeping, and responding to requests. Chris made clear how Donor Perfect, Constant Contact, and Quickbooks work for us and also led us through a review of membership data from 2008 forward. Chris and Glenn Ruga, our IT Specialist, have worked together to streamline our technical processes while they tackle updating our membership and branch records.

For several months last year Mary Dooley of Key Elements Consulting was part of our staff and worked closely with our Development Director Marybeth Gardam. Mary spent an afternoon with us and reviewed the Case Statement and Three-year Development Plan that she created with Marybeth and others on the Development Committee. The Plan covers long- and short-term campaigns, a grant solicitation program, planned giving, and special events.

2018 was the third year we participated in Peace Development Fund's Sustainability Project (PDF is our fiscal sponsor).



From left: Nancy Price, Chris Wilbeck, Maggie Rawland, Barbara Nielsen, Laura Dewey, Joan Engler, Jan Corderman, Frank Cownie, Mary Hanson Harrison, Shilpa Pandey, Eileen Kurkoski, Kathy Sharkey, Marybeth Gardam, Photo by Al McDonell.

We were again privileged to work with Kathy Sharkey of their staff, someone the Board has come to know through the project. Kathy's presentation focused on our Board's Development and 'Leading with Intent.' We spent time exploring how Board members' roles and responsibilities further our mission, reviewing what we stand for, what are we good at, and who we serve—all good points for us to review, discuss, and act on.

In addition to providing housing and transportation, the Des Moines Branch held a reception for our Section leaders. We greatly appreciated their hospitality and friendship and used this opportunity to ask Branch member Rodger Rough, videographer, to create a video to introduce our Board to our members and friends. If you haven't already done so, please click on it @ wilpfus.org.

We also used our time together for an in-person Board meeting, a pleasant change from our usual meetings by phone. In addition to conducting the regular business, we identified short-term strategic goals of further developing our volunteer base, fundraising, and agreeing to commit future time and energy to long-term strategic planning.

We closed out our work session by engaging in a workshop with Kesho Scott, an internationally renowned Diversity Trainer/Consultant, Associate Professor of American Studies and Sociology at Grinnell College, and an award-winning writer. In small groups we identified how our cultural experience is embodied. Kesho brought us back together to consider how to unlearn that experience. In over two decades of developing unlearning racism work, Kesho has helped shift the awareness, commitment, and skill set of participants toward being actively and personally anti-racist and anti-sexist, rather than remaining merely passive observers. She shared her “affirmative duty” technique with us. As Board members, we're responsible to include all those present.

Our Board is “centralized” but doing “decentralized” work toward a world of peace with justice. The work session was productive and informative.

New WILPF Branch Rocks Northern Illinois

By Beth McGowan, Chair, Rockford Branch



A group of WILPFers at a local church gym the day of the 2018 Rockford Women's March. From left: Tabitha Benson, Eve Harker, Kathy Tall, Barb Verni-Lau, Beth McGowan, Sara Dorner, Sally Roberts, Nika Nicole. Photo credit: Angela Fellars

Rockford, Illinois is home to Jane Addams' Alma Mater, then Rockford Female Seminary but now Rockford University. It is also home to a new WILPF branch. Officially begun in late fall 2017, the Rockford Branch has become a major player in the progressive culture of Rockford!

Most of our efforts in 2018 were centered on getting out the vote. Joining a nationwide effort of marches with a "power to the polls" theme, Rockford WILPF sponsored our city's Women's March on January 20, 2018, with the help of several other progressive groups in the city including unions, the League of Women Voters, AAUW, and a local organization Rockford Urban Ministries. We began with a pre-march rally, marched 15 blocks, and then held a meeting that included multiple speakers on progressive topics as well as information tables for major groups involved in progressive causes. We had speakers discuss sexism, the Me Too movement/sexual assault, environmentalism, immigration, racism, education, religious freedom, transgender identity, as well as other pressing concerns. This raised the profile of Rockford WILPF branch in our city as a force to be reckoned with!

Following up on this effort, we began a several-months-long campaign to register voters by coordinating closely with the League of Women Voters and with a mighty assist from the local Board of Elections. This multi-step program included: recruiting people to become deputy registrars; organizing classes with local board of elections; setting up events with multiple agencies and events around town; and staffing those events to register people. Our efforts resulted in training over fifty new deputy registrars and hosting over eighty different events to register voters.

When the window to register voters closed, we began another get-out-the-vote effort. Using a database from elections, we identified 10,000 women who had not voted in the 2016 election cycle. Each of these women received a handwritten note on a postcard, urging her to vote. This required a fundraising effort, and we brought in about 75 people to write postcards and then to stamp and mail them.

During this event, one of our members—Barb Verni-Lau—arranged for a surprise visit from Jane Addams! Addams (aka

Want to form a new WILPF branch in your community?

First of all, congratulations on your decision!

Branches are an important part of WILPF as they:

- Share and adopt the vision of the total organization and its democratic participatory way of work
- Create a space, where the members take part in determining the policies and programs of the US Section
- Provide support for WILPF US by paying Section dues, sharing information and ideas for action
- To be successful in forming a group in your community, you need to engage others and discuss:
- Shared concerns of women, peace and security issues within your community
- How you can adapt and realize WILPF's vision and work in your community

Our Membership Development Committee can help! Contact Shilpa Pandey, Committee Chair, to get started (emailto:shilpa@yahoo.com)

Sue Crandall) arrived around hour three of an eight-hour marathon postcard writing session to discuss her life and work trying to change the world. She took questions from the attendees and congratulated us for following in her footsteps and encouraging women to make use of the franchise!

In addition to these get-out-the-vote efforts, we participated and sponsored multiple other rallies and marches including functions to protect healthcare, anti-gun violence activities, a march to Keep Families Together, and an anti-Kavanaugh rally.

Finally, Rockford WILPF, with an assist from the local INDIVISIBLE, organized the Rockford Protect Mueller rally after Trump fired Jeff Sessions, joining dozens of protests across the country.

Presently, we are focusing on proactive measures in Rock-

ford. WILPF's campaigns are structuring our work: we are participating in the Poor People's Campaign and Racial Justice campaign by aligning ourselves with other local organizations to enact bail reform in the city of Rockford and to look into policing tactics in the city. We are participating in WILPF's environmental justice campaign by reducing availability of one use plastics and engaging in climate action, and in the Human Rights Campaign by playing a major support as fundraiser and acting as educators and advocates on immigrant and refugee issues both locally and on the Mexico border.

All these actions have made Rockford WILPF known in our city as the women who get things done!!

Hibakusha

Continued from page 11.

and remembered as a point in history when one generation inspired another.

- I will always remember the pain in their faces when they were talking about the bomb and the happiness in their eyes when they said they wanted us to be happy.
- We need to understand the gravity of what we as humans have created.
- Consider all the harm that nuclear weapons cause. Unlike the Hibakusha, they have never directly experienced being under the attack of nuclear weapons, so they have no idea how awful it is to witness. You must consider the people you are hurting before producing all the nuclear weapons.
- Stop wars, stop producing the weapons and weapons of mass destruction, invest funds in social reforms and raising the quality of life globally.
- I plan to tell others the stories I heard and hope it makes a difference.
- I hope to support and vote for people who will denuclearize the world.
- It was amazing and you should make it a goal to go to every state in America at least twice.
- I am so glad I got to hear these folks talk. That was one of the greatest things I've ever experienced.
- They were lovely, they made me cry and I started feeling determination about changing the world.

Burlington WILPF members believe that providing peace education to the schools may be the best way to empower the next generation of peace activists. Today's students receive very little peace education or women's history in their text-

books. We know from feedback forms that the testimony of these two Hibakusha have had a powerful impact on students.

Burlington WILPF is now contemplating another program for schools in the fall of 2019, perhaps focusing on Eleanor Roosevelt, a WILPF member, women's right activist, and drafter of the UN Declaration of Human Rights. During these political times, bringing peace education and women's history to the schools needs to be carefully tailored to present history along with an action message for today's youth.

As part of the WILPF US mini-grant, Burlington WILPF promised to make all its materials for Hibakusha Stories available to other WILPF Branches that might be interested in bringing Hibakusha to their communities. Available materials include copies of grant proposals, program schedules, school resource lists, press releases, advertisements, budgets, and more. In addition, DVDs of the UVM program will be distributed to schools and Branches as long as they are available.

For more information contact Marguerite Adelman at madel51353@aol.com or 518-561-3939.

NOTES:

1. Peace Boat has organized over 90 voyages, including 60 around-the-world voyages, carrying more than 70,000 participants to 200 ports. Peace Boat has worked with over 170 Hibakusha—travelling around the world calling for a nuclear-free future.
2. Funders included: WILPF US mini-grant, WILPF Burlington VT, Harris and Frances Block Foundation, Sandra and Bernard Otterman Family Foundation, Anne Slade Frey Charitable Trust, Price Chopper's Golub Foundation, Ben and Jerry's Foundation, Youth Arts New York, St. Michael's College, and several sources at UVM: the Center for Cultural Pluralism, Interfaith Center, and Departments of Anthropology, Global and Regional Studies, and Asian Studies and Languages.
3. Kathleen is an education consultant to the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, was the principal author of disarmament-related curricula for the UN's Cyberschoolbus website, and co-wrote with Peter Lucas Action for Disarmament: 10 Things You Can Do! Robert is founder and treasurer of Youth Arts New York and has taught multicultural, interdisciplinary global literature and culture for 20 years with CUNY's Gateway Institute for Pre-College Education.

Building the Movement Together: PDF's Women Peacemakers Initiative

By Kathleen Sharkey
Director of Communications and Outreach,
Peace Development Fund

In 1981, Peace Development Fund (PDF) first brought donors together as peace and anti-nuclear funders. Now, more than 35 years later, we continue to be faced with wars and nuclear build-up. On the foreign policy front, our government has become more bellicose and more isolationist. Now is the time to bring donors and activists together to bring about the peaceful, anti-nuclear world we have long sought, one that treasures human rights.

PDF began to discuss this concept with our communities and grantees, and realized that, with our fiscally sponsored groups, we have the potential for facilitating movement-building as well as capacity building at the organizational

level. These cross-sectional conversations are especially well-suited to work with groups that share similar missions and visions.

Hence, PDF is excited to announce the Women Peacemakers Initiative, inviting six of our grantees to participate. The Initiative will be anchored by Women for Genuine Security, Women Cross DMZ and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom-U.S. During this one-day conference, they will discuss their work, needs and explore possibilities for collaboration. The Women Peacemakers Initiative, like other future planned initiatives, is aiming to bring together groups that are affiliated with PDF through grants or The Sustainability Project, that are run by women, and that focus on peace and anti-militarism.

The Women Peacemakers Initiative is planned for March 22, 2019 in San Francisco. (Information on how WILPF US members can apply for this opportunity has been shared in an eAlert and in the February eNews). Along with five delegates from WILPF and the other anchor groups, participants include Heart and Hand Fund, Whose Knowledge?, and Women's Earth and Climate Action Network. PDF envisions they will come together to make connections, network, learn, and receive support from one another. We believe that by facilitating this convening, these organizations will have a greater opportunity to grow and thrive.

Congress Reflections

Continued from page 16.

Katherine Ronderos (WILPF Colombia President) affirmed that she saw the proposal as a strategy to make sure decisions are faster to deliver, but expressed worry regarding how this would work in reality due to the diversity of the regions and how they operate. In particular, she raised concerns about the representation of the Sections when political decisions need to be taken. She then proposed that instead of one Regional Representative and one Regional Alternate, there be two Regional Representatives, still with one vote per region.

Written statements from WILPF US and WILPF Colombia regarding the decision taken to change the Constitution can be found in the Appendices of the 2018 Congress Report.

Adilia Caravaca (President, WILPF Costa Rica) acknowledged the efforts in creating a body that is more effective and efficient, but expressed concerns on how Sections would feel represented in the new IB. She then argued that the ExCom was meant to have regional representation while maintaining the IB for political decisions.

Heidi Meinzolt (WILPF Germany) expressed support for the new Constitution, pointing out that it would be a process that would help WILPF bridge some of the insufficiencies. Similarly, Carmen Magallón (WILPF Spain) agreed on the need to try this changed structure in a spirit of trust.

In response to the concerns, Margrethe and Lyn noted that there have been many opportunities for engagement, through discussion papers, IB meetings and webinars. However, some Sections did not participate. "Let's ensure every time at the Section level or regional levels that we get 100% representation and participation," stated Margrethe.

Hannan Awwad (WILPF Palestine) asked about the number of regions and how many members would represent each region. In response, it was confirmed that the decision was taken to focus on the same six regions that WILPF currently focuses on, and that each region is entitled to one seat at the table; when the Regional Representative is not available the Alternate Regional Representative would step in.

Kozue Akibayashi called for a vote on the original proposal to adopt the new Constitution and By-Laws as proposed by the Standing Constitution Committee.

The motion passed, with 102 votes in favor, six votes against, and 10 abstentions.

This is a slightly edited version of the account that appears on pp. 25-27 in the Women's International League for Peace & Freedom 2018 Congress Report prepared by Zala Zbogor and edited by Elena Cason and Janette McLeod. The full report including appendices will be available on the WILPF US website.

Credit: Feminist Art Project, Rutgers University



June S. Krebs

1930-2018



June Krebs speaking, second from left.

Photo courtesy of Karen Share, daughter of June Krebs.

June Krebs, a longtime member of WILPF and chair of the Greater Philadelphia Branch from 1994-2000, died on April 17, 2018.

June Marie Ostrander was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on June 7, 1930, and grew up in Mt. Airy. She lived in Glenside, Ambler, and Oreland before buying a home in Germantown in the 1970s. Ever the activist, she chaired *News and Views* until 2012, which met weekly to read, share, and react to current world events.

In 1948 June graduated from Stevens School for Girls, and in 1950 from Bradford Junior College as an art major. She finished The Philadelphia College of Art (now Philadelphia University of the Arts) in 1954 as a major in fashion illustration. In 1983, at age 53, June graduated from Antioch University with a master's degree in counseling.

June joined the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Restoration in 1952. In 1986 she joined the Unitarian Society of Germantown (USG). She famously began a peace vigil in front of USG every Wednesday in December 2005 for one year, for which she received the Peace and Justice Dove Award given annually by the Greater Philadelphia Branch.

She was married to Lawrence Edward Schulkins from 1953-1963 and bore two children, Karen Elizabeth (Share) in 1955 and David Wayne in 1957. She married Paul F. Krebs in January 1967 and gained four children through marriage, Mark Nathan (Armstrong), Heidi Ruth, Matthew Curtis, and Peter Lauris. Matthew died in May 1995 and David drowned in July 1998. Paul passed away after a long illness in December 2001, and is buried next to June in the USG memorial garden.

June became the first Art Therapist in the area at North-western Mental Health Center from 1961 to 1967. She then volunteered for the Mental Health Association of Southeastern Pennsylvania as a community companion in April 2004 and visited a patient weekly.

She was active with the Keystone Alliance against nuclear power in the 1970s. June co-chaired the USA/USSR Friendship Society from 1983 to 1989 and traveled to the Soviet Union in 1985, before the fall of the iron curtain. She became a

card-carrying member of the Communist Party in the 1980s and served on the District Committee from 1982 to 1990. She was well known for passing out leaflets on tax day.

Tina Shelton, Libby Frank, and Sylvia Metzler of the Greater Philadelphia Branch wrote the following about June's importance to their branch: "June's social justice spirit was at home in the WILPF community. June opened her home and was a consistent welcoming presence for meetings, gatherings, and events. She hosted monthly meetings for WILPF for the last few years of her life."

"She was always available to distribute literature, welcome people to meetings and lunches, and help at Mt. Airy Day and other events," they continued. "She was not afraid to talk to members of the public about her ideas, using her oversized WILPF button as an icebreaker. When she received a visit from a WILPF member in the days before her death, the memory of Mt. Airy Day, one of June's favorite events, made her face light up with a smile!"

June didn't just talk the talk, she walked the walk, they stressed. "June lived the struggle. At her beloved Johnson House, at Mt. Airy Day, at countless events, she embodied the spirit of creating a better world. She truly lived what she aspired to be. She was open, fair, and welcoming. She was persistent and sensitive about getting our WILPF Branch to be more racially inclusive. Knowing that we live in a racially diverse neighborhood, she pushed WILPF to reflect that diversity."

June even carried her social justice spirit into her beloved retirement home, they noted. "Each morning, after watching *Democracy Now*, she and her neighbors discussed current events because, June said, 'residents need to stay aware of what's happening in the world outside their Retirement Community.' She frequently wrote to her current heroes and led a campaign for our Branch to give Elizabeth Warren the Peace and Justice Dove award."

They remembered, "In the last few years, it was not uncommon that as we sat around and discussed some logistics of current actions, June would become quiet. As the business would wind down, she would offer a saying that was on target and resonated with the rest of us as she said exactly what needed to be said to summarize. Hearing June's family call these her 'Junisms' makes sense to us!"

"WILPF was a home for June," they concluded. "She tended it, nurtured us, gathered recruits, and did all the work that a home needs. We treasure her and are blessed by her years of being in WILPF."

Thank you to Karen E. Share, daughter of June Krebs, for compiling and sharing a detailed biography of her mother, in part from June's autobiography.

Branches Rally, Lobby, Educate, and Collaborate

Boston



Virginia Pratt and Eileen Kurkoski holding the WILPF banner at the start of the Veterans for Peace march.

WILPF Boston joined the Veterans for Peace march and rally on November 11, 2018, to honor the 100th anniversary of Armistice Day. The first Armistice Day was celebrated at the end of World War I when the world came together to recognize the need for lasting peace. At the rally, Eileen Kurkoski promoted and obtained signatures for the Ban Nuclear Weapons petition. WILPF supporter David Rothauser spoke eloquently of WWI. Virginia Pratt and Eileen Kurkoski are pictured here holding the WILPF banner at the start of the march.

Eileen Kurkoski, Boston Branch member and WILPF US Secretary, also reported on WILPF Boston's Annual Speaker Retreat, held November 30-December 1, 2018. The 2018 retreat "included [feminist writer, theorist, and Clark University professor] Dr. Cynthia Enloe and our own Dr. Patricia Hynes discussing the strong link between Patriarchy and Militarism & Violence, with women often the victims. Attendees discussed ways to both challenge and alter war patriarchy. Stories from African WILPFers offered good suggestions."

Peninsula/Palo Alto

The Peninsula/Palo Alto Branch held a special "Stop the Tears" demonstration in Palo Alto on November 30, 2018, to protest the recent violence against asylum-seeking women, children, and men at the Mexican border in Tijuana.

In September, Judy Adams reported on exciting lobbying victories. "Our branch has successfully lobbied East Palo Alto and Menlo Park, CA, to join Mayors for Peace," she wrote. "The branch is also working with Palo Alto, which had belonged to MfP for 28 years, but resigned in 2013. We may expand our campaign to other nearby cities." According to Judy, "the awarding of the Menlo Park Proclamation was particularly moving as it was presented to a branch member at the City Council meeting on August 6th—Hiroshima Day—by the Mayor, Peter Ohtaki, who is of Japanese American ancestry." On the same

evening in Palo Alto, she said, "our branch hosted a community screening of the film *Atomic Homefront*, to bring home the dangers of radioactive waste in the US."

And before the California State Senate recessed on August 31, it passed two resolutions: One *against first-strike use of nuclear weapons* and the other *urging nuclear disarmament*. The Peninsula/Palo Alto Branch was quick to thank other WILPF branches "for responding to our emailed request for calls/emails supporting these two resolutions."

Pittsburgh

The Pittsburgh Branch, with the support of World Beyond War, posted the following quote on a billboard on a busy street for one month in the fall of 2018: 3% of U.S. military spending could end starvation worldwide. Edith Bell reports, "We were so successful at raising money from local activists that we were able to have it posted on Washington Blvd. for a month, and we still had enough funds to purchase a second month in another location!"

On August 25, 2018, the Pittsburgh Branch participated in a March for Peace emphasizing the local creators of weapons and benefactors of the military industrial complex, which includes Carnegie Mellon University, PNC Bank, and several other corporations. The event was cosponsored by the Anti-War Committee of the Thomas Merton Center, Veterans for Peace, Stop Banking the Bomb, WILPF, and others. And at the beginning of August, Pittsburgh WILPF hosted a group of 30 people "Abuelas Responden (Grannies Respond)" on their way from New York to McAllen, TX. Their caravan was protesting the US government's 'zero-tolerance' immigration policy.

Triangle, NC



Fran Schindler (left), and Ruth Zalph (right), with fellow NC activist David Freeman (center). Photo: Stella Martindale (who was also arrested at the Kavanaugh hearings).

The Triangle (NC) Branch had an active 2018. In addition to supporting the Poor People's Campaign, its members joined other local and national protests and persisted in their environmental advocacy.

Triangle WILPF members have been a regular presence at student-initiated protests at the "Silent Sam" statue of a Confederate soldier that has occupied the entry to UNC Chapel Hill since 1913. Emily Keel explains, "We distribute leaflets on the history of this and other monuments erected in the period of Jim Crow, nearly 50 years after the Civil War."

In September and early October, branch members Ruth Zalph and Fran Schindler joined thousands of others in Washington, D.C., protesting the nomination and then confirmation of Brett Kavanaugh to the US Supreme Court. Ruth and Fran were arrested multiple times for civil disobedience, both inside and outside the proceedings. Lucy Lewis wrote, "We are so proud of all our sisters and brothers who took a stand!"

And the Triangle Branch is in alliance with over 40 organizations speaking out to stop destruction of the state's natural resources, educate citizens on the crises, and stop fracking. According to Lib Hutchby and John Wagner, "We are now trying to prevent the Atlantic Coast Pipeline and the Mountain Valley Pipeline from cutting gashes across our state." Though so far "marches, rallies, calls, letters, and meetings with the NC Department of Environmental Quality with the Governor's staff have fallen on deaf ears," WILPFers say, "We persist!"

Maine



Organizers and presenters at the start of the Greater Brunswick Peace Fair. Photo by WILPF member Martha Spiess.

Christine DeTroy of Maine WILPF sent the following report in September: "August 4, 2018, marked the day of the 14th year of the Greater Brunswick (ME) Peace Fair. This year's theme was 'Imagine a World Without Nuclear Weapons.' The opening ceremony included a dramatic reading of excerpts from the novel *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes* to mark the 73rd anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Maine WILPF has been an active participant in the planning and development of the Peace Fair since 2005.

Western Cluster Meeting

Cherill Spencer of the Peninsula/Palo Alto Branch provided a summary of this year's "Western Cluster meeting." She wrote, "Every year the WILPF branches in northern California get together for a day-long meeting to learn from one another and spend time with other WILPFers.... This year's gathering took place in downtown Sacramento on September 29, 2018, kindly hosted by the Sacramento branch. About 30 WILPFers

from these eight branches attended the meeting: East Bay/Berkeley, Fresno, Monterey, Peninsula/Palo Alto, Sacramento, San Francisco, San Jose, and Santa Cruz." Pennie Taylor of the Sacramento branch emceed the meeting and the branches discussed public banks, *Screwnomics*, how to help WILPF national, and news from the Triennial Congress.

Hiroshima/Nagasaki 73rd Anniversary

WILPF branches and members participated in a remarkable array of August events to commemorate the 73rd Anniversary of the US bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Here are a few highlights:

Barbara Nielsen of the San Francisco Branch wrote, "I participated in the August 6 actions at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in Livermore, CA, with Marylia Kelley of Tri-Valley CARES and WILPF Life Member Jackie Cabasso of Western States Legal Foundation, with many others, including East Bay branch members Anne Henney, Annie Boddum, and Sandy Thacker and Sandy's husband Ed Williger, and Barbara Blong of our San Francisco branch. We were later joined by Cappy Israel of the Santa Cruz branch."

Leah Bolger wrote from Corvallis, OR, "We held an outdoor ceremony just next to the Willamette River...[which included] a program with some speakers, the reading of the first commemoration in 1947, and a group reading of the community affirmation. Following the reading, we picked up a jar with a candle and we walked to the sound of a bell to the bridge crossing the Willamette. From there we watched a floating procession of 11 kayaks adorned with colored lanterns come up the river and pass under the bridge. It was so beautiful."



Burlington, VT Hiroshima Day Commemoration

Robin Lloyd from the Burlington (VT) Branch noted that WILPF members "participated in our shadow chalking on Church St., Burlington, during our walk to the water and the floating of candleboats." She explained, "Unlike in Japan, we tie

the candleboats together so we are able to retrieve all of them."

Odile Hugonot-Haber of Ann Arbor, MI, sent this account from Valduc, France: "For Hiroshima Day I was in Valduc (the French Centre for Nuclear Studies) where they are making parts for nuclear missiles. At the event, there were 100 people surrounded by the police, people from Movement la Paix, ICAN, a die-in was covered by media from the local press. I also did a three-day fast."



WILPF Is the Real Deal



DC Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton (center) with WILPF Disarm/End Wars Co-Chairs Robin Lloyd and Ellen Thomas.

"We shall have to learn to use moral energy to put a new sort of force into the world and believe that it is a vital thing—the only thing, in this moment of sorrow and death and destruction that will heal the world...."

—**Jane Addams**,
first President of WILPF,
Zurich 1919 International Congress of Women

We stand on the shoulders of our foremothers, putting our wisdom to work for a better world. With more than 104 years of solidarity, WILPF is the real deal! With YOUR hands-on work and financial support we will continue to stand up for women's rights and justice for all. Help us to ensure that women's voices will be heard in force!

Join Us! Donate at www.wilpfus.org