

# PEACE FREEDOM

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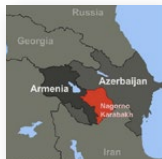




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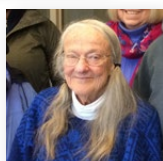
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The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) has been working since 1915 to unite women worldwide who oppose oppression and exploitation. WILPF stands for equality of all people in a world free of racism, sexism, and homophobia; the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

### WILPF US Section

President: Darien De Lu  
PO Box 13075  
Des Moines, IA 50310  
phone: 617-266-0999  
e-mail: [info@wilpfus.org](mailto:info@wilpfus.org);  
website: [www.wilpfus.org](http://www.wilpfus.org)  
To contact the National Board as a whole,  
please email: [president@wilpfus.org](mailto:president@wilpfus.org)

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Submissions welcome; please query first.  
Contact the editor at:  
[wendymcdowell12@gmail.com](mailto:wendymcdowell12@gmail.com)

Editor: Wendy McDowell  
Art Director: Glenn Ruga  
Opinions expressed in bylined articles are those of the authors.

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Barbed wire, a Korean flag, and wish ribbons wishing for peace and unity at the DMZ on the South/North Korean border at Imjingak, South Korea.

### WILPF International

President: Sylvie Jacqueline Ndongmo  
Secretary General: Madeleine Rees  
1 rue de Varembe, 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland  
phone: 41-22-919-7080; fax: 41-22-919-7081  
e-mail: [secretariat@wilpf.ch](mailto:secretariat@wilpf.ch)  
website: [www.wilpf.org](http://www.wilpf.org)

# Working in a Fire Zone

By Darien De Lu

WILPF US President

**W**hat if my home were burnt to the ground, my family heirlooms destroyed? What if the yard I've lovingly planted were scorched and poisoned?

In my state of California, for several years in a row, huge wildfires have forced us to consider such possibilities – yet always with a community to help out. As I hear the war news of bombings, shellings, and drone attacks – and, worse yet, injuries and killings – I can only imagine, how many *helpless* cries of grief and loss there must be.

Like you, I feel oppressed and overwhelmed by the wars and violence erupting all over our planet. I'm horrified further by the apparent failure of our government – and of many others – *to value equally all human lives* – a value fundamental to our peace work.

What can strengthen me in such times? I turn to those I know through WILPF and other activism. Yet what if we, as stressed-out activists, exchange sharp words?

If we're both lucky, we'll be able to recover our balance. And if we don't? What if either or both of our prior life experiences or daily challenges leave us with a hair trigger? How well do we apply insights from conflict resolution and nonviolent communication? Are we able to stop, take a step back, even apologize?

The answers to these questions should be based in *community* practice – not left just to us, as lone individuals!

With close enough connections, we can begin to understand each other. With study and applied practice, we can learn how to respond more appropriately – both for individual needs and for the benefit of our community. *Then*, if someone reacts badly in a situation, we may know each other well enough to confront them – *or comfort them*!

Perhaps, to do either, someone will tell a story, to remind us of our larger context. Our stories and our "people's history" can support us. In this issue of *P&F*, you'll find such pieces, including one remembering committed disarmament activist, Carol Urner. I'll add a small story about her.

I worked with Carol over a period of years, starting from the time, around the turn of the century, when we were both on the national board. I knew her then as a dedicated activist and fellow board member. But in 2015 in the Netherlands, I got to see Carol at all hours.



We were at the Hague for WILPF's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary Congress, and we found affordable lodgings, together with six others, by sharing a houseboat on a canal. In the mornings I'd still be drinking my coffee when Carol headed off early to the Congress, with her briefcase filled with flyers and reference documents. Her determination kept her up late, preparing for the next day's session – *and* got her in trouble when she *insisted* she knew the way to walk home (she didn't).

We worried about her that night, but she showed up the next day. She and her husband had faced far more difficult situations when they worked in Asia and Africa! On our cozy and crowded boat home we laughed about her micro-adventure as we celebrated her 86<sup>th</sup> birthday.

When I listen to the news each day, it doesn't *nourish* me the way Carol's life story does. The *people's news*, about heroic activists like Carol, helps us find inner resources to rise to new challenges.

The daily corporate news mostly only assures us of how bad and scary things are. But when I read here about the "Red Summer," early COINTELPRO, and the recent political attacks and attempts to divide us, I'm reminded how we've made it through bad and scary times. That people's history teaches us that we protect ourselves and our movement when we keep our balance, support each other, and learn to distinguish rumor and disinformation from accurate reports.

Our opponents *do* stir up internal quarrels among us and try to sow suspicions. So we must seek ways to talk about differences and to focus on our alignments.

We're fortunate that, as peace and justice advocates, we get to apply our politics to our personal experience. Ours is the personal opportunity – to explore what contributes to sustained and harmonious working relationships. And when we *fail* – then we see in our hand mirror the reflection of the world at war.

So, as committed activists, we cannot stop. We have both inner and outer work to do!

# Seventy Years Is Enough

## End the Korean War!

By Gwyn Kirk



Thousands of people marched and rallied in Seoul on July 22, 2023, to mark the 70th anniversary of the Korean Armistice Agreement. Photo credit: Korea Peace Action.

**J**uly 27, 2023, marked the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ceasefire signed by the United States and North Korea to halt the Korean War (1950-53). This Armistice Agreement defined the DMZ as the border between North and South Korea and called for the governments involved to start negotiating a peace treaty within three months. Seventy years later, this has still not happened. Instead, ongoing hostilities, provocations, mixed messages, mutual demonization, broken commitments, and lack of trust have justified the military build-up on both sides of the DMZ. Also, South Korea, Japan, and the United States are involved in a spiraling arms race with Russia and China.

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, including the US section, opposed the Korean War from the beginning, and worked hard for a ceasefire through "its UN consultants in New York and Geneva, its international officers, and its national sections."<sup>1</sup> Since then, the Korean War has often been called the "forgotten war" in the United States. We need to recall the role of successive United States administrations in the tangled history that has produced this current dangerous stalemate, and put pressure on our government to change its military policies.

### Twentieth-Century History of Korea

Korea was under Japanese imperial rule from 1910 till 1945. Japan's defeat at the end of World War II was a moment of liberation for Koreans who had many ideas for the future of their country. But immediately the Cold War powers — the

US and the Soviet Union — divided the peninsula at the 38th parallel, which led to the creation of two states: the Republic of Korea (ROK) in the south and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in the north. After superpower negotiations failed to reunite the country, military tensions escalated into all-out war, a dreadful slaughter during which about 4 million people died, mostly Korean civilians. The war ended with an Armistice Agreement but no peace treaty, so each side fears that fighting could resume at any time.

The United States did not leave South Korea after the war. It has maintained major army and air force bases there, and conducts regular military drills along the DMZ that date back to 1976. The maneuvers in March this year, code named "Freedom Shield 23," involved amphibious landings and combined air drills in order to practice coordination between US and ROK forces, as well as to demonstrate US "extended deterrence" against North Korean threats.<sup>2</sup> The port call to Busan of the USS Michigan, a nuclear-armed submarine, provided another show of force in July 2023, as US and ROK officials began talks to coordinate their responses in the event of nuclear war with the DPRK.<sup>3</sup>

Given this history, for decades North Korea has considered the United States an enemy due to its highly provocative military maneuvers and past failures to honor agreements. North Korea correctly sees itself as outgunned by the US-ROK alliance across the DMZ. Its northern neighbors, Russia and China, are nuclear powers, and Japan is doubling its military budget. The DPRK relies on its nuclear arsenal to compensate for its lack of conventional weaponry in relation to these states. All but China have first-use nuclear policies.



Korean Peninsula showing the 38th parallel; note Pyongyang and Seoul are only 160 miles apart. Source: [www.teara.govt.nz](http://www.teara.govt.nz)



## US-DPRK Relations Since 2000

United States government overtures to North Korea have been sporadic at best. They came to a grinding halt in 2002, when President George W. Bush declared the DPRK part of an “Axis of Evil” in his State of the Union address. In 2003, the DPRK withdrew from the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. It conducted its first nuclear test in 2006, but later agreed to shut down its nuclear facilities in exchange for oil and normalization of relations with the US and Japan.

North Korea has offered to talk with US officials many times. But it will not relinquish its nuclear program as a condition for talks and will only negotiate when the United States changes its “hostile policy” and ends nuclear threats and severe economic sanctions, first imposed in 1950. The United States will only talk if North Korea stops its nuclear tests. Despite the possibility of a breakthrough following former President Trump’s first meeting with Kim Jong-un, Trump walked away from their second meeting in Hanoi, and reiterated the same conditions.

The DPRK had adopted a self-imposed moratorium in its nuclear program, in anticipation of talks with US officials. Then, when these negotiations failed, North Korea hoped for progress after President Biden’s election, but that did not happen either. In January 2022, the North Korean leadership ordered a review of the moratorium and reopened suspended activities, including the launching of ICBMs. It is not clear whether Chairman Kim’s high-profile meeting with Russia’s President Putin in September 2023 will increase North Korea’s military capacity, but it will certainly complicate its volatile relationship with the United States.<sup>4</sup>

The wider context surrounding US military policy in Asia is its attempt to maintain dominance by “containing” China. The Obama Administration’s “Pivot to Asia,” announced in November 2011, involved constructing new military bases and deploying more warships and aircraft throughout the Asia Pacific region, with centers in Okinawa, Guahan (Guam), and Hawai’i, the headquarters of the Indo-Pacific Command. This strategy includes drawing staunch Asian allies – South Korea and Japan – into closer relationship.

South Korea, for example, has constructed a new naval base on Jeju Island in the south of the country that can accommodate US Aegis destroyers, and agreed to US deployment of Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missiles in South Korea. In 2022, the US established Space Force command posts in South Korea and Hawai’i, with a third one planned for Japan.<sup>5</sup> The US has pressured the governments of Japan and South Korea to support military expansion politically and financially, and to conclude unfinished World War II business, such as the “comfort women” issue and forced labor of Koreans in Japan, that hinders their working more closely together.



Participants tie peace ribbons to the fence at a DMZ event held on July 27, 2023. Photo credit: Korea Peace Action.

The US attempt to stop North Korea’s nuclear program has failed. Through increasingly powerful weapons tests over the past decade or more, the DPRK has shown that it can counter strikes by the ROK, Japan, and the United States. ROK President Yoon, a right-winger compared to his predecessor, has said that a preemptive strike is the only “answer” to North Korea. However, no military option can solve this current dangerous standoff.

## We Need a Deeper Understanding

Living in the United States, we are distanced from the impacts of US militarism experienced by people overseas, including those in allied nations. Mainstream US media provide a narrow, polarized view of the two Koreas, which serves to mobilize people in this country to support the possibility, even likelihood, of war on the Korean peninsula. We get a facile South-good/North-bad narrative that is focused on the security of nation states, not on people or the environment.

We rarely hear of anti-military activism in South Korea, such as the large protests against US-ROK war drills in March 2023. Nor do we know about efforts by North and South Korea to reduce hostilities, which have included the North becoming party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1985, the Agreed Framework of 1994, South Korea’s “sunshine policy” towards the North (1998–2007), and more recent meetings between President Moon and Chairman Kim. At the 2018 Winter Olympics, hosted by South Korea, athletes from North and South Korea marched together in the opening ceremony under the Korean Unification Flag—a thrilling moment for attendees and millions of viewers.

We need information from other sources to shape a critical perspective. And beyond knowledge, we need deeper understanding. Writing about the Holocaust, philosopher Alan Rosenberg distinguished between knowing about this atrocity and understanding its significance.<sup>6</sup> Knowing concerns facts.

The Nazis killed six million Jews, as well as Roma, gay people, and people with mental and physical disabilities. Rosenberg argued that it is possible to learn facts without “their having any impact on the way we understand ourselves or the world we live in.” Understanding the meaning of an event is a much deeper process by which “it becomes integrated into one’s moral and intellectual life,” part of a person’s analysis and ethical principles. In addition, “Understanding compels us to action, even though we may not initially want to change our habitual ways of thinking and being.”

I’ve found this distinction helpful in thinking about how people in the United States can be allies in Korean people’s struggles for peace and disarmament. How do we change our lack of concern? What gets in the way? And what compels us to act? I believe we need guides and teachers, open minds, and a willingness to show up. Several robust Korean and Korean American organizations, listed below, provide information, materials for use in school and community settings, and opportunities to join ongoing campaigns to finally end the Korean War.

Rather than continuing the military buildup and threats, it is imperative to ease economic sanctions against North Korea and start meaningful talks toward a peace agreement. This is the safest way to address the ongoing security crisis and reduce the threat of nuclear conflict. More than this, millions of people on the Korean peninsula, across the Asia Pacific region, and indeed worldwide, could thrive if massive military spending was redirected toward genuine security for people and the planet. In Washington, DC, Republicans and Democrats alike are fueling military spending, with \$886 billion proposed for the coming fiscal year, the highest ever. Ro Khanna is the only member of the House Armed Services Committee to vote against this.

In July 2023, South Koreans held rallies, marches, and press conferences in Seoul, at the DMZ, and in other cities. In Washington, DC, the National Mobilization to End the Korean War called for sustained diplomatic engagement toward a binding peace agreement on the Korean peninsula. For the past three years, the Korea Peace Appeal has collected hundreds of thousands of signatures calling for an official end to the Korean War. Organizers plan to deliver them to the UN Secretary General in New York, and to UN representatives from the ROK, DPRK, US, and China at the end of September 2023.

*Gwyn Kirk is a founder-member of the International Women’s Network Against Militarism that links activists across the Asia-Pacific region. She was part of an international women’s delegation to North and South Korea in 2015 to call for the end of the Korean War. See “Stitching Korea Back Together,” [Peace and Freedom \(Fall/Winter 2015\)](#), vol. 75, no. 2: 18-19.*

## Five Things We Can Do

1. Go to the [WILPF webpage on Korea](#) for updated information on the continuing human costs of the Korean War, including divided families and humanitarian crises, and US responsibility for the current situation.
2. Screen and discuss the [award-winning documentary Crossings](#). This film features thirty women activists including Nobel Peace Laureates and noted US feminist Gloria Steinem, who crossed the DMZ from North to South Korea in 2015, calling for an end to the Korean War.
3. Check out the following organizations, which are all building on the actions they organized this year:  
Korea Peace Action: [koreapeaceaction.org](#)  
Korea Peace Appeal Campaign: [endthekoreanwar.net/posts](#)  
Korea Peace Now: [Path to Peace: The Case for a Peace Agreement to End the Korean War](#)  
The Korea Policy Institute: [kpolicy.or](#)  
Women Cross DMZ: [womencrossdmz.org](#)
4. Support the Peace on the Korean Peninsula Act (H.R. 1369). Catalyze Congressional and public support for this initiative, introduced by Brad Sherman (D-CA), which now has 34 co-sponsors in the US Congress.
5. Continue to oppose bloated military budgets and demand that this money is redirected toward vital social and environmental needs.

## Notes

- 1 Gertrude Carman Bussey and Margaret Tims, *Pioneers for Peace: Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom 1915-1965*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (WILPF British Section, 1980), 204-205.
- 2 Josh Smith, “[US, S.Korea to hold big exercises with focus on N.Korea aggression](#),” *Reuters*, March 3, 2023.
- 3 Commander, Submarine Group Seven, “[USS Michigan Visits Busan](#),” [www.csp.navy.mil/csg7/](#), June 21, 2023.
- 4 Justin McCurry, “[The Vladimir Putin-Kim Jong-un Summit: five things we learned](#),” *The Guardian*, September 15, 2023.
- 5 Dave DeCamp, “[US to Establish New Space Force Command Post in Japan](#),” *Antiwar.com*, September 18, 2023.
- 6 Alan Rosenberg, “The crisis in knowing and understanding the Holocaust,” in *Echoes from the Holocaust: Philosophical Reflections on a Dark Time*, ed. by A. Rosenberg and G.E. Myers (Temple University Press, 1988), 382.



# The Middle East, North Africa, and Afghanistan

Toward Peace, Human Security, and Women's Empowerment



On October 1, 2022, nearly 3,000 people marched in Brussels, Belgium, for Mahsa Amini, who died in the custody of Iran's morality police.  
Viktoria Bykanova / Shutterstock.com.

By Valentine M. Moghadam

Boston Branch

**T**he Middle East and North Africa region (MENA) has long been plagued by tensions, rivalries, and conflicts, most of which have followed coercive or destabilizing external interventions. A listing would include the overlong Israeli-Palestinian conflict; the 2003 invasion and occupation of Iraq; the 2011 NATO attack on Libya; the assault on Yemen by Saudi Arabia and the UAE; and the Trump administration's withdrawal from the 2015 international agreement on Iran's nuclear capacity and application of "maximum pressure sanctions." In recent years, there has been a cycle of protests in Iran, Iraq, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, and Egypt over unemployment and rising prices, and in Lebanon over that country's financial crisis and political incompetence and corruption. Such tensions, conflicts, and citizen protests predate the 2022 Russia-Ukraine-NATO war, which itself has exacerbated regional and global tensions through increased militarization, shortages, and high prices of food, fuel, and fertilizer. Most recently, the outbreak of war between Israel and the Hamas leadership of Gaza – after years of bulldozed homes, violence, and expanded illegal settlements – threatens regional and global stability even further, not to mention the lives and livelihoods of Palestinians and Israelis. Instead

of peace and cooperation, the peoples of the Middle East experience more militarism and conflict.

The fallout from the 2003 invasion of Iraq and weakening of its institutions, and the destabilization of the Syrian state a decade later, included the emergence of the murderous "Islamic State" (also known by the acronyms ISIS and ISIL, and Da'esh in Arabic). The 2011 NATO bombing of Libya to effect regime change produced a fragmented and weakened state that became a conduit for human trafficking and women's physical insecurity. Of all the countries that experienced the 2011 Arab Spring, only Tunisia embarked on a widely celebrated democratic transition – only to find itself bereft of the necessary financial and economic assistance from the "international community" for sustainable democratic development. The ensuing political dysfunction brought about a presidential maneuver in July 2021 that prevented democratic consolidation. The European Union's decision this summer to allocate funds to Tunisia is [focused on keeping Tunisian and international migrants at bay](#).<sup>1</sup>

After a 20-year military occupation of Afghanistan, the United States and NATO withdrew in 2021, leaving behind rubbish, ruin, and bitter memories, as well as frightened and bewildered women and men who had benefited from employment or schooling. The Taliban, now in control, proclaim an end to crime and narcotics production, but they also have

[prohibited women from employment and girls from secondary schooling](#). The [U.S. continues to hold on](#) to Afghanistan's \$7 billion in foreign reserves, much as it illegally [holds on to Iran's frozen assets](#) worth considerably more.

In January 2023, the extreme right-wing Israeli government launched military attacks on Gaza and the Jenin refugee camp for Palestinians while also alienating its own citizens through efforts to diminish the powers of the country's judiciary. Nonetheless, the Biden administration continued the longstanding [U.S. financial largesse to Israel](#).

Meanwhile, the oil-rich Gulf states continue to purchase massive amounts of military hardware, mostly from the U.S. but also from Britain and France. High military spending shifts funds away from social sectors and reinforces patriarchal institutions, attitudes, and practices – making the work of feminists, peace activists, and human rights advocates that much more difficult.

The UN's ambitious [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) call for an end to poverty and hunger; reducing inequality within and across countries; improving health and wellbeing, education, gender equality, clean water, and clean energy; and building resilient and safe cities. How these can be achieved in a region especially vulnerable to climate change as well as to conflicts and wars is an open question.

The broader context for the problems facing the MENA region is a capitalist world-system that fails to guarantee equitable distribution of resources while enabling the international flow of weapons. Instead of efforts to achieve human security, we continue to see the obsession with national security.<sup>2</sup>

## Positive Developments?

There are some hopeful recent developments in the region, but even these remain puzzling in their longer-term repercussions. In March 2023, China brokered a rapprochement between longtime rivals Iran and Saudi Arabia. This could have implications for the war in Yemen, with Iran likely to stop supporting the Houthi rebels and Saudi Arabia ending its brutal attacks on Yemen. On the other hand, the civil conflict continues between the northern-based Houthis and political groups in the south, and it desperately needs resolution. What remains unclear about the Iran-Saudi rapprochement is its impact on the Abraham Accords. Mediated by the U.S. in August-September 2020 to normalize relations between Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and Bahrain (and now encompassing Sudan, Morocco, Oman, and Jordan), the Accords were meant in part to further isolate Iran in the region, with Saudi Arabia being cajoled into joining.<sup>3</sup> But will the war between Israel and Hamas dissuade Saudi

Arabia from normalizing relations with Israel and joining the Abraham Accords?

Twenty years after the disastrous U.S./U.K. invasion and occupation, Iraq is a “shaky democracy” unable to provide jobs and services for its citizens, but its government seeks to help broker better relations across the region through [the Baghdad Dialogue](#). The brutality that ISIS/ISIL had visited on Christians and Yazidis – including the sexual slavery of Yazidi women – ended in Iraq in 2017.

As of May 2023, [Syria is back in the League of Arab States](#), from which it had been expelled a decade earlier. The ISIS “caliphate” base in Syria was defeated in March 2019 through the combined efforts of the Syrian military in cooperation with Iranian and Russian forces, and of Kurdish militants in cooperation with U.S. forces. The country, however, is in ruins and will take decades to recover and reconstruct. With the U.S. and European allies fixated on militarily, financially, and diplomatically supporting Ukraine and Israel, will they allocate anything toward Syria's reconstruction?

## Women's Movements and Achievements – and Obstacles

MENA women are present in both institutional and non-institutional politics: in parliaments and cabinets, in civil society organizations, and in women's movements and policy agencies. Women constitute 20% to 30% of lawyers in some countries, and there are notable examples of female members of parliament coalescing with activist women in the law and civil society to adopt women-friendly legislation – for example, in Morocco in the early 2000s and Tunisia after 2011. Yet the regional average of women's parliamentary representation is 17.7%, which – as of October 2023 – is the lowest of all regional averages, according to the [Inter-parliamentary Union dataset](#).

In all but the poorest MENA countries, women have done extraordinarily well on health and education indicators, but less so on “economic participation and opportunity,” according to the World Economic Forum's 2023 Global Gender Gap Report. In most countries, women outnumber men in pursuing university degrees, with [high rates of female graduates of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics \(STEM\) subjects](#), but women are less likely than men to land jobs. MENA women with college degrees have high labor force participation rates, as they gravitate to professional jobs in the public and private sectors, but their unemployment rates also are high. Women with secondary-level schooling or less are less present in the labor force proportional to their population size.<sup>4</sup>

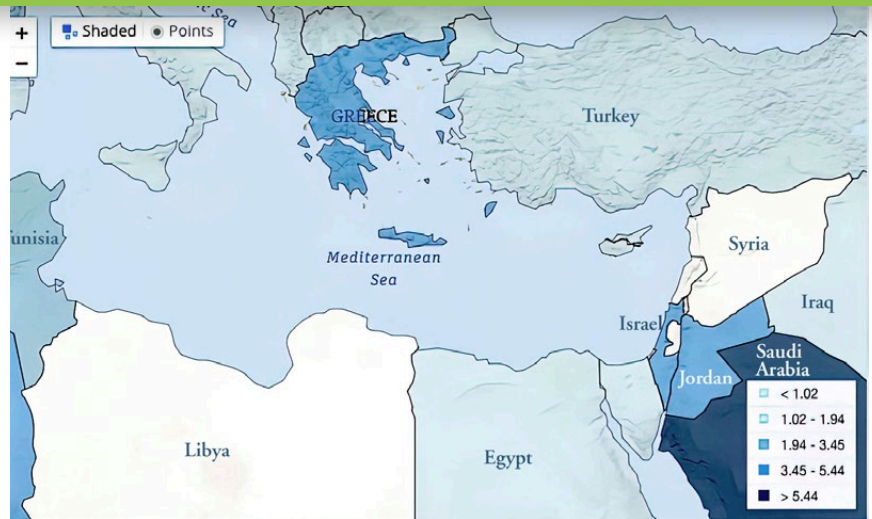


In terms of political systems, of the 20 MENA states examined by The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) in its [periodic report on democracy](#), fully 17 are authoritarian and just three are deemed “hybrid” or flawed democracies.<sup>5</sup> Such patterns and trends suggest both the tremendous capacity of MENA citizens to organize and mobilize for change, and the obstacles they face in having a wider and deeper impact. In the fall of 2022, Iran saw an unprecedented wave of nationwide protests following the death in police custody of a young Kurdish-Iranian woman, Mahsa Jina Amini, who had been arrested in September for improper hejab. Joined by men of all ages and ethnicities, the [protests were led by schoolgirls and female university students](#) who defiantly removed and burned their headscarves. For several months, the authorities were reluctant to reinstate mandatory hejab, but by October 2023, it appeared that the hejab law would be enforced.

After a decade-long delay, a bill on abuse and harassment of women was passed by Iran’s parliament in April 2023, although it awaits final endorsement by the Guardian Council (Iran’s version of a Supreme Court). Other MENA countries had already adopted violence-against-women (VAW) laws: Jordan adopted a law against honor crimes in 2008, the Kurdistan Region of Iraq in 2011, Saudi Arabia in 2013, Lebanon in 2014, Algeria 2015, Tunisia in 2017, Bahrain and Morocco in 2018, and the UAE in 2019. Egypt adopted new measures to strengthen the prohibition of female genital mutilation. [Egypt’s national strategy to combat violence against women](#), adopted in 2015, seeks to coordinate efforts by the government, the National Council for Women, the National Committee on the Eradication of Female Genital Mutilation, and civil society.

Several countries have repealed their “marry-your-rapist” laws that enabled a rapist to escape prosecution if he married his victim. In Morocco, article 475 of the penal code was repealed in 2014 after the suicide of a rape victim who had been forced to marry her rapist, which had produced widespread women-led protests. Additional reforms across MENA include the following:

- In Oman, passport application procedures are now equal for men and women;
- Kuwait and Lebanon enacted laws protecting women from sexual harassment in employment, including criminal penalties for such conduct;
- Bahrain now mandates equal remuneration for work of equal status;



**Military expenditure (% of GDP) - Middle East & North Africa.** Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Yearbook: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security.

- The Egyptian government enacted legislation to ease procedures for women’s access to credit.

Such legal advances are the result of years of feminist advocacy, lobbying, and protests.

## Wither Peace and (Human) Security?

Unfortunately, women’s political presence seems not to have made a dent on peace and security matters. United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, which launched the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda, requires states to prepare National Action Plans (NAPs). As of October 2023, only seven of the 20 MENA countries had prepared a NAP. Iraq was the first to prepare one (in 2014), followed by Jordan and Palestine (2017), Tunisia (2018), Lebanon and Yemen (2019), and the UAE (2021). Morocco announced the launch of its NAP in 2022, although details are yet to be made available. [The League of Arab States produced a regional plan](#) which purports to cover the entire Arab region. And yet hardly any of the NAPs includes an explicit budget and timetable for achievement of specific goals. Moreover, neither the NAPs nor MENA women’s political presence has been able to mitigate the continued tensions, rivalries, and conflicts in the region, nor have they helped to reduce military spending.

[The most recent data on military spending as a percent of GDP](#) (a nation’s gross domestic product) show very high spending for the Gulf states: Saudi Arabia 6.6%, Oman 7.3%, Kuwait 6.7%, Qatar 4.8%, and Bahrain 3.6%. There also are high rates in Algeria (5.6%) and Israel (5.2%). Morocco’s spending has increased to over 4% of GDP. [Data from the Swedish International Peace Research Institute \(SIPRI\)](#) shows a high figure for Libya for 2013 – military spending constitutes 7.6% of GDP; this compares to a mere 1.8% in 2008 under Ghaddafi.<sup>6</sup> In recent years, Tunisia has increased its military

spending to 2.8% of GDP. On the low side are Egypt (1.3%) and Iran and Iraq (2.3%).

What all this suggests is an international system in disarray, one that urgently needs to be transformed. In particular, human security and sustainable development should take priority, and military spending must decline. The human security agenda – first introduced in 1995 by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and endorsed by several transnational feminist networks, including WILPF – calls for attention to food, environmental, health, and economic security that should be enjoyed by people everywhere.

However, achieving human security is a tall order at a time when the West is increasing military production and sales in the context of the Russia-Ukraine-NATO war. Whether one believes that Russia is the aggressor or was provoked into invading Ukraine, is there any reason why the U.S. and European allies have ignored appeals by Pope Francis, progressive scholar-activists, and peace organizations for a ceasefire and negotiations? The ongoing war has had serious implications for the food security of countries like Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia, and for the ability of those countries and many in sub-Saharan Africa to meet the SDGs, let alone achieve human security. The Israel-Hamas war is yet another blow to the possibility of peace and human security.

## 'Transformative Shifts' Needed

As Bela Kapur and Madeleine Rees write, conflict prevention is the “poor little sister” of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) framework, and they criticize “the deliberate militarization” of the WPS agenda, which emphasizes increasing the number of women in the military rather than conflict prevention and an end to militarization and war.<sup>7</sup> They propose four “transformative shifts” to prevent conflict and sustain peace: transforming gender relations; challenging, transforming, and eliminating violent militarized power relations and militarization; ensuring sustainable equitable social and economic development; and promoting restorative agency.<sup>8</sup>

This is an admirable approach, but for one gap: states that destabilize or invade other states should be held accountable. If Russia is today being charged with war crimes for which it must be held to account, then so should the U.S. and U.K. for the mayhem of their invasion and occupation of Iraq, NATO for its bombing of Libya, the U.S. and allies for civilian deaths in Afghanistan during their 20-year military occupation, Saudi Arabia and the UAE for their military assaults on Yemen, and Israel for Palestinian civilian deaths.

It is time for peace, human security, sustainable develop-

ment, state sovereignty, regional cooperation, and women's participation and rights to become the defining features of the MENA region. Toward that end, WILPF members can work together and with other progressive organizations – including Massachusetts Peace Action or other state-level Peace Action affiliates, Code Pink, Jewish Voice for Peace, Friends Committee on National Legislation, Veterans for Peace, and World Beyond War – to urge members of the United States Congress to end all endless wars. This means less military spending and weapons production in the US; vastly reducing weapons sales to MENA countries, including Israel; a return to the original Iran nuclear agreement; and a ceasefire and peace talks on the Russia-Ukraine-NATO war. While it is more impactful to lobby Congress in concert with other groups and organized campaigns, individuals may make the above points directly [to their representatives](#) and [to their senators](#).

Last but not least, we should form a working group to examine the US commitment to Security Council Resolution 1325 and the extent to which its National Action Plan (NAP) is geared toward ending and preventing conflicts and ensuring women's equality, leadership, and physical security everywhere.

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## Notes

- 1 See also Jones Hayden, [EU finalizes migrant deal with Tunisia](#), politico.eu, July 16, 2023.
- 2 It is worth noting that the world-system's hegemon, the United States, ranks poorly on indicators provided by the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report. In the report's [2023 edition](#), the US ranks 43rd overall of the 146 countries listed, below countries such as Colombia, Belarus, Serbia, and Peru – let alone its OECD peers. The US ranks 59th on educational attainment; 63rd on political empowerment; and 78th on health and survival.
- 3 See Michael Crowley, [“Israel, U.A.E. and Bahrain Sign Accords, With an Eager Trump Playing Host,”](#) *New York Times*, November 11, 2020.
- 4 See my article on this topic, [“Toward women's economic empowerment in MENA | SDG Action \(sdg-action.org\).”](#)
- 5 [The EU's 2022 report](#) begins as a defense of Ukraine, but also contains useful data on the state of democracy across the globe. The US is part of the category “flawed democracy.” On the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) rankings of “liberal democracy”, the U.S. is 29 – below all its OECD peers (see p. 10).
- 6 The Ghaddafi regime was overthrown through NATO's military intervention in March 2011, led by France, the U.K., Canada, and the U.S., on the pretext of saving civilians from regime attacks.
- 7 Bela Kapur and Madeleine Rees, “WPS and Conflict Prevention,” in Sara E. Davies and Jacqui True (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Women, Peace, and Security* (Oxford University Press, 2019), 135-147; the quotes appear on pages 136 and 139.
- 8 Ibid., 135.



# What Leads to a Sustainable Peace?

## Insights from Local Conflict Resolution Work

By Linda Belle\*

**W**hile I'm no expert on peacebuilding, I am happy to share some insights I picked up during my years working with The Conflict Resolution Center of Santa Cruz County (CRC). Typically one person would contact CRC with a conflict and it was our work to then invite the individual with whom they had a conflict to join in a mediation process. This was the most difficult challenge because often the second party had no idea there was a conflict, or if they did, had no desire to resolve it. Much time was spent in helping the second party understand there were mutual benefits to resolving the issue.

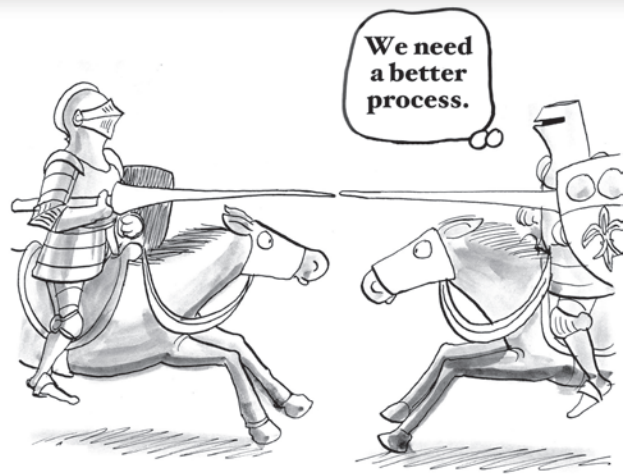
This was the same dynamic whether working with two neighbors disagreeing about trash or working with 45 families feuding over who was to pay for the new road paving. Unless both (or all) parties saw a benefit to themselves for the issue to be respectfully resolved, long-term peace seldom occurred.

In reality, disputing parties can go to a negotiator, court, therapist and even the United Nations in search of decisions but inevitably we end up with winners and losers. There are built-in limitations when disputes are resolved from the outside. A decision may be rendered but it often doesn't lead to sustainable peace. Ending a dispute where one side feels shamed, unheard, frustrated, or hurt will never lead to permanent peace. "True peace is not merely the absence of tension; it is the presence of justice," said Martin Luther King Jr. in 1955. At the outset of all conflict negotiations we must agree on our definition of justice.

Sometimes issues cannot be resolved. Therapists can't keep a marriage together, employees leave a toxic situation, adult children realizing they are harmed by destructive relatives end the family tie. Helping harmful relationships stay together is not the goal. The work of conflict resolution at that point is to help both sides reach respectful closure. It takes courage to stay, it takes courage to leave; both can be positive and peaceful.

One thought on the world we live in today: Social media and our ability to hit "send" have had dire consequences for families, organizations, and our world. There is no substitute for sharing time or for passing the talking stick in pursuit of facilitated agreements. Coming together will reduce the forces (global and local) amplified by social media that fuel division and untruth. Onlookers cheering on the sidelines are never helpful. I'm aware of the financial and time costs (along with the environmental stress) that in-person meetings can incur, but face-to-face mediations are more likely to succeed.

What is peace? It's more than silencing the opposition; it's more than the absence of war. Real peace includes long-term, sustainable respect, inclusion, even delight in our differences.



I've never embraced the word 'tolerance'. To be tolerated may indicate no harm is being directed to someone, but that bar is way too low for my liking. I'd much rather The Simon Wiesenthal Center be a Museum of Acceptance than a Museum of Tolerance. To accept is a world away from merely tolerating.

How do we come to acceptance? By showing our interest, respect, curiosity, and openness to another's thought. If our intention is to understand, rather than to be right, we need to move the conversation toward new thoughts and a new way of interacting; however, good intentions are not enough. There must be time and skill so that all parties can engage in setting aside their judgments while enabling trust. If both sides are willing to use their time to come to a respectful solution, it will happen. Giving up needing to be right can be the beginning of a true, sustainable peace.

This brings me back to the fundamental issue of helping both sides see the benefit in finding a mutual solution. The path to a sustainable resolution involves uncovering buried common needs along with a common understanding of the problem. It's not complicated but it requires time, commitment, and neutral facilitation.

Five takeaways for successful, long-term resolution to a conflict:

- Resolution comes from the disputants not from outside
- Parties are all aware their needs have been uncovered and will be resolved
- Competent, skilled, impartial mediator
- Written agreement at the conclusion with all parties signing and receiving a copy
- The agreement will include a date for follow up conversation(s) to evaluate how it's going and make any needed tweaks.

CRC's motto is: "People talk, People listen, Things change." Are there lessons here for WILPF? Maybe. Those are for you, the readers, to decide.

\*With great thanks to Catherine Hoffman and Virginia Rasmussen.

# Azerbaijan, Gaza, and Ukraine Are All Connected

By Charlotte Dennett

**O**n September 19, 2023, Azerbaijan began its lightning attack on the Armenian people living in their declared republic of Artsakh, otherwise known as Nagorno Karabakh. In the space of 24 hours, the Azeris succeeded in forcing some 100,000 Armenians to flee their native homeland, leaving only 20% of Artsakh's Armenians behind.

This clear case of [ethnic cleansing](#) comes with a notable twist: Israel supplied the advanced weaponry that allowed the Azeri offensive to succeed. According to the [Associated Press](#), "Azerbaijan's September blitz involving heavy artillery, rocket launchers and drones—was largely supplied by Israel and Turkey... Israel supplied Azerbaijan with nearly 70% of its arsenal between 2016 and 2020—giving Azerbaijan an edge against Armenia and boosting Israel's large defense industry." This partnership also meant supplying Azeri oil to meet "40% of Israel's oil needs."

So far, there have been only muted responses from the international community.<sup>1</sup> Compare that to the world's swift condemnation of Hamas's attacks on Israeli citizens two weeks later, already being referred to as "Israel's 911." Israel's President Benjamin Netanyahu exacted swift revenge, bombing Hamas outposts, forcing the displacement of 100,000 Palestinians in two days, and promising a long war on Gaza. Meanwhile, the war in Ukraine is in its second year, with deaths in the hundreds of thousands and [millions of Ukrainians displaced](#).

I want to suggest here that these conflicts are connected, and what connects them is pipelines and The Great Game for Oil. President Bush's 2003 invasion of Iraq was motivated largely by Netanyahu's desire to reopen the Iraq Petroleum Co pipeline connecting Iraqi oil with Haifa, and Netanyahu's long-term ambition is to turn Israel into an energy corridor, funneling its newfound offshore natural gas to Europe via pipelines while bypassing Russia.<sup>2</sup>

As for Ukraine, I predicted shortly after the Russian invasion in February 2020 that it could be the [Mother of all Energy Wars](#). It started off with years-long attempts by the United States to stop the completion of Russia's Nordstream II pipeline, which would have sent more natural gas to Europe via Germany and made Europe even more dependent on Russian gas. The Biden administration finally convinced Germany to kill the contract. Months later, a series of underwater explosions sabotaged the pipeline. Biden's warning on February 7,

2022, that if Russia invaded there would be '[no Nordstream 2](#),' set off a scramble for alternative energy supplies.

Enter Nagorno Karabakh. As the [New York Times reported on September 13](#), "The energy crisis precipitated by the war in Ukraine raises the stakes of a new war in the Caucasus enormously."

Given my own interest in tracking this century's post-911 energy wars in my book [Follow the Pipelines](#), I came across an Armenian filmmaker, Peter Bahlawanian, who has produced a widely-acclaimed documentary in an effort to prevent today's catastrophe. [The Desire to Live](#) stands as a powerful warning of yet another Armenian genocide. In an interview with Peter last March, we talked about this film, which documents the history of Artsakh and the resilience of its people, and we also discussed what motivated Azerbaijan's genocidal attacks.

I will focus on the possible oil/natural gas connections to the attacks, while encouraging readers to read my [full article in CounterPunch](#) for an in-depth analysis.

## The Curse of Location

Nagorno Karabakh is wedged between the Caspian Sea and Black Sea. The lands are rich in minerals, and both bodies of water are highly prized for their abundance of oil and natural gas.

Bordering Nagorno Karabakh/Artsakh to the west is the larger nation of Armenia. Both Artsakh and Armenia have been embroiled in conflicts with Azerbaijan ever since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, yet the world appears largely ignorant about this part of the world.

Between 1991 and 1994, the region was engulfed in a war that killed over 100,000 people on both sides. This war occurred, Peter explains, when ex-Soviet Republics became independent. "Armenia created its own country and Azerbaijan created its own country. Then there was the fight over the land, which was primarily Armenian. 90 percent voted to separate from Azerbaijani rule, but the Azeris wouldn't accept it."

When hostilities finally ended, "Armenians continued to spend most of their time and energy building their country, while the Azerbaijanis spent their wealth on building their military—which led to the 2020 war." The reason for the buildup of the military is seldom stated, but it was to protect Azerbaijan's vast oil and gas supplies and the pipelines that distribute them.

Beginning in 2021, military forces from Azerbaijan began occupying the hills that surround and enclose the rural Armenian villages of Artsakh, trapping them in what some residents – all unarmed – liken to concentration camps. For them, memories have been rekindled of the horrific genocide



of Armenians by the Turks that killed over 1.5 million Armenians between 1915 and 1917—especially since Turkey, which has always denied responsibility for the earlier genocide, has allied itself with the Azerbaijanis.

## The Oil Connection

Just as with Ukraine, where bombed-out civilians asked what the “unprovoked war” was all about, many Armenians in Artsakh asked the same question: Why?

As I suggested to [TIME](#) in October 2020, “The conflict [between Azerbaijan and Armenia] is best understood in the context of pipeline politics involving major powers jockeying for geopolitical influence in the oil-rich Middle East and neighboring Caucasus. American and British oil companies have since the mid-1990s poured billions of dollars into Azerbaijan, whose three major transnational oil pipelines run only a few miles from the Nagorno Karabakh [Artsakh] line of contact.”

“Small wonder,” I added, “that regional leaders and their



(green) BTC: Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline (via Georgia, Caspian to Mediterranean) (brown) Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline – parallels BTC (red) Baku-Supsa oil pipeline (via Georgia, Caspian to Black Sea) (blue) Baku-Novorossiysk oil pipeline (via Russia, Caspian to Black Sea) Source: Wikipedia.

intelligence agencies are watching the whole region with heightened concern. A single spark could set off a conflagration that could engulf the entire world.”

That worry persists three years later.

In *Follow the Pipelines*, I concluded that all the post-911 wars in the Middle East were energy and pipeline wars. Peter Bahlawanian agrees that “oil and pipelines play a big part in it. Azerbaijan is super oil-rich. Their fiscal budget toward military spending is higher every year than the whole budget of Armenia. Every year the US sends \$100 million in military aid to Azerbaijan.”

Initially, Peter thought the fighting between Azerbaijan and Armenia had something to do with Azerbaijan’s Trans-Anatolian Pipeline [TANAP] to Turkey, which received \$500 million in funding by the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development and was completed in 2019.

“I figured that was why the Azeris wanted to take the land. They didn’t want to go around Armenia and Artsakh to get their pipeline to Turkey,” Peter said. But then he realized that the pipeline was built in Azerbaijan above Armenia and Artsakh, so he figured there was no need to occupy those countries.

That got him looking at the mineral resources of Artsakh and Armenia. “There are mines in Artsakh with elements used in microchips which Armenia controls,” he told me.

“With all the funds that are coming into Azerbaijan, President Aliiev is using the military to take over the entire landscape,” Peter explained. “It all started with speeches by his ally, Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in 2015. The so-called self-made Sultan of the Turks has Pan-Turkik goals to create one unified area stretching from the Bosphorus in Turkey to China.”

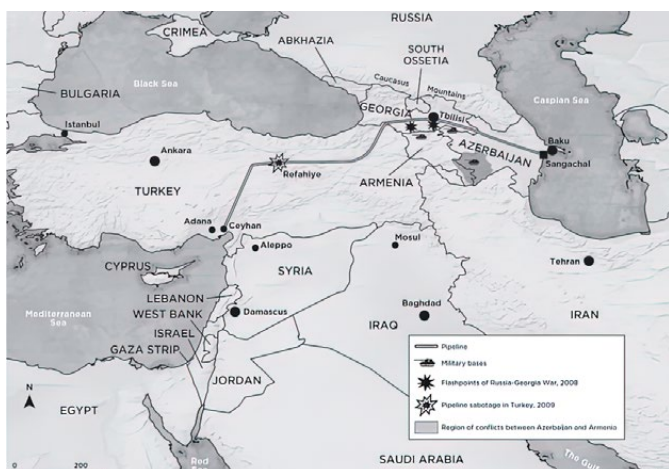
Armenia, he suggests, “is a speck on the map which they want to erase. Just like back in the Ottoman time when the Armenians lived under the Turkish Ottoman regime. They see Armenia as irrelevant, and they wanted to get it off the map and turn it into part of Turkey. History is repeating itself.”

## Arteries of Empire and the Bypass Game

In the post-911 years, the competition between the Russians and the US has continued full force. In 2002, *Nightline* host Ted Koppel reported on the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline (BTC) connecting the Caspian Sea to the Turkish port of Ceyhan on the Mediterranean Sea.<sup>3</sup> According to Koppel, the BTC pipeline had become the “anchor of national security interests of the United States in Central Asia and the Caucasus that goes to the heart of an American policy goal; that is the uninterrupted transport of Caspian oil” to Europe.

Uninterrupted was the catchword, requiring military protection against sabotage. The BTC pipeline, a consortium of eleven energy companies including BP, Chevron, and ConocoPhillips, was completed in 2005. Its backers hailed it as a triumph, as it passed through some of the most volatile areas in the world, feeding oil to Turkey and Europe while bypassing Russia and the extensive system of Soviet-built pipelines crisscrossing Europe, including Ukraine.

Victoria Nuland, the hawkish neo-conservative who worked for Dick Cheney and helped orchestrate the 2014 coup in Ukraine, is now a top State Department strategist



**The Western-financed BTC pipeline, carrying oil from Azerbaijan to Turkey while bypassing Russia.** Credit: Chelsea Green, *Follow the Pipelines*.

on the Ukraine war in the Biden administration. Biden's goal has been clearly stated: reduce Europe's reliance on Russian oil and gas.

Over the ensuing years, the US poured money into Turkey to train Turkish military officers, who in turn would train the Azerbaijanis in weapons supplied by Washington. In 2008, Georgia (aligned with the West) and Russia came to blows near the route of the pipeline, causing fears of escalation and the start of World War III. Saner heads prevailed, but Russia keeps a watchful eye on what it sees as a Western effort "to redraw the geography of the Caucasus on an anti-Russian map."

Turkey's President Erdogan, who has welcomed the West's view of his country as an emerging major energy corridor, has also cut deals with the Russians. Turkey serves as the terminal point of three Russian pipelines traveling beneath the Black Sea to Turkey: The Blue Stream Pipeline, inaugurated in 2005, the TurkStream 1 Pipeline, built in 2016–18, and the TurkStream II pipeline, operational in January 2020—the latter running under now-Russian controlled waters in the Black Sea after Russia's annexation of Crimea. As I noted, the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea are known to hold enormous volumes of oil and natural gas.

In November 2019, Erdogan switched sides again by announcing yet another pipeline deal with Azerbaijan: the completion of the Trans-Anatolian Natural Gas Pipeline (TANAP) running from the Caspian Sea port near Baku to Turkey. Erdogan was once again playing the Russian bypass game that he previously played with the BTC pipeline.

It appears that neither the US nor Russia want to harm their relations with Turkey and with oil-rich Azerbaijan. Both superpowers supply Turkey and Azerbaijan with military assistance. Russia, Peter discovered, signed a military

agreement with Azerbaijan two days before the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Henry Kissinger, protégé of oil scion Nelson Rockefeller once said, "Who controls the oil controls the world." Is that why the two most powerful petro-nations in the world, Russia and the US, are exercising their military influence over the region, Armenia be damned?

Russia under Putin has similar revivalist ambitions, recovering a lost empire while invoking the sacred theme of Mother Russia to justify his invasion of Ukraine. Russia has always played the role of protector of Christian Armenians, a fact that has not escaped Turkey, a Muslim nation, going back a century when some Armenians sided with Russian efforts to weaken the Ottoman Empire, further inflaming nationalist Turks against Armenians living in Turkey.

But now, with the Americans supplying military aid to Azerbaijan and Turkey, to protect the BTC pipeline in the early 2000s and later, the TANAP pipeline, Peter said "the Russians have increased their military support of Azerbaijan and effectively are allowing the Azeri incursions into Artsakh while ignoring their treaty obligations as Armenia's protector."

Most Americans, indeed, most people in the world, are not aware of the oil connection to all these conflicts. In the interest of national security, the oil connection is routinely censored from media analysis and reports. But at what cost in human lives and national treasures?

The geopolitical dimensions of the wars in Armenia, Artsakh and Azerbaijan need further scrutiny, including of the vast mining industries in the region. But of one thing I am certain: until the major powers of the world move away from gasoline for their military machines, we are going to keep having endless wars and tragic genocides.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Israel's attacks on Gaza in 2008 and 2014 to uproot Hamas also prevented Gaza from getting royalties from the offshore gas which, it was claimed, "would go to supporting terrorism."
- <sup>2</sup> A few notable exceptions have weighed in. Media personality Kim Kardashian and Dr. Eric Esraillian, both descendants of Armenian Genocide survivors, [wrote for Rolling Stone](#) a week before the invasion. "The war in Ukraine has made Azerbaijan a seemingly more favorable alternative to Russian oil and gas for some countries," they said.
- <sup>3</sup> At the time, the Caspian Sea was viewed by characters like George W. Bush and Haliburton's Dick Cheney as the new Middle East.

*Charlotte Dennett is a lawyer and investigative journalist described as "an expert in resource-based politics." Her most recent book, now out in paperback, is Follow the Pipelines: Uncovering the Mystery of a Lost Spy and the Deadly Politics of the Great Game for Oil.*



# DC-Maryland-Virginia Branch Builds Capacity



By Tara Vassefi

DC-MD-VA Branch Leadership Team

**T**he third iteration of the DC-Maryland-Virginia Branch was formed in June 2022 by Luci Murphy, under the encouragement and guidance of fellow Black feminist practitioners George Friday and Theresa El-Amin.

Our branch usually meets every second Monday of the month at 4 pm virtually and in-person at the headquarters of the Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press in Washington, DC. We are humbled and honored to use our unique geopolitical position and platform to stand in solidarity with local affinity groups so occasionally we will aim to time our meetings so they fall just before or after another action or convening to fortify their ranks.

After several months it became clear that many in the WILPF and broader PeaceMaking community would like to be able to call on our branch to host and amplify their work, so our immediate goals are to build our branch capacity so there are at least 2-3 members self-selecting to focus on WILPF issue horizons. Recently, branch members Jill Clark-Gollub and Samantha Wherry self-selected the WILPF issue horizon of Cuba and the Bolivarian Revolution as their area of focus.

Our hope is that when visitors and comrades come here to mobilize a campaign or call to action, we will be prepared to receive our SiStars and Siblings holistically. We are also aiming to serve as an information-sharing hub where we radically restructure our approach to Womxyn\*-led communications and strategies.

\* inclusive of anyone who identifies as female, femme, non-binary

## Visit from Asociación de Trabajadores del Campo de Nicaragua

On September 14-16, 2023, branch members participated in a visit to Washington, DC, from Erika Takeo, a representative of the Association of Rural Workers (Asociación de Trabajadores del Campo – ATC) of Nicaragua. (Marlen Sanchez of ATC also prepared the presentation and planned to be part of the visit, but was unable to travel due to illness.) The discussion was focused on “Water Is Life / Life Is Food Sovereignty.” We visited the UDC farm and learned more about why peasants’ rights and food sovereignty are important for world peace and for protecting our planet.

The ATC has played a key role in fighting for the rights of small scale farmers and rural workers, improving their living conditions and strengthening the rural economy so that farmers are able to feed themselves and their communities. ATC is also one of the founders and leaders of the worldwide peasant

movement La Via Campesina (LVC). Nicaragua has made huge progress toward food sovereignty and is currently 90% food self-sufficient. However,, the United States is actually waging economic war against Nicaragua with sanctions and other coercive measures.

Peasant farmers, pastoralists, and fisherfolk provide over 70% of the world’s food on 25% of the earth’s farmland. They are engaged in struggles to protect native seeds from GMOs, to resist free trade agreements that rip off small producers, and to preserve

the clean land and water needed to sustain life. Small-scale practices like theirs actually cool the planet, while agribusiness practices (the use of fossil fuels and chemicals) is responsible for about one-third of greenhouse gas emissions.

In our monthly branch meeting before the visit, we discussed these issues and our branch’s role in this ecosystem. This visit from the inspiring women of ATC served as a model for us of what we’d like to keep doing and continue building. As a new branch location in our nation’s capital, how can we be effective hosts and stewards of comrades and visitors that are connecting issues and nations “gLocally”?



# Des Moines Branch Promotes “No Mow May”

## Start an Initiative in Your City or Town!



From left, Janice Hawkins, Joann Muldoon, and Carolyn Uhlenhake-Walker of Des Moines WILPF standing on the lawn at Muldoon's home on May 24, 2023. © Zach Boyden-Holmes – USA TODAY NETWORK.

### By Janice Hawkins

Des Moines Branch

**N**o Mow May” started in the United Kingdom in 2019, jumped the pond in 2020, and has now been embraced by cities throughout the United States. According to [Bee City USA](https://www.beecityusa.org/), at least 372 city and campus communities are working to improve habitats and spread awareness about pollinators. In Iowa, Ames, Cedar Falls, Dubuque, and Des Moines have joined the No Mow May initiative, and WILPFers made it happen in Des Moines.

Pollinators are the keystone members of our ecosystem but the number of bees worldwide has dropped by 50% since the 1970's. This is a dire situation since pollinators are directly or indirectly responsible for 75% of the human food supply worldwide. The United Nations has stated that the dwindling count of pollinators is a threat to the survival of life on earth, including human life.

According to the “No Mow May, Low Mow Spring” section at [beecityusa.org](https://www.beecityusa.org/):

Lawns cover 40 million acres, or 2%, of land in the US, making them the single largest irrigated crop we grow. Lawns are mowed, raked, fertilized, weeded, chemically treated, and watered—sucking up time, money, and other resources. Lawns provide little benefit to wildlife, and are often harmful. Grass-only lawns lack floral resources and nesting sites for bees and are often treated with pesticides that harm bees and other invertebrates.

Because “the start of the growing season is a critical time for hungry, newly emerged native bees,” allowing your grass to

grow higher in the spring and letting flowers bloom can turn your lawn into an inviting site that provides nectar and pollen for local bees.

Conformity to a certain kind of lawn has been part of American culture for many years so suggesting lawns will not be mown for a period represents a shift. But “nonconformity”—recognizing the role of pollinators, adding native plants, and replacing grass with bushes and trees—is slowly picking up steam.

### How “No Mow May” Came to Des Moines

Des Moines WILPF Leadership Team Member Carolyn Uhlenhake Walker introduced the idea to our branch and suggested it was a manageable project to pursue. Janice Hawkins began doing research and developing steps to advance the initiative, then Joann Muldoon joined in. This trio worked together and enlisted other WILPF members in various tasks.

How high your grass can grow before it is referred to as a “public nuisance” is usually found in your city's list of Ordinances, typically under “Weeds.” In Des Moines, once your grass exceeds 12” in height, city staff will advise you and offer to cut your grass at your expense. So the first strategy we used consisted of educating our city council members; in our case this involved speaking during the public comment section of a council meeting followed by requesting a proclamation that was read at the next meeting.

Des Moines Mayor Frank Cownie met with us several times and, a committed environmentalist himself, he heartily agreed to promote the proclamation including a waiver of the maximum height rule. An editorial and several articles, including “Letters to the Editor,” were printed in the Des Moines Register.

Des Moines has 49 Neighborhood Associations and over 150 yard signs were placed in 28 or 57% of those jurisdictions. Four weekly newsletters provided information on the names of individuals posting signs. At the end, participation awards of gift certificates to Blooming Prairie Nursery and gardening texts were made.<sup>1</sup> Spurred by the interest, we are already dreaming of “Mow Less May” for next year!

Not everyone could participate due to rules, agreements, or contracts of their living situation (the City Proclamation does not usurp those agreements). We found that negotiated

*Continued on page 17.*



# The Fearless Four

By Robin Lloyd

Burlington (VT) Branch

Two recent books by Megan Threlkeld and Kirmen Uribe touch on one of the most flamboyant peace activists to take part in the 1915 International Congress of Women at the Hague — Rosika Schwimmer. Serendipitously, I met both authors and learned of their books-in-progress at the Schwimmer-Lloyd collection in the New York Public Library on 42<sup>nd</sup> St. and Fifth Ave, where I too was researching both Rosika and her friend and supporter, my grandmother Lola Maverick Lloyd.

In discussing these books, I will expand the story to include two more women intensely committed to world peace, world government, and each other: Edith Wynner, Rosika's trilingual secretary, and my aunt, Georgia Lloyd. Georgia, my grandmother Lola's youngest daughter, devoted her life to furthering the ideas that Lola and Rosika had developed, as well as to launching the Campaign for World Government. Edith Wynner also committed her life to the cause, as well as to writing a biography of Rosika, although it was never finished. Taken together, the lives of these four fearless women cover the entire twentieth century, from Lola's birth in 1875 to Edith's death in 2003.



**Rosika Schwimmer, 1914.** Photo credit: Library of Congress.

## Citizens of the World

In her book *Citizens of the World: U.S. Women and Global Government* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2022), historian Megan Threlkeld has profiled nine women — white, Black (Mary McLeod Bethune), radical, moderate, liberal, socialist — describing their ideas for a permanent machinery to end war. Between 1900 and 1950, they promoted world citizenship and/or world government. Two chapters in the book tell the story of the fearless four.

In chapter 4, she describes the feelings of dread Lola and Rosika experienced in the 1930s as they saw the Second World War approaching. They mourned their inability to stop the first, and were discouraged by the weakness of the League



**Robin Lloyd with a bust of her grandmother Lola Maverick Lloyd.**

of Nations in controlling resurgent nationalism.

As Threlkeld explains, in 1937 they crafted a plan to federate the world. Envisioning an “all-inclusive, nonmilitary, democratic Federation of Nations,” they launched the Campaign for World Government to implement it.

Lloyd and Schwimmer “had little patience with what they saw as the capitalist, imperialist underpinning of Wilsonianism,” she writes. “Even though their vision was never realized, their plan is important because it represented a vision of peace, justice, and equality far more radical than that of other world government theorists in the 1930s — many of whom later helped shape the United Nations. Schwimmer and Lloyd sought a sweeping alternative to the international status quo, one that took the needs of ordinary men and women into account and gave them a voice in international relations” (82).

A federation — with more central control - would bind member nations together more firmly. Both the League of Nations and the United Nations were designed to be confederations. But the only way to end war permanently was to establish a world government, the four women believed. Their key proposal was a parliament, initially within the UN, with representatives directly elected by the people, similar to the US House of Representatives. Governments would have no say in who represented their countries.

In addition, an economic commission would “plan the regulation of the world's production of raw materials and the control of distribution according to the needs of all nations” (91).

Threlkeld documents, from original research in the archives, the arduous efforts to spread the word about the campaign, summarized in a small pamphlet, “Chaos, War, or a New World Order?” After Pearl Harbor and the US entry into the war, however, support for such idealistic peace plans declined. Lola cut her ties with WILPF in 1942 when the national board failed to endorse her world government plank in its platform. Rosika had resigned years earlier, in 1927, declaring that the League did not have the courage of its convictions. Later, she resumed her activities on behalf of and with WILPF.



Georgia Lloyd (family photo).

In chapter 8, Threlkeld documents the efforts of Georgia Lloyd and Edith Wynner, second-generation activists who promoted their mentors' ideas. In 1944, they collaborated on *Searchlight on Peace Plans: Choose Your Road to World Government*, a compilation of theories and plans for world government through history. "The book was not a bestseller, but it was timely, and it made enough of an impact in Washington that Eleanor Roosevelt invited the two to dinner at the White House in June 1944," Threlkeld notes (167).

Once nuclear bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki their concern grew. Along with Albert Einstein, the two women argued that "the atomic age necessitates international enforcement." Einstein wrote in the *Atlantic* (November 1945) that the secret of the bomb should be closely guarded by a world government. "Do I fear the tyranny of a World Government? Of course I do," he added. "But I fear still more the coming of another war."

Another bestselling book at that time, *The Anatomy of Peace* by Emery Reves, argued that the UN was not the answer. He characterized it as "the pitiful miscarriage of the second World War" and an "unholy alliance stillborn in San Francisco." He saw that the UN was set up from the start to favor control by the superpowers, instituting their veto power in the Security Council and making appointments to the General Assembly undemocratic. The only solution, he wrote, was a world government.

My father, William Lloyd, also worked for the Campaign for World Government, and spent considerable time in Washington in 1938 and 1939 promoting a call for a world constitutional convention. He managed to get a member of Congress, Jerry Voorhis of California, to introduce a plan for a world convention "which shall draw up a constitution for an all-inclusive, democratic, nonmilitary federation of nations."

Threlkeld also discusses the many groups that formed after the war, including the World Federalists and Americans United. Surprisingly, she doesn't mention World Citizen #1 Garry Davis, an admirer of Lola and Rosika.<sup>1</sup> Davis was a bomber pilot during World War II, and the trauma of dropping bombs on cities prompted him to give up his US passport in Paris in 1948. His act of defiance was widely covered by the interna-

tional press, and he became a hero overnight. He declared that governments are the cause of wars. He traveled for the rest of his life with his own world citizen passport.<sup>2</sup> As a result, he spent time in many prisons, yet remained a crusader for world government until his death in 2013.

Reading Threlkeld's book in 2023, as militarism runs rogue across the world and a major war in the center of Europe obstructs the delivery of food and energy to peoples everywhere, it seems obvious that new ways of thinking and new mass movements must emerge. However we decide to move forward, the ideas discussed in this book are essential.

## Life Before Dolphins



The cover of Uribe's book pictures Georgia Lloyd and Edith Wynner.

Kirmen Uribe is a Basque language writer who won the National Prize for Literature in Spain in 2009 for his first novel, *Bilbao—New York—Bilbao*.

During the Franco dictatorship, Uribe was raised by a group of free-thinking women, including his own mother and aunt. With this inspiration, he decided to write a book that would focus on feminism and the power of nonviolence. He applied for and received a grant from the New York

Public Library to do research in the papers of Edith Wynner for a novel on Rosika Schwimmer.

The result is *Life Before Dolphins*, which intertwines three storylines in a nonconventional narrative form. Unfortunately, the English version has not been published yet. But Uribe sent me an initial English translation.

He describes Rosika Schwimmer as "one of the most important intellectuals of her era: the first woman to be named ambassador of a country, a renowned speaker, and an esteemed champion of social rights. The same woman who some time before had defended women's right to vote in the majestic parliament built on the shores of the Danube,



Lola Maverick Lloyd



## Postscript

At the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of WILPF in 2015, lawyer Charlotte Dennett and I submitted a resolution to our highest body proposing the democratization of the UN. The resolution had been endorsed by Burlington WILPF and WILPF US.

### Endorsement and Support for a UN World Parliament or Parliamentary Assembly

“We propose an enlarged United Nations: with a World Parliament, made up of members *elected by the people* (similar to the US House of Representatives), that would balance the General Assembly, which is made up of representatives appointed by national leaders, including dictators. This body could have the same rights and authority as the General Assembly.”

This proposal was summarily dismissed by WILPF International leadership without a vote. Could it be revived?

when she was a very young activist who awed the political class with her speeches and along the way became famous for her armless glasses, an image reproduced in every newspaper of the Austro-Hungarian empire. The same woman who in London had been press secretary of the International Women's

Suffrage Alliance and fomented a pacifist movement to try and avert World War I....”

In the first few pages of the book, he describes Rosika's 1929 defense of her right to American citizenship before the US Supreme Court. Her case, *Schwimmer v. the United States*, had reach the court after successive appeals and thirteen previous decisions in which seven judges had ruled against her.

Ultimately her outspoken statements in court torpedoed her appeal: “I am an uncompromising pacifist. I am an absolute atheist. I have no sense of nationalism, only a cosmic consciousness of belonging to the human family.” She refused to carry a gun.

Uribe's book is a sometimes lighthearted chronicle of his research at the New York Public Library from 2018 to 2021, interspersed with reminiscences of his youth growing up with a group of revolutionary women.

Contact Uribe if you would like more details about his book, or if you have an idea for an English language publisher! [kirmenu@gmail.com](mailto:kirmenu@gmail.com).

For more background on Rosika Schwimmer, watch this [YouTube video](#) from the Global Democracy and Justice Lecture Series.

## Notes

- 1 I got to know Garry when he sought me out in Burlington, VT, on one of his trips north to see his family. We became friends and he shared his life story with me.
- 2 See more at [worldservice.org](http://worldservice.org).

## No Mow May

*Continued from page 14.*

modifications can be successful and allay fears of personal neglect, neighbor complaints, or leaving the impression of no one at home or the property being abandoned.<sup>2</sup>

## Get Started Where You Live

There are many helpful resources available at <https://beecity-usa.org/no-mow-may/>, including FAQs, summaries of published studies, webinars (such as “[No Mow May: Bringing Your Community on Board](#)”), No Mow Ordinance Examples, and a No Mow May Affiliate Promo Kit. Each region is different so learn what works for your habitat.

Our experience taught us that you should start as early as possible, do your ordinance research ahead of time, and engage with your city council, health department, mayor's

office, or other local officials. Be prepared to tell them what you're proposing and why, and find various ways to start the conversation in your community (including your local media).

Bee City USA's advice is sound: “There are no set rules. What you choose to do is up to you, and what your local ordinances allow. Do what you can now, make incremental changes over time, and learn as you go.”

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Blooming Prairie Nursery is a family-owned business in Des Moines that specializes in growing and installing native Iowa prairie flowers, grasses, and shrubs.
- <sup>2</sup> In some situations such as Home Owner Associations (HOAs), members can offer proposals that may be amenable to the members, such as asking for a portion of the land to be left unmowed. First Unitarian Church in Des Moines agreed to post two yard signs in a prominent spot on a busily travelled route asking the landscaper to mow around that area during May.

# Now's the Time to End Violence against Women and Girls



Graphic from the UN Women webpage, [FAQs: Types of violence against women and girls](#)

**By Lois A. Herman**

Managing Director, Women's UN Report Network (WUNRN)

**T**he most risky, dangerous situation in the world is to be a woman, and girls suffer the most persecution of any group.

Why is violence against women and girls so normalized and globally prevalent, year after year, in spite of laws and country commitments? Why does violence against women continue to be a weapon of war? Why are negative gender stereotypes and cultural practices left unchallenged, though they exacerbate disrespect, inequality, and violence against women and girls?

The media gravitates toward covering sensationalist violence against women (such as acid burning and femicide), but rarely to never mentions the fact that most country's gender budgets are repeatedly shortchanged such that funding is unavailable for the data collection, monitoring, development of effective programs, and enforcement of laws on gender violence.

The UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers has stated:

When crimes and human rights violations go unpunished, and assuredly those affecting women, then States should be held accountable for contributing to a culture of impunity and lawlessness. When certain types of crimes, such as honor crimes, affect disproportionately one gender, go unpunished, the State can, in addition, be held accountable for discriminatory treatment under the law.

The United Nations has attempted to address this issue over decades, including the following efforts:

1. The [CEDAW Convention](#) (no specific VAW component, but a general recommendation)
2. The UPR – [Universal Periodic Review](#): “The issue of violence against women was by far the most prominent one on recommendations made by countries on women's rights.... Within violence, the issue that received the more attention

was domestic violence...which was followed by Female Genital Mutilation and rape, and also sexual violence.”

3. The [Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women](#) (not an enforceable document)
4. The [Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#) – and +5, +10, +15, +20
5. The [International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women](#) – November 25
6. The UN [Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women and Girls](#)
7. The [16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence](#) campaign
8. The Secretary-General's ongoing campaign [UNITE to End Violence against Women](#)

We've had so many resolutions on violence against women and girls at the UN Human Rights Council, the Commission on the Status of Women, and the General Assembly. There are continued conferences, seminars, and colloquia on VAW.

Now is the time to hold governments accountable, create serious policy, and raise global awareness of these violations at all levels, from local to international.

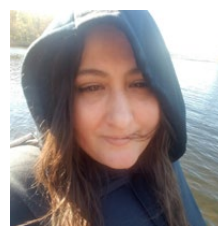
Now is the time to stop the promises that do not result in practice, to explore cross-sectorial impacts, and provide the funding which always seems so elusive to women's NGOs, programs, and projects.

Now is the time to move beyond elitism, and power and profit controls, and to end the impasse, the discrimination, the inequality, and the violence. We no longer have the time for formalities and headlines that do not reach the real “pulse points” in the lives of women and girls.

## Why Domestic Violence Matters

**By April Rumery**

DPoW Committee



**D**omestic Violence (DV) is a pattern of behaviors used by a partner to maintain power and control over another partner in a relationship. It is an invisible killer, physically and emotionally, which disproportionately affects cis-

gender women across all demographics of society.

DV affects us all. Whether overt or covert, it impacts the contributions of those who face additional impediments to overcome this experience. The impacts and reverberations of domestic violence hamper collective progress towards healthy, thriving, and peaceful societies.



As members of the Domestic Prisoners of War (DPoW) Issue Committee, we understand that these are easy statements to agree with. But what are your experiences regarding this issue and how has it hampered people you know? Here are just a few things I have witnessed/experienced on a personal level:

- An ex – the father of my son, who had a number of mental health issues – tried to hire someone to kill me, my new husband, and another former girlfriend. (The person he tried to hire was an ex police officer, and the investigation made the news)
- Another ex, the father of my eldest daughter, who struggled with substance abuse issues, would drag me out of bed by my feet, hold my head in toilets, and showed me where my body would be found in a swamp. There are many other horror stories with them that are too many to list here.
- As a mother of a child with Dravet Syndrome, one of the worst forms of epilepsy, I see and hear many tragic and alarming shares from members of the support networks I am involved with. One mother lost her child due to court visitation rulings. The father had promised the mother that “one day I will take her (their child) away from you.” The child would come home from visitation with bruises on her eyes and face. On her final visit with her father, the child died in her father’s custody. She was almost three years old. Another mother only escaped her abusive partner due to her child’s medical conditions. The courts allowed her to move to another state for better medical care, which allowed them to escape the physical and emotional abuse from the children’s father, including burning their son with cigarettes.

There needs to be much more focus on social issues and more effective legislation surrounding domestic violence. We need to acknowledge the residual effects on survivors and on our society. Survivors are not just here for academics and researchers to “report on the need for...‘x’ issue” or to tell our stories for us. We must be supported in speaking for ourselves.

## BIPOC Survivors Need Self-Determination

By Rita Gonzalez

Co-chair of the DPoW Committee



**I am a BIPOC woman** and a child sexual abuse trauma survivor. Dee Murphy and my other fellow activists in the DPoW Committee are committed to the work. We have shared our personal stories as abuse survivors and in turn have been inspired by one

another. We are quite protective over the work we do and the privacy of our members.

Survivors lack true support. They are blamed, face repudiation, are accused of lying, or they are ignored. Women who fall within minority groups face extra hurdles when seeking help or support.

As BIPOC survivors, we face the trauma of what was done to us, and we relive those tortured moments every day. We are triggered by simple things, a word or phrase, a scent, a sound, a sight or a touch. Our thoughts and emotions in hyperdrive. Boom! We’re back there, living it all over again, feeling anger, disgust, or other extreme emotions and not knowing why. We deny our pain, try to erase the memory. It’s still there.

Many women who have stood in my place are often unable to share their perspectives due to being undermined or stripped of their identity. Enduring domestic violence is a dreadful situation but to view it from a racial lens and the lingering effects of colonialism just adds more toxicity. It feels permanent, pervasive, and personal.

We must discover our own truth, determine our own worth, face what hurts and find what heals so we can be free.

Survivors of domestic violence have experienced the loss of peace, autonomy, and freedom in some of the most drastic ways possible. So self-determination and some level of autonomy are extremely important for victims of violence, especially BIPOC women. Autonomy is synonymous with freedom, independence, and self-determination, defined as the state of having control over one’s own actions, or the state of being independent from external control. As victims of domestic violence, child sexual abuse, or both, we haven’t experienced that. We are prisoners trapped in this cycle of abuse.

We always remember the dark despair, feeling abandoned and betrayed, feeling guilt and shame for something we didn’t do but was done to us. No one can reach the hearts of victims still trapped in dangerous situations or of survivors who have already been through it. Perspective is often the result of experience, and our experiences can be a powerful tool to move society into recognizing as well as standing with survivors. Together we can go past surviving and thrive.

Either you or someone you know has been or is currently being abused. It could be a relative, friend, or an acquaintance. Abuse occurs across age, class, race, ethnic origin, religion or sexual orientation. And the consequences of such abuse affect everyone directly or indirectly.

The great civil rights leader Fannie Lou Hamer said that “nobody’s free until everybody’s free.” Martin Luther King Jr. put it this way: “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. Nelson Mandela said, “For to be free is not merely to cast off one’s chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.”

What say you? What are you doing to stand with survivors and enhance the freedom of others?

# WILPF Rises to the Challenge

## Warheads to Windmills, AI and War, CSW Practicum Changes

By Vicki Elson

Creative Director, NuclearBan.US

**W**ILPF has long advocated for abolishing both nuclear weapons and fossil fuels – two of the biggest existential threats to our world. Now, WILPF is helping to combine the efforts of climate and anti-nuke groups, aiming to nurture collaboration and growth that strengthen both campaigns.

WILPF US has joined the new [Warheads to Windmills](#) Coalition, which supports peace, climate, and environmental organizations by providing effective action tools for their members. Ellen Thomas, MacGregor Eddy, and Cherrill Spencer are some of the WILPFers helping to midwife the coalition into its full fruition.

The coalition is facilitated by WILPF partner [NuclearBan.US](#). We demand that the nine nuclear-armed nations eliminate their arsenals, and use the money, brainpower, jobs, and infrastructure to cut global carbon emissions in half by 2030 and to no more than the Earth can absorb by 2050. The world's biggest carbon emitters must stop pointing nuclear weapons at each other and work together on building a fossil-free economy.

This is not a politically “realistic” demand. It is not a polite request. It is what is needed for our survival as a species and a planet.

The Warheads to Windmills Coalition aims to coordinate what we already have and build on it. We already have worldwide climate and anti-nuke movements. We already have excellent alternatives to fossil fuels. We already have excellent pathways to safe and fair global disarmament, like the game-changing Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). A global Fossil Fuels Treaty is in the works. We are all working to bust myths, misinformation, and propaganda, and provide useful education. We are all pressuring the profiteers with divestment, boycotts, shareholder actions, and NVDA (nonviolent direct action). We already have local, state, and national legislation in process.

Thanks to WILPF campaigners (hats off to Ellen Thomas!), there is a pending federal bill to convert “warheads to windmills.” WILPF has worked with Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC) to develop and promote the [Nuclear Abolition and Conversion Act, H.R. 2775](#). It calls for the US to sign the TPNW as a first step to safely, fairly, verifiably eliminating all nuclear weapons from all countries, and to convert the resources to climate solutions and other pressing human needs. It is a stellar example of legislation to “feed two birds with one scone!”



From left: Timmon Wallis, NuclearBan.US, Beatrice Fihn, ICAN, Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC), and Vicki Elson, NuclearBan.US/WILPF. Fihn is displaying the Nobel Peace Prize and Norton is displaying her bill.

To abolish the nukes and implement the most effective green technologies, it takes a lot of facts, figures, history, ideas, and examples of what works. We recently published an updated, downloadable summary of our report, *Warheads to Windmills: Preventing Climate Catastrophe and Nuclear War*.

The extensive book version is coming soon. It will be an accessible, deeply researched, amply illustrated, thoroughly referenced handbook for legislators, students, campaigners, organizations, and the general public. Find the summary and the report at [warheadstowindmills.org/report/](http://warheadstowindmills.org/report/).

There is hope. Against all odds, we've made headway against these trillion-dollar industries of extinction. Keep up the great work!

## Artificial Intelligence and War

By Eileen Kurkoski and Margo Schuler

Disarm Subcommittee on Drones & Autonomous Weapons

**T**he European Parliament, European Union (EU), and the United Kingdom (UK) are taking seriously the threat to international security and innocent civilians posed by the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in military applications, and the frightening prospect looming just over the horizon of killer robots ready to make life or death decisions without a human in the loop. Possibly Europe and the UK are more sensitive to these issues because of their homeland experience of two world wars.

However, in the United States, Senator Chuck Schumer and other important figures in our government have not yet adequately focused on the risks of military AI. They emphasize the “need to beat China,” a significant competitor in developing AI weapons. We question the wisdom of using these technical advances when those uses are not accompanied by



a sense of global responsibility and ethical awareness that they could pave the way to disaster.

As we do with nuclear weapons, we question how useful AI weapons will be. If you use AI weapons on an enemy's homeland and if your adversary also has them, when your adversary strikes back, your country will be devastated.... clearly a suicidal option. And if your adversary doesn't have AI weapons, it's not war, it's genocide. Will AI weaponry be a deterrent? Not according to some Pentagon AI specialists, who fear with time, a rogue group or nation could destroy us. Other AI specialists, even in the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), have admitted that with very complex weapon systems, there is no way to completely eliminate mistakes and oversights that could lead to disasters.<sup>1</sup>

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) has confronted the menace and humanitarian disaster of war for the past 108 years and sees this dialogue on military applications of AI as vital. Like Europe, we want to take

a safer and saner approach to global security: to only use AI for peacemaking, arms control, and the avoidance of war; or, at least, to avoid unnecessary killing in war.

WILPF members, please ask your legislators to vote for just and sane regulations of AI and demand a budget that includes AI for PEACE and finding ways to safely wean off nuclear weapons and lethal autonomous weapons.

### Notes

1. For expert opinion on the R & D of AI weapons, read Paul Scharre's *Army of None: Autonomous Weapons and the Future of War* (W.W. Norton & Company, 2018).

In this article, artificial intelligence (AI) refers to the ability of a computer or computer-controlled robot to perform tasks commonly associated with intelligent beings. The term is frequently applied to the project of developing systems with the ability to reason, discover meaning, generalize, or learn from past experiences.

## CSW Practicum Now Open to Young Activists

By Shilpa Pandey

Coordinator, UN Practicum in Advocacy

**A**s a young woman growing up in India and dreaming about a just society where women get to participate in the decision-making process as much as men do, I often wondered how to go about it. In my search for a platform that would allow me to bring suppressed voices to the front lines, I discovered WILPF in India. One of the things that struck me was that WILPF had a consultative status with the United Nations (UN) and that meant the work our activists did at the local community level found its voice resonating at the global arena through our organization's representatives who had a seat at the table at the UN.

As years went by, and having myself worked professionally with the United Nations agency in India as a consultant, I often pondered how we can expose more and more young women activists to these kinds of experiences. How can we engage young women who are interested in learning more about how the UN functions or how voices from their communities might reach some of the highest levels of decision making?

Well, the answer came to me when I moved to the United States and became active with the US section of WILPF. I came to learn about the CSW programs that WILPF offers.

Due to its consultative status with the UN, WILPF US is able to offer a UN Practicum in Advocacy program that allows us to take select participants to the UN during the first half of March held at the UN headquarters in New York City, and to participate as delegates at the annual Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) programs.



International delegates to the UN at CSW 67, 2023.  
Photo credit: Shilpa Pandey.

During other years, these programs were restricted to only those applicants who were enrolled in universities or colleges in traditional study programs. But this year we have opened these programs to young activists who may not be enrolled in a formal study program but are community leaders and budding activists who want to make a change. We know these young activists can benefit from WILPF's programs as they network, attend, and participate in all of the

panels, events, and other forums that are available during the annual CSW sessions.

The application for the year 2024 is already open and I am hoping that we see more and more young women from diverse communities apply for these.

I feel honored to be a coordinator for this program which truly is an example of bringing local voices to the global forum.

# "First They Came..."

## Standing in Solidarity with Activists Under Attack

By Leni Villagomez Reeves

Co-chair, Cuba and the Bolivarian Alliance  
Issue Committee

**W**e are again in a period of racist ultra-nationalism and right-wing extremism. It's not the first one, and we can learn about the need for solidarity from the oppression of the radical left and of people of color in past eras.

### Red Summer, Lynching, and the Palmer Raids

During the period after the First World War, there was an increase of white supremacy, ultra-nationalism, extreme hostility to socialism and communism, as well as efforts to identify those engaged in peace efforts with enemy sympathizers. It is not incidental that this was the period that included an extreme spread of lynching; white supremacy is the oldest and most pervasive of the right-wing terrorist ideologies in the United States.

Red Summer was a period in 1919 during which white supremacist terrorism occurred in more than three dozen cities across the U.S. The term "Red Summer" was coined by NAACP Field Secretary and author James Weldon Johnson. African-Americans came under attack in at least 38 separate incidents, and unknown hundreds were killed, with massive destruction of homes and businesses. In many of these attacks, Black people fought back, defending themselves and their right to self-defense. In 1919 there were also numerous lynchings. Authorities did not prosecute the lynchings or the attacks.

The *New York Times* ran an article in 1919 with the headline "[Reds Try to Stir Negroes to Revolt](#)" in which they repeated federal claims that the violence resulted from "an agitation, which involves the I.W.W., Bolshevism and the worst features of other extreme radical movements." The article went on to say:

Every week the militant leaders gain more headway. They may be divided into general classes. One consists of radicals and revolutionaries. They are spreading Bolshevik propaganda. It is reported that they are winning many recruits among the colored race. When the ignorance that exists



Still shot from security camera inside Uhuru's Solidarity Reparations Center on the south side of St Louis during the FBI raid in July 2022. Photo credit: [The Burning Spear](#).

among negroes in many sections of the country is taken into consideration the danger of inflaming them by revolutionary doctrine may [be] apprehended....

One of the attacks occurred in July 1919 in Washington, DC. For weeks prior to the riots, the *Washington Post* ran a series of sensationalist articles about fiendish Black men allegedly committing sex crimes. The police questioned a Black man about an alleged attack on a white woman then released him for lack of evidence. When this became known, four days of attacks by white men on random Black individuals began. When police refused to intervene, the Black population fought back. The NAACP sent a telegram of protest to President Woodrow Wilson referring to

...the shame put upon the country by the mobs, including United States soldiers, sailors, and marines, which have assaulted innocent and unoffending negroes in the national capital. Men in uniform have attacked negroes on the streets and pulled them from streetcars to beat them. Crowds are reported ...to have directed attacks against any passing negro.... National Association for the Advancement of Colored People calls upon you as President and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the nation to make a statement condemning mob violence and to enforce such military law as situation demands.<sup>1</sup>

The notoriously racist Woodrow Wilson didn't respond. J. Edgar Hoover was at the beginning of his ugly career, doing analysis for Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, and Hoover's interpretation was to repeat the false claim of "numerous assaults committed by Negroes upon white women."

On August 1, 1919, Palmer selected J. Edgar Hoover to head a new division of the Justice Department's Bureau of Investigation, the General Intelligence Division (GID), with responsibility for investigating the programs of radical groups and identifying their members. Hoover began an investigation of "negro activities" and targeted Marcus Garvey because he



thought his newspaper *Negro World* preached Bolshevism. He authorized the hiring of Black undercover agents to spy on Black organizations and publications in Harlem. This was the first version of what was to become COINTELPRO.

## Jane Addams Stood Up Against Lynching, Palmer Raids

The Red Squads of that period specialized in killing and jailing the leaders and members of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), of the Communist Party. They were also motivated by a fear of political radicalism, of workers mobilizing for their rights, and of such radical innovations as child labor laws and women's suffrage.

President Wilson's Attorney General, A. Mitchell Palmer, created the first form of what became the FBI and organized the Palmer Raids carried out by the United States Department of Justice in 1919 and 1920, particularly targeting immigrants who were labor organizers or who had "leftist" tendencies.

On November 28, 1919, Jane Addams said about the Palmer Raids, in which over 16,000 "suspected communists and anarchists" were arrested and held without trial:

Hundreds of poor laboring men and women are being thrown into jails and police stations because of their political beliefs. In fact, an attempt is being made to deport an entire political party. These men and women, who in some respects are more American in ideals than the agents of the government who are tracking them down, are thrust into cells so crowded they cannot lie down.

And what is it these radicals seek? It is the right of free speech and free thought; nothing more than is guaranteed to them under the Constitution of the United States, but repudiated because of the war. Let us end this suppression and spirit of intolerance which is making of America another autocracy.<sup>2</sup>

Interaction with the brilliant and courageous Ida B. Wells helped form Jane Addams's thinking about race and justice. Wells invited Addams to speak at a protest against lynching in 1899. After she spoke, Addams wrote an anti-lynching article that argued against lynching, but still made the assumption that the victims might be guilty of the crimes of which they were accused. Wells published a rebuttal, pointing out that the sole purpose of the lynch mob was to strip African Americans of their civil rights and their humanity. Addams learned from the experience, went on to be one of the founding members of the NAACP, promoted the work of W.E.B. DuBois, and protested against the racist policies of the federal government during the Wilson administration.

## McCarthy and HUAC, Hoover and COINTELPRO

The "second Red Scare" was of course McCarthyism, and some of us are old enough to remember the effects of that persecution of all progressive people, whether in the labor movement, the peace movement, or the civil rights movement. Although Joseph McCarthy's name is firmly attached to the period, it might also be termed Hooverism, for it was he who actually designed the loyalty and security programs as well as the surveillance and persecutions.

The Counter Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO) organized by the FBI, was officially initiated in 1956 and was created to disrupt, discredit (and assassinate) leaders of US political and racial/social justice organizations through surveillance, infiltration, entrapment, and false information. Its missions were to:

- Create a negative public image for target groups (for example through surveilling activists and then releasing negative personal information to the public)
- Break down internal organization by creating conflicts (for example, by having agents exacerbate racial tensions, or send anonymous letters to try to create conflicts)
- Create dissension between groups (for example, by spreading rumors that other groups were stealing money)
- Restrict access to public resources (for example, by pressuring nonprofit organizations to cut off funding or material support)
- Restrict the ability to organize protests (for example, agents would promote violence against police during planning and at protests)
- Restrict the ability of individuals to participate in group activities (for example, by character assassinations, false arrests, surveillance, approaches to employers, letters sent to spouses, IRS audits).

This program has been called "the FBI's war on Black America," which is true but incomplete. In addition to Black organizations, many other groups were targeted: the Communist Party, feminist organizations, anti-war groups, AIM and other Native American groups, environmental organizations, Puerto Rican independence groups, organized labor, and the left in general.

## Here We Are Again

We urge the need for WILPF US solidarity with, and support for, peace, social justice, Black Liberation and Cuba/Nicaragua/Venezuela Solidarity groups that are currently under attack.

On July 29, 2022, the FBI raided the St. Louis, Missouri home of Omali Yeshitela, the leader of the African People's Socialist Party (APSP) and the Uhuru Movement. The APSP and the Uhuru Movement are Black nationalist organizations with a history going back to the early 1970s of opposing U.S. imperialism and the oppression of Black people. The raid took place at 5 am, using flash-bang grenades, while large numbers of agents in combat gear broke down the doors and broke windows. The only occupants of the home were Omali Yeshitela (age 81) and his wife Ona Zené Yeshitela. At the same time, the FBI staged raids on different offices of the Uhuru Movement in St. Louis and in St. Petersburg, Florida, including the office of the APSP's radio station and newspaper, *The Burning Spear*.

In April 2023, the Biden administration charged Omali Yeshitela and Penny Hess, Jesse Nevel, and Augustus Romain Jr, all U.S. citizens from this pan-Africanist group, with conspiring with the Russian government to sow discord in U.S. elections. On [Democracy Now!](#) Yeshitela said, *"the indictment happened after something like nine months, after we were characterized as unindicted co-conspirators in some plot with the Russians, who it is said that we served in fighting for — around the questions of reparations and fighting to bring the United States before the United Nations for the crime of genocide against African people, and for our differences with the United States in terms of the Ukraine war, and our participation in elections."*

Code Pink and other organizations including Tricontinental Institute, the Peoples Forum, and Just World News and Books, came under attack recently. First *The New York Times* [ran an article](#) on August 5, 2023, attacking groups funded by Neville Roy Singham, which included the sentence: *"None of Mr. Singham's nonprofits have registered under the Foreign Agents Registration Act, as is required of groups that seek to influence public opinion on behalf of foreign powers."* Then Senator Marco Rubio (R, Florida) [called for a federal investigation of these groups](#) on the basis that they are somehow agents of the Chinese government.

The Foreign Agents Registration Act was used in the McCarthy era, most infamously to target W.E.B. Du Bois and the Peace Information Center, a US anti-nuclear group, which was connected with international peace movements and published anti-nuclear and pacifist literature from around the world, including the international Stockholm anti-nuclear petition.

Du Bois and four other PIC officers were indicted for failing to register as foreign agents.

Although the case was ultimately dismissed by a judge for lack of evidence, the costs involved with mounting a legal defense effectively shut down the Peace Information Center. The prosecutions also sent a message to other organizations that the government would prosecute those who were successful at organizing against nuclear weapons and militarism.

More recently, in 2018, the Foreign Agents Registration Act was used against environmental organizations. Four organizations were targeted for congressional investigation: the National Resources Defense Council, the Center for Biological Diversity, the World Research Institute, and EarthJustice. The accusation against the NRDC was strikingly similar to the current accusations, alleging that the NRDC was more critical of US environment policy than of China's policy. The accusation against the CBD was that they had opposed the relocation of a US Marines base on Okinawa on environment grounds! Again, these organizations had to expend resources defending themselves from charges of being "foreign agents."

Congressional committees and individual members, as well as the Justice Department, have used this act to target organizations with which they disagree. Even without any proof of wrongdoing, much less a conviction, this can drain the human and financial resources of an organization and destroy its functioning. In light of this history, it is hopelessly naive, or intentionally misleading, to pretend that an attack that suggests that organizations should register as foreign agents is "simply revealing the sources of their funding."

Pastor Martin Niemöller's *"First they came..."* is so well known that there is no need to quote the whole thing here. Here are the last three lines, in case you have forgotten:

Then they came for me  
And there was no one left  
To speak out for me

Jane Addams's anti-war efforts, including the founding of WILPF, led her to be labelled "the most dangerous woman in America." She was a founding member of the ACLU, of the NAACP, and a member of the Anti-Imperialist League. Her activities were constantly under the same kinds of attack. She would want us actively to defend our fellow radicals.

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## Notes

- [1] ["Protest Sent to Wilson: Association for the Advancement of Colored People Takes Action"](#), *New York Times*, July 22, 1919.
- [2] *"Jane Addams Heads Meeting of Protest on Deportations," Chicago Daily Tribune* (1872-1922), Jan. 24, 1920; ProQuest Historical Newspapers; *Chicago Tribune*, pg. 2.



# Yvonne Simmons, a Voice for Peace in Portland and the Balkans

By Mary Rose, Karen James, Dan Handelman,  
& Desiree Hellegers



**Y**vonne Simmons, a force for peace, freedom, and justice in Portland, Oregon, died on July 2, 2022, after a few years of diminishing physical strength. Her mother-in-law, Pat Hollingsworth, brought her to a WILPF branch meeting and gave her

a lifetime membership. Yvonne was known for her presence at actions with her dog, Mischief (Mischief by name, Mischief by nature) wearing a T-shirt with PEACE DOG written on it.

Dan Handelman of Portland [Peace and Justice Works](#) (PJW) helped organize Yvonne's care through these most difficult years. Yvonne was a comrade founding member with Dan in PJW, working with Flying Focus Community Video, protesting against war and United States interventions. A video of the virtual memorial service for Yvonne is available at [flyingfocus.org](#).

Yvonne and Mary Rose met in the 80's, performing publicly for the first time at a rally against the nuclear power plant, Trojan. Yvonne had new words for "This Little Light of Mine," something like "I don't need any nuclear power to let my little light shine!" They were well matched and continued as "Simmons Rose" into the 21st century, singing for vigils, protest rallies, national and international WILPF gatherings, college classes, peace camps, and with friends and fellow workers in the struggle.

One of Yvonne's passions was to end violence against women. This was rooted in her personal experience as a girl in 50's London, living with comrade street people, when she escaped a stalker by traveling to Italy with a Swedish friend.

During a WILPF national congress, Yvonne was inspired by an artist who made violence against women more public with a display of T-shirts telling each woman's story. Workshops were organized, participants invited, and [The Clothesline Project](#) came to be in Portland. The idea grew fast, 30, 40 shirts were hung in parks, peace and justice fairs, and hallways during feminist conferences.

Yvonne also devoted her energies to Peace Camps, which continue to offer WILPF's precepts to young children during summer break. Her enthusiasm, great fondness for children, and musical talent took this opportunity as far as possible, not only in the schools and parks in Portland, but overseas.

Yvonne made peace journeys to the Balkans for more than five years in the early 1990's. The children were underweight,

there was no water or electricity. Schools were closed, so every day they would call to Yvonne from outside her window to come and play with them. She used the principles of WILPF Peace Camps, incorporating crafts, songs, interactive and noncompetitive games.

In her own words: "Almost every day I traveled to the center of Sarajevo on a UN bus to work at various centers. On one particular day, it had been raining and I arrived home at dusk. In front of our building, where the children played, they had made a little model village of mud and sticks.,,about 15 feet long and 7 feet wide. A road circled the village, with mud and stone bridges over tiny rivers of water. There was a forest made of leafy twigs. Houses were made of sticks, stones, tiny pieces of concrete rubble collected from bombed-out buildings. Flower gardens were made from pieces of flowers." Yvonne was moved, writing, "The children had created a model village in which the homes were intact and the people could live in peace. It was their answer to the destruction of war."

During Yvonne's work in the Balkans, she met and joined women in Belgrade and Zagreb determined to work to end the war in the former Yugoslavia and discovered they could articulate their needs through the global Women in Black campaign. When the small group of women stood silently on a busy street in Belgrade, their presence spoke volumes. Soon other groups around the world were standing in solidarity with them. Yvonne started a Women in Black weekly vigil in Portland.

In the 2000s, Yvonne met a woman from Peru who inspired her to develop the Las Lomas Project, which raised funds for necessities for people living on a garbage dump just outside Lima, Peru. In March 2008, the Portland branch sponsored a fundraiser for Yvonne's return to Peru.

Yvonne's body is gone but her spirit is in our hearts, our memories. She never sought recognition for her work with children, abused and war-ravaged women, families eking out existence on a garbage dump, and comrades encouraged by a song. Edith Ballantyne, WILPF's International President from 1992-1998, praised Yvonne for her work in the Balkans and Peru. *The Oregonian* named her Woman of the Year for bringing aid to women and children under siege in Sarajevo. In September 1994, Yvonne received the Oregon Peace Institute's 1993 Peace Award for collecting and delivering humanitarian aid to the people of former Yugoslavia.

# Ying Lee, Berkeley City Council Member and Lifelong Anti-War Activist



© David Bacon, used with permission.

**E**ast Bay (CA) branch member Ying Lee, Berkeley's first Asian American City Council member (1973-78) and a longtime anti-war activist, died on September 10, 2022, at the age of 90. Ying's branch remembers her as a warm and loving woman with a beautiful smile.

Ying had an active voice in left-wing politics throughout the course of her life as a first-generation Chinese immigrant, author, and schoolteacher at Berkeley High School for 21 years. Her compelling upbringing was captured in her oral history book *Ying Lee: From Shanghai to Berkeley*, edited by Judith Scherr and available through the Berkeley Historical Society. Her story began in war-torn China; she and her mother walked across China from Shanghai to escape Japanese forces. After World War II, 13-year-old Lee and her mother came to San Francisco, where she later studied at City College of San Francisco and then worked toward a political science degree from UC Berkeley, graduating in 1953.

Philip Maldari, a host at KPFA radio and a friend of Ying's, called the tale "heroic." He said her honest and hardworking character earned her the respect of colleagues in everything she did.

David Bacon's [remembrance in \*The Nation\*](#) shares that while she was a teacher at Berkeley High School, Ying helped a handful of students (including her son Paul, David Bacon, and their friend David Laub) to organize a Young Socialists club. The club invited a communist speaker, which was quickly prohibited by the principal but overruled by the school board. Bacon also notes that Ying was married to John Kelley, a UC Berkeley math professor who was "fired in the McCarthyite hysteria for refusing to sign a loyalty oath (a move later ruled unconstitutional)."

Ying Lee made a particular impact on the anti-Vietnam War movement and the City of Berkeley's alignment with campus student protests of that era. She was a McGovern delegate in 1972, at the height of the war.

When she was elected Berkeley's first Asian American City Council member in 1973, she played an active role in the leftward shift of the City Council, fighting for rent control and for greater diversity on the Council.

After her time as a council member, Ying went to work for Congressman Ron Dellums, who called for Henry Kissinger to be tried for war crimes during the Vietnam War, and after that, she worked for Congresswoman Barbara Lee. In 1984, she co-founded Asian Americans for Jesse Jackson.

Her extensive social justice efforts for anti-war and racial justice movements continued through her final years of life. She was a member of Grandmothers Against the War, an anti-Iraq War group, and continued to support WILPF causes. She was also an early member of the [Living New Deal](#). As Bacon put it, "Ying fought our fights, and was arrested in many of them, from saving the downtown Berkeley post office to protecting Black Lives Matter demonstrators in the streets. She sat in the Occupy tents at Oakland City Hall."

The photo above was taken by David Bacon at a November 2011 demonstration with grassroots and political activists from the Occupy Oakland movement in which they marched through the city. Bacon wrote in his remembrance, "Ying was one of the people who made us who we are, who fought racism and for the dignity of working people. You can see in her face that she never stopped."

After her passing, the tributes poured in. "She was gentle towards people but fierce with her ideals," said Kate Harrison, Berkeley City Councilmember. "She was an indomitable presence around Berkeley for decades, active in every good cause," said Richard Walker, director of the Living New Deal. "She will be missed."

And House Representative Barbara Lee summed up the feelings shared by WILPF's East Bay branch: "Ying will always hold a special place in my heart, our community, and the planet. Her life will be remembered as one of love, passion, compassion, dedication, and brilliance. Her legacy will provide us guidance in rising to the occasion as we continue her fight for peace and justice."

# Carol Urner, Tireless Advocate for Disarmament

By Kirby Urner and Ellen Thomas

**C**arol Urner, longtime co-chair of the Disarm/End Wars committee and a lifelong activist committed to anti-nuclear and anti-militarism causes, died on January 30, 2023, at her home in Portland. When Disarm Co-chair Ellen Thomas heard the news, she expressed her deep sadness and thought back on the many activities she and Carol engaged in together.

"We worked and traveled together for a decade before she retired from WILPF," Ellen wrote, "including the 2011 WILPF US Congress in Charlotte, NC, a trip to New York for the 2015 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty Review, and our Nuclear-Free Future Tour of WILPF branches from San Diego to Seattle during the winter of 2016."

Carol Reilley Urner was born April 21, 1929. She attended Garfield High in Seattle, and much later in life received a lifetime achievement award from the school. Carol developed her early political consciousness during meetings at the YWCA when she was an undergraduate at the University of Washington, where she met her future husband, Jack Urner, and they both decided to become Quakers.

Carol supported Jack through his academic programs, including his PhD in urban and regional planning. His intent was to live overseas serving developing nations but his first planning job was in Portland, Oregon, where the couple had their two children (Kirby and Julie). During this era, Carol and her lifelong friend Mary Bolton became active with the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), and with Women Strike for Peace in particular.

In the early 1960s, Carol campaigned against the spread of nuclear testing (radioactive toxins were showing up in the food chain), and against the normalization of "duck and cover" type civilian defense drills. She also wrote an op-ed for *The Oregonian* against the ongoing escalation of military activity in Vietnam.

Carol's focus on American-Japanese friendship started with citizen diplomacy and a trip to Japan. She joined others in organizing an annual commemorative ceremony of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki with the intent to ban any future nuclear weapon use. These ceremonies have continued to the present day at the Japan-America Friendship Park along the waterfront in Portland.

Once Jack launched his career overseas, at first working in Libya, then over subsequent decades in the Philippines, Egypt, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Lesotho, Carol found ways to exercise her talents working with the poorest of the poor in each country. In the Phil-

ippines she worked as a volunteer for the rights of indigenous peoples, resurrecting an NGO (named PAFID) that had been shut down at the start of martial law. She received an award from the US Embassy for her work. She obtained her master's degree in history from Ateneo de Manila, a Jesuit university.

She also worked with impoverished shantytown women to help them develop a handicrafts and quilt-making cooperative, work she continued in Bangladesh. She and Jack worked with Right Sharing of World Resources (RSWR), a Quaker program, to establish micro-lending programs in both Cairo and Dhaka. The Urners were active Quakers, attending the Parliament of World Religions in Cape Town in 1999 and becoming co-clerks of their Yearly Meeting.

Both were involved in a car crash in South Africa in October of 2000, which was fatal to Jack and very injurious to Carol. Carol said, "When my husband was killed, and I was injured, not expected to live, I knew I would have to come back to the United States and work on demilitarization.... It's not just nuclear weapons. It's an end to war. That's what our organization (WILPF) is about, for over a hundred years we've been trying to put an end to war, and we're not giving up." She did make it back to the US to live another 23 years, where she again joined with Mary Bolton, Ellen Thomas, and many others to continue her WILPF work against militarism, now taking up the issue of weapons in space.

Carol and other WILPF members have their names included in Walk of the Heroines, a monument on the campus of Portland State University dedicated to the memory of Portland's women peacemakers. She attended WILPF's hundredth anniversary in The Hague in 2015, and a subsequent WILPF Summit at Wayne State University in Detroit.

In an interview Carol and Ellen did with Rachel Anne Goodman for Santa Cruz Community TV during their 2016 tour, Carol said this about the many years she'd spent educating others about the nuclear weapons ban and working for demilitarization: "If you care about people, it's something you have to do, want to do, you can't not do it. And of course if you're working with others, it becomes joyful.... You know you're doing the right thing. What better thing to do with your life?"

Carol is survived by her two children and two grandchildren.





# Branches Find Many Ways to Advocate for Peace



The **DISARM committee** co-chairs thanked the branches and members who attended public events in 2023 to commemorate the 1945 atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in these locations: Asheville, NC; Burlington, VT; Lawrence Livermore National Lab, Monterey, CA; Palo Alto, CA; Santa Cruz, CA; Sunnyvale, CA; and Valduc, France. They also thanked the many branch members who handed out the special *Oppenheimer* trifold flyer to moviegoers during the film's run in theaters over the summer.



During the month of August, the **Palo Alto Branch's** Friday silent vigils were dedicated to the Hiroshima/Nagasaki commemoration and calls for peace in Ukraine. On August 4, the branch invited members of the Fridays for Future (FFF) environmental action group to stand with them to "Say No to Nukes." Vigil participants unrolled WILPF banners, and others held two-sided signs to communicate with both directions of traffic at the busy Palo Alto intersection. Colorful paper peace cranes were hung at street-crossing poles. At an information table, pedestrians were free to take small cranes from a basket, to sign a TPNW petition, to take a copy of the "End the Whole Nuclear Era" pamphlet, and to join the protest. An intern from independent radio KPFA interviewed several participants.

There's a new branch in WILPF US: the **Miami Mujeres!** It was started by high school sophomore Eva Egozi who discovered WILPF after she became increasingly interested in understanding policy changes and violence in the world through a feminist lens. One of the branch's first efforts involved getting in contact with sexual harassment/assault shelters for women and children across Florida to deliver packages filled with necessities for the women and children living in shelters. Eva shared, "As we continue to build our Leadership Committee, we hope to continue to gain more opportunities to help break barriers and spark material change in the Miami, Florida area."



**Maine WILPFers** picket with other groups each Friday in the center of Portland. In recent months, they deployed their most active banners to emphasize how important diplomacy is, given the threat of all things nuclear. Branch members also thanked Maine's US Representative Chellie Pingree for recently co-sponsoring H.Res 77 which calls on President Biden to embrace the goals and provisions of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and to make nuclear disarmament the centerpiece of US national security policy. They have asked their other legislators to support H.Res.77 and the Norton Bill H.R. 2775 (Nuclear Weapons Abolition Bill).

The **Humboldt County (CA) Branch** worked to get an International Day of Peace proclamation from the City of Arcata, and a couple of branch members – including Brenda Perez, who is a leader of Centro del Pueblo, a local immigrant rights organization – were on a local radio station on Monday, September 11.



March 2023 was a busy month for the **Greater Philadelphia Branch**. A small bevy of activists were given a tour of the Lest We Forget Slavery Museum by the executive director of the museum, Gwen Ragsdale. The branch also partnered with Korea Peace Now to bring the film *Crossings* to the UPenn campus and Philadelphia. According to Tina Shelton, "it was well received, and we are looking forward to more opportunities to work together!" And toward the end of March, the branch donated six books (recipients of the Jane Addams Peace Association's Children's Book Award) to the Kensington Library, in the Free Library of Philadelphia system, in honor of Marge Van Cleef.

## Contemplating Water



On March 22, 2023, members of the **Fresno Branch** gathered at the San Joaquin River Conservancy and contemplated water. Lance Canales, Yokuts, played Native American flute music, and Dirk Charley, Dunlap Band of Mono Tribe, shared some of his life experiences and talked about water from an Indigenous perspective. The group also heard from representatives of environmental organizations, such as Rachel Clark, president of the Fresno Audubon Society, and Anita Lodge from Friends of the Gorge, which has been stalwart in the struggle against Temperance Flat Dam. Then participants went out to observe the San Joaquin and returned to share their impressions in words and pictures.



The **Detroit Branch** focused the April 20, 2023 meeting of their "Kitchen Table Talk and Action" series on "Water for All: The Future of Water in the Great Lakes Region." The session featured Liz Kirkwood, Executive Director of FLOW (For Love Of Water) and an environmental lawyer with over 20 years of experience, who presented sobering statistics and described recent changes impacting the Great Lakes. WILPF members and friends from eight Michigan cities, as well as Minnesota, listened attentively and asked many questions. They left with a shared determination to contribute to the preservation of the largest body of fresh water on our planet.

### **Pennsylvania Branches Welcome *Golden Rule***

From May 9-13, 2023, the **Greater Philadelphia Branch** joined with several other groups to welcome the *Golden Rule* sailing vessel to Philadelphia as it made its way up the Eastern Coast on its "Great Loop" Journey. A welcoming contingent greeted the crew on May 9, including the Northwind Sailing Schooner



escort, fans, and flags. City Councilmember Mark Squilla presented a Resolution marking the *Golden Rule's* visit to Philadelphia, which included the city's past support for nuclear abolition. Activities for the crew while in the Philadelphia area included a potluck at Friends Center with Sally Willowbee (daughter of one of original sailors), a visit to the Peace Collection at Swarthmore College Library, and on the final day, a walk from Independence Hall to Penn's Landing Marina. A dockside sing-along with Buzz Merrick and the Granny Peace Brigade was held to send off the crew to their next stop in New York.

On August 4, 2023, a caravan from the **Pittsburgh Branch** traveled to Erie, PA, to greet the *Golden Rule*, built by Quakers in 1958 and restored by Veterans for Peace to share its message that nuclear abolition is possible along its 1500-mile Great Loop voyage. An enthusiastic group from Pittsburgh was joined by about a dozen locals in welcoming the beautiful ship and crew. Visitors toured the ship, talked to the crew, and sang anti-nuclear and peace songs on the dock. The mayor of Erie sang two songs along with the group. Members of the group who sailed with the crew reported getting many waves and thumbs up from others in the harbor.



## ***Women's International League for Peace and Freedom WILPF US 2024 Triennial Congress***

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## Tommorow's Gift, Today's Work



Photo from the Women's Collective, an organization of more than 100,000 members spread across 19 districts in Tamil Nadu, India.

Only two percent of all US charitable gifts goes to women's organizations, according to the *Chronicle of Philanthropy*. You can change that today by securing the future for WILPF US. Here is one example of how a bequest strengthened our work for peace – local to global.

"Working for a Democratic Food System" was the theme for the WILPF US Des Moines Branch's Jane Bibber Memorial Symposium and Strong Feisty Woman Award Luncheon in the spring of 2013. The all-day symposium was made possible with the help of a generous bequest by WILPF US and Des Moines Branch member Dr. M. Jane Bibber.

Frances Moore Lappé, the celebrated author on food and democracy, delivered the keynote address and focused on the way we think to create the world we want. The 2013 Food Sovereignty Prize winners included: farmer-activists with La Via Campesina (Haiti & South America); Basque Country Peasants' Solidarity (Mali); and Tamil Nadu Women's Collective (India). Hans Herren, noted entomologist and co-founder of the Monsanto Tribunal at The Hague participated as well. At the luncheon, the Strong Feisty Woman Award was presented to Frances Moore Lappé and former co-president of the DSM Branch, Marybeth Gardam.

**This groundbreaking symposium would not have been possible without Dr. Jane Bibber's bequest. Let YOUR legacy increase percentages for women and peace work forever!**

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