

PEACE



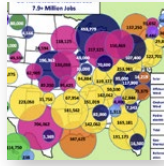
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Zooming ahead back cover

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

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Cover: "Emily's Dialogue" by Cheryl Braganza (1945-2016). © Cheryl Braganza. Reprinted by permission. Cheryl Braganza was an artist, writer, and pianist. Born in India, she studied art and music in Italy and the UK before arriving in Montreal in 1966. In 2008 she was chosen Montreal Woman of the Year by the Montreal Council of Women for using her art as a tool to advocate for women's rights all over the world. She said, "I want my art to play a role in lifting people's spirits, in challenging their assumptions, in provoking thought . . . thus promoting dialogue between peoples towards peace."

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Hope, Despair, Reality — and Inspiration from a People's Victory

By Darien De Lu

President, WILPF US Section

The dog whistles, the slurs, the casual insults – racism has been a fundamental part of the administration of the last four years and the years of bigoted actions and speechifying that preceded it. Still, it's remarkable that the two contrasting headline events of January 6 should both so clearly be *about* underlying racism without, in either case, most media coverage *focusing* on racism.

The media story in Georgia is the electoral victory – a *people's victory* of strategy, outreach, determination, perseverance, and nationwide participation. Despite extensive voter suppression, voters in Georgia turned out in huge numbers, reshaping the Congressional prospects for the next two years.

Before the Georgia results, my hopes grappled with my despair. As a peace activist, what could I hope for under Biden-Harris? Still I wanted to hope. And looking at climate issues – if and when the returns finally came in we found ourselves with even one Republican senator from Georgia, we'd continue with a crippled Senate... ah! I despaired, afraid to think about it.

But the Georgia voters – supported and encouraged by an on-the-ground grassroots movement and calls and cards from across the country – stood up and spoke up. Record numbers of Blacks and Latinx affirmed their hopes for democracy with their votes. That surge was enough to be just enough. They overcame, making the difference for all of us.

The headline story out of DC was a stark contrast, spotlighting a violent effort to overthrow democracy and to attack its symbols. In DC, the underlying racism story was law enforcement and government officials deferring to – even supporting – law-breaking and violent white supremacists. In Georgia, the people challenged centuries of oppression of Black and indigenous people.

Those rallying in DC disregarded the “objective realities” of the Biden-Harris win, and, many of them, of the equality of all peoples. Tying this denial into other January news – the “entry into force” of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) – it's likely that many DC attackers also refuse to acknowledge that there are no winners in a nuclear war. If the attackers even knew of the TPNW, they'd likely oppose it.

Yet in a 2019 survey, a majority of Republicans favored remaining within the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. With people, we can reach out to their humanity, based



on shared goals – like sustainable food systems and a healthy environment. Such overtures must be chosen strategically: Is this approach ethical? What are our short- and long-term objectives?

With human *opponents*, there's *hope* for discourse. Ethical discourse is consistent with the WILPF purpose to “abolish violence and coercion in the settlement of conflict and their substitution in every case of negotiation and conciliation.” Yet we must also uphold the WILPF goal, to achieve justice for all. Consequently, many concepts and tactics of our opponents are enemies to us – antithetical to our principles.

Demonizing and stereotyping black and brown people and the “far left” are important “enemy concepts”. When police wink at extremist right-wing white nationalist violence and a noose is hung outside the Capitol, the threats against Blacks, the Left, and other targeted groups are real and chilling. WILPF joins allies to strongly oppose these vicious ideas – including racism and dehumanization.

Who is this “degenerate” far left? Us: Grandmothers, nonviolent activists, intellectuals, rationalists, the spiritually inclined. With our Call for Peace – pushing for 50% military spending cuts to free up trillions for Green New Deal and other human needs investments – we are outside the United States militarist norm that leads politicians to end speeches with “God bless our troops.”

As with our support for “Defund the Police”, WILPF recognizes that the search for a false “security” sucks up most resources; broad “security” *cuts* are required to *transfer* funds to human needs. WILPF opposition to social program austerity makes us “far left socialists”.

To protect ourselves and our allies from a violent mean streak, we need no new “security” laws but to expand our collaborations and networks. We can increase our numbers by deepening our understanding of the militarism-racism-neoliberalism intersections. Bringing 100+ years of experience and an informed analysis to the peace and justice movement, we can unite with others on widened initiatives for disarmament and diplomacy.

The Georgia election of two progressives, including their first Black senator, opens up new doors of possibility for WILPF work in Congress. May the message from Georgia echo more loudly than the flash-bangs of DC!

Feeding Two Birds with One Scone

Converting Warheads to Windmills

By Vicki Elson

WILPF US Disarm/End Wars Committee

This is a story about the day the doorbell rang. It's 2019. Pre-Covid. We're all sitting around the [NuclearBan.US](https://nuclearban.us) office, brainstorming, researching, tapping away on our computers as fast as we can, like squirrels getting ready for winter.

We're writing a report called "[Warheads to Windmills: How to Pay for a Green New Deal](#)", about how the three emergencies of climate, inequality, and nuclear weapons could be solved by combining two solutions: A good Green New Deal and the [Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons](#).

We've been working with [WILPF US](https://wilpf.us) to promote and add cosponsors to Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton's [House bill](#) to abolish nuclear weapons and shift the funding to green technologies. It's *Warheads to Windmills* in federal legislative form! We hope our report will add documentation to support the bill.

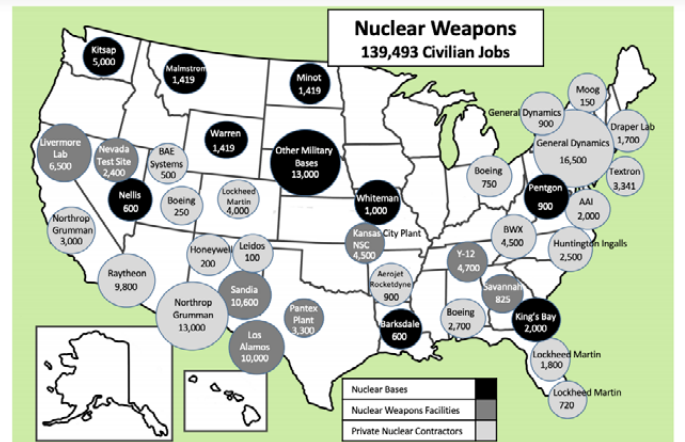
We also hope our report will help build bridges between the movements working on the three emergencies that threaten our existence: the climate crisis, unsustainable inequality, and nuclear weapons. There are so many connections: the biggest greenhouse gas emitters are pointing nuclear weapons at each other – hardly conducive to the unprecedented international cooperation we'll need to solve the climate crisis. Meanwhile, poor people, people of color, and indigenous communities suffer the most from climate disasters, whether it's global warming or nuclear winter, AND they also suffer disproportionately from fossil fuel and uranium production and pollution.

All three emergencies have the same root causes: greed, selfishness, shortsightedness, Big Money corrupting politicians. We believe that the more we all build intersectionality and solidarity between the three movements, the more power we will all have.

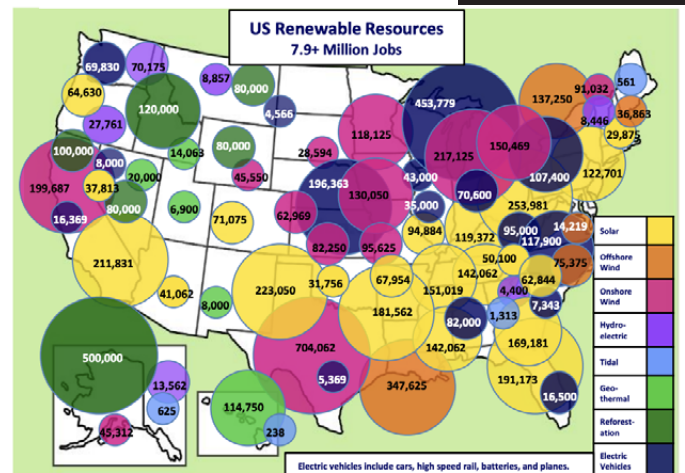
Digging into the details, we're trying to figure out what it would take to meet the IPCC targets for reducing greenhouse gases in time to avert the worst climate disasters. We need a Green New Deal, but not just any old Green New Deal – what **MUST** it include if it's going to work? 100% clean and renewable energy. Agricultural and industrial reforms. Banning hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs). Protecting forests, restoring ecosystems, planting trees.

And we're studying: what are the false solutions that get us in trouble? Nuclear power, biomass, biofuels, carbon capture and storage – they're too dangerous, cost too much, take too long, or they just don't work.

Do personal lifestyle changes or economic incentives make



[Click to view larger.](#)



Moving the money and brainpower from weapons of mass extinction to green technologies can create millions of good jobs and address the existential problems of climate, nuclear weapons, and income inequality all at once. Used with permission from NuclearBan.US.

enough of a difference, or do we need massive policy and infrastructure changes too? Can nonviolent direct action, divestment, boycotting, and awareness-raising translate into political pressure and concrete policy changes? How do we cooperate with the rest of the world so we ALL work together to save the glaciers and stop the fires?

How Much Will This All Cost?

We're coming to a really interesting conclusion – oh, wait, there's the phone. We have one rule. If our kids or grandkids call, we drop everything. They're learning to walk. They're learning to swim. They're learning to drive a car. They're in a play. They're thinking about getting a new job. Their neighbors' farms are flooding in Wisconsin. They're worried about their daughter's preschool in the middle of a dry forest in California with only one road out. Our hearts are bursting with love, and joy, and concern, and a ferocious urge to protect them.

OK, back to work – our research is pointing toward a fascinating coincidence. **The money we need for a great**

Green New Deal in the United States is about the same amount of money we're currently wasting on nuclear weapons of mass extinction.

And there's another fascinating coincidence: to solve the remaining green technology problems, like better batteries, electrifying transportation, retrofitting buildings, and wind-mills that don't kill birds, **we'll need some particular kinds of brainpower, trained experts, specific skills -- the exact people currently tied up in the nuclear weapons industry.**

We're wasting the minds of brilliant scientists who are busy building and upgrading machines that, used as directed, have ONE function: to indiscriminately slaughter entire cities full of innocent people in the most horrific ways.

There is ONE rationale: as long as we have these things, nobody will dare nuke us, because we'd nuke them back. Never mind that we're not talking about conventional weapons where this logic might conceivably make sense -- we're talking about the end of the world.

There's really only ONE reason nuclear weapons still exist. As [Greta Thunberg says](#) about the fossil fuel industry: "Our civilization is being sacrificed for the opportunity of a very small number of people to continue making enormous amounts of money."

I'll tell you what scares me: human error, sabotage, and plain old mechanical malfunction. There's a stunning history of accidents, close calls, and misunderstandings. We've been spectacularly lucky so far.

Happily, the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is a big breakthrough. It's not yet another treaty written by the nuclear nations that they review and then fail to implement decade after decade. This treaty comes from the rest of the world. They're sick of living with the threat of global annihilation. 122 countries agreed to this Nuclear Ban Treaty in 2017.

The Treaty doesn't just add to the existing international laws that make *using* nuclear weapons illegal under international humanitarian law (they cause disproportionate harm to civilians, they cause unnecessary suffering to soldiers, and they affect neutral countries downwind). It makes *everything* to do with them illegal in the ratifying countries: threatening to use, developing, testing, producing, manufacturing, transferring, stationing, possessing, or stockpiling nuclear weapons. It's also illegal, in the ratifying countries, to *assist* anyone to do any of those things. That includes financing them. It's going to be harder and harder to continue with business as usual.

The phone rings again. This time it's Setsuko Thurlow, who survived Hiroshima as a child. She worked toward the Treaty for 72 years. She's thanking us for quoting her in an article:

"When I was a 13-year-old girl, trapped in the rubble, I kept moving toward the light. And I survived. Our light is now the Ban Treaty."

We love Setsuko. We watched her stand on the stage, together with Beatrice Fihn of [ICAN](#), the [International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons](#), to accept the [Nobel Peace Prize](#) in 2017 for facilitating the Treaty. ICAN worked with the [International Committee of the Red Cross](#) -- there's no meaningful medical response to a nuclear attack or accident, and nobody wants to see it happen again, ever. At our office, we have little replica Nobel prizes sitting around, reminding us that we're part of this international movement of young people, women, hopeful and beautiful and hardworking like Greta is for the climate movement.

We take a break for coffee and listen to the latest news about the fires in the Amazon. We go back to our research...
...and the doorbell rings.

There are two door-to-door proselytizers standing there, pamphlets in hand, with earnest expressions of concern for our eternal souls. "Tell me," one says, "have you ever thought about the end of the world?"

Vicki Elson is a member of WILPF US Disarm/End Wars Committee. She is the Creative Director of NuclearBan.US, and the Executive Director of TreatyAwareness.org.

Take Action to Pressure US to Join the Treaty



Fast forward to December 2020: the Treaty has been signed by 86 countries and ratified by 51, and counting! It will enter into force as international law in the ratifying countries on January 22, 2021. This will put unprecedented

pressure on the nuclear nations and on the profiteers who make nuclear weapons. You can help get the word out, and take action to move the USA closer to joining the Treaty. Learn much more at [NuclearBan.US/blog](#).

Meanwhile, [in a pandemic, the bomb looks different](#). We're all working so hard to keep each other alive.

Iran and the United States

What Might a Feminist Foreign Policy Look Like?

By Val Moghadam

Boston WILPF Branch



The Trump administration's withdrawal from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal – officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA – exemplified a certain historic trend in United States foreign policy. That trend, which has spanned both Democratic and Republican administrations, is to arrogate to the U.S. the right to decide which international treaty to honor, which multilateral organization to respect and support, and which country or countries around the world to undermine.

Thus over the decades, the U.S. has subverted, bombed, invaded, and occupied countries; it has denigrated or withdrawn from UNESCO (twice, from 1984-2002, and again in 2019), the ILO (briefly, in 1977), and the WHO (in 2020, to take effect in 2021); and it has withdrawn from the Iran nuclear deal (2018) and the Paris climate agreement (2019). Over the decades, the U.S. has chosen not to ratify the UN's Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (known as CEDAW, 1979, in force since 1981) or to join the 2002 Rome Statute, which founded the International Criminal Court. The Trump administration has been the most egregious violator of international agreements, but its actions are not unprecedented.

One of the few achievements of the Obama administration was to conclude the JCPOA, which established a set of strict monitoring protocols over Iran's nuclear sector. If the objective was to ensure a nuclear-free Middle East, however, it failed – not only because the U.S. political system allows a government to abrogate an international treaty concluded by the preceding government, but also because the Obama administration did

nothing to compel Israel to own up to its own nuclear arsenal and begin the process of denuclearization. The Obama administration also continued to provide extremely generous military grants to Israel, with no conditions attached. It continued the longstanding U.S. policy of subsidizing U.S. weapons manufacturers and selling highly sophisticated weapons to oppressive states such as Saudi Arabia.

A progressive feminist foreign policy would overturn all the above actions. It would seek diplomacy, international cooperation, demilitarization, and denuclearization. It would not only return to the UN agencies from which the U.S. has withdrawn but also would seek to strengthen the UN and its specialized agencies through increased funding and the nomination of highly qualified feminist officials. A feminist foreign policy would insist on reviving the Paris climate agreement and the Iran nuclear agreement. If it attached any "conditionalities" to negotiations, it would be to insist on the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security, to ensure the participation of representatives of women's rights and peace organizations. A return to the JCPOA – which one hopes that the Biden administration could accomplish in its first 100 days – could likewise entail the participation of representatives of women's rights activists in Iran (such as the valiant lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh, frequently harassed and jailed by the Islamic Iranian authorities) as well as representatives of transnational feminist networks such as WILPF, Code Pink, MADRE, Women Crossing DMZ, and the Marche Mondiale des Femmes. The extremely harsh economic sanctions against Iran, which were ramped up under the Trump/Pompeo regime, would be lifted.

Do Women Make a Difference in Foreign Policy?

Women diplomats like Catherine Ashton of the UK, Germany's Helga Schmid, Wendy Sherman of the U.S., and Federica Mogherini of the EU were pivotal to the negotiations resulting in the signing of the JCPOA. There are other examples of impressive women in power: New Zealand's Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and the women governing Finland and Iceland. Would the presence of more women like them in positions of power help bring about a more stable, secure, peaceful, cooperative, and women-friendly world? Certainly.

But then I remember women like Condoleezza Rice, Susan Rice, Samantha Power, and Hillary Clinton, and – internationally – former president Park of South Korea and the late Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan (who turned a blind eye to her

country's nuclear development), not to mention Margaret Thatcher. Such women officials held hawkish views and had no qualms about attacking other countries. It is not enough to have women in power; they should be judged on their capacity and willingness to enact feminist principles of equality, cooperation, and peace. The security and prosperity of women (and children, youth, and men) in one country should not be enacted at the expense of the human security of people elsewhere and especially not of women's physical security. What, after all, did the 2011 NATO bombing of Libya accomplish other than a failed state and the murder of many prominent women?

The U.S. heavily arms Israel, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), three countries that attack other countries (notably Syria and Yemen, attacked by all three countries, and the siege of Gaza by Israel). Compounded by the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq and the 2011 NATO bombardment of Libya (both times to enact "regime change"), such actions made the Middle East a very unstable region – even before the January 2020 assassination in Iraq of Iranian General Ghassem Soleimani and Iraqi commander Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis. Such actions not only make the Iranian authorities jittery and reactive, they also give the green light to other countries to attack Iran – notably, the Israeli assassination in late November 2020 of a prominent Iranian nuclear scientist. Such actions also perpetuate patriarchy and gender inequality in the region. As we know from decades of feminist research, patriarchy is both a cause and effect of militarism, inter-state rivalries, and violence. United States foreign policy is no friend of women's rights and equality, and it never has been.

For these reasons, the participation and engagement of representatives of transnational feminist networks is critical to a new foreign policy. Working in coalition with other progressive organizations, including broad peace movements, advocates of a feminist foreign policy should push for a complete overhaul of the U.S. foreign policy agenda, based as it is on the expansion of U.S. hegemony through militarism, capitalism, and the threat of economic sanctions. Is there any reason for the continued presence of numerous U.S. bases around the world? Why should Iran be surrounded by U.S. bases, making the Iranian authorities anxious, reactive, and hostile – as well as unlikely to enact domestic reforms? As noted, a feminist foreign policy would prioritize diplomacy, cooperation, and honest brokerage, not the biased and bullying tactics that have characterized U.S. actions since the 1953 coup d'état against Premier Mossadegh.

What Do Iranian Women Want?

Like women anywhere, Iranian women desire a stable, peaceful, and prosperous country, but they also want the repeal of discriminatory laws that place limits on their autonomy within the family and in public spaces. They similarly desire a relaxation of the social and cultural restrictions that have been in place for decades.

Iran is stratified as are most countries; it has a class system where some do much better than others. That's also true of the female population, although all women in Iran are subject to the same discriminatory laws, which place women in a subordinate position within the family, subject to the "protection" (or control) of fathers, brothers, or husbands, and which also place some restrictions on women's public presence (although Iran is not nearly as restrictive and segregated as Saudi Arabia). If you are from a liberal family or you made the right marital choice, you have more leeway.

There has been much progress for women in the past decades, especially in terms of the rising age at first marriage, lowered fertility, and educational attainment. Iranian women have had the benefit of significant educational attainment, with very high rates of university enrollments, but these have not been met with expanded employment opportunities. There is a respectable proportion of women in public services (including the civil service), but there is very high unemployment, even for university-educated women. Unemployment worsened with the harsh economic sanctions imposed by the Trump/Pompeo regime, which have had other adverse effects as well, especially on health, even before the pandemic struck. There is a tremendous reserve of unmet potential within Iran's female population.

Iranian women love their country but many are not happy with aspects of their lives such as compulsory *hejab* (veiling) or restrictions on social interaction (such as mixed-sex parties). In the first decade of this century, they launched an impressive grassroots campaign for a million signatures to change discriminatory laws. (This they learned from the successful Moroccan campaign of the early 1990s, thanks to the feminist brokerage of the Women's Learning Partnership for Rights, Development, and Peace, a transnational feminist network led by Mahnaz Afkhami.) Women also had a huge presence in the 2009 Green Protests – the aftermath of the controversial presidential election whereby right-wing populist Mahmoud Ahmadinejad won a second term in what was regarded as a rigged election. Although the campaign had to stop and the Green Protests were repressed, Iranian women have continued

to make brave public displays in defiance of, or liberation from, compulsory veiling. Most recently they launched their own version of the MeToo movement.

One can confidently state that all Iranian women were very hopeful that the 2015 nuclear agreement would result in both normalization of international relations and relaxation of social restrictions, as well as serious reforms in Iran in the direction of women's full equality and equal citizenship. But the Trump administration upended that, dashing women's dreams and turning them into nightmares. With the Trump/Pompeo sanctions, Iran could neither import nor export with ease, and even when it tried to sell some oil to Venezuela, the U.S. responded with what can only be called piracy on the high seas.

The Iranian people's economic conditions have deteriorated significantly. Of course, the Iranian regime deserves some blame for economic and financial mismanagement, but its mismanagement pales when compared to the effects of the harsh economic sanctions put in place by a country with inordinate control over the world's financial system. The Iranian people, and the wellbeing of women, the elderly, children, and youth, are held hostage by U.S. policies and especially the sanctions. This is as far from a feminist foreign policy as one can imagine.

When Pompeo went to the UN Security Council in late August 2020 to argue for the "snapback" provision of the JCPOA, which would reimpose all UN sanctions against Iran, he received a humiliating rejection. The Security Council members voted against his proposal, pointing out that the US had no standing, given that it had withdrawn from the agreement, and also that Iran had agreed to allow monitors to inspect its facilities. This only made Pompeo react – as usual – in a rude and bullying manner. The sheer heartlessness of calling for more sanctions on top of the unilateral U.S. sanctions is mind-boggling. Iranian women do not want more sanctions. They desire reform in their own country, normalization internationally, and a peaceful neighborhood. They have not been able to enjoy any of these prospects with the Trump/Pompeo regime. Will prospects change with the Biden administration?

What Can Be Done?

Now that we know Joe Biden will be the next president, we need to strongly urge a return to the JCPOA in the first 100 days, the lifting of sanctions against Iran (also Syria), and the start of negotiations for the end to hostilities and a return to normalization of relations. Normalization would enable the Iranian regime to move in the direction of much-needed internal reforms, including the repeal of gender-discriminatory laws. This might also pave the way for both Iran and the

U.S. to finally ratify CEDAW and respect the global women's rights agenda.

We also should call on the Biden administration to halt the sale of arms to countries that attack other countries. Such attacks, and the dispatch of weapons that encourages them, must stop for the sake of regional peace and stability. A feminist foreign policy on Iran, therefore, would prioritize diplomacy, international cooperation, and demilitarization as well as denuclearization. The longer-term positive outcomes are immeasurable for Iran, the U.S., the Middle East region, and the world.

Those of us in the feminist peace movement have continued work to do, building coalitions and alliances across borders to name and shame those policies that perpetuate war and suffering. We also need to insist on a reallocation of funding from the military toward improved public services.

Valentine M. Moghadam is Professor of Sociology and International Affairs at Northeastern University, Boston. Born in Tehran, Iran, she is author of *Modernizing Women: Gender and Social Change in the Middle East* (1993; second and third editions 2003, 2013); *Globalizing Women: Transnational Feminist Networks* (2005); and *Globalization and Social Movements: The Populist Challenge and Democratic Alternatives* (2020). She has also served as Coordinator of the Research Program on Women and Development at the UNU's WIDER Institute (Helsinki, 1990-1995) and a section chief on gender equality and development with UNESCO's Social and Human Sciences Sector (Paris, 2004-2006). She is a board member of Peace Action, Massachusetts, and active in the Feminist Foreign Policy Project collective and WILPF Boston.

Resources

Valentine M. Moghadam, *Modernizing Women: Gender and Social Change in the Middle East* (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1993, 2003, 2013): all three editions have a chapter on Iran; and *Globalization and Social Movements: The Populist Challenge and Democratic Alternatives* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2020): includes a chapter on global feminism and transnational feminist networks.

Medea Benjamin, *Inside Iran: The Real History and Politics of the Islamic Republic of Iran* (New York: OR Books, 2018).

Reese Erlich, *The Iran Agenda Today* (Routledge, 2019).

Anything written by Trita Parsi, former executive director of the National Iranian American Council and now with the Quincy Institute.

Catherine Sameh, *Axis of Hope: Iranian Women's Rights across Borders* (University of Washington Press, 2019), which examines the One Million Signatures Campaign, its transnational character, and key activists.

Nazanin Shahrokni, *Women in Place: The Politics of Gender Segregation in Iran* (University of California Press, 2020), which dispels several stereotypes about gender segregation in Iran.

In Colombia, the Struggle Continues

By Leni Villagomez Reeves

Co-chair, Cuba and the Bolivarian Alliance Committee



Community of Aguasal, Reserva Indígena Alto Andágueda, El Chocó, Colombia.
Photograph by Steve Cagan.

Violence against activists has become an alarmingly routine occurrence under President Ivan Duque.

government and not leftist rebels responsible for the bulk of the violence. In fact, in a landmark decision on September 22, the Colombian Constitutional Court ordered the government to restructure the police and to apologize for “security forces” abuses. Predictably, the government’s response was to deny any systemic problems by taking the old “few bad apples” line, and to say that the government would appeal rather than comply with the court ruling.

On the next two pages are reports of violence gathered during just one month, November 2020. These examples show why it’s hard to write about what is happening

in Colombia. There are daily assassinations of activists in Colombia, sponsored and encouraged by the government, which has no interest in controlling the paramilitary forces. It’s a relatively few people killed and injured each time, but it adds up. As the Justice for Colombia website points out, “The year 2020 was the most violent in Colombia since the peace agreement was signed in November 2016.”

The strike actually began on November 21, 2019, when hundreds of thousands of Colombians protested throughout the country, with the government responding by deploying 170,000 troops. The issues raised by protesters have still not been addressed by the government.

Among the underlying problems are the following: Colombia is the second most unequal country in Latin America and the seventh in the world (of 194 countries.) Colombia has one of the biggest economic gender gaps in Latin America. Colombia is not only a dangerous place to be an activist, it is also an extremely dangerous place to be a woman. Eighty-six femicides were recorded in the month of September 2020.

Now What?

This protest has been smoldering for a year. The chances that Duque will meet with desperate protesters and actually implement reforms is fairly close to zero. His current plans

At the end of October in Colombia, an Indigenous people-led national strike was renewed. Unions, including the teacher’s union, student groups, and Afro-Colombian associations joined this action. Some 10,000 Indigenous people, leaders, and other activists were in Bogotá demanding that the government of far-right President Ivan Duque end the murders of community leaders, especially Indigenous leaders, and also implement reforms like a guaranteed income for those who lost their jobs because of coronavirus, more funding for health and education, and steps to stop gender-based violence.

Duque blames all the killings on political violence from leftist forces. A historic peace agreement between rebel forces and the Colombian government was signed in November 2016. These negotiations were historic in many ways, and one of them was the presence of a relatively high percentage of women at the peace negotiations in Havana. In 2013, Colombian women at National Summit of Women and Peace demanded inclusion. In 2014, delegations of survivors of the conflict addressed the negotiating parties, 60% of whom were women. However, Ivan Duque was elected in 2018, and his right-wing administration has focused on dismantling the agreement. They have also drastically cut funding for healthcare and education.

Most people, in Colombia and internationally – even the rather conservative Human Rights Watch – hold the right-wing

What Are They Protesting?

To understand why people feel the need to protest, here are some reports from just the month of November 2020. This list is by no means comprehensive, but it reveals how violence against activists has become an alarmingly routine occurrence.¹

November 1

Members of an armed group killed 31-year-old Rocío Alomía Mantilla and 60-year-old Audberto Riascos before setting fire to their home in the zone of López de Micay. Rocío belonged to the community council of El Playón, while Audberto was a prominent African-Colombian leader. At least one other person was injured in the attack.

November 3

Human rights defender Jorge Solano Vega was killed in Ocaña, northeast Colombia. He was a representative for the committee of conflict victims. Armed men shot him dead at his home.

Community leader Luis Gonzalo Hincapié was murdered in Peñol, department of Antioquia. He belonged to the Community Council in the village of La Cristalina and had previously stood as an electoral candidate for the Indigenous Authorities Movement of Colombia (AICO).

The 71st massacre of the year was committed in the Bajo Cauca region of Antioquia, where five people were reportedly killed in an attack on a pool hall in the village of Bijagual. The region has a high paramilitary presence. In late August, the national Ombudsman issued an alert over armed groups committing human rights violations in Bajo Cauca.

November 4

FARC former guerrilla Jainer Córdoba Paz, 38 years old, and his partner Katherin Álvarez were shot dead in the city of Buga, department of Valle del Cauca.

Death threats signed by a group purporting to be the Águilas Negras (Black Eagles) were issued against 18 social leaders in the northern region of Magdalena Medio who were told they had 24 hours to leave the region or be 'declared military objectives.'

November 5

Indigenous FARC former guerrilla Hernando Ramos was killed in Caldono, Cauca.

November 7

At least 85 African-Colombian families were displaced from the villages of Peñita and Pángala in Chocó, western Colombia, due to violent confrontations between the army and armed groups.

ESMAD security forces, which have repeatedly committed human rights violations, forcefully evicted Wayú indigenous communities from a settlement in Riohacha, northern Colombia, where they were trying to avoid exposure to Covid-19. At least one child was hurt.

November 8

An indigenous child, identified as 11-year-old José David Pascue Tenorio, was killed in a shootout involving an armed group in Paéz, Cauca.

Paramilitaries entered the village of José María in Puerto Guzmán, Putumayo, and reportedly killed Ever Edwardo Velásquez Cuellar, a young member of the community council for the village of José María.

A group of around 50 armed paramilitaries entered the Uradá indigenous reserve in Jiguamiandó, Chocó. They demanded a census of the local population and attempted to locate indigenous guard Joaquín Cuñapa Carupia and other leaders.

November 9

Three people were killed in a massacre in Támesis, Antioquia. This was the 72nd massacre of 2020 and the 20th in Antioquia, the region most impacted by these types of attacks.

November 10

Three people were killed in a massacre in Argelia, Cauca, including a child: Luis Evelio Quiroz Patiño, Reinel Ijaj and 15-year-old Yeison Fabián Jiménez Botino. This was the 73rd massacre of 2020.

Community leader Juan Pablo Mina and his family were forced to leave their home in the city of Buenaventura, western Colombia, after receiving paramilitary death threats.

November 11

Community leader Eibar Angulo Segura was murdered in Tumaco, department of Nariño.

November 12

Indigenous leader Genaro Isabere Forastero was abducted from the Embera community of Ankozó Catrú Dubasa in Chocó, western Colombia. Two days later, he was found dead nearby with signs of torture.

November 13

A married couple and their daughter were murdered in Tierralta, department of Córdoba. Onilda María Díaz Urango and James Correa were killed in the zone of Lorenzo, before their daughter Luisa Fernanda Correa Díaz was also

call for increased "austerity measures" which will obviously make things worse for everyone except the rich. He also plans to reopen schools at a time when the COVID pandemic is out of control in Colombia, with about 8,000 new cases and roughly 165 COVID-19 deaths per day. (Colombia's population is about 51 million.)

The United States government is very invested in maintaining a right-wing government in Colombia because of its resources involved in multinational exploitation and due to the Monroe Doctrine in general, but in particular because the border shared with Venezuela is such a convenient base for threats and attacks against that country.

The people of Colombia keep trying, in spite of appalling risks, to effect change. Right now Colombia is one of the

most (if not *the* most) dangerous place in the world to be an environmental activist, a human rights activist, an indigenous rights activist, a women's rights activist, an Afro-Colombian rights activist, a community activist, or a labor activist.

LIMPAL: WILPF Section in Colombia Engages in Feminist Peacebuilding

In this dangerous and difficult environment for activism of any kind, courageous women maintain the organization LIMPAL, a feminist, peacebuilding, anti-militarist organization that works for peace and the recognition, defense, and protection of women's and girls' rights in Colombia.² They are part of the National Summit of Women and Peace, mentioned above as

killed nearby. Onilda belonged to the PNIS crop substitution programmes created in the 2016 peace agreement. The couple was also members of the Patriotic March political organisation and the Alto Sinú Peasant Association, as well as being active in their community council.

November 14

FARC former guerrilla Heiner Cuesta Mena was murdered in Chocó.

Two prominent members of the African-Colombian community of Recogedero, Rigoberto Camilo Caicedo and Helena Johana Yale Muñoz, were murdered in the El Tambo zone of Cauca.

November 15

Councillor and social activist Neriet Penna was murdered, along with her husband, in Puerto Guzmán in the southern Putumayo region. Their two children were injured. INDEPAZ said she was the 254th social activist killed in 2020.

FARC former guerrilla Jorge Riaños was killed in Florencia, Caquetá,

The army killed two teenage boys, 14-year-old Joselino Iruá and 15-year-old Emerson Alejandro Dussán, at a checkpoint in San Agustín, department of Huila.

November 19

FARC former guerrilla Bryan Steven Montés Álvarez was murdered in Puerto Caicedo, Putumayo.

November 20

Social activist Yhoni Walter Castro was shot dead in his home in the village of San Francisco de Linares, department of Nariño. 40-year-old Jonny was a member of the local Victims' Committee, which represents those impacted by conflict, particularly those with disabilities.

November 21

Armed men entered a bar in Tumaco, Nariño, and killed 17-year-old Breiner Meza Meza and 21-year-old Breiner Meza Arellana.

The first of two massacres on the same day was carried out in Argelia, Cauca, with five people killed. At around 10 pm, armed men traveling in a truck and on a motorbike opened fire at a group of people outside a disco. At least ten people were injured. Social leader Libio Chilito was identified among the dead, with other victims named as Faber Joaquín Hoyos, Arlex Daniel Salamanca, Dannover Santiago López and Harold Ruiz Salazar.

November 22

Just hours after the Argelia massacre, ten people were killed in an early-morning attack in a coffee plantation in Betania, Antioquia. The victims were harvesting coffee when they were attacked, with at least three more injured. This was the 76th massacre of 2020, with 303 people killed. Antioquia has seen more cases (18) than anywhere else in the country.

The body of teacher trade unionist Byron Revelo Insuasty was found in a morgue in Tumaco. On November 13, he had been abducted while en route to union elections. Byron was a member of the SIMANA teacher union in Nariño and of the Colombia Humana political movement.

Teacher trade unionist Douglas Cortés Mosquera, who belonged to the Risaralda Teachers Union (SER), was killed in La Virginia, department of Risaralda, becoming the 258th social activist murdered in 2020.

November 23

Community leader Edgar Hernández was murdered in Puerto Caicedo, Putumayo. Edgar was president of the community council in the village of La Independencia and a member of the FENSUAGRO trade union.

Three people were killed in Colombia's 77th massacre of the year. The attack occurred in Soledad, in the northern department of Atlántico. The victims were named as Cindy Paola Monsalvo De Alba, Gustavo Alexis Zúñiga Julio, and John Jairo Cantillo Robles.

November 24

Jorge Armando Tous was murdered in the Toluviejo zone of Sucre, northern Colombia.

FARC former combatant Paula Osorio García, 25 years old, was killed in the Atrato region of Chocó. She is the 243rd FARC member killed since the 2016 peace agreement was signed.

November 29

FARC former guerrilla Nacer David López Gómez was murdered in Maicao, northern Colombia, and was the 244th FARC member killed since the peace agreement was signed.

November 30

Indigenous community activist Romelio Ramos Cuetia was murdered in the Suárez zone of Cauca.

Environmental defender Harlin David Rivas Ospina was murdered in Quibdó, Chocó. Harlin was a member of the National Youth Environmental Network.

instrumental in including women in the peace negotiations of 2016.

Their work continues, involving alliances with organizations including women from all sectors of Colombian society, and continued efforts to initiate dialogue and reconciliation. The women of LIMPAL maintain that women are not simply victims of conflict, but essential protagonists in decision-making and in the construction of peace; they demand inclusion in the processes. They engage in struggle as well as dialogue for the rights of women and girls, although they acknowledge the threats and dangers. They are a part of WILPF. We should be extremely proud of them.

Here's their website: <https://limpalcolombia.org/es/>. (If you wish to go beyond moral support, there is a donate button.)

END NOTES:

- 1 I have no personal sources in Colombia and am indebted to the [Justice for Colombia](#) site as well as other sources found by searching "Colombia killing of activists."
- 2 [WILPF Colombia Anniversary: 20 Years of Peace and Development Advocacy](#) is an informative article about LIMPAL on WILPF's International website from 2018 which celebrates the 20th anniversary of Colombia joining WILPF and includes three videos of women who took part in LIMPAL projects.

Border Walls Bring Misery and Discrimination

By Odile Hugonot Haber

Co-chair, Middle East Peace and Justice Action Committee

It is strange that after we have gone to the moon and we have developed transportation and technology systems that allow us to be increasingly connected to one another, we are still building walls to prevent poor migrants from coming into our countries. Just as China built the Great Wall in the seventh century to block the nomadic Mongols from raiding their towns, countries continue to build walls to attempt to solve security and migration problems, though research shows that they do not even accomplish what their supporters are hoping for while they do bring dire humanitarian and environmental consequences.

Thirty years ago, people in the United States were excited when the Berlin Wall came down, but since that time the U.S. has supported the building of walls in the Middle East and in Texas and along the southern border of the U.S. The pace of wall building has only increased in the last 30 years. According to [a resource from Harvard Kennedy School's Shorenstein Center](#), "there are about 70 border barriers worldwide" now, whereas there were only "about 15 of them in 1990."

The Israel-Palestinian wall, called the "West Bank Separation barrier," snakes along the "green line," most of it inside the West Bank, for a total of 440 miles. It is called "the security barrier" by Israel and "the Apartheid Wall" by the Palestinians. These names tell you a lot about how this wall is perceived by those who live on either side of it.

The wall oppresses the Palestinians by:

- Taking over some of their most fertile lands, severing farmers from their fields and cutting them off from water sources
- Preventing easy access to schools and clinics by using checkpoints
- Isolating their commercial areas and affecting even more the already depressed economy.
- Isolating families and weakening local culture
- Increasing surveillance and militarization in Palestinian areas.
- Growing a war culture instead of a peace culture
- Trying to dampen the human spirit instead of making life bloom



Kalandia, Palestine, 2011: A woman is passing a concrete wall near the Kalandia checkpoint. The wall was built by Israel to stop Palestinians from commuting into East Jerusalem. Photo credit: dominika zara / Shutterstock.com.

The wall has altered the face of communities and is becoming a dominant factor in many people's lives. It not only prevents the Israelis from seeing Palestinians, it makes the lives of the Palestinians "miserable." It has become one of the main symbols of the occupation. Even though the International Court of Justice deemed this wall illegal in 2004, construction on it has continued the past 15 years.

The same company that is building the wall in Israel is also building the walls in Texas. According to Chung-Wha Hong's article, ["Resisting the Wall Industry, from Palestine to Mexico"](#): "Elbit Systems of America, a subsidiary of an Israeli company, is making millions off militarizing the U.S.-Mexico border." These walls on the U.S. border with Mexico are part of an infrastructure named "The Wall System" by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP). In addition to walls in Clint and El Paso, Texas, there are detention camps which house migrants in awful conditions. According to an extensive, multifaceted [report by The Texas Observer](#), which "has covered the expansion of the Texas-Mexico border wall for more than a decade": "More than 50,000 people are being held in [facilities run](#) by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and something close to 20,000 in facilities run by CBP, and [more than 11,000](#) children are in the custody of the Department of Health and Human Services."

["Back to the Wall"](#), Gus Bova's article in this series, describes how \$1.4 billion of wall funding has been approved for a wall, much of it based in the Laredo area. Bova explains that Laredo's residents see the "hulking fence of steel and concrete" headed their way as "alien," calling it "an invasion" and saying it will be "like a jail." Nevertheless, "the government is tearing apart desert landscapes studded with saguaro cacti and threatening the survival of species like the jaguar." There are attempts to resist, for example, "On July 6 [2020] Zapata County and a pair of landowners...sued the federal

government, arguing the wall is a racist project in violation of the Constitution.”

Thankfully, there is an international movement underway to resist these walls and to raise awareness about the harm they cause. [“The Call for a World Without Walls”](#) already has hundreds of signatories from Palestine, Mexico, and internationally. According to the statement that multiple human rights and youth advocacy groups, international nonprofits, peace and religious organizations have signed:

From Israel's apartheid Wall on Palestinian land to the US Wall of Shame on indigenous land at the border with Mexico – almost 70 walls across all continents are today ripping through people's lives and lands as they fortify often unilaterally defined borders or limits of state control. They cause thousands of deaths every year and destroy means of livelihoods and hope for many more. They are monuments of expulsion, exclusion, oppression, discrimination, and exploitation.

The statement also calls for action, pledging those who sign to unite to:

- Raise awareness about the devastating effect of the increasing dominance of walls in our world and our lives
- Create solidarity and links among the people affected by the walls and movements fighting the walls
- Demand an immediate end to the walls that expel, exclude, oppress, discriminate and exploit
- Resist and defund those that profit from the walls

Physical walls do not actually work. They are extremely expensive to build and maintain. The whole concept is atrocious. Other solutions need to be found to address migration issues, which are largely driven by people fleeing poverty, violence, and climate crisis. WILPF US and the Middle East Peace and Justice Action Committee are looking at alternatives, including ending support to “the wall system” and building bridges between communities instead. These walls are like a fracture in our collective human soul and our hearts cry out in agony about this system being allowed to extend any further.

The Roots of Separation, or How Walls Develop

By Barbara Taft

Co-chair, Middle East Peace and Justice Action Committee

All around the world, people have built a variety of “walls” that separate them into “us” and “them” (or “the Others”). Some of this can be described in the context of the many “-isms” that separate us: racism, sexism, ageism, etc. Despite all of this, we do know that we are all part of the human family. We have more in common than all of the differences people can think of.

When our Bridges Not Walls campaign began last spring, the Black Lives Matter demonstrations showed there were “walls” between anti-racist demonstrators and the police. Since then, even more fortified “walls” have gone up between Republicans and Democrats during the election cycle. You can probably think of many other “walls” that divide people. Most recently, we’ve been restricted in reaching out to others and really seeing them as a result of COVID-19. We have to remember that bridges unite, while walls divide. How can we build bridges and heal these divides?

Can you imagine how much harder it is to see the other, and to hear his or her voice, when a physical wall divides you? The physical separation wall that divides Israel from the Palestinian people, and the physical wall being built on the southern

United States border with Mexico, as well as the many other physical barriers that exist, all began with the demonization of the “Other.” They involved situations in which one side, or both, feared the other or, at the very least, failed to truly hear what the other side was saying. But building a physical wall only serves to make this lack of understanding worse.

The Middle East Peace and Justice Action Committee wants to tear down all of the artificial walls between people, as well as the physical ones. This involves seeing what we all hold in common, what we share in terms of our humanity. We want to build bridges that will connect us to others. During the next three years, our goal is to find the many bridges that connect us to other people, to their issues, their causes, their dreams, and their goals. Working together, there is much that can be done. To knock down the physical walls, their foundations (the psychological differences that are perceived) need to be diminished.

Do you recognize where your issues intersect with others? Do you have ideas about how we can link all of our work with the work of others, so that we can become allies instead of having animosities? Most of our WILPF members are involved in more than one issue. How are those issues interrelated? Are there other groups that might be more interested in our issues, if only we would help them to see the interconnectedness of the things we want to achieve? How can we build bridges together and tear down the walls of separation? Please talk to us. Tell us how you see this initiative strengthening our ties.

Sameena Nazir on Women's Rights and the Desire for Peace in Pakistan

By Robin Lloyd

Co-chair, Disarm/End Wars Issue Committee and Vermont Branch member

This summer's Vermont WILPF Gathering was smaller than usual due to the pandemic and the need to limit our face-to-face time together to Vermonters only. But we were eager to try out hybrid Zoom connections to link up with friends and activists near and far.

On August 15, 2020, the first conversation consisted of me interviewing WILPF member and author Charlotte Dennett on her recent book *The Crash of Flight 3804: A Lost Spy, a Daughter's Quest, and the Deadly Politics of the Great Game for Oil*. Our second conversation went a bit better with former State Department official Elizabeth Shackelford joining us from her farm several miles away.

On Sunday, August 16, we conversed with Sameena Nazir who talked to us on Zoom from Islamabad, the capital city of Pakistan.

Sameena started WILPF's Pakistan section in 2011 and has been involved with WILPF on many different levels. In 2015 she was elected Vice President (Asia) for International WILPF. While living in Washington, DC, she took part in the formation of the DC branch, and in the summer of 2018 she joined us in Vermont for the Gathering and helped facilitate a lively meeting at the town library in Rochester with slam poetry artists Muslim Girls Seeking Change.

Here are some highlights of her talk with us.

Q: Please tell us about women's rights in Pakistan.

A: There are many organizations in Pakistan working on women's rights and human rights. The Constitution of Pakistan has an equality clause, but there is a layer of complication with colonial laws, interpretation of religion and low literacy.

Our organizations stress that women have rights. We raise awareness in government of international laws, such as the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) that has been signed by the government of Pakistan.

In recent months, due to COVID-19, we could not continue our field work and worked mostly online. There is a huge divide between the urban and rural areas in Pakistan. Electricity is low quality and many areas do not have access to the internet, though there is an extensive phone system. People communicate with WhatsApp. With schools shut



Sameena Nazir speaking at the Vermont WILPF Gathering in 2018.

down, it's a difficult time for women and men at home. Violence has increased against women and children and seniors. Now there are efforts to engage men; that they need to take part in addressing the issue of violence against women and children in the society.

Pakistan has a large youth bulge which needs channeling. The government is trying to keep young people busy. During COVID, with unemployment spreading, the government offered people jobs to plant trees. The government has a target of 10 billion tree plantings!

What is Pakistan's relationship with Afghanistan and the Pashtun tribe which has given birth to the Taliban in both countries?

Pakistan has very interesting neighbors: Afghanistan on one side, Iran on the other, China in the north, India plus the disputed territory of Kashmir, so there is always something going on on the borders. There are three million refugees in Pakistan from the Afghan war. Pakistan has been one of the largest host countries in the world for refugees for decades although now Turkey has more refugees.

The conflict in Afghanistan is over 30 years old. Pakistan was pushed into this conflict geographically more than anything else, having a 1,340-mile-long border with Afghanistan, a landlocked country which has no other exit to the sea than through Pakistan. Most Pakistanis believe that the U.S. forced Pakistan to become a facilitating country for the U.S. war against the Soviets in 1979. During the same time, then Pakistan's very popular elected democratic leader Zulfikar Bhutto, father of Benazir Bhutto, was killed and a military government was installed and that government became the front line to carry out the U.S. war against the Soviets. The Pakistanis paid a price in terms of losing democracy and gaining an inflow

of weapons and drugs. Eleven years of civil liberties were suspended and the voice of the people of Pakistan was shut down through undemocratic means.

The issue of the Taliban came later. Most Pakistanis believe the Taliban are the orphan refugee children of the 1979 war against the Soviets. They were cut off from their families and educated in fundamentalist madrassahs. The Taliban came into power in 1996, after 20 years of warfare.

The Pashtun tribes live on both sides of the Afghan-Pakistan border. It's a border without fences. Recently Pakistan has been putting up fences because of international pressure, but for years people have had cross-border connections. As one tribe, they have different political movements including a socialist movement and anti-colonial movement. Outsiders don't understand the complex reality of people on both sides of the border.

As a Pakistani, what do you see as the prospects for peace in Afghanistan? Under the currently negotiated peace settlement, U.S. troops will be leaving Afghanistan and the Taliban may come back into power...

Pakistanis want peace in Afghanistan. We're not homogenized, there are five different recognized languages and provinces in Pakistan. While many want the U.S. troops to leave, there are some who fear that a sudden withdrawal of U.S. troops will lead to civil war and to a reversal of civil liberties, especially women's rights, in Afghanistan. We could say there is an overwhelming wish that the U.S. should leave, but there are also genuine fears because of what the U.S. did immediately after the Soviet Union withdrawal in 1988. The US left the landmines that they had scattered around the countryside. Recently there was a national consultative meeting in Afghanistan (Loya Jirga) and it was heartening to see a large number of women in attendance. One of the major issues was around Taliban prisoners. The Taliban said that all of their prisoners should be released as one of the conditions of peace. The Afghan government was reluctant as there are many dangerous prisoners who have committed human rights violations. The government did not want to give a blanket amnesty.

Feminist groups are concerned that if the Taliban come back they will exercise more control over women.

Yes I have that concern. We have this concern everywhere in the world where we have conflict. Because we know that women's bodies are used in negotiations between the warring factions, and given the history of the Taliban, this is a genuine fear. Whatever arrangements are made, this concern must be addressed.

What is the situation in Kashmir?

Kashmir has been a disputed territory since 1947. One of the first resolutions passed by the UN in 1948 says that the people of Kashmir have the right to plebiscite, i.e., to vote to join Pakistan or India, or become independent. But India has not allowed that plebiscite to take place. For years there has been tension between the two countries leading to two wars over Kashmir. Most recently, last August in 2019, India made constitutional changes and repealed the special independent status Kashmir had and by doing that has made Kashmir part of India. Previously, the Kashmiri people had many rights and privileges and non-Kashmiri Indian people could not buy land there. Now they can. The native people had a lot of rights. All of that was revoked with this law and now there are fears that the population mix will be changed, the demographics will be changed, and new settlements will be imposed like in the Palestinian territories.

Since the August 2019 curfew in Kashmir, there has been a complete shutdown of phone and communication. Then COVID-19 came. Pakistanis feel that there is not enough global concern about Kashmir. Over the years, there has been reluctance by the international media to criticize India because of India's huge influence and market, but the recent actions of India in Kashmir have been so severe that many human rights organizations like Human Rights Watch are now condemning what is happening. The Security Council recently had a special session on Kashmir, so now there is more open discussion about the human rights violations in Kashmir.

Are there many non-Muslims in Pakistan?

Pakistan is 97% Muslim and within that there are Shia, Sunni, and many other sects. Of the minority populations, the largest is Hindu and the second largest is Christian.

The constitution of Pakistan does not discriminate on the basis of religion. However, in practice, culturally and socially, there are violations against minorities in Pakistan in the areas of education, conversion, and employment. At the same time, there is a significant minority community among the Christians and Hindus who are educated and who are part of the government and the parliament. Blasphemy is a recent phenomenon of the last 25 years. It is a bad version of laws introduced by the British that have become even worse in Pakistan now with abuse of this law by people with vested interests. More Muslims have been killed with misuse of this law than non-Muslims. When someone is accused of blasphemy in Pakistan, before the police come, the mob kills them. It's very troubling and painful. We as human rights activists remain concerned. Recently, there have been efforts to stop the abuse.

Money Creation Is a Form of Violence

By Dorothy Van Soest and
Mary Sanderson

Imagine having to choose between paying for necessary health care and paying for food, rent, or your child's school supplies. Or working two to three jobs just to meet your basic needs when suddenly you're faced with an unexpected expense followed by an eviction notice. Or living in a trailer home with no other choice but to make the 10% interest mortgage payment even though it's moldy, uninhabitable, and worthless. These are the kinds of untenable situations in which millions of poor women find themselves.

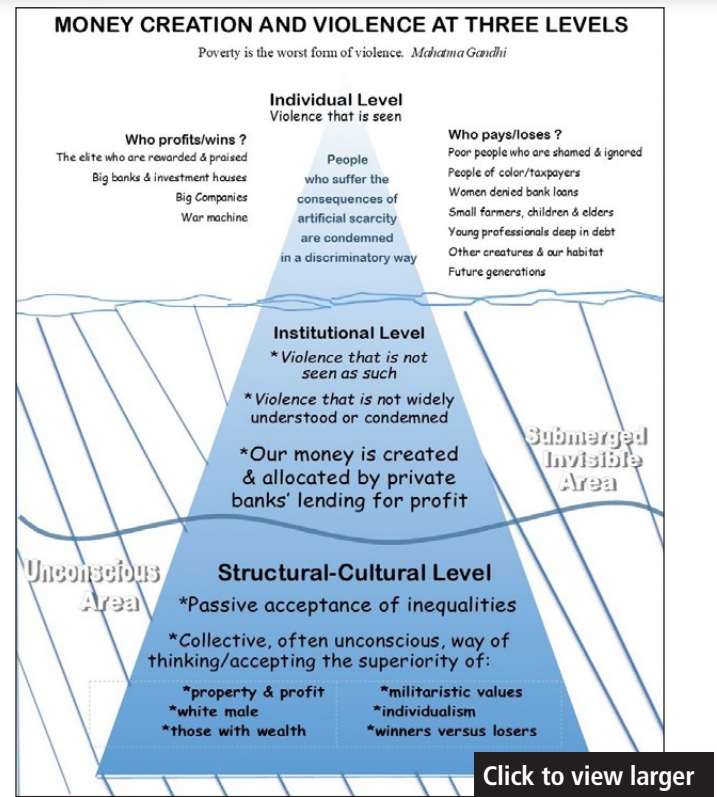
In the United States, more women than men are poor. According to US Census Bureau data, of the 38.1 million people living in poverty in 2018, 56 percent—or 21.4 million—were women (Bleiweis, et. al., 2020). An estimated 52.1% of our children (38.5 million) are poor or low-income according to the Poor People's Campaign.

In 2019, the Federal Reserve reported that four in ten Americans didn't have enough cash in their bank accounts to cover a \$400 unexpected expense. And in 2020, millions of Americans—disproportionately women and women of color—find themselves unemployed due to COVID-19. Yet, even as more than half of our children do not know if they will have a place to sleep, nutritious meals, and safe communities, billionaire wealth has continued to grow during the pandemic (Woods, 2020).

With tens of millions of Americans out of a paycheck, how is it that the rich have continued getting richer? The dominant narrative is that all you have to do is work hard and make good choices and you can bootstrap your way out of poverty. That is a sinister lie, and the truth of our system is shocking. The system that creates and issues new money into circulation needs to be examined. The violence of scarce money for most people is a feature of this rigged system; likewise with the concentration of real wealth and money power to a shrinking elite. The rigging starts with the Federal Reserve Bank, which is neither part of the federal government nor a public system.

Money Creation and Artificial Scarcity

Few Americans know the Federal Reserve is a network of privately owned banks, empowered by Congress to create dollars—but only through loans. The need to also pay added interest on loans creates an artificial scarcity of money, which is a system of oppression that transfers wealth and power from the many to a tiny elite. It limits people's life choices and thrusts many into poverty, which is a form of violence. This



assertion is based on the following definitions and illustrated by the iceberg diagram above.

Oppression defined:

Oppression is the domination of a powerful group—political, economic, social, cultural—that acts to prevent subordinate groups from attaining access to resources or acts to inhibit or devalue them.

All systems of oppression:

1. bestow power and advantage on certain groups and/or people based on the money power inherent in an ideological foundation of superiority;
2. are held in place by violence—physical, interpersonal, psychological, institutional—or the threat of violence;
3. keep the impact of oppression invisible by devaluing and/or ignoring those in the subordinate group who are denied resources.

Violence defined:

Violence is any act or situation in which a person injures another, including both direct attacks on a person's physical or psychological integrity and destructive actions that do not involve a direct relationship between the victims and perpetrators (Bulhan, 1985; Van Soest, 1997).

This definition broadens traditional perspectives of violence in four ways:

1. it emphasizes the consequences of violence from the victim's perspective;
2. it treats all types of violence equally, whether the perpetrators are individuals, groups, institutions, or society;
3. it includes socially sanctioned violence, unintended violence, subtle or covert violence, violence that causes nonphysical harm, and violence causing long-term consequences;
4. it includes any avoidable action that violates a human right in the broadest sense or that prevents the fulfillment of a basic human need (Salmi, 1993).

Based on this definition, poverty is a form of violence that injures those who suffer under its conditions, even though direct links to obvious perpetrators usually cannot be made. It destroys life, not with a single blow as with physical violence, but by blocking the full development of the life potential of millions of people who suffer from undernourishment and malnourishment, who are more vulnerable to disease and high stress, and who experience higher infant mortality rates and reduced life expectancy.

Oppression Operates at Three Levels

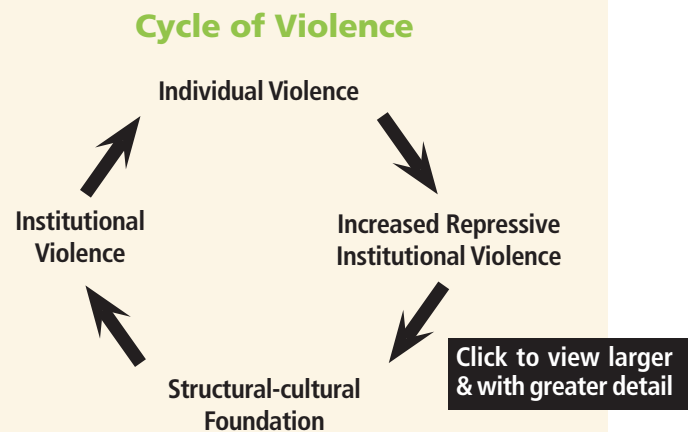
As illustrated by the iceberg diagram, debt-money mechanism creates and maintains a system of oppression at three interconnected levels—individual, institutional, and structural/cultural—thus weaving a tight web of poverty and low wealth conditions into the fabric of our economic system.

Like the submerged root of an iceberg, the base of the triangle represents the firmly embedded ideological foundation that undergirds and gives rise to the institutional and individual levels of oppression and violence. It holds the conventional values and everyday social realities and relations that form a collective way of thinking, which in the United States is white supremacy, patriarchy, and other superior-inferior categorizations. The structural level of violence is difficult to grasp because it is rendered invisible by a passive acceptance of inequalities and deprivations (for example, “the poor will always be with us”) and because social and economic indicators of inequality (such as differential infant mortality, a premature death rate, and other avoidable differences) reinforce beliefs in white, male and other superiorities instead of being accurately perceived as symptoms of violence.

The institutional level of violence is submerged from view so that its forms are almost completely invisible. Violence at this level includes harmful actions by social and financial institutions (the Federal Reserve system, large commercial banks) that obstruct the development of human potential through the use of discriminatory lending and other economic

The Debt-Money System: An Intractable Cycle of Violence

Wealth disparities and conditions of poverty, low wealth, and debt produced by the artificial scarcity of money are maintained by an intractable cycle of violence as illustrated by the following. When viewed in the context of a rigged financial/economic system of oppression, some senseless and irrational individual forms of violence committed by those in the subordinate group reveal their inner logic as a form of counter violence to economic practices and conditions. It is within the context of impoverishment that violence on an individual level can best be understood (Gil, 1990).



policies and practices. Violence at this level is not universally condemned because it is often subtle, indirect, covert, and involves long-term rather than immediate consequences. It is a form of “violence not seen as such” (Keefe & Roberts, 1991).

The top of the triangle represents harmful actions taken by individuals or groups against people or property. Like the tip of an iceberg, this is the violence that can be seen. But it is not seen (when it is) in a neutral, objective, or systematic way, but instead in a discriminatory fashion based on a superiority ideology and beliefs that are held at the structural-cultural level. For example, wealthy people who benefit from the debt-money system are admired for being ambitious and successful, while poor and low wealth people are condemned for being lazy or poor money managers rather than being seen as targets (victims) of an unjust financial system of oppression.

The individual, institutional, and structural-cultural levels of a violent debt-money system are interrelated and cannot be understood apart from one another. The violence of institutions and individuals gives expression to the dominant ideology of

[Continued on page 26.](#)

Paper Crane Exhibit Takes Flight in Menlo Park

By Judy Adams

Peninsula/Palo Alto Branch

I volunteered to organize a Solidarity event or project for the 75th anniversary of Hiroshima/Nagasaki for our branch. I'm one of our branch's two-person DISARM/Peace Issues committee, so it was a natural for me, since in my "spare time" I was transcribing signatures and contact information from WILPF's petition in support of the 2017 UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. I decided to organize events for my town, Menlo Park, CA (near Stanford), and to also include an activity with the Peninsula Peace and Justice Center in Palo Alto, a neighboring city. I kept in touch with branch members about my plans.

First, I arranged with the Peninsula Peace and Justice Center to host two relevant films in August on their YouTube channel: David Rothauser's documentaries on the Japanese survivors of Hiroshima (*Hibakusha: Our Life to Live*), and one on Japan's post-war constitutional amendment, Article 9, which basically outlaws war (*Article 9 Comes to America*). Next, I explored options for virtual events in Menlo Park, and asked the city library staff member who arranges films and performances to invite a Japanese-American storyteller whom I had seen at a city event a few years ago. He scheduled an online program where the storyteller told the story of Sadako Sasaki and explained the tradition of paper peace cranes, and she also offered a mid-level paper crane lesson. Both events had excellent attendance and were well received.

After we received the many individual and paper crane strands from WILPF distributed to branch members for use in commemorating the anniversary or for other local projects, **I approached our Sister Cities committee that was planning a summer 2020 visit to Bizen, Japan.** This was one of two Mayors for Peace cities in the program, which they last visited in 2018 after I'd successfully "lobbied" the Mayor and City Council to join Mayors for Peace.¹ Two other peace activists and I suggested several projects leading up to their selection of students to travel to Bizen, but the pandemic interrupted everything, the trip was canceled, and gathering youth to paper crane "parties" at the local library, churches, or summer schools before August were all out of the question.

The issue of what to do with the paper cranes we had received from Ehime/WILPF remained, but a plan started to form in conversations with one of the peace activists who came to the Sister City planning meeting with me. Katharina

Powers is the director of Art Ventures, a local art gallery, who'd hosted the Peace Angel Project exhibit at the gallery² and a march protesting gun violence from her gallery to a local school, and who founded a nonprofit for public art in Menlo Park. The idea came up that I might organize a community art installation of paper peace cranes outside her gallery, using a two-story, sturdy metal trellis with a small vine to display paper cranes made by community volunteers. This project quickly "took wing!"

The photos that follow show different moments in the project, whose goal was to display, by tradition, 1,000 paper cranes, which included about eight of the strands from Ehime (with approximately 30 of the small cranes per strand). The rest of the donated cranes, strands and individual cranes of varying sizes, were made by volunteers. We gained more volunteers to make cranes as the installation moved forward and passers-by asked questions when we were hanging the cranes. *We eventually displayed 2,080 handmade paper peace cranes!*

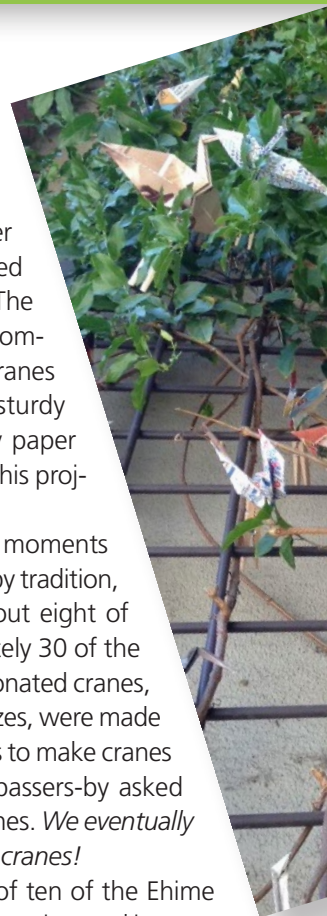
Every participant picked up a packet of ten of the Ehime cranes at the site, with a description of the project and instructions (including a link to a video) on how to make a paper crane. We got excellent local publicity in the press and social media. A local charitable organization that works with young women brought us many volunteers from their program. People of all ages took the packets and came back with cranes. Participants could clip their cranes to the lower portion of the trellis with hinged wooden clothespins, safely masked, or leave cranes with us to hang on the higher positions on the trellis that required a ladder. We filled the trellis and moved to fill a small blossoming tree near the trellis outside the gallery. Our final activity was the production of [a short video of the art installation](#) at the gallery and on our branch Facebook page.

[View a full slideshow of images from this project.](#)

Please enjoy these photos capturing how one community managed to commemorate the 75th anniversary while following pandemic public health advice.

NOTES:

- 1 After returning from Bizen, Mayor Cecilia Taylor of Menlo Park issued a Proclamation at the Council's August 6 (Hiroshima Day) meeting in support of Mayors for Peace and pledged to work to "build a world free of nuclear weapons."
- 2 The Peace Angel Project is the work of artist Lin Evola, who makes sculptures out of metal melted from guns dropped off at police stations.





A paper peace crane installation for the 75th anniversary of Hiroshima/Nagasaki outside a Menlo Park art gallery was organized by Peninsula/Palo Alto WILPF branch member Judy Adams in August 2020. The photos show different moments in this community art project which led to the display of 2,080 peace cranes contributed by Ehime/WILPF and by local volunteers. Photos by Judy Adams, Becky Fischbach, Katharina Powers, and others, all used with permission. [View a full slideshow of images from this project.](#)



A Pandemic Within the Pandemic

By H Patricia Hynes

On March 23, 2020, as COVID-19 was overtaking the world, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres pleaded for peace: “To warring parties: Pull back from hostilities. Silence the guns; stop the artillery; end the airstrikes...End the sickness of war and fight the disease that is ravaging our world. It starts by stopping the fighting everywhere. Now. That is what our human family needs, now more than ever.”

Two weeks later, horrified by the global surge in male violence against women, he again implored for peace: “[Peace](#) is not just the absence of war. Many women under lockdown for COVID-19 face violence where they should be safest: in their own homes. Today I appeal for peace in homes around the world. I urge all governments to put women’s safety first as they respond to the pandemic.”

In every region of the world, battery and sexual assault of women and girls isolated at home increased with the spread of the coronavirus. Reports from China’s Hubei province indicated that domestic violence [tripled](#) during February 2020 compared to February 2019. In France violence against women increased 30% after they initiated a March 17 lockdown; in Argentina, by 25%; and in Singapore, 33%. The pandemic in sexual assault of women and girls followed the COVID-19 pandemic in what Executive Director of UN Women Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka called “a [perfect storm](#) for...violent behavior behind closed doors.” By the end of May 2020, nearly [250 million](#) women and girls had reported suffering sexual or physical violence by an intimate partner, *a far greater number than those infected by the virus*.

“Stay Safe – Stay Home” is one of the essential public health measures in containing this coronavirus. Yet home is a dangerous and unsafe place for those one in three women worldwide who are physically and/or sexually abused over their lifetime, [most](#) by a male relative or intimate partner at home. Further, intimate partners commit [one-half](#) of femicides — the killing of women *because they are women* — throughout the world. School, the workplace, outdoors, anywhere is safer than home for women and girls at risk of domestic violence.



Demonstrators wearing protective masks with a sign reading: “Implement Istanbul Convention!”, take part in a protest against femicide and domestic violence, in Istanbul, Turkey August 5, 2020. Shutterstock.

An estimated 1.6 billion of the world’s children lost their in-school education because of COVID-19, with many in developing countries lacking the benefit of online education at home. For girls, this setback can be yet more dangerous, more violent and more life-limiting. Boarding schools in Tanzania have saved girls from female genital mutilation (FGM) until COVID sent them home. According to the NGO Terre des Hommes, which runs a safe house for girls, “The community has taken advantage of this situation of COVID-19 and where children are now back at home, they are [cutting](#) their girls. They know it is against the law but they are not afraid.”

During the 2014-2016 Ebola crisis in Africa, many children were kept out of school at home, especially girls, according to Eric Hazard of Save the Children. “Over [11,000 girls](#) became pregnant,” due to sexual violence and abuse.

Given that the same is assuredly occurring now with our current pandemic, what recourse to healthcare do women and girls have? Some governments in lockdown [did not classify](#) sexual and reproductive health — for pregnancy, childbirth, abortion and birth control — as essential, forcing the health centers to close. In the case of India they were repurposed for COVID. The UN Population Fund director Natalia Kanen calls the effect of COVID-19 on women and girls “[devastating](#),” with estimates of 7 million unintended pregnancies worldwide and potentially thousands of deaths from birth complications and unsafe abortions.

What of the situation in the United States? Crime rates [plunged](#) in cities and counties across the U.S. over the second

half of March — with one exception, domestic violence — as mandatory stay-at-home orders drove millions of residents to stay inside their homes. Calls by victims of domestic violence surged between 10% and 30%, according to an analysis of crime data published by 53 law enforcement agencies in two dozen states.

Another more nuanced study found that the crimes that have dropped are more minor, younger peer group crimes such as vandalism, car theft, and DUIs. The graver crimes of homicide and aggravated assault have remained the same. Only intimate partner violence has increased.

And what of the fate of women's reproductive health clinics? Twelve states quickly banned or blocked abortion services in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, justifying their actions by defining abortion services a non-essential health service. Many defended their actions under the aegis of conserving personal protective equipment (PPE). In response the leading medical professional organizations, among them the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, issued a public statement defining abortion as "an essential component of comprehensive health care."

Ultimately these bans were rescinded, after successful court challenges or state executive action. However, in the time this took, many reproductive health clinics closed for financial reasons; and the consequences for women and girls in need of abortion, before the bans were lifted, are unknown.

But, ending stay at home orders won't end violence against women. On average, at least one in three women in the U.S. is beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused by an intimate partner in the course of her lifetime. More than one in three women regularly fears being sexually assaulted, according to a new report from Gallup.

Violence against women is the "most common but least punished crime in the world," according to the UN; and it is a catastrophic obstacle for achieving women's equality worldwide.

As with systemic racism, we must as a society excavate and eliminate the structural roots of violence against women and girls: namely gender inequality, rape culture, and the failure to treat violence against women as a serious offense.

Peace on earth begins with peace at home. The degree of equality women have within their families and in their society predicts best how peaceful or conflict-ridden their country is.

Patricia Hynes, a retired Professor of Environmental Health, is an at-large member of WILPF and directs the Traprock Center for Peace and Justice in western Massachusetts

WILPF's Global Movement to End Gender-Based Violence



Ahead of the annual campaign "16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence" (November 25-December 10, 2020), WILPF International addressed gender-based violence during the pandemic:

In 2020, GBV emerged as a crisis within a crisis with the escalation of COVID-19. Stay-at-home orders, school closures, job losses, economic insecurity, food shortages, and other pressures have led to alarming increases in all forms of GBV in countries worldwide — putting the well-being, livelihoods, and lives of millions of women and girls at risk.

The article includes descriptions of movements "demanding — and creating — change for women and girls" in Ghana, Palestine, Sri Lanka, and Switzerland.

WILPF is also among a group of international women's organizations including MADRE who are "advocating for policymakers to prioritize local, women-led strategies" to address this problem. Read a cooperative briefing paper entitled: From Global Coordination to Local Strategies: A Practical Approach to Prevent, Address and Document Domestic Violence under COVID-19.

Friend-Raising at WILPF US Has Come a Long Way

By Marybeth Gardam

Outgoing Development Committee Chair



Fundraising at WILPF US has been on a steady path towards a more professional and focused effort since around 2015 when we invested in the professional fundraising software program Donor Perfect. It took a concerted effort to transfer our donor records to the Donor Perfect (DP) platform, but we gained a lot in the process. We can accurately track donors and members in terms of their current dues status, their history of donating to WILPF, and their interest in specific aspects of WILPF issues.

More recently we've been fine-tuning our efforts. We raised the utility of our DP software when we hired our current part-time Administrator, Chris Wilbeck, who mastered the software quickly and has used it successfully to keep our membership and renewal reminders current, and our donation records accurate. We've been better able to retain members and donors because they receive timely reminders for renewal, reversing some past trends.

We could be doing even more to exploit our data if we had more capacity... **more development committee members** with experience and time to donate. **Could this be you?**

The Development Committee of WILPF US is always looking for new members. Anyone who is congenial and interested in people – especially anyone with professional fundraising experience – can make a big difference for the organization you love.

We've begun a more mindful and focused approach to our **major donors** (donors of \$500 or more in a single gift) by intentionally keeping them informed with personal letters 3-4 times a year, and personal contacts from Development Com-

mittee members at least once a year. In 2018 we rewarded donors at the \$1,000 level with gifts of our white WILPF sashes. ALL WILPF donors at any giving level are invaluable to our organization. Recently our Board members began making donor 'thank you calls' to random donors of any giving level, prior to each monthly Board and Steering Committee meeting. It's a way to for our Board to personally reach out to donors, and keep fundraising and donor appreciation top of mind for our WILPF leaders.

In 2018, at the urging of our Board Treasurer, we launched a **Foundation Grants Task Force**. Marguerite Adelman of the Vermont Branch is a former professional fundraiser who co-chairs the Grants Task Force with Eileen Kurkoski of Boston WILPF. Together they've been working closely with issue committees and the Program Committee to identify long-term projects deemed fundable, researching foundations whose criteria cover the subject of WILPF projects, and writing and submitting grant applications that request funding for these projects. This is a long-term initiative that requires focused communication between the grant writers/researchers and WILPF leaders at the issue committee or branch level who are planning a project 12-18 months in advance.

As grant-seeking efforts continue, they have emphasized the importance of planning, evaluation, and strategic data gathering that allows us to demonstrate to major funders how effective our projects are, and why they are worthy of investment. We're promoting this measuring stick to strengthen planning through the Program Committee's strong commitment to organizational strategic planning.

Bequests Keep WILPF Strong

In 2020 we achieved a long-held goal: producing and distributing a Bequest brochure. **Bequests have been a strong part of our donor mix from the birth of WILPF.** 'Seeds' planted among 'legacy donors' in the 60s, 70s, 80s, and 90s continue to bring us precious funding that these donors set aside as part of their estate planning.

You don't have to be a millionaire to leave WILPF a bequest. Bequest funds come to us only after your final debts and named inheritances are made. You can add a few designated words to your will that direct dollars from your pension savings, your investments, or your estate residue to come to WILPF after your death, without sacrificing dollars for your living expenses. You can also make WILPF the beneficiary of an insurance policy or donate appreciated stocks.

Every member received the Bequest brochure in 2020,

Why Fundraising for WILPF US Is Critical



Marybeth Gardam has led the Development Committee for five years. Committee members include Marguerite Adelman (VT), Eileen Kurkoski (MA), Nancy Price (CA), US Treasurer Jan Corderman (IA), US Section President Darien De Lu (CA), and Robin Lloyd (VT). As outgoing chair of the committee, Marybeth shares these thoughts with fellow WILPFers:

“Fundraising at any nonprofit is essential. For WILPF US it’s even more critical. I remind donors and members all the time that WILPF US is somewhat unique among worthy ‘causes.’ For one thing we are a women’s organization, which automatically narrows our appeal to a wide swath of donors (men). For another we are seen by the majority of Americans as ‘radical,’ a designation our strong and feisty members are proud to claim. As the nation’s politics have shifted precariously to the right, WILPF has stood our ground, insisting on a radical feminist perspective on peace, the environment, human rights, and economic justice. For many established major donors, that makes us too ‘edgy.’

Most worthy national organizations mail nearly monthly (if not more often) requests for funding. Generally they

are already much larger than WILPF, with budgets that include many full-time staff spread across the US, as well as committed and energetic volunteers. WILPF has a pretty modest budget for a national organization. We have no full-time employees. Nearly every dollar raised goes towards supporting communications and the work of our members towards a more peaceful and just world. Like our members, our Board and WILPF leadership work as volunteers, donating countless hours.

Our donations fund mini-grants which advance branch and issue committee projects, and the work of organizing and support for organizing across the US. WILPF US has only three annual appeals each year. Though we always offer quiet ways to support us through our website, renewal reminders, *Peace & Freedom* donations, and with our annual WILPF leadership election ballots, our mailed appeals occur only in Spring/Summer, and at the end of the year. In recent years we’ve added an online Giving Tuesday campaign (the Tuesday following Thanksgiving) aimed mostly at the public.

It’s been a pleasure to get to know personally many of the donors who support us each year. Their stories are as inspiring and nurturing as their donations. I’m continuing on the Development Committee but we’re seeking a new chair to lead us.”

and we hope it has planted seeds for future legacy gifts that will continue to sustain WILPF for our daughters and granddaughters. **Request a copy of the brochure and find out more by contacting us at PlannedGiving@wilpfus.org.**

About a third of our members donate on a regular basis to WILPF US. **It’s the task of the Development Committee to increase both the number of donors and to inch up the size of the gifts.** Two years ago we began making our end of year appeal a more personal ask, using the Donor Perfect giving history to identify a *range of gifts we suggest* once a year for individual members. That has helped us fulfill our modest annual goals by **a gentle nudge to donors** to dig a little deeper and consider a somewhat larger gift. The difference between \$25 and \$50, or between \$100 and \$125, may not be huge for the individual, but it adds up to increased capacity for WILPF’s projects and budget.

A growing number of members choose to make **recurring monthly donations**, through secure electronic fund transfers directly from a bank account they designate or a credit/debit card. Once this process is enabled, they donate effortlessly and those monthly donations constitute a reliable income

for WILPF. That makes a huge difference for sustainable planning to meet our ongoing expenses. We so appreciate these recurring donors who use our secure process, either through a simple online set-up, or by contacting Chris Wilbeck at info@wilpfus.org with their intention. Chris helps handle all the details. *If you are a recurring donor and your credit/debit card info changes, please remember to update WILPF US!*

In 2021 we plan to focus more on email fundraising asks as we continue streamlining the online giving experience with the new ‘coming soon’ WILPF website. Our Development Committee will meet every other month. And we’ll continue to seek a new Development Chair. Fundraising is really friend-raising.

Once people understand who WILPF is and what makes us unique, they are usually happy to donate. Getting the message out, and training members to do so, is part of the Development Committee challenge. And we have the unique opportunity to personally engage with donors who invest in WILPF.

Contact us to learn more, or to donate time or dollars, at Info@wilpfus.org.

A Virtual Tour of the WILPF US Office!

By Jan Corderman

WILPF US Treasurer and Member,
Des Moines Branch



Back in 2017, when we learned that we would have to leave our beautiful office in Boston,¹ Eileen Kurkoski of the Boston Branch and Candace Perry from the Cape Cod Branch started packing. Candace shipped WILPF banners and materials to be displayed at our 2017 Congress in Chicago. Eileen's work included contacting Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania to find out what should be added to WILPF's archives, and she boxed and shipped many, many items to them. The Swarthmore College Peace Collection has a rapidly expanding collection of our materials including oral histories from our past officers. I traveled to Boston to help Eileen for a week of sorting, packing, and putting everything that didn't go to Swarthmore into storage.

Our WILPF US Board considered next steps and determined that a physical space was desirable. Mary Hanson Harrison, WILPF US President at that time and I started looking for space in Des Moines. A few months later, the American Friends Service Committee contacted us to let us know that space would soon be available in the Friends House, a beautiful three-story home that AFSC converted to offices. We took a look and fell in love with the space.

In addition to a desk and chair, thanks to a donation from Mary, our little office has a pretty table that seats three and a floor-to-ceiling bookcase. We exhibit some of our treasures there, some dating back almost one hundred years. A storage



closet easily accommodates all of our wonderful books and promotional materials.

I thought you might be particularly interested in some of the special items we unpacked and proudly display. Perhaps most amazing is a photo of Jane Addams and other WILPFers at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC (see next page). The inscription notes that the photo was taken during WILPF's 4th Congress, May 1-7, 1924.

Genie Silver of the Greater Philadelphia branch shared information about the woman with Jane Fonda in the photo above, which she recalls seeing in the conference room of WILPF's office at 1213 Race St in Philadelphia, before the move to Boston.

Genie writes:

Mildred Scott Olmsted (5 December 1890 - 2 July 1990) served for 20 years as Executive Director of the U.S. Section, between 1946 and 1966. A graduate of Smith College, Mildred worked with dispossessed and famine-stricken refugees in Germany and France following WWI. It was during this time she met Jane Addams, who urged Mildred to work with WILPF. On returning home to Pennsylvania, Mildred first worked as the Executive Secretary of WILPF's Pennsylvania Branch and then as WILPF's National Organization Secretary. In 1961, Mildred organized the first seminar between the U.S.



Section and the Soviet Women's Committee; it was held at Bryn Mawr College, with Margaret Mead in attendance. The seminars were then held every two years, alternating between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Mildred remained active in WILPF until she passed away; she attended meetings at the 1213 Race Street national office until the early 1980s.

After working beside Mildred as a WILPF activist for many years, Genie continued to keep her updated about WILPF's work even after she could no longer participate.

Also hanging on our wall is the official Resolution from the State of Montana congratulating us on our ninetieth anniversary.



Evonne Waldo from the Fresno branch responded to my request for info about our Key to the City of Fresno CA. Evonne learned that in all probability, Marcia McLane, a Fresno Branch activist who has left the area, may have gifted the key to us following her receipt of it as an award when she was named the 1992 Woman of the Year by the Fresno City/County Commission on the Status of Women.

The label on the bottom of a beautiful doll in the likeness of Jane Addams identifies the doll maker as Ruth Cecil Weeks of Independence, Missouri. Our research uncovered a project created by Ms. Weeks (1895-1984) called "Dolls for Democracy," which grew into a national program spanning decades. A project way ahead of its time, it started at least 10 years before the height of the civil rights movement and 20 years ahead of the second-wave women's rights movement. Dolls for Democracy filled a community need for teaching tolerance, while providing women a valid volunteer activity. We suspect that our beautiful Jane Addams doll was part of the project.

We also have access to a bonus space as part of our lease, and the first time we used it was in the fall of 2018 for a three-day gathering of our Board and Development Committee. We accomplished our work in this comfortable space, with natural light coming in thanks to huge windows, and adjourned to the lower level that includes a full kitchen for our meals.

Are you planning a trip that will take you through Des Moines after COVID? Please call Chris at our regular phone number: 617-266-0999 and ask for a tour. She'll find one of our branch members to show you our digs, all these treasures, and more!

NOTES

- 1 Just before hearing that the university had sold the building where we and other like-minded groups rented space, our Membership Coordinator and Managing Director had both given notice that they would be leaving WILPF. Mail and phone calls were forwarded to me until we hired our current amazing Administrator, Chris Wilbeck, of Des Moines.

Rabbi Hirsch's Neighborhood in Winter

Jane Addams and Hull-House's Early Years

By Gloria McMillan



Children playing in Hull-House, ca 1900. Photo courtesy of the Swarthmore Peace Collection.

One of the few who cared about these social differences was Jane Addams, a spirited and highly intelligent young woman from Cedarville, Illinois. Jane's father had a thriving grain mill and was a for sixteen years as a state senator. She was descended from President John Adams and John Quincy Adams and Abraham Lincoln called her father "my dear double-d Addams." Jane and her family were "comfortable," but as a girl, Jane was already nurturing hopes to do something useful in the world. Her initial dream was to be a doctor and serve among the poor.

Seasons mean different things to different people. For some, the approach of winter with its holidays means skating at the park, hot chocolate, picking and wrapping gifts, riding in a carriage out of the cold, sitting at a dinner at a family member's house. But in Chicago in the late nineteenth century, there might as well have been an ocean between the different parts of town. The holidays for one side of Chicago might mean warm festivities, but for the other part of Chicago, the winter and its holidays might only mean a day or two off work without needed pay.

After graduating from Rockford Female Seminary, her father's unexpected death led Jane to move with her step-mother and sister to Philadelphia, where she completed one year of medical education. But Jane experienced lifelong spinal problems from suffering Potts's disease at the age of four, and a much-needed spinal surgery and long recovery forced her to abandon medical school.

Jane's brother-in-law encouraged her to travel, and starting in August 1883, Jane spent two years traveling with family and friends throughout Europe. She went from England through France, Germany, and Italy, but she did not spend all her time doing the march through cathedrals and palaces. Instead, Jane visited Whitechapel on London's East Side, where children could be seen in a street market fighting over half-rotten cabbages. She was shocked to see this level of poverty.

When Jane stopped in Germany, she saw poor girls with steam burns on their arms working in a brewery. In the famed Munich beer gardens, she saw girls throwing out their backs from holding so many heavy mugs of beer. Everywhere it was the same. Jane's group of traveling companions would take off to see "the sights," but Jane would go see "how the other half lives," as the famed Danish immigrant reporter Jacob Riis put it. In 1888, Jane and her friend Ellen Gates Starr returned



Whitechapel in the 19th Century, courtesy the artist, Gloria McMillan.

to London and Jane was impressed by the adult education being done at Toynbee Hall, a settlement house in East London. Inspired by Toynbee Hall, in 1889 Jane and Ellen opened Hull-House in a run-down mansion at 800 South Halsted Street in the meatpacking slum on Chicago's near south side. Jane called upon her network of friends to come join her there, telling wealthy young women from Chicago's North Shore that they had a tremendous disadvantage to overcome: growing up in comfort, shut off from "how the other half lives."

Rabbi Hirsch Inspires at Town Hall Meeting

Jane attended the great meeting called by William T. Stead to address the solid wail of misery coming from South Chicago in the winter of 1893, the time of the economic "panic." Stead edited the famous *Pall Mall Gazette* in London, a "muckraking journal." He had come to see the 1893 World's



Frontspiece, *If Christ Came to Chicago*, courtesy of the Library of Congress. Stead likened Charles T. Yerkes to Dives, the rich man of the Bible, and commissioned a local artist to create a line drawing of Christ driving the recognizable faces of "respectables"—thieving Chicago capitalists and aldermen—out of his temple. Yerkes can be seen at lower left.

Columbian Exposition and report on the fair, but Chicago's poverty and corruption made him stay on. He wrote a text called *If Christ Came to Chicago* that laid the blame for every vice at the door of some of the posh who lived in the North Shore and paid for front pews in its churches, but who also owned and paid taxes on many of the South Side's brothels. Stead named tax dodgers like Charles T. Yerkes, the railway oligarch who built the Loop, which was killing and maiming hundreds of Chicagoans with its overcrowded cars and street-level rail crossings. Stead called a town hall of all who had good will in the great metropolis of Chicago.



Rabbi Hirsch image, courtesy of the Newberry Library, Chicago.

And what a convocation it was at Central Music Hall! Everybody was there: the governor and mayor, bishops and bar keeps, Mrs. Potter Palmer of the Palmer House, Ida B. Wells the African American lecturer, Mrs. Marshall Field and her friends, Jenkin Lloyd Jones who supported labor unions and was minister of All Souls Unitarian Church, representatives of the

DAR and GAR, politicians and socialites, actors and artists, reformers and prostitutes. From high to lowly in status, they spoke to the assembled crowd.

One of the most moving speakers was Rabbi Emil Hirsch, who served the Chicago Sinai Congregation. Founded in 1861, it was one of the oldest Reform synagogues in the Midwest and was composed of Jews fleeing the tyranny of rigid, state-sponsored orthodoxy in Germany. Its stated mission was "to repair the world," and Rabbi Hirsch became well known for an emphasis on *social justice*. He delivered rousing sermons on the social ills of the day and many Chicagoans, Jews and Gentiles alike, were in attendance. Hirsch considered Jane Addams a "good friend and partner" in their work to improve the plight of the poor in Chicago.

At the Chicago town hall, after correctly pointing out that what the Jews were suffering "to-day in 1893 from most governments is not inconsequential," the Rabbi said:

"Shall we call these Jews to America? I would gladly do so if their coming would be a solution of the problem. But it would not be. From the prey of Russia to the sweatshops of America does not spell redemption."

First Hull-House Holiday Party

The holidays were coming to Chicago in 1893. Thanksgiving had just passed with its turkeys sent down to "the deserving poor" from the North Shore philanthropists. Jane Addams was walking down Halsted Street with Florence Kelley, William T. Stead, and Rabbi Hirsch as she described her plan to run for

Sanitation Inspector of the 19th Ward surrounding Hull House.

In summer, sometimes a cart horse would die and the rotting corpse would lie there for weeks—stinking. In winter, people froze under bridges and their stiff bodies sometimes were found a week or two later, loaded on somebody's cart and hauled off to a pit or common grave for the poor. Refuse went uncollected week after week because the office of inspector was largely a political plum and not enforced much in the poorer regions of Chicago.

Still, things were not all grim in the neighborhood. Children made holiday wreaths from evergreens in the park. They bought chestnuts from the man with the heater on the corners.

"What's that?" Jane asked the Rabbi.

"I was just saying, what if we held a party for all the people at Hull-House?"

"Why, Rabbi, that would be wonderful. You know sometimes it is a little difficult, when men are working days and women all hours at sweatshops or in their homes."

"We'll get as many as can come. It won't be most of them, but in our garment trades the clothing comes in lots. You understand? Feast or famine."

"I can make it known through the Skilled Trades Men's Club!" William Stead burst in. "That can be something to look forward to. Times being a bit rough, as it were."

The party, the first of many at Hull-House, brought in the Rabbi's young men and women (who, of course, didn't mingle—at least at first), the little group of Irish and Italian seamstresses, the small class Jane had set up for young African Americans up from the south, a couple Bohemian pipefitters and boilermakers, Lithuanian, Hungarian, and German meat

dressers from Armour's plant, Serb and Croat leather tanners, a few Turkish rug merchants, Italian masons and marble workers, a Greek diner owner, young Spanish and Mexican girls who made paper flowers, three young Chippewa Indians, Malinski the Polish baker, Lin Jiang, the herb store owner, and assorted others. Some of these brought their favorite holiday foods and decorations.

Pat Reilly took out his little flask and added a nip to the punch that the ladies were pouring. He turned and there was Jane Addams, who greeted him warmly.

"Ah, Pat! Season's greetings! How good to see you and how is Nancy? Is she better?"

"Oh—ah—she's just a mite poorly, Miss Addams, y'see, I only wish she could be here, but she still has the croup."

"Just go to the kitchen and Florence Kelley will make a plate for her and your children."

"The kiddies just love those gingerbread men!" Pat smiled.

"And you see, hasn't dear Ellen Starr always said that we don't need strong drink to enjoy the holidays?"

"Oh, no, Miss Addams, not at all!"

Jane winked. Pat nodded. He knew that she knew. She knew that he knew.

Gloria McMillan is retired from The University of Arizona. Her doctoral dissertation on three immigrant Chicago writers from 1890-1940 won the Florence Hemley Schneider Prize for Women's Studies scholarship. She taught college writing for over 27 years, and has had several plays produced and a novel published. Her novel about Hull-House, Jane Addams, and immigrants during 1893 and the World's Columbian Exposition may be found online at: <http://www.neleth.com/gloria/>

Money Creation. [Continued from Page 15.](#)

superiority at the structural foundation. Oppression is inherent in all three levels. Dominant beliefs and norms at the foundation rationalize institutional violence and depersonalize and decontextualize individual violence.

To learn more, read Ellen Hodgson Brown's *The Web of Debt: The Shocking Truth About Our Money System and How We Can Break Free* (available as a free pdf). Join the Women, Money & Democracy Committee (W\$D) to help research the inner workings of money power structures and explore the question: Is violent scarcity the natural outcome of our private money creation system? W\$D needs your help to examine public money proposals and support public banking initiatives.

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Money & Democracy (W\$D) Issue Committee and chair of the Debt Drives War, War Drives Debt Project.

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Remembering Vivian Schatz

Lifelong Peace Activist and Environmentalist

Vivian Schatz, a longtime member and chair of WILPF's Greater Philadelphia Branch who served on WILPF's national board, and a beloved science teacher and lifelong environmentalist, died on June 16, 2020. Vivian's daughter Linda Schatz notified the branch that Vivian passed away at the age of 95 at her home in Mount Airy, Pennsylvania.

Vivian grew up in northern New Jersey. As a girl, she loved being outside and was already interested in studying the wildflowers and nature around her. Vivian and her family were Jewish, and she also experienced anti-Semitism at an early age, which spurred her interest in social justice.

She earned a BA in science at Cook College, a master's degree in biology from Drexel University, and a second master's degree in medical biochemistry from the University of Pennsylvania. She and her family moved to Chile in 1962, where she was the acting head of a bilingual K-12 school for Chilean and foreign students. Her family tells the story that when she discovered snakes and tarantulas were being killed on school grounds, Vivian paid the groundskeepers to bring them to her alive so she could let them go in the surrounding hills.

Upon returning to the US, she served as a junior high school teacher. While teaching science in St. Louis in the 60s, she kept small animals in her classroom, including two baby goats and ducklings. According to Vivian's family, the ducklings followed a student outside one day to look for food, and "after their snack, the parade occurred in reverse, back to Vivian's classroom," bringing joy to everyone in the school.

She continued to enrich the classes she taught in Philadelphia at the Crefeld and William Penn Charter Schools, and what is now Springside Chestnut Hill Academy. The School District of Philadelphia hired her as a consultant to show other teachers how to use elements from nature and household objects as hands-on science lessons. Vivian was also an early environmentalist, keeping a compost heap in her backyard long before this was common, and regularly writing articles and letters to the editor about environmental issues.

In 1990, Vivian wrote a piece called "Reflections on the Germantown Branch in the 70s," in which she describes joining "the evening group of the Germantown Branch of WILPF...in 1960," during "the height of alarm about atmospheric nuclear testing." When her family returned from Chile they lived in University City, MO, and Vivian was a member of the branch there for four years and was elected to the WILPF national board in 1968.

In her reflection, Vivian described Lucy Carner, close to 80 at the time, who was "always ready to join me with picket signs at a demonstration. It was Lucy's vigor, insight and eagerness to share her knowledge that inspired me to pen



Vivian Schatz leafletting for the Nuclear Freeze Campaign in Philadelphia in the Spring of 1983. Photo courtesy of Linda Schatz, used with permission.

the phrase, 'Join the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and age with vigor'."

Vivian and her family returned to Philadelphia in 1969, and she became the Germantown Branch chair in 1972. At first she was reluctant to take the role, but she ended up serving for eight years, and wrote, "I learned about working in coalitions on a local level, a city-wide level and a national level."

Under her leadership, the branch: organized five buses to protest the bombing of Cambodia at the Nixon inauguration in 1972, worked for the release of political prisoners in South Vietnam, and supported the struggle for democracy in Chile after the brutal coup there in September 1973.

Other branch activities included "working on campaigns for the freedom of political prisoners closer to home," including Angela Davis, playing "a major citywide role in the campaign to stop Senate Bill 1" (a "dangerously repressive rewrite of the Federal Criminal Code"), participating "in the citywide [and national] protests about Three Mile Island," and playing "a key role in the 'Feed the Cities: Not the Pentagon' campaign."

She explained, "I was elected to the National Board again – this time from Philadelphia – and headed the national personnel committee and then the national program committee."

On May 27, 2017, the Greater Philadelphia Branch honored Vivian with its Peace and Justice Dove Award for her many years of service to the cause of peace and justice and for her dedication to making the world a more humanitarian place. As Tina Shelton wrote, "Her activism was noted in stories, and her work at both the national level (board member) and the branch level (before the Internet!) was saluted." Branch member Marlena Santoyo compared Vivian's service to that of others who have dedicated their lives to WILPF and to peace, such as Jane Addams.

After her passing, her family remarked, "Vivian lived her life with great purpose and determination. She was a peacemaker in the truest sense of the word."

WILPF US Branches Get Innovative

Activism Takes New Forms

On March 8, 2020, the **Humboldt Branch** held their eleventh “donations only” celebration for International Women’s Day. All money raised goes to the branch’s Edilith Eckart memorial scholarship fund and to donating the Jane Addams Children’s Book Award books to the local library system. In April, the branch gave over \$3,500 to diverse local community groups.



in front of her home in Brewster a big copy of Julia Ward Howe’s original Mother’s Day proclamation, along with a line strung with peace cranes. People were invited to take a crane.

In March, the **Peninsula/Palo Alto Branch** halted its weekly peaceful sidewalk vigil/demonstrations until the COVID-19 crisis was over—but moved its branch meetings to Zoom and stepped up its “virtual” presence and peace actions with email, Facebook posts, and by providing volunteers the opportunity to participate in get-out-the-vote activities from the safety of their homes. The branch also helped communicate Poor People’s Campaign concerns as they transitioned to a virtual action and continued to work diligently on transferring information from WILPF’s petitions in support of the 2017 UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

On September 27, the **Triangle (NC) Branch** was one of the cosponsors for the online webinar [Breaking Barriers: Women of Color and the Right to Vote](#). Triangle member Lucy Lewis was one of the panelists, speaking as a white woman about the complex history of white women and the suffrage movement. The Branch also helped to sponsor a series of six events in October: [The Light of Truth - October Virtual Series Honoring Ida B. Wells](#), which was linked to GOTV efforts. In the fall, Branch members participated in

GOTV (get-out-the-vote) phone banking, texting, and mailing postcards through nonpartisan NC groups including the NAACP and Poor People’s Campaign, and attended George Lakey’s trainings through [ChooseDemocracy.US](#).



The **Burlington Branch** marked the Women’s Suffrage Centennial in two ways this summer and fall. Branch members took the lead in planning a recognition event on August 26, an hour of speeches on suffrage, voting rights, women’s equality, and more, featuring 13 speakers in front of

Burlington’s City Hall, including WILPF members Marguerite Adelman, Robin Lloyd, Jean Hopkins, Robert Ackland, and Peggy Luhrs. The event is available for viewing at [this public access link](#). In late October, with a mini-grant from WILPF US, the branch held a number of virtual suffrage programs with Dr. Sally Roesch Wagner for Vermont high schools and universities. The University of Vermont Program – POWER, PRIVILEGE & THE VOTE: Focus on Women, Culture and Herstories of Suffrage – was [made available for viewing](#).

The **Jane Addams Branch** has a new convener, Dianne Blais, who has stepped up the branch’s recruitment efforts and established a more regular meeting schedule for the group. The JA Branch meets virtually and is made up of at-large members who in areas without an established branch. In the fall, the branch held a movie night and informative meetings to learn more about WILPF and the work of issue committees.

Solidarity Events: Hiroshima/Nagasaki 75th Anniversary

At least **24 branches** organized one or more activities to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945. This was the main theme for the first part of the WILPF US “CEASEFIRE/75th Solidarity Season” and was spurred on by 12 resource guides the solidarity planning team produced and shared with branches. Several different types of successful activities were held on dates from August 3-9.

The most popular type of activity our branches did was an “outdoor crane display.” These branches assembled such displays: **Burlington, VT; Fresno, CA; Humboldt, CA; Minneapolis Metro, MN;**



Peninsula/Palo Alto, CA, and San Jose, CA. Another popular crane display activity was to place them inside a bookshop window with posters explaining their significance, so passers-by could see them. These branches assembled window displays: **Corvallis, OR, East Bay, CA; San Francisco, CA and Santa Cruz, CA.**

The pandemic notwithstanding, many of our branches held solidarity events outdoors at which they could interact with the walking-by public. These branches held outdoor tabling events: **Cape Cod, MA** (eight different towns!); **Greater Philadelphia, PA** (see photo); **Maine WILPF** and **Santa Cruz, CA.**



Some branches held outdoor rallies, marches, and street demonstrations. They included: **Boston, MA; Burlington, VT; Milwaukee, WI; Pittsburgh, PA** and **Peninsula/Palo Alto, CA.** Boston area WILPFers placed educational lawn signs outside the Newton, MA, public library as part of a walking 1945 timeline exhibit. During their outdoor event on August 6, the **Des Moines, IA Branch** helped to strike a large Japanese peace and friendship bell 75 times and heard a proclamation from their Mayor.



Many of our branches arranged activities and events using online platforms. The silver lining in the pandemic cloud is that people all over the world could take part in these events at their own convenience. These branches arranged for films made by others to be shown online with discussions afterwards: **Burlington, VT; Monterey County, CA; and Peninsula/Palo Alto, CA.**

WILPF US joined with 165 other anti-nuclear organizations to form a coalition to amplify our common nuclear disarmament voice in order to reach a much wider public, arranging for 19 hours of live-streamed events to be shown on August 6 and 9 via www.hiroshimanagasaki75.org/events. These branches provided content for this well-watched event (over 25,000 accumulated views): **Monterey County, CA; Sacramento, CA; Tucson, AZ; and the Disarm Issue Committee.** Two branches held Zoom meetings to light candles, hear poems written by hibakusha, and reflect on the terrible attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki: **Greater Phoenix, AZ, and Tucson, AZ.**

Solidarity Events: International Day of Peace

The theme for the September 21, 2020, International Day of Peace was "Shaping Peace Together," with activities dedicated to fostering dialogue and collecting ideas. Members in the

Bloomington, IN, Humboldt County, CA, and San Jose, CA branches participated in such dialogues and "dreamed together about a world of peace." The **Humboldt County Branch** developed an International Day of Peace Proclamation that was proclaimed by the Arcata City Council and organized an online peace day celebration which was captured in a [two-hour video](#). **Portland, OR** branch members collaborated with other activist groups on political tasks and **Tucson, AZ** members joined demonstrations outside nuclear weapons manufacturer Raytheon.

The **Greater Philadelphia Branch** developed a clothesline exhibit in a public park focusing on the high costs of militarism and how this takes away from effectively addressing COVID-19 and other much-needed services. Passers-by were interested in the data and some wrote pre-addressed postcards to their senators in support of the amendment to the appropriations bill to reduce the military budget by 10%.



Members in the **Des Moines Branch** had a busy International Peace Day starting with a Zoomed book club meeting and organized an observance in the town center later in the day which was livestreamed. All day a local artist worked with different seeds to create a sculpture of a dove's eye over a map of the world. At the same time, a couple was making the same sculpture in Christchurch, New Zealand, to commemorate the 51 people who died at the hand of one gunman. Piles of feathers were sprinkled on the dove's eye, representing hope, followed by a young woman dancing around the dove's eye to live harp music (watch a [15-minute video](#) of the dance).

The **Palo Alto/Peninsula Branch** celebrated International Peace Day by meeting via zoom and singing the peace-related songs provided in the Resource Guide #20. They were joined by WILPF members from the Sacramento and San Jose branches. Watch this [four-minute rendition](#) of the song "Finlandia" by Jean Sibelius if you need a pick-me-up.



Zooming ahead....

WOMEN, POWER & SOCIAL JUSTICE **Building from Strength**



WILPF US 34th Triennial Congress August 13–15 & 20–22 and weekdays

Save two weeks in August for WILPF US Branch presentations, featured speakers, panels – all with breakout rooms and Q&A discussion opportunities. Sessions will be held August 13-15 & 20-22 AND during the two weeks and will include: extra presentations, interviews, entertainment, extra-ordinary vignettes from guests and members.

Do you have suggestions for possible panel topics, featured speakers, “lessons learned (activism, leadership, outreach),” and other ideas? Send them ASAP (by February 28) to Mary Hanson Harrison: congresscoordinator@wilpfus.org

This SAVE THE DATE is brought to you by the host Fresno Branch of the Congress Program Committee: Janet Slagter, Karina Renee Lopez, Beverly Fitzpatrick, Leni Villagomez Reeves, and Robin Lloyd of the Vermont Branch