

PEACE FREEDOM




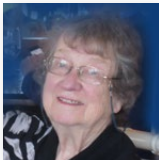


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The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) has been working since 1915 to unite women worldwide who oppose oppression and exploitation. WILPF stands for equality of all people in a world free of racism, sexism, and homophobia; the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

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Fewer Words, Our Actions

Tell you as much and convey... WILPF
Over a hundred years – women
 peace! justice!
I embrace my sisters – mothers
 of fourth graders... their soft-cheeked children
daughters of honored elders – needed, valued, vibrant
I reach out for a hand, to strengthen our connections
 Reach out, to those who've been so hurt, so assaulted
 Reach out, across: Black, brown, white; young, old
 Reach out when I need comfort, witnessing this world
 Holding
in your hand (perhaps) the print issue, the hard copy
 It's so twentieth century
like that war in 1915: Intrigues, power games, an individual striking out
and igniting... what burns again, still
Can this paper ignite? (Can these electrons?)
 I, living in a wildfire state, must respect fire's power
and fire power – boot printing and scorching, disrupting
 and exaggerating; influencing, consuming
 power dealing
Perhaps, think of this page, these words
 water
cooling the overheated all
healing rawness, quenching as nothing else
 thirst for justice
We of WILPF welcome you
as well as we can with tears in our eyes, for this world
 where racial justice must be a cornerstone
We cultivate community in these shattered times
Can you – new reader, longtime member – engage with us?
These articles, rather than reinforcing fears, name
 tensions traumas trafficking toxins to shape, to inform
a different path... Listen
 to these women's voices
By their actions be inspired to breathe in
 renewal
Enter, envision, nurture our world for a change



— Darien De Lu
WILPF US President

10,000 Miles Apart but Connected by Our Activism

By Shilpa Pandey

Membership Development Chair, WILPF US



Shilpa Pandey with farm laborers in Uttarpradesh during her 2017 visit to India.

Passing through the interiors of India a few years ago, I had the privilege to meet and interact with the backbone of the Indian economy, the women farmers of Uttarpradesh, India. Or perhaps I should say the women farm laborers of India. In a country that depends heavily on agriculture as a major source of employment, it was disheartening to learn that the rapid commercialization and privatization within the agricultural sector of India has reduced the once farmland-owning community into farm laborers on their own land.

I noticed a handful of women toiling in the field with no men in sight. I came to find out later that the men sit back playing cards and smoking while the women do the hardest, most backbreaking work. I wanted to talk to these women firsthand to see what their reaction was to the government bringing a highway into their area.

As I stopped by to get to know these women a bit, I was taken aback when a few men showed up on the scene. It was as if they came from nowhere. I realized that the women perhaps needed permission from these men (their male relatives) before they could have a chat with me. I was dressed in Western attire and obviously looked like a city person.

They did get silent permission from their relatives to continue talking with me, and they shared their struggles. "Anytime there is any type of development, we suffer because the government only gives us a lump sum but that doesn't make up for losing our land," the women told me. The compensation provided is grossly inadequate, it wouldn't even buy a

decent apartment in any city, and yet the government expects these people to part with their land and look for other ways to earn their livelihood.

This interaction made me reflect upon my own journey as a women's rights activist who grew up in India, the land of Mahatma Gandhi and the birthplace of nonviolent peace movements, and what led me to now be the membership development chair of the US section of one of the oldest women's peace organizations in the world.

Inspiring Each Other's Journeys as Rights Activists

I grew up in a highly educated environment – my mother was a doctor and my dad was a businessman – and I come from a family of social and political activists. Despite that, my mother was constantly asked, "So you only have two girls. You never wanted a boy?" My sister and I would always be asked, "How many brothers do you have?" It was just a cultural norm that you had to have a brother. Even though the government was requesting people to have a maximum of two kids and to engage in family planning, people kept having children until producing a boy. Family planning was somehow viewed as being against manhood, and women would keep bearing children to the point that some ended up dying in childbirth.

In fact, it's illegal to find out the sex of the baby in India because of the history of aborting girl children. Even today, there is a much too high incidence of female infanticide. In some villages, there aren't enough women for men to get married to.

When you grow up in a society where patriarchy is as steeped as that, you can't help but to be influenced by it. I was excited to migrate to the United States, since we always looked to America as a champion and pioneer of human rights. But after I officially migrated here in 2012, I learned about the struggles of women of color, and the long struggle for women's rights and the vote. It was a shock to me. I realized no matter where you go, as a gender we continue to be subjugated.

While India was suffering from the dark periods of Sati (an ancient practice where a widow sacrifices her life by sitting atop her deceased husband's funeral pyre to protect her honor), child marriage, and female infanticide, my American sisters were campaigning for their right to vote, agitating for placements in universities, and facing numerous obstacles to employment. While the Dalit (lowest category within the caste system in India) women suffered gender-based oppression

on top of everything else, my African American sisters were facing both racial and sexual discrimination here, and they continue to do so.

Despite all these difficulties, all through history we can also see how women as far away from each other geographically as India and America have continued to inspire each other's journeys as rights activists. Angela Davis understood the struggles of Dalit women in India and continued to inspire waves of marches, and Gloria Steinem, one of our country's most outspoken feminist leaders, was inspired by followers of the nonviolence advocate Vinoba Bhave when she visited India on a student fellowship.

It is important to remember just how much we have gained from our collective journeys and experiences so that we can continue our work together to get the world to "listen to women for a change."



The author with other delegates from the 2015 WILPF International Congress at the Hague marking the 100-year anniversary of the first Congress of Women in 1915. Krishna Patel is second from the right with Robin Lloyd right behind her.

How Does WILPF Stay Relevant?

Thanks to my family, I have always been fascinated by Gandhi's nonviolent approach and it inspired me throughout my growing years. In 2009, I attended a seminar on Gandhi at Gujarat Vidyapith, the only university in India started by Gandhi himself which runs on the principles of nonviolence. In the peace research center there was the headquarters of WILPF in India. I had the privilege of hearing Krishna Patel at the seminar, one of the past presidents of WILPF, and I was so inspired by her. She said to me, "You are young, can you start a youth branch of WILPF in

Delhi?" I was honored by her request, so I enthusiastically did what she asked.

At that time, in the big cities young people from subjugated classes had no rights or voice, and the ones that had money and privilege didn't engage or volunteer. We worked on encouraging middle-class youth in India to be involved and not so disconnected from the important issues of the day. I collaborated with United Nations volunteers and the UN Programme to bring multiple stakeholders together to answer the question, "How can we encourage our citizens and officials to achieve the Millennium Development Goals?" We focused on how we as youth could contribute. We developed membership materials and more youth started getting involved.

I am still a life member of WILPF India. When I came to the US, I was an immigrant and I'm a person of color. There were multiple challenges for me. On the positive side, I found wonderful, like-minded women in WILPF US, and again found WILPF to be a platform to exercise my voice and advocate for peace and justice. I became an at-large member and was encouraged to join the national board where I've served for six years. Now I'm also the membership chair, and the past two years we've been focusing on the "One by One We Grow" campaign.

With its history of bringing together women of different nationalities, religious beliefs, and socioeconomic backgrounds, WILPF has a very important role to play in contemporary times. In America we have yet to see a women president and continue to grapple with women's participation in the political arena and to struggle for basic things like abortion rights, while our sisters across the developing world continue to face harassment and violence.

It's true that we live in a global village, and if we ever want to have peace, there is no better way to connect than in an international organization like this one. When I went to the last WILPF International Congress in Ghana, I got to meet so many women from across the globe.

I hear the criticisms and accusations of WILPF. Do we need more participation by women of color and more diversity? Yes, absolutely! People of color have not held leadership positions in most major peace organizations in the US and that must change. But you can't go back and change history.

Jane Addams did a remarkable thing and inspired generations. One of the challenges any old organization has is that we tend to rely heavily on our past glorious history. How do we continue to stay relevant and keep up? We need to make sure we have a glorious future. That is the need of the hour.

Technology — the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

By Eileen Kurkoski

Chair of the Anti-Killer Drones Group/Disarm Committee



Tucson, Arizona, November 12, 2017: Peace activists gather at the entrance to Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, protesting war, drones, and nuclear weapons. Jim West / Alamy Stock Photo.

Ugly things happen during times of war. That is why we should pay attention to developing technology and engage actively in conversations about how it is being used.

As humans we are facing serious decisions about technology. Decades ago, robots and drones were developed in industrialized nations to maximize efficiency and reduce physical strain on working bodies. Recently, a newer artificial intelligence (AI) technology has been rapidly developing that can significantly speed up financial practices, medical diagnosing, and educational opportunities. There are examples of children successfully learning from private tutors that are robots, but of course only for those who can afford it.

However, this same technology created drones that have been used to kill innocent people of all ages, including women and children. Contrary to the rhetoric often used to describe drones, they can be weaponized with rocket, artillery, mortar, and other conventional threats that injure and kill suspects secretly, without the need for evidence of an imminent threat or any due process for the accused. There are multiple instances of intelligence or information proving to be incorrect after an attack has already occurred.

Now AI technology can be used to kill humans autonomously, and with the development of a new generation of weapons using quantum computing, it will be possible to autonomously kill millions of people in a few days.

Do the benefits of these technologies outweigh their lethal uses? We need to be asking this question of our business and political leaders, and insisting that our governments are transparent about how and when new technologies are being used as instruments of war.

The Good: Benefits of AI Technology

First let's look at arguments in favor of "AI." Artificial Intelligence – also known as "Machine Intelligence" – is the ability to design smart machines or to develop self-learning software applications that imitate the traits of the human mind like reasoning, problem-solving, planning, optimal decision-making, sensory perceptions, etc. Per Aniruddha Chaudhari, the McKinsey Global Institute reported that AI can add \$13 trillion to the global economy by 2030, which is about 16% of the total global share.¹

According to EDUCBA, an Asian online learning platform, AI has many benefits:

- 1. It reduces human intensive labor,** such as moving large inventory quantities from one shelf to another; it also enhances safety at the workplace. (Of course, it also reduces human employment. See "Job Loss Problem" below.)
- 2. It increases efficiency in the Pharma industry.** In Research & Development, different machine learning algorithms help scientists analyze historical data related to genes, chemical reactions, and other attributes. This can increase the chances of drugs clearing clinical trials.
- 3. It's transforming the financial sector** in areas such as risk assessment, fraud detection, algorithm-based trading, financial advice and management. (But wealthier companies and individuals most benefit from these uses of AI.)
- 4. It provides quicker and easier customer service.** An AI chatbot using Natural Language Processing with an understanding of human interactions can learn on its own and is considered adept in providing an adequate response to customers. (However, if the chatbot does not understand a customer's words, a customer often goes into a frustrating loop or is cut off.)
- 5. It enhances safety on roads.** AI applications can record and analyze minute details regarding the driving patterns of drivers ranging from lane discipline, to traffic

rules compliance, to distance maintained with other vehicles on the road. These details are used to provide safety recommendations to the driver and help automobile companies come up with safer vehicles.

6. It predicts and enables quicker response to disasters.

AI applications such as AIDR (Artificial Intelligence for Disaster Response) are being deployed to preempt natural disasters using different pattern recognition algorithms and also to mitigate losses by aiding in disaster relief work.²

The Bad: Problems with AI & Measures to Address Them

Notwithstanding its tangible and monetary benefits, AI has serious problems which inhibit its large-scale adoption.³ Examples of three major problems include:

1. Job Loss

Job loss related to Artificial Intelligence has been the subject of numerous business cases and academic studies. Per an Oxford Study, over the next decade the United States is projected to lose more than 1.5 million jobs to automation.⁴ According to the AI expert and venture capitalist Kai-Fu Lee, 40% of the world's jobs will be replaced by AI-based bots by 2033.⁵

Low-income and lower-skilled workers will be the worst hit by this change, but no worker is immune. As the AI becomes smarter by the day, even the more highly paid, higher-skilled workers become more vulnerable to job losses as companies discover they can get better profit margins by automating their work as well.

However, these issues related to job loss and wages can be addressed by focusing on the following measures:

- **Overhauling the education system** and focusing more on skills like critical thinking, creativity, and innovation, since these skills are hard to replicate.
- **Increasing both public and private investment in training workers so that they are better aligned with industry demand.** Robots cannot understand feelings and provide empathy; nor are they able to accomplish complex tasks that require dexterity. These areas will still be in demand.
- **Improving the condition of the labor market** by bridging the demand-supply gap and giving impetus to the “gig,” or independent contractor, economy.

- With increasing job displacement, it may be necessary to **reintroduce the idea of a *universal basic income (UBI)***, in which the government provides a stipend for each citizen regardless of need, employment status, or skill level.

2. Safety Problems

When experts like Elon Musk, Stephen Hawking, and Bill Gates, among others, express concerns about AI safety we should pay heed. There have been various instances where Artificial Intelligence has gone wrong, such as when Twitter's chatbot started spewing abusive racist sentiments, and another instance when Facebook AI bots started interacting with each other in a language no one else would understand, ultimately leading to the project being shut down.

There are grave concerns about AI doing something harmful to humankind. Most notable are autonomous weapons which can be programmed to kill humans. If such weapons are deployed, it will be very difficult to undo the repercussions. There are also imminent concerns with AI forming a “mind of their own” that doesn't value human life.

The following measures can be taken to mitigate these concerns:

- **Ban these weapons**, as has been proposed by the Campaign to Ban Killer Robots (<https://www.stopkillerrobots.org/>).
- **Global cooperation, with signed agreements** to ensure no one develops or deploys autonomous weapons.
- **Strong regulations and accountability**, especially when it comes to the creation of or experimentation with autonomous weapons.
- **Complete transparency** where such technologies could be developed is essential.

3. Trust-Related Problems

As Artificial Intelligence algorithms become more powerful by the day, there are several trust-related issues around whether AI is able to make decisions that are fair and for the betterment of humankind. With AI slowly reaching human-level cognitive abilities, the trust issue becomes all the more significant. There are already several applications where AI operates as a black box.

Here are a few examples:

- In high-frequency trading, even the program developers don't have a good understanding of the basis on which AI executed the trade.
- An Amazon AI-based algorithm for same-day delivery proved to be biased against Black neighborhoods.
- The Artificial Intelligence algorithm in Correctional Offender Management Profiling for Alternative Sanctions (COMPAS) was biased against the Black community while profiling suspects.⁶

The Ugly: Next Generation Autonomous Weapons

Quantum computing (QC) is a general-purpose technology like the steam engine, electricity, and classical computing. Because QC uses quantum bits or “qubits,” it harnesses the unique ability of subatomic particles that allows them to exist in more than one state (i.e., 1 and a 0 at the same time), thereby expanding its abilities. Expert Kai-Fu Lee believes quantum computing has an 80% chance of working by 2041 and that it will be a great accelerator for AI.⁷

Quantum computing is touted for its possible contributions in the fields of finance, military affairs and intelligence, drug design and discovery, aerospace designing, utilities (nuclear fusion), polymer design, machine learning, Big Data searches,⁸ and digital manufacturing, as well as helping us to improve science and understand nature. **But this quantum computing technology will likely be the basis of the next generation of weapons – unless measures like those listed in “Safety Problems” (above) are acted upon.** With near certainty the US, and its adversaries, will continue to build up fully autonomous weapons.

As Berkeley professor and AI expert Stuart Russell explains, “The capabilities of autonomous weapons will be limited more by the laws of physics—for example, by constraints on range, speed, and payload—than by any deficiencies in the AI systems that control them.... One can expect platforms...the agility and lethality of which will leave humans utterly defenseless.”⁹

Although nuclear weapons are an existential threat they have so far been held in check by the deterrence theory. A QC drone would need to be captured to deter it, and if it is part of an interactive swarm, another drone would soon follow to do the job. Attacks by lethal autonomous weapons (LAWS) can quickly trigger a response, with escalations occurring quickly. The first attack may not be triggered by a country, but by terrorists and non-state actors. The point is, **anyone could make and use these weapons.**¹⁰

This new multilateral arms race, if allowed to run its course, will eventually become a race toward oblivion.¹¹ The United

Nations comprehends the urgency to do something about autonomous weapons. In 2021, for the first time, most of the 125 nations that support the United Nations Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons¹² said they wanted new laws to be introduced on killer robots. However, some countries that are developing these weapons, including the US and Russia, were in opposition, making an agreement impossible.

What Can We Do About Lethal Technologies?

Here are some actions we can take immediately to address the urgent concerns raised here:

- Learn more about these technologies and talk with others about them.
- Contact your legislators about your concerns.
- Support initiatives to regulate and ban autonomous weapons. Join the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots (www.stopkillerrobots.org).
- Insist the development of Artificial Intelligence be focused on the greater human good.
- Oppose two 2021 Congressional bills. One was introduced by US Representative Jake Auchincloss (D-MA) – H.R.5148 – to create a US-Israel Artificial Intelligence Research and Development Center which will serve as a hub for robust R & D in AI across the public, private, and education sectors in the two nations. A companion bill – S.2120 – was introduced by US Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL).

Footnotes:

1. <https://www.csestack.org/artificial-intelligence-impact-economy/>
2. <http://www.educba.com/benefits-of-artificial-intelligence/>
3. <https://www.educba.com/artificial-intelligence-problems/?source=leftnav>
4. Alexa Lardieri, “Robots Will Replace 20 Million Jobs by 2030, Oxford Report Finds,” *U.S. News & World Report*, June 26, 2019. Per another McKinsey report, AI-based robots could replace 30% of the current global workforce. See James Manyika et al., “Jobs Lost, Jobs Gained: Workforce Transitions in a Time of Automation”, McKinsey & Company (December 2017), 2. A pdf of the report is available online at www.mckinsey.com.
5. Kai-Fu Lee and Chen Qiufan, *AI 2041: Ten Visions for Our Future* (Currency, 2021), 346.
6. Jeff Larson, Surya Mattu, Lauren Kirchner and Julia Angwin, “How We Analyzed the COMPAS Recidivism Algorithm,” ProPublica.org, May 23, 2016.
7. Lee and Qiufan, *AI 2041*, 302
8. “Big data” is a term that describes large, hard-to-manage volumes of data that inundate businesses on a day-to-day basis. It's not just the type or amount of data that's important, it's what organizations do with the data that matters.

Continued on page 25.

Be Part of History

Attend WILPF's 33rd International Congress July 16-24

By Janet Slagter

WILPF Americas Region Alternate International Board Representative



The last WILPF International Congress was held in Ghana in 2018.

If you attend the 33rd International Congress, “Making Connections: Environment, Social Justice, and Demilitarisation for Feminist Peace,” you will hear updates on exciting developments in WILPF’s work. But what is a WILPF Triennial Congress for?

Voting Matters

Congress is WILPF’s “highest decision-making body and the final authority.” It is one of the four divisions of the organization. The other parts are the International Board, National Sections, and the International Secretariat.

The Secretariat and the International Board attend and deliver reports on their activities. Delegates vote shaping the future of WILPF.

As the largest national section, WILPF US has four delegates. Delegates have the following responsibilities: They vote on International Board officers, changes to the constitution and by-laws, on the admission of new national sections, and on the proposed International Programme and budget for the next three years.

Delegates also vote on resolutions from members and appoint conveners of standing committees such as Finance, Constitution, and Personnel. US WILPF members can and should run for these positions!

The delegates will vote on these major constitutional and by-laws changes:

- Restricting those paid by WILPF from serving on the International Board, to avoid conflicts of interest;
- Adding an Advisory Board, composed of members from every section, who will meet with the IB twice a year;
- Changing the role of the International Treasurer;
- New organizational development plans.

Why Should You Go?

Congress is much more than business sessions. In the discussions and topical programs (Monday through Friday) you can meet amazing women from around the world who work on the issues you believe in. Topics will include WILPF and feminism and tackling racism across the organization. Also, expect presentations on wars and conflicts in the Ukraine, Afghanistan, West Africa, and Palestine and on how the US military program, Africom, functions in African countries.

Most importantly, you will exchange information and strategies with WILPFers and begin to get to know each other as you talk about the political realities of each other’s lives. With all this on offer, we in WILPF will be able to work in knowledge-based solidarity.

33rd Congress Nuts and Bolts

1. Virtual platform

COVID-19 means that this congress will be virtual, using a platform called Canopii. Attendees can access trainings on how to use Canopii. Congress registration is here: <https://account.canopii.com/events/wilpf-congress-2022>.

Registration costs \$15 with options to increase what you pay to help support other members.

2. When does congress meet?

The Congress is scheduled for **July 16-24, 2022**. However, that’s based on Australia time, because Australia is hosting. Morning Australia time (on July 16th, for example) is the evening of the day before (July 15th), US time. It is impossible to schedule Congress events that are convenient in all global time zones.

Two blocks of sessions are scheduled every day, several hours apart. During the weekdays you’ll find sessions designed by and featuring international members and their work: panels, films, speakers, etc. Business sessions on both weekends will focus on voting matters and organizational reports.

3. This virtual congress offers special benefits!

A virtual congress is much less expensive to host and to attend, so many more people can participate. Sections can more easily make presentations, and those sessions will be recorded and available for registrants to watch online.

You don’t have to attend every pre-dawn or midnight session to get a lot out of Congress. This summer, take part in WILPF history!

Dr. Jean Facilitates Fresno “Unpacking Racism” Group

‘This work is spiritual. This work is intimate. This work is passionate.’

Pease & Freedom Editor Wendy McDowell sat down with “Dr. Jean” Kennedy in an audio Zoom conversation on April 21, 2022. There was enough material in this rich, substantive conversation for a two-part Q&A. The first part of the interview will appear in a future eNews. The second part follows here.

When and how did you get involved with the Fresno Branch of WILPF US?

I connected with WILPF in the 1990s, a while after I’d moved into the Central Valley of California. I’d been living in Los Angeles before that and was finding it very hard to “assimilate” here as an immigrant from England who thought internationally. Growing up, we were always around international people and observing different cultures. We saw people doing their rituals and dressing certain ways and eating certain foods, that was the norm. Whereas when I came to California in 1973, the idea was to quickly become part of the “melting pot.”

I moved to Fresno for school and eventually ended up teaching at Fresno City College. WILPF US was co-facilitating a celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the United Nations there in 1995. Coming from Europe, I knew what the United Nations was about and had always viewed it in a positive way. When I heard what WILPF stood for, I thought, “This is a group I need to be part of. It is a women’s group. I’m a woman. And I’m an international person interested in peace and freedom, reconciliation and social justice.” I looked at the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom as the organization that should have been at the airport waiting for me when I first came to the United States!

They should have brought you your welcome basket...

Right, they should have been there saying, “Welcome to the United States, my dear woman who is international and who believes in no war because you dealt with South Africa. You’re the very woman we’re looking for!”

At the time, I wasn’t worried as much about ethnicity because what the women of WILPF had beyond the color of their skin was that they understood international issues.



I knew I was going to be a good fit for them and they were going to be a good fit for me.

And I couldn’t tell the story of my involvement with WILPF without mentioning Ellie Bluestein, who became my friend before I was a member. She just kept inviting me to things and I would show up. There was never any pressure for me to be a paying member. Ellie honored me, respected me, and created a relationship with me. She found a way to make it feel safe for me when many times I’d be the only Black person at a meeting or banquet. I’d walk in and think, “Oh, my God,” but she was right there, not making me invisible.. “Come over here, I want you to meet my friend Jean,” she’d say, and the way she interacted with me was a model for others. As the saying goes, the rest is history. I’ve been an active member of the Fresno Branch for more than 15 years now.

What are some of the memorable projects or movements you’ve been involved in through WILPF?

Two that come immediately to mind are the water project for the homeless and our partnership with the Occupy Fresno movement. Our city was turning off certain water taps so homeless people couldn’t get water to wash themselves or to drink. I was also involved in an HIV project at the time, and one of the things we realized was, “How do people take their medications if they don’t have any water to take them with?” Our branch recognized that water was a basic necessity, and that we needed to raise our voices for the homeless. That project opened doors for many women in our branch to get involved in community activism.

I was also fortunate to sponsor a student WILPF organization at Fresno City College since I was on the faculty there. I

taught in the social sciences program, so I framed it in terms of studying the behavior of human beings in different groups and sections of society. I actually wrote it into the curriculum that students could do extra credit activities in the community. When the Occupy Fresno movement came about, I wanted the students to learn from it and from the groups that were supporting Occupy such as WILPF. It was rewarding to introduce these students to social justice work and restorative justice work that went beyond book knowledge.

Tell me about the monthly discussions you've been hosting for your branch, "Unpacking Racism and Discovering your Blind Spot(s)." Why did you decide to start this group?

About a year and a half ago, I noticed that our WILPF folks were expressing their support of the Black Lives Matter movement after George Floyd's shooting. I kept hearing the word "unpacking." People were reading books about anti-racism, going to Zoom book clubs during the shutdown, and speaking more outwardly about all the different institutions that impact the lives and the quality of life for Black people. It was acceptable in conversation to bring up the disenfranchisements that affect people of color, particularly Black people.

People would come to our branch meetings saying, "I read this book on anti-racism and Robin D'Angelo said this," and they'd be throwing around all these new terms that had become sexy, "white fragility" and "white supremacy culture." I thought to myself, "But what does that have to do with Black Lives Matter?"

I've taught in a women's studies department, where we understand all about unpacking issues and about the disparities that can happen in different groups. So as I observed all this, I began to wonder, "Do white people, and do our women in WILPF, understand what it really means when they say 'Black Lives Matter'? Does it become a cliché, or the politically correct thing to say, or is it something more?" That's when I became inspired and thought, "You know what? We need to unpack this whole racism thing in our branch and see if we can understand our own issues."

How did you come up with the name of the group?

Every time I get in my car, I look at my rearview mirror and the side mirrors. It's the way I was taught to drive and I always do it, especially because I have grandchildren and animals around me all the time, I also turn around and look over my

shoulder to be sure there isn't anything in my blind spot I might be missing—that a ball isn't under the car, or an animal didn't run out, or a tree branch isn't in the way. We all do this consciously or subconsciously.

It felt like a perfect metaphor for all the issues around racism. I've gotten pushback that I shouldn't use a term that is a disability, but for me that's precisely the point. I really believe this society has debilitating disabilities, we have become a country that is manifesting serious illnesses. And we have to work on healing and resolving them. I'm not willing to get rid of the term "blind spots" because we need language that acknowledges how serious our dysfunctions are.

We all have blind spots. I have them, too. They are something we need to work through together. And they are not all bad. Some can also be protections, because there are painful, hurtful things we do not want to see.

What have the discussions been like so far?

We started by focusing on telling and hearing stories, on the "touchy, fuzzy stuff." This was deliberate on my part, because we needed to get to know each other. We go out and protest together and talk about all the issues, yet we don't really know who the people are around us.

I shared my own story and stories from my own family, and the circle began to open up as others did the same. We began to learn who is who, how each of us was raised, what our true thoughts are, what's really going on in our lives. "Oh, you have a biracial grandchild. We didn't know that!" I found out that some women were raised with no Black people around them, something I never knew.

Since this was during the COVID shutdown, I opened up my own household to share, too. My son offered. He is a Fresno firefighter, and he described the racism he experienced trying to get into the Clovis Fire Department. He would have been the only Black firefighter to be hired in that particular community. He made a difficult decision to turn the job down because the reputation of the department made him fearful that he might not be safe.

It strikes me that being a firefighter isn't just any job. If you don't feel safe in that workplace, it could be a matter of life and death.

Exactly, and that was one of the "aha" moments for the women and men who were at that meeting. It also helped them understand why I bring people in to tell their stories. I'd gotten some pushback, "Can't we read a book?" I'd say,

"You are free to read books on your own and bring what you've learned to the group, but we need to hear stories from people themselves."

Another Black firefighter described how their department was trying to be more inclusive, so they were printing and wearing T-shirts for breast cancer awareness and other important issues. But when it came time to do a T-shirt for Black History Month, all of a sudden there was no budget for it. How do you think that made the Black firefighters feel? They're going in and out of burning buildings and protecting the backs of all the other firefighters, yet the department can't get a T-shirt to recognize their Blackness.

Then we heard about an older African American firefighter who had taken on the role of mentoring the young Black men coming into the department so they have good careers, and someone they can go to with issues and concerns. He was one of the first few Black firefighters in the Fresno Fire Department for many years and actually won a lawsuit around issues of discrimination. But instead of just taking the money and leaving, he told the department, "I want you to recruit Black firefighters. That's what I want as the condition for my settlement."

By the time our group had listened together to all of these stories from the City of Fresno's Fire Department, we started saying "We've got to do something." That's what it's like to discover what your blind spots are and to put a name to all of it. Hearing and feeling the pain of others leads to informed action.

It takes a lot of bravery to run a group like this, and it must be challenging sometimes being one of the few Black women in what is still a predominantly white women's organization. How do you take care of yourself?

This work is spiritual. This work is intimate. This work is passionate. This is heavy lifting. After facilitating the group for a little while, I realized, "Jean, you can't do this by yourself." So I invited Rev. Dr. Floyd Harris to join me. He serves as a covering for me if I get challenged, or someone doesn't quite understand something I'm saying, or if I find myself working through something that I didn't even know was an issue for me until we got into it. He's got my back and knows how to articulate things in a way people can hear because he's been a civil rights activist for a long time. Rev. Harris is respected in the community and by WILPF.

Sometimes I feel people in general will try to shut me down by saying things like, "Oh, she's an immigrant. She isn't from here. She don't know what she's talking about." So having another person facilitate a group with me who is African American and male is helpful. He can speak about African American history in an authentic voice.

Is there anything else you'd like WILPF members to know about the "Unpacking Racism" group, or about you?

I want everyone to know that this group is not just about bonding as a branch. It has been planned using a project-based methodology and taking a phase-based approach. The first phase has been all about building a safe space to talk. We might need to spend a year on this – it takes time. But we also intend for there to be two more transformational phases. My co-facilitator and I will introduce African American history timelines to show the trauma of history for African Americans in this country. We will also discuss cultural group behaviors of African Americans and whites/Caucasians, and how this impacts our interactions and discussions. These phases will help our group to understand how and why slavery, white supremacy, and racism have hurt the building of healthy relationships between whites and blacks in the United States.

Having grown up in another country, I can say definitively that "racism" in America is different, because slavery here was based on race, money, and power, and specific laws in the US existed for most of the country's history to disenfranchise Black people. Some of those laws still exist, and new ones are being introduced. We are still fighting for the right to vote freely in 2022.

But in my heart, I am a believer in restorative justice. My spirituality teaches me to give people second chances and allow them to be restored whole. I hope other WILPF members will join our branch's discussion group, or start one of their own, because there's no way we can fight racism without fighting it together. I need my white folks in the fight, and they need me, so that together we can create an understanding about what this disease of racism is all about. No one group can do this alone and we can't spend all our time attacking each other. We're in this mess together, and we've got to help each other out of it if we truly want to live in harmony.

Detroit Branch Hosts Forum on Gun Violence

In response to the Oxford High School shooting (Oxford Township, Michigan), on November 30, 2021, and to the steadily increasing number of children impacted by domestic gun tragedies, the Detroit Branch hosted the online forum “After Oxford: A Mental & Public Health Forum” on January 27, 2022. The discussion was introduced and moderated by Laura Dewey, Detroit Branch President. Panelists included Jayanti Gupta from the youth advocacy group March for Your Lives Michigan and National; Leslie Adadow, an experienced school social worker; and Barbara L. Jones, Community Dispute Resolution Specialist with the Center for Peace and Conflict Studies at Wayne State University. Speakers were Michigan State Senator Rosemary Baylor and US Representative Elissa Slotkin. Both Senator Baylor and Representative Slotkin are sponsoring bills for the safe storage of all firearms, and they are supporters of “red flag” laws. Edited excerpts from the panel discussion are included here.

A video of the event can be viewed at www.youtube.com/watch?v=LeOd9SKTmhs or you can read more about it in Judith Shelton’s March 2022 eNews article. For more information or to get the resource flyer, contact wilpfddetroit@att.net.

‘We Do Not Have to Succumb to Despair’

By Laura Dewey

Gun violence is pervasive, it cuts across class, race, and gender. A common refrain after every mass shooting, especially in a rural town or suburb is: We didn’t think it could happen here. Sadly, it does “happen here,” and too often. No matter where gun violence occurs, whether in a suburb, rural town, or city, we should be deeply concerned; we should empathize with all victims; and we must take action to end it.

In 2021, there were over 20,000 gun deaths in the United States, excluding suicides, which average 23,000 each year. In 2021, more than three-fourths of murders were committed with guns. Most of these guns were purchased legally. In Michigan alone, more than 1,200 people die by guns, and 89 children and teens die by gunshots annually. Shockingly, guns are the second-leading cause of death among children and teens in Michigan.

The mental health picture is equally grim. Our nation does not have a cohesive, well-funded, well-staffed mental health system. In the 1980s we witnessed the closure of psychiatric institutions in Michigan. The remaining facilities for those in



Students embrace during a candlelight prayer vigil at Bridgewood Church in Clarkston, Michigan, a day after a deadly shooting at nearby Oxford High School. December 1, 2021. REUTERS/Seth Herald

mental health crisis are few and poorly staffed. Many resemble prisons more than places of supportive healing. The mental health crisis grew during the pandemic, and counselors are overbooked and overwhelmed. And young people are facing an existential crisis: the devastating impact of global climate change on the environment, where we live, and on our lives.

However, we do not have to succumb to despair. The solutions are there, and even modest ones would be effective. For example, we can hire more social workers and mental health experts in our schools. We can insist on safe storage of guns and ammunition so that children everywhere, in every location, can be kept safe. Let me give you one more statistic: In the United States, eight children each day are shot by misused or unlocked guns. A simple gun-storage law could end these senseless accidental shootings and injuries. Together, we can turn that statistic around.



‘Our Politicians Are Signing Our Death Warrants’

By Jayanti Gupta

I work as an organizer at March For Our Lives, a youth-led movement founded after the tragic Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting on February 14, 2018. As an organization, we are dedicated to promoting civic engagement, education, and direct action by youth to eliminate the epidemic of gun violence.

I joined March For Our Lives with a mission: to protect myself, my loved ones, and the young people of this country from gun violence. On the day-to-day level, this consists of

organizing other youth activists—we walk out of class, sign petitions, rally outside of politicians’ offices pleading with them to protect us, write pages upon pages of legislative agendas and peace plans, uplift gun violence survivors, and more.

Like so many others, I’ve been reeling ever since the horrifying shooting at Oxford High School in Oxford Township, Michigan. As a high school student and someone who has many friends that attend Oxford High, the evening after the shooting felt the opposite of normal. I waited in front of my phone for five numbing hours, jumping at every notification, hoping it was the text which told me that my friends at Oxford High School were safe.

That night and the next morning were spent texting and calling my peers and urging them not to go to school in light of the copycat shooter and threats that my school district, along with over 100 schools across Michigan, were receiving.

However, it wasn’t until four days later in class that I truly felt the terrifying reality of the situation. Four innocent children between the ages of fourteen to seventeen were no longer with us because of senseless gun violence, seven more were injured, and my school was in danger.

I rushed to my counselor’s office. She met me with an abundance of love and support, helping me understand the range of emotions I was feeling: guilt, anger, helplessness. She expressed her own stress as a high school counselor in America. “It’s so terrifying to think that one day I might have to tell students to jump out a window and run for their life,” she told me with tears in her eyes. “School should be a safe place to learn, not fear for our lives.”

The shooting at Oxford was the twentieth school shooting since we returned to class this fall. Each day, about a hundred people across the country are shot and killed. If ever there was clear evidence of a nation in crisis, and an utter failure to contain gun violence, this is it.

My first thought after the shooting was guilt. For every loss of life to gun violence, I can’t help but feel a sense of responsibility. I could have organized more, lobbied more, protested more. This shouldn’t be what a teenager has to think about. This shouldn’t be my (or any other young person’s) responsibility. But that choice has been stolen from us. Our leaders have failed us.

Thoughts and prayers are not enough. We can’t sit still any longer. If we do nothing, nothing will change. Our politicians are signing our death warrants. We have voted. We have organized. We have cried for help. It’s time for our leaders to take concrete action to protect our lives. Our schools must be safe places to learn. Instead we are using the very textbooks and pencils that should be teaching us the beauty of learning as weapons of self-preservation at a moment’s notice.

As an organization, March For Our Lives Michigan is using

this time to organize. After the shooting we organized a community healing event in Oxford. We are also emphasizing the importance and relevance of youth voices in this movement by speaking at events such as this one, recording podcasts, being interviewed by various news sources, and writing Op-Eds. A big part of our organizing is getting young people involved in legislative changes and holding those who represent us accountable.

Start having conversations surrounding gun violence prevention with your family and friends. If you are able, donate to survivors and to the victims’ families. Donate to a gun violence prevention organization of your choice. Write to your elected officials, and speak up at your town hall meetings. No matter what, **just do something.**



Strategies Leading to Safe and Supportive Schools

By Leslie Adadow

When a social emotional curriculum is built into a school setting, the possibility exists to provide a positive school climate, thus improving mental and emotional well-being for students, as well as other members of the community.

There is a mental health crisis within the schools and schools are scrambling to respond. There has been a significant increase in behavioral and mental health issues since COVID began. According to the National Mental Health Institute, suicide is now the second leading cause of death among youth and there has been a 31% increase in serious mental health issues among our youth during the pandemic.

The good news is that youth are resilient and that healthy relationships at school can contribute to their overall well-being and mental health. If they are connected in the community and have supportive families, they fare even better.

Strategies that schools may adopt for a safe and supportive environment include:

- Employing a **Trauma Informed Approach** - This perspective honors and recognizes that most students and staff have trauma imprinted on them. Schools can then understand that “behavior is communication” and respond with interventions that meet the needs of everyone in the community rather than a discipline and punishment response.
- Adopting a **Social-Emotional Learning Curriculum** which models and teaches emotional and social coping strategies essential for emotional well-being.
- Adopting **Restorative Justice Practices** provides an opportunity for students to learn empathy and restore the harm caused. The state of Michigan endorses Restor-

ative Justice Practices and developed a program called OK2SAY, for anyone to call in a confidential concern. We have to teach students to use it.

- Strengthening **music, drama, art, and humanities** provides opportunities for reflection, growth, confident expression and positive interactions; these are critical mental health coping strategies.
- It is also necessary for schools to **support teachers, staff, and administrators through professional development** that focuses on social, emotional well-being for their students, and for themselves.
- It is important to **offer parents (and other community members) adult education experiences**, learning opportunities, and support to handle the range of social challenges many are currently facing.
- School districts need **clear written policies and protocols that mandate a social worker be part of the assessment and evaluation** for managing emergency health and safety issues such as threats of suicide and violence.
- Districts need to **hire and place Social Workers in every school**. Social Workers are the perfect fit to provide preventive emotional support services as well as crisis intervention.

Find out if your school district has any of these things in place and encourage each district to hire social workers for every school. I am providing a sample letter you can send to your local school board that calls for every school to implement the strategies listed above.



From Conversations to Concrete Actions

By Barbara L. Jones

We are at a crossroads in terms of what type of society we desire to live in. There are varying and multiple levels of erosion of mental and public health due to gun violence.

Moving from conversations to concrete actions in the midst of loss, pain, trauma, and healing, there are people with whom we can establish connections to build relationships and enter into difficult dialogues and discussions. The places and the spaces we do this are where we can make change.

In my roles as a community dispute resolution specialist, restorative justice facilitator, an activist, a faculty member, and more, I would like to offer some suggestions:

- Connect and reacquaint yourself with your neighbors, family members, friends, community centers, book clubs and

block clubs. Connect with people with special and unique needs, parent groups, interfaith and faith-based organizations. Engage with people in the spirit of cross-sector collaboration and learn about their advocacy efforts.

- Build one relationship at a time, with people you may not know such as city councilors, and local, regional, state, and national legislators.
- Grassroots mobilization and organizing are concrete and effective ways to make an impact. Be reciprocal, with a lens on prioritizing our mutual futures, and seek evidence-informed and community driven contributions. Cultivate young people to participate in discussions. Their presence and their voices are crucial and must not be minimized.
- Support organizations that focus on gun violence reduction and prevention, such as Wayne State University, Center for Peace and Conflict Studies, Students Demand Action Wayne State University Chapter, Everytown for Gun Safety, Science Policy Network of Detroit, Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Prevention and Policy, Crime Survivors for Safety and Justice, just to name a few.
- Prepare for difficult dialogues beforehand. Here are just a few examples of guiding questions to ask: How do we define what a safe and brave space is? How do we determine frameworks through sharing narratives, personal experiences, storytelling, and data? What truths are revealed about the human costs of gun violence, and how might we be able to address these issues?
- Establish relational community dialogue norms and agreements up front, such as a welcoming and belonging environment, active listening, speaking with others in a respectful, empathetic, and collaborative manner. Suspend judgments and generalizations. Seeking real understanding affirms the other person and what they have to say.

My story of grief sits inside my story of love. My only son and youngest child Conte was murdered on October 30, 2017, at the age of 24. He was shot multiple times with an AR-15 semiautomatic rifle while he was at work by two individuals, one of whom was 16 and the other who was 23. Bearing witness to the loss of children and youth is the most traumatic form of violence one can experience due to gun violence; bodies of research and evidence support these findings.

My heart is with all of the parents, families, and the entire community of grievers of the Oxford School shooting and I stand alongside you all.

In closing, I would like to share a quote that I consider transformational from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: "By listening to your story, my story can change. By listening to your story, I can change."

Supporting from the Shadows

Voting Rights and the Incredible Power of Women

By Ashley Carrington

Chair, WILPF Cultural Arts Committee

Member, Voting Rights Ad Hoc Committee and Black Liberation Caucus

Voting rights in the United States has been one of the more polarizing issues throughout our nation's history. Although voting is a sacred key freedom of American democracy, the nation was founded during a time when the mindset, norms, and even the definition of equity were interpreted vastly differently.

When the Constitution took effect in 1789 after the initial federal elections, voter eligibility and who had the right to vote was not explicitly delineated. Left to the states to determine, some chose the route of landowning white males, while others employed religious tests to ensure only Christian white males were allowed to vote. It was not until the Fifteenth Amendment was ratified in 1870 that the Constitution was specifically altered to include that the right to vote could not be withheld based on race. Even still, Indigenous people born in the United States were not officially recognized until the Snyder Act granted them the right to vote in 1924.

Incremental changes were being made that would help shape the face of American democracy, but there was still much more work to be done. In 1872 Susan B. Anthony registered and then proceeded to vote, citing that the Fourteenth Amendment gave her "the expressed right" to do so. Several days after taking this action, she was arrested. At her trial a year later in 1873, the judge presiding over her case did not allow her to testify on her own behalf. He then dismissed the jury and found her guilty, issuing her a fine of \$100. Susan B. Anthony exercised the power she had and refused to pay the fine.

While men were shaping the laws surrounding voting rights, women were just as diligently working behind the scenes with the limited powers granted to them at the time. On May 9, 1837, the Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women in New York City was convened and among the 175 participants were several African American women who actively discussed women's rights as well as voting rights issues. Though the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848 is considered the first American convention to focus exclusively on women's rights, the Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women in New York City occurred first. No known African American women were invited to attend Seneca Falls.

Decades of Agitation and Protest

The slow trod towards universal suffrage—voting rights without regard to race, gender, education, or economic status—was in motion and the amendment was first introduced in Congress in 1878. It took decades of agitation and protest to achieve voting rights; women marched, lobbied, spoke, wrote, and participated in civil disobedience. These active supporters of women's suffrage were at times heckled, jailed, and mentally and physically abused. But with women at the helm, whether seen or unseen, progress wouldn't be halted.

An influential and controversial march pushing for ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment was held March 13, 1913, in Washington, DC. Organized by suffragette Alice Paul, the event drew support as well as ire when Paul attempted to restrict African-American women from participating; however, the National American Woman Suffrage

Association (NAWSA) forced Paul to integrate the march. African-American activist Ida B. Wells-Barnett and lawyer Marie Louise Bottineau Baldwin, a member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians, marched side by side with white women and men from Pennsylvania Avenue to the Treasury building.

In 1917, the National Women's Party (NWP) began protesting President Wood-



Ida B. Wells-Barnett, ca. 1893-1894. Cihak and Zima, Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.

row Wilson's inaction towards voting rights for women. Their picketing lasted for nearly 30 months. Though it started as a peaceful protest, after the United States became engaged in World War I numerous women were jailed, beaten, and force-fed. This led to a massive public outcry and the eventual passing of a joint resolution proposing a Nineteenth Amendment on June 4, 1919. Finally ratified in 1920, the Nineteenth Amendment ensured the right to vote could not be denied or abridged on account of sex.

However, just as with the Fifteenth Amendment, passage of the Nineteenth Amendment did not guarantee full voting rights for all women. Women of color especially had additional struggles and their fight for equality was paired with the dual fight for civil rights. In 1951, female students at Bennett College in North Carolina encouraged African-American residents of Greensboro to register; this led activist and educator Septima Clark to hold workshops to train



Septima Poinsette Clark, ca. 1960.
Avery Photo Collection, 10-9,
 Courtesy of the Avery Research Center.

Fannie Lou Hamer had been crusading for voting rights for some time. The turning point came when she exposed on national television how African-American Mississippians had been excluded from selecting the state's delegates to the Democratic National Convention. This bold move emboldened African-Americans from Mississippi, men and women alike, to join the fight for their own voting rights.

The Twenty-fourth Amendment was ratified in 1964 and prohibited Congress and the states from imposing any sort of poll tax or other types of taxes for federal elections. Though this particular amendment was often legally contested and unlawfully manipulated in the Jim Crow South, more and more excluded individuals were becoming empowered with this fundamental right. Finally, the Twenty-sixth Amendment, ratified in 1971, ensured that no citizen who is at least 18 years of age or older may be denied the right to vote on the account of age.

African-American voters in Tennessee to vote. In 1958, activist Ella Baker organized African-American voters into the organization Crusade for Citizenship, which encountered hostile resistance from White officials.

By 1964, community organizer and activist Fan-



Fannie Lou Hamer at the Democratic National Convention, Atlantic City, New Jersey, August 1964. Photo by Warren K. Leffler, *U.S. News & World Report Magazine*. Accessed on Wikimedia Commons.

Women Are at the Forefront Protecting Democracy

Voting protections kept evolving over time through our burgeoning judicial system, but at the heart of each of these momentous turns were the incredible voices, influence, and power of women. From the likes of suffragettes Marie Louise Bottineau Baldwin, Mabel Ping-Hua Lee, and Jovita Idár, to the 1869 founding of the National Woman Suffrage Association by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, to the 1913 Alpha Suffrage Club founded by Ida B. Wells, a former slave, women have always championed the protection of American democracy and voting rights.

Women today are at the forefront of voting rights and

GOTV (Get Out the Vote) efforts locally and nationally. Perhaps the best recent example are the movements focused on voting rights started by Georgia gubernatorial candidate Stacey Abrams, including the Fair Fight Action organization. Abrams founded this grassroots organization in 2018 to address voter suppression in the states of Georgia and Texas, but it is now active in eighteen battleground states.

Now more than ever the voices of women are needed to make sure the true ideals of democracy are protected, upheld, defended, and respected. To date, nineteen states have passed laws restricting access to voting and polls still show a significant number of Republicans believe the 2020 presidential election was stolen. Partisan gerrymandering has made voting accessibility nearly impossible for low-income voters and voters of color in many districts. In Texas, it is a crime for an election administrator to encourage voters to apply for an absentee ballot, and now it is also a crime for said administrator to inform voters of their rights under Texas law on how to submit an application for an absentee ballot. These kinds of jarring and unprecedented attacks on American democracy have only increased since 2016. Yet again, it is up to women to be at the forefront of efforts to protect the rights of every American to participate in the privilege of voting.

The work of the WILPF-US Voting Rights Ad Hoc Committee has been innovative and diligent but also directly connected to the historical work of the suffragists who came before us. We have created a Voting Rights Toolkit to be distributed to all WILPF-US branches. The Voting Rights Toolkit or VRT will be a resource kit for all WILPF-US branches to help their local communities stay engaged in voting rights work. It will include resources for social media campaigns, suggested actions to take, as well as links to available organizations that can assist with voting rights rallies, campaigns, or events.

The toolkit will be available this summer in order to support voter registration, increased voter turnout/participation, election time awareness and voter awareness before the mid-term elections in the fall. It is our hope that through raising awareness and supporting voting rights through this Voting Rights Campaign we, too, will add to the legacy created by our foremothers.



Washington, DC/USA - November 15, 2019. Stacey Abrams speaks at a National Press Club luncheon. Al Teich / Shutterstock.com.

'If We Truly Want Peace, We Have to Work for Justice'



Photo by Steve Pavey/Poor People's Campaign/Repairers of the Breach/Kairos Center

By Emily Keel

WILPF US Liaison to the Poor People's Campaign

"Ignorance allied with power is the most ferocious enemy justice can have." – James Baldwin

During the week of April 11, 2022, the Poor People's Campaign held a march, then a vigil, in West Virginia at the coal mine owned by the Manchin family. Sixteen activists were arrested there for a blockade meant to call attention to the resistance of Senator Joe Manchin to back moral policies for his constituents and the nation.

Throughout all of the Poor People's Campaign's actions, co-chairs Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II and Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis hold fast to their religious faith and offer spiritual comfort and biblical references to everyone who attends campaign events. In the cold West Virginia morning on Palm Sunday, Rev. Barber dipped his hands in a bowl of water to dribble onto the hands of the protesters to emulate Jesus washing the feet of his disciples. With this gesture, he wanted people to know that they must take time with each other, care about what each has been through, and convey concern for one another.

As he sang "Hold On Just a Little While Longer," Rev. Barber jerked his body from side to side to face people because he has ankylosing spondylitis, a condition which makes his neck flex forward and his spine unable to rotate. He says that "when we stand with Jesus for justice we have to be willing to suffer sometimes." The prayer "God grant us wisdom and

grant us courage" is a familiar refrain at PPC rallies and vigils.

A vital part of each rally is the testimony of affected people. Those who have suffered evictions, job losses, unnecessary deaths of uninsured family members, environmental injustice, hunger, and much more speak their truth. They testify from the heart, from a place of suffering and sorrow. In one heart-wrenching testimony from Denita Jones of Texas, she had this to say to political elites like Manchin: "You have destroyed this nation's land, sea, air, and water, and now you have turned your sights on the people."

Focusing on individual elected officials who have opposed just policies is one facet of the Poor People's Campaign. Another important part of building a forceful movement for poor and low wealth people rests with the power of their vote. There are 140 million people in this country who are poor or low wage, which amounts to one-third of the electorate. Forty-five percent of them live in swing states. Rev. Liz says that the PPC "is not partisan, but is deeply political" by necessity since the vote is the voice of people. The campaign does not support individual candidates but pushes candidates to support a moral agenda which will enable people to "thrive not just survive." The campaign encourages volunteers to phone and text bank to get out the vote among targeted voters but not to tell them for whom to vote.

Interlocking Injustices

The central theme of the PPC is justice. Rev. Barber teaches that there are interlocking injustices of systemic racism, poverty, ecological devastation, militarism/the war economy,

and the distorted moral narrative of religious nationalism. Building a moral fusion movement has been crucial in organizing for action. In order to build the power of those most impacted by these injustices, the narrative of the movement must reflect the immorality of policies. It is immoral to support policies that deny people health care, deny workers a living wage, and that funnel vast, unfathomable sums to buy weapons and fund wars while people are going hungry and unhoused.

It is not only people's livelihoods that are at stake when immoral policies are in place but their very lives. A study undertaken by the PPC with Howard University and the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network titled "A Poor People's Pandemic Report: Mapping the Intersections of Poverty, Race and COVID-19" analyzes the impact of COVID-19 on the poor at a county level and shows how poverty intersects with other areas of vulnerability.

Among the findings were that the poorest counties had two times the deaths of the richest counties. Death rates were five times higher in the Delta wave and three times higher in the Omicron wave in these counties. Poor Black people had higher rates of COVID-19 than others but more white poor people died in total numbers. These deaths are a result of policies that preceded COVID. Who died in the pandemic was a policy choice of not putting a priority on the poor. "You have got to let us wail," said another testifier at a PPC event, Callie Greer, "for our children, elders, siblings who are no more."

When poverty intersects with gender, race, ability, age and other characteristics, there is a compounding of disadvantage. According to Legal Momentum (the Women's Legal Defense and Education Fund), 70 percent of the nation's poor are women and children, and women in the United States are still 35 percent more likely than men to be poor, with single mothers facing the highest risk.¹

The highest rates of poverty are experienced by American Indian or Alaska Native (AIAN) women, Black women, and Latina women, according to a Center for American Progress Fact Sheet.² The report states: "While Latinas represent 18.1 percent of all women in the U.S. population, they constitute 27.1 percent of women in poverty. Similarly, Black women represent 22.3 percent of women in poverty but make up only 12.8 percent of all women in the U.S. population.... About 1 in 4 AIAN women live in poverty—the highest rate among women or men of any racial or ethnic group."

These two sources also show how age, sexual orientation and gender identity, disability, and domestic violence lead to higher rates of poverty due to the intersections of discriminations. Both organizations call for policy solutions that are remarkably similar to the platform of the Poor People's Campaign and emphasize that any such solutions "must address

the myriad ways that structural and societal sexism and racism uniquely burden women, depress their wages, and limit their opportunities."³

WILPF US Acts in Solidarity with the PPC

Since the founding of WILPF US in 1915, our goals have been to achieve racial and economic justice, an end to all forms of violence, and to establish those political, social, and psychological conditions which can assure peace, freedom, and justice for all. Coretta Scott King and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. were members of WILPF US because their commitments to peace and justice fit with the mission and aims of our organization.

In 2017, WILPF US saw the need to recommit to that fight begun by King 50 years ago and became a partner in the revived Poor People's Campaign at the urging of member Mary Bricker Jenkins. In 2022, members selected participation in the June 18 Mass Poor People's and Low Wage Workers Assembly as a solidarity event. We are wholeheartedly offering our support and our presence at this moral march in Washington, DC. WILPF members are in roles of leadership with the campaign in at least three states. We gladly hosted a Zoom kickoff in February with a welcome by PPC Co-Chair Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis, who related her own feeling of community with us due to her mother's involvement with WILPF. Rev Liz knows the strength of our call to foster peace and reminded us that "if we truly want peace, we do have to work for justice".

Our WILPF US committees and subcommittees hold goals and themes in common with the PPC. We share the desire to end mass incarceration and the death penalty, to support justice for immigrants, and to support voting rights. We oppose the increasing militarization and war profiteering, as well as environmental injustice and egregious violations of measures to protect our air, water, and soil. WILPF members work on these issues every day because of our commitment to justice. Our members recognize that everybody's got a right to live a life of dignity, equity, and justice.

We will continue to support the campaign in its mission to heal the wounds of our society and address its interlocking injustices. Different outcomes are possible if we choose to fight poverty and not the poor. Rev. Barber and Rev. Theoharis make clear that immoral policies which harm the poorest and most vulnerable among us are decisions made by our government and *they do not have to be this way*. This is a defining moment in our society and globally as we struggle to right economic disparities, honor our shared humanity, and resist authoritarianism. Let us heed the words of the campaign's leadership, "We do not quit until we win."

Continued on page 25.

Listening to “The Hague Women” of 1915



By Gloria McMillan

Why should young activists today take the time to hear about an event that went on in 1915? Now, more than ever, we are at the brink of nuclear war, although our media tends to downplay this danger in the United States. There is a great deal we can learn from the women who planned and attended the 1915 Hague International Women's Conference that is relevant to our peace activism today.

Prior to World War I, there had been two Hague Peace Conferences, one in 1899 and another in 1907. War came suddenly after the Archduke Franz Ferdinand and Duchess Sophie Chotek were shot in Sarajevo, Bosnia, in 1914. European military alliances kicked in and things quickly grew more deadly. More and more countries were pulled into the war, sometimes because of secret treaties, and all diplomatic talking ended. The cancelled third conference that had been planned for 1914 at the Hague Court of Justice bears witness to how quickly countries felt compelled to take sides.

We tend to struggle over ideas that may already have been discussed in depth in past events, events that could serve as effective *guides for action* for us today. This cannot happen if we know nothing about the innovative methods and important conversations that took place during these events. This historical amnesia is what has largely happened vis-à-vis the thirteen to fifteen hundred women who attended the 1915 Hague International Women's Conference, including Jane Addams and other Women's Peace Party leaders.

Why Did this Women's Conference Meet?

The women who came to The Hague in 1915 were appalled that the international Hague Conference delegation men had decided not to meet to discuss peace again until they “got this war stopped.” The 1915 Women's International Conference took place about nine months after the outbreak of World War I, and delegates came from neutral countries and from countries at war.¹ Of the UK delegates who aimed to attend, only three made it because the rest of the UK delegates (about 180 women) were prevented by Winston Churchill from using the ferries to cross the Channel.

German feminists Anita Augspurg and Lida Gustava Heymann, Dutch suffragist Aletta Jacobs, American settlement reformer Jane Addams, and the other activists who planned the conference deliberately structured it in such a way as to avoid topics that would shut down conversation during such a volatile time. The Hague event operated under two important rules: they would *not* govern the rules of how wars should be fought nor would they attribute blame for any current or future war. They were solely concerned with how to *avoid* war and with finding ways out of polarized situations of armed hostility, a very different approach from the earlier peace conferences led by male cabinet officials.

The Women's conference also prioritized the participation of women in matters of war and peace and endorsed measures focused on international cooperation. In their resolutions, among the things they advocated for were:

- **Continuous Mediation.** Refusing to talk while war raged seemed insane to these women, who watched as paranoid rhetoric and the arming of belligerent states

heated up rapidly. One of the adopted proposals of the 1915 International Women's Conference at The Hague was "continuous mediation" during war, which for them meant "that foreign politics should be subject to democratic control." They urged "the governments of the world to put an end to this bloodshed, and to begin peace negotiations." (Proposal II. ACTIONS TOWARD PEACE. Subpoints 3 and 4.)

- **Role of Neutral States in Mediating.** Additionally, the women recognized the important role of *neutral countries* in negotiations. (Proposal II. ACTIONS TOWARD PEACE. Subpoint 4.) World War I escalated so quickly and uncontrollably because most countries were swept and bullied into being on one side or the other, leaving few in a position to mediate. This point was reinforced in *Women at the Hague*.
- **International Bodies of Cooperation.** Early on, the Hague women recognized the need for an international court, a "Society of nations," and a "permanent Council of Conciliation and Investigation." (Proposal IV. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION. Subpoint 11.) These bodies would advance "practical proposals for further international cooperation" and would aim to settle "international differences arising from economic competition, expanding commerce, increasing population and changes in social and political standards."
- **General Disarmament.** Even before there were nuclear weapons, the women who attended this conference called for an "international agreement" that would "take over the manufacture of arms and munitions of war and...control all international traffic in the same." (Proposal IV. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION. Subpoint 12.) What's more, these women already saw "in the private profits accruing from the great armament factories a powerful hindrance to the abolition of war."

Constructing 'Reality' in Warring States

In *Women at The Hague*, Jane Addams, Emily Balch Green, and Alice Hamilton quoted people from both the Allied side and the Central Powers side in the war. Many times Addams was struck by the symmetry of the claims justifying the war from their side's point-of-view:

Each belligerent nation solemnly assured us that it was fighting under the impulse of self-defense, to preserve its

*traditions, from those who would come to disturb and destroy them.*²

When Addams and her delegates would suggest that it would be better to stop fighting rather than each side trying to achieve maximum gains and fighting on until exhaustion, the interviewees would insist that war must run its course even though they favored peace. Jane Addams summarized that the gains in any war are nothing to its losses and the horrific daily events are but the waves on the ocean's surface compared to the ocean's depths—the intolerable burden of continued war.³

The difference between rhetoric about war among those who were far outside the range of suffering and what people thought in the countries at war repeatedly struck Addams and the others who wrote up their interviews and observations. These observations continue to be salient today.

Many assume media attacks are a recent phenomenon, but Jane Addams and the women who maintained their pro-peace views in public were hounded by the US and UK press after returning from The Hague. Because Jane Addams was a wealthy woman and a descendant of President John Adams with no connection to extreme political groups, the press could not use labels like "radical," "communist," or "anarchist" against her. So press stories called Addams "a smug and complacent woman," "senile", a "withered old maid," and claimed that she had no understanding of global affairs. As a result of continuous vilification in the US mainstream press, Addams suffered a depressed period in the fall of 1915 and into 1916, but she rebounded and continued her work.

What Can We Learn from 1915?

For the first time, women had protested war itself in a visible and public way, asking that women be consulted in matters of war and peace, as well as on "household and domestic issues." Explicitly recognizing the suffering of women and children during war, their insistence that women must be at the table of all domestic and international political discussions, including the peace settlement after the War, continues to be relevant today. Women are still vastly underrepresented in the organizations and teams carrying out peace negotiations and determining settlements.

A whole new way of working from the margins and overcoming press-created hysteria also came from this conference. Peace activists today can learn a lot from how the women conducted themselves before, during, and after the

Continued on next page.

Middle East Regimes Becoming More Despotic

US military aid to the region is huge, but democracy is elusive.

By Odile Hugonot Haber

Co-chair, Middle East Peace and Justice Action Committee

WILPF women are concerned about the situation in the Middle East and the heavy – and generally negative – involvement of the United States. With so much US money and military support going to the region, the lack of substantial US media coverage is something for us to find more ways to speak up about!

In Yemen, the war has a temporary ceasefire, as the population there is totally starved with many people dying. The United Nations used to call it “the worst disaster on Earth.” But now it is not the only one.

The United States continues to build and sell weapons and grow wars in the Middle East. **US military and financial support for Israel is massive, at about \$3.8 billion a year.** At the same time, Israel is *more* oppressive and murderous in its occupation of Palestine, despite international law. The recent killing of Shireen Abu Akleh, a Palestinian American journalist, demonstrates this.

The Middle East lies bleeding like a wide-open wound. In the last few years, the US has spent a huge fortune on arms in the region with the claim of growing democracy there. Arms abound but democracy is elusive, as regimes in the Middle East are becoming more corrupt and despotic. Whether it is Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, or Libya, regimes are persecuting people, jailing



dissenters, and cracking down on anyone who speaks out about human rights.

Women from these countries are victimized and discounted, and at the same time they are among the most active in trying to patch up their societies. They bring comfort to the imprisoned, sick, and hungry. They organize soup kitchens, make informative flyers, create and advocate for new policies, hold their governments to account, and demand transparency. In Lebanon, the women in the WILPF section there take care of refugee camps, providing education, clothing, and relief.

What can we do? Read the Call for Peace Resource Guide #5, “Your Tax Dollars at Work in the Middle East” to learn how your tax dollars fuel the war system. This resource also includes suggested actions to “Move the Money” and “Divest from the War Machine” and provides sample letters to send to your congressional representatives.

Continued from previous page:

The Hague Women

conference. During the conference, leaders employed expert arbitration and diplomatic skills to encourage delegates to reach consensus. Afterward, their resolutions were printed in English, French, and German, distributed to European heads of state, and 30 delegates toured Europe between May and June 1915 to plead the cause of continuous mediation.

When Jane Addams returned to the States, many observations and the proposals were given to President Woodrow Wilson in her post-conference meetings with him. Even though delegates were vilified in the press, they continued to push for the methods and policies they knew could save lives and prevent further violence and harm. Though their actions “did little to sway the leaders of the warring nations [at the time], the proposals introduced by the congress are still used today as guidelines for many diplomatic negotiations between hostile nations.”⁴ Two of their key points, continuous mediation and recognizing the important role of neutral states in

peace negotiations, are now standard.

Finally, long before the term “The Military Industrial Complex” was coined by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in his 1961 *Farewell Address*, Jane Addams and the women who met at The Hague in 1915 were energetically striving to prevent a permanent war machine and its war profiteers from sucking up our national resources and freedoms. To learn about “The Hague Women” is to be inspired by their insights, bravery, and persistence.

NOTES:

- 1 Countries represented included the United States, which sent 47 members; Sweden, 12; Norway, 12; Netherlands, 1,000; Italy, 1; Hungary, 9; Germany, 28; Denmark, 6; Canada, 2; Belgium, 5; Austria, 6, and Great Britain, 3,
- 2 Jane Addams, Emily G. Balch and Alice Hamilton, *Women at the Hague: The International Congress of Women and Its Results* (The Macmillan Company, 1915), 28. Pdf retrieved from the Library of Congress.
- 3 Ibid., 55.
- 4 “International Congress of Women adopts resolutions on peace, women’s suffrage,” This Day in History (May 1), History.com.

Threads of Hope amidst Deepening Crises

By Nancy Price

Co-chair, Earth Democracy Committee

It is my pleasure to introduce you to at-large WILPF member Pat Hynes through this collection of her writings. *Hope, but Demand Justice* is an inspiring book that brings together articles she published mostly between 2010 and 2021 at a time, she reminds us, of “deepened social and economic inequalities and expanding weapons budgets, as the Earth reached tipping points—points of no return—from existential climate crisis and species extinction.”¹

Pat is a trained environmental engineer and Professor of Environmental Health Emerita at Boston University. In her professional life, she has worked on multiracial and low-income issues in the urban environment, including lead poisoning, asthma, safe housing, community gardens and urban agriculture, feminism, and environmental justice. She has won numerous awards for her writing, teaching, and applied research, and has authored seven books, including *The Recurring Silent Spring* and *A Patch of Eden: America's Inner-City Gardeners*.

“It was a seminar on the public health effects of war in my department at Boston University School of Public Health that set the course of my life since retiring in 2009,” she relates. “I chose to speak in that seminar on the health effects of war on women, a topic that led me to much soul-troubling reading about the rampant sexual violation of women during war, in refugee camps, and during post-war occupation. Being an environmental engineer led me to probe the effects of war on the environment—again facing another shock that the US Pentagon is the major institutional contributor to the climate crisis worldwide.” (97)

These realizations led Pat to join the Traprock Center for Peace and Justice “as my first political act once I returned fulltime to my home in western Massachusetts. And thus began a journey of writing, speaking, protesting, initiating partnerships and collaborative projects, many here and others in Vietnam, Sierra Leone, and with Lebanese NGOs working with Syrian women war refugees, all with Traprock as a sheltering canopy” (97-98).²

As Pat explains in her introduction, titled “Work for Something Because It Is Good”: “Many writings focus on both the evidence and obstacles that obstruct our quest for peace, justice, and a sustainable Earth with equal emphasis on policy and activism to re-right our path” (1). She also stresses that “Though *Hope, but Demand Justice* separates chapters by



topic, I did not conceive of them in silos. Rather, they reside in the web of interrelated politics, the environment, economics, and all manifestations of political and social justice and injustice—the dimensioned world in which we live our lives” (2).

Peace & Freedom readers will find convergence with WILPF's many program areas, and will resonate with the examples in this book that show the crucial link between new policies and grassroots organizing and movement building for lasting systemic change. Pat's expertise about the impact of militarism on women and children—and on Mother Earth—is evident in several writings. One article in particular, “Ten Reasons Why Militarism is Bad for Women” (188–193) could be handed out at WILPF tables to educate the public and recruit new members.

Pat discusses each point and provides reliable data to back everything up, as she does throughout the book.³ She reports on the “rise in the proportion of civilian deaths—and notably women's and children's deaths—in twentieth-century and twenty-first-century warfare” (189). She stresses that “Eighty percent of the world's refugees and internally displaced persons are women and children” (190). And she points to the rape and sexual exploitation of women and girls during war and in post-conflict areas:

A unique harm of war for women is the trauma inflicted when men wield women's bodies as weapons to demean, assault and torture. ...

Military brothels, rape camps, and growing instances of sex trafficking for prostitution are fueled by the culture of war that relies on, licenses, and admires male aggression and by post-war social and economic ruin, which is particularly devastating for women and children. (291)

Her important article “Girl Soldiers: Forgotten Casualties of War” highlights the fact that girls are among the children abducted during war, and “are exploited like boy soldiers as servants, cooks, porters, spies, human shields, suicide bombers, and fighters.” (195)

These realities are hard to stomach, but Pat practices “living with hope” (2). In his forward, Randy Kehler emphasizes that “lest you think you'll come away from reading these essays feeling numb, hopeless, and depressed, please don't worry. Despite the gravity of the problems she analyzes, there is a

clear stream of hopefulness running through all of her essays as she describes positive, real-time actions, initiatives, and actual accomplishments on the part of ordinary citizens and a few – though still too few – enlightened leaders worldwide” (xii).³

Pat writes, “Those who work for good to save public forests or to save the lives of COVID patients and those who speak out against the futility of war, strive to create a future of equality for girls and women and people of color, labor to eliminate nuclear weapons—present a lifeline through *Hope, But Demand Justice*” (2). Among the many strengths of this book are the specific groups and projects she highlights, among them the Indigenous Environmental Network, Housing Is a Human Right, Vietnamese “Peace Villages”⁴, Nuclearban.us and Back from the Brink (both based in Northampton, Massachusetts), Iraq Veterans Against the War, the Greenbelt Movement, and the EMMA Coalition⁵.

Scanning through the chapter and article titles demonstrates the wide range of topics covered. As a co-chair of WILPF’s Earth Democracy committee, I was struck by how much Pat has written about the environment. She relates, “A thread joining personal and community activism to crucial government and economy reform courses through consideration of the environment. All are needed to sustain life on our already diminished primal home—our planet Earth” (5).

The entire first chapter is devoted to writings on climate crisis and citizen action, with chapter titles like “We Loved Our Trees and Waters,” “Civil Disobedience in the Time of Climate Change,” “Earth Day 2016: Retrospect and Realism,” “Madness Driving Climate Policy Catastrophe” (a review of Simon Pirani’s *Burning Up: A Global History of Fossil Fuel Consumption*, and “What Then Is the Value of Bird Song?” (a review of *Lost Woods: The Discovered Writings of Rachel Carson* edited by Linda Lear).

Pat also takes on inequality, COVID-19, international relations, nuclear weapons and nuclear power, and veterans’ issues. Her final chapter is focused on “Pursuing Equality for All Women” and there is much to enjoy here. “Bread and Roses Restaurant: The Women’s Restaurant Inc. 1974 – 1978” tells the wonderful story of this women’s-owned business that included a gourmet vegetarian restaurant and a center for feminist culture with weekly events. This chapter also includes “African Feminists: A Key to Global Peace” discussing Pat’s experience at the 2018 WILPF International Congress in Ghana and linking the fate of nations to the status of women.

I highly recommend this remarkable book. Pat organizes, frames, and explores each topic in fresh and unique ways, going far beyond ordinary journalism and reminding us that intelligent, impassioned writing can be one of the most vital expressions of activism. Each article is written in an authentic, compassionate, honest, and personal voice with many

enriching passages woven together: engaging bits of memoir; comments and observations about friends, neighbors, colleagues, students, and travels; historical background about the topics with facts and data; anecdotes, observations, and experiences; comments on books and quoted poems; and recommendations for policy and action.

In the afterword, “Hope” (published in *Portside* in June 2021), Pat writes:

...many of us have had to examine our sense of hope and where we experience it. For what we choose in the face of diminishing prospects for our world—action, despair, or some place in between—will determine how fully, how resolutely we live.

Hope upwells in me now in smaller places and actions, no matter their chance of success—when I witness, for example, the countless bold and creative actions undertaken by youth across the world on behalf of their future; by victim survivors resisting their oppression; by a small prescient group challenging the majority consensus, and by an unexpected outcome defying the naysayers. (211-212)

With words that should encourage us all to engage in actions of resistance, she concludes: “We create conditions for hope when we aspire to something both good and badly needed and when we work toward achieving it, no matter the odds. And, if enough of humanity joins in this, we can improve the odds of human survival” (215).

NOTES:

- 1 Many of the articles in this collection were written as guest editorials in the prize-winning local newspaper the *Greenfield Recorder*. Others were published in regional newspapers, and for progressive online national publications such as *Truthout*, *Truthdig*, *Common Dreams*, *Portside* and *Nukewatch Quarterly*.
- 2 Pat served as the director of Traprock from 2010-2020 and continues to serve on its board. She notes that “Western Massachusetts has a long and honorable history of mobilizing against nuclear weapons. Ending nuclear war and fostering non-violence were the animating mission of the Traprock Peace Center...in Deerfield...in 1979.” (121).
- 3 As Randy Kehler says about Pat in his forward, “Why Do I Trust Pat Hynes?”: “I never have any doubt that she really knows what she is writing about; it’s clear from her sources that she has done the research” (xi).
- 4 Pat shares that “Peace Villages are organized and built by the Vietnam Association for Victims of Agent Orange, VAVA, with funds from the Vietnam government and international supporters. Many staff and administrators are retired Vietnamese war veterans, and some staff are themselves physically handicapped from their parents’ exposure to Agent Orange” (74-75).
- 5 Pat lifts up the Equality Model in Massachusetts (EMMA) in her afterword, which was founded by survivors of prostitution and sex trafficking and has led to the establishment of exit programs for women and girls in prostitution and advocacy for important legislation to “Strengthen Justice and Support for Sex Trade Survivors” (214-215).

Summer Reading List

Enjoy this summer reading list sent in by WILPF members. Some focused on a particular theme while others chose books they've enjoyed or intend to read this summer.

Marlena Santoyo reminds readers to please consider getting your books at your local "independently owned" bookstore.



Tura Campanella Cook

Jane Addams Branch

My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies

By Resmaa Menakem (Central Recovery Press, 2017)

This is a workbook for Black bodies, White bodies and police bodies. Take the recommended weeks and months to do the exercises and study this book in the company of others in your body-group.

Sitti's Bird: A Gaza Story

By Malak Mattar (Crocodile Books, 2022)

A Palestinian artist recalls overcoming her childhood fears through painting while Israel bombed Gaza for 50 days in 2014. Deliver this children's picture book in person to the home offices of your members of Congress or schedule time with their staff to read it aloud.

Not 'A Nation of Immigrants': Settler Colonialism, White Supremacy, and a History of Erasure and Exclusion

By Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz (Beacon Press, 2021)

Autobiography of the US acknowledges colonialization and imperialism were inherent in its founding and institutions, and calls for oppressed people and educators to take the rewriting of history into their own hands.

Once I Was You: A Memoir

By Maria Hinojosa (Atria Books, 2020)

Hinojosa, host of *Latino USA* and founder of Futuro Media, was a baby held in her mother's arms when she arrived in the US. In addition to covering her early life and award-winning career in journalism, the memoir provides insights about US-Mexico relations and immigration policies.

Jack Herbert

Portland (OR) Branch

Unforgetting: A Memoir of Family, Migration, Gangs, and Revolution

By Roberto Lovato (Harper, 2020)

An urgent, no-holds-barred tale of gang life, guerrilla warfare, inter-generational trauma, and interconnected violence between the United States and El Salvador by a co-founder of #DignidadLiteraria.

Choices: Death, Life, and Migration

By Patricia Rumer (CreateSpace Independent Publishing, 2018)

Lifetime activist and educator Patricia Rumer fell in love with Guatemala in 1969 as an American Friends Service Committee volunteer. This book of intimate stories spans 50 years, from the US-backed government oppression of the 1970s and 80s to the migrations of today.

Cindy Domingo

Cuba and the Bolivarian Alliance Committee

Since Philippine history is being revised with Marcos Jr's election, I want to do a little promotion of two books I had a hand in: ***A Time to Rise: Collective Memoirs of the Union of Democratic Filipinos***, edited by Rene Ciria Crus and myself (University of Washington Press, 2017), and ***Women Against Marcos: Stories of Filipino and Filipino American Women Who Fought a Dictator*** by Mila DeGuzman (sold out through Arkipelago Press, only available through me now).

Marybeth Gardam

Women, Money & Democracy Committee

Lords of Finance: The Bankers Who Broke the World

By Liaquet Ahamed (Penguin Press, 2009)

This book describes in riveting terms the creation of the Central Banks of England, Germany, France, and the US for the purpose of funding WWI, and the unique characters who founded them. The lessons learned have implications for today's funding of endless wars.

Screwnomics: How Our Economy Works Against Women and Real Ways to Make Lasting Change

By Rickey Gard Diamond (She Writes Press, 2018)

The best explanation of how the 2008 crash happened and the women who risked everything to sound alarms. Also excellent on innovative solutions to unrig the economy. Use it for a great discussion group, or for your own personal reading. Find it at www.Screwnomics.org.

Mary Bricker Jenkins

Jane Addams Branch

Our WILPF sister Dorothy Van Soest understands the kinds of things that call us to WILPF: confronting the outrages of racism, poverty, and war, and sharing our longing for community, peace, and even simple fairness. She invites to explore these issues through her four social justice mystery novels (all published by Apprentice House). ***Just Mercy*** (2018) was praised by Sr. Helen Prejean as "a must-read that teaches us about the true nature of justice." In ***At the Center*** (2015) and ***Death, Uncharted*** (2018), unlikely sleuth Sylvia Jensen investigates the deaths of children, faces social and economic injustices and personal responsibility, and experiences the New York City teacher's strike of 1968. In ***Nuclear Option*** (2020), Dorothy's characters confront our hidden, still lethal, nuclear heritage. Visit Dorothy's website at <https://www.dorothyvansoest.com>

Marlena Santoyo

Greater Philadelphia Branch

Bad Mexicans: Race, Empire, and Revolution in the Borderlands

By Kelly Lytle Hernández (W. W. Norton, 2022)

Tells the dramatic story of the magonistas, the rebels who sparked the 1910 Mexican Revolution. Led by Ricardo Flores Magón, this motley band of journalists, miners, migrant workers, and more, organized thousands of Mexican workers—and American dissidents—to their cause.

Treasurer's Report to Members

Building on WILPF's 106 years of sustainability.

By Jan Corderman

WILPF US Treasurer

Even as we celebrated Earth Day this spring, our hearts are broken over the invasion of Ukraine, the human rights violations and war crimes. We call on all those involved to immediately de-escalate and seek people-centered solutions for peace.

As we look around us, it seems that democracies all over the world are threatened. We are stepping up to address that existential threat here in the US.

Our WILPF US Finance Committee (Eileen Kurkoski, Phillip Cole, Linda Conte, Marci Henzi, Darien De Lu, and me) and Board are held responsible for implementing the organization's objectives when we create our fiscal year's budget. By committing to the accounting basic\$ of 'Mission Through Numbers,' the system we learned with the help of our fiscal sponsor, the Peace Development Fund, our budgeting decisions must be driven by mission priorities.

WILPF's mission is to create the peaceful transformation we wish to see in the world. Our mission guides us every day—as does the work of our members in their branches and in issue committees, initiatives, and branch and member support projects. We invite you to learn more about our work through a cost-benefit perspective from the graphs showing our 2021 income and expenses and this annual report, which highlights some of the ways that our staff, members, and partners are caring for each other and standing up for each other.

In 2021 we received an extraordinary boost from bequests—more than two times the total of our expenses for the entire year. The Fall 2021 issue of Peace & Freedom featured Julia W. Bishop, Patricia Miller Evans Weiss, Harriet Guignon, and Catherine D Hopson, for their thoughtful gifts. That same issue included a remembrance of former WILPF President Phyllis Stuckey Yinling in the "In Memoriam" section, who also generously included WILPF in her will.

Bequest gifts don't just allow us to establish reserves and make solid investments—they are one of our most important sources of future planning. That amount will allow us to strengthen our programs and adopt new ones. We are thankful to our friends who make WILPF part of their legacy.

At this point in the year, we have been able to add two part-time positions. New staff members will engage in development work and enhance the extraordinary work

by Marybeth Gardam and other Development Committee member volunteers.

It's also my pleasure to let you know that two amazing women now lead a revived Metro Atlanta Branch and a new branch in North Carolina. Chantaye McLaughlin contacted members in the Atlanta area and brought in new members to revitalize the Atlanta branch, all while running for office and keeping up with an amazing six-year-old. She engaged with her community on local issues in her race for a City Council position last year. Her hard work didn't win her a spot on the Council but we look forward to her next campaign! Kim Porter of Durham, NC, has been an activist for thirty years and now leads the new Triad Branch. As part of the Moral Mondays protests she seeks to "restore morality in the public sphere." Kim is also a leader in the Poor People's Campaign. We look forward to getting to work with both of these activists.

A new branch can be launched with just ten members. We have kept our dues low, with no increases even as our expenses have increased. In another important development, WILPF's International Board has reduced the amount of the assessment they ask of Sections. We're looking at ways to use that savings to recognize the expenses branches incur in their work.

Growth continues to happen, in WILPF and around us. I hope the illuminating signs of spring help remind us of the difference we can make together—all despite the stresses of a global pandemic during which many of our homes have been turned into offices, schools, and playgrounds. Drawing from the expertise of so many of our members and partners, I'm appreciative that we've been able to meet each other over Zoom as we learn new skills. I encourage you to watch the recordings of our Congress presentations that you may have missed, either at home or at watch parties with other WILPFers or prospective members. You can find them at the [WILPF US YouTube channel](#). I think you'll find them as inspirational as I have.

Thank you for supporting WILPF with your time, talent and treasure, and for being a part of our global community.

"Action is indeed the sole medium of expression for ethics. (U.S. Social Worker, 1860-1935)" —Jane Addams

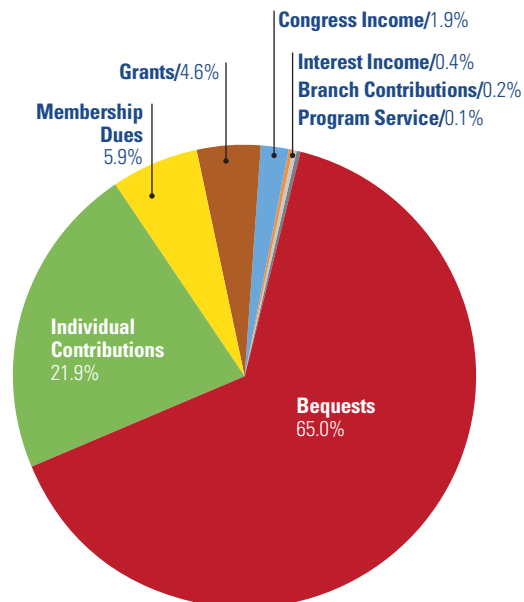
In solidarity,
Jan Corderman

2020 Income & Expenses

Income

Bequests	\$352,736
Branch Contributions	\$1,157
Individual Contributions	\$118,716
Grants	\$25,000
Membership Dues	\$31,745
Program Service/Resource income	\$495
Congress Income	\$10,290
Interest Income	\$2,417

Total Income **\$542,556**

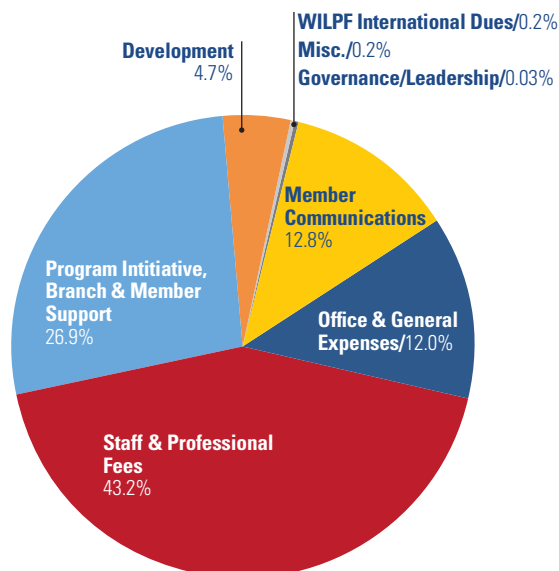


Expenses

Development	\$7,252
Office & General	18,498
Member Communications	\$19,805
Governance/Leadership	\$39
Staff & Professional Fees	\$66,603
Programs, Initiatives, Branch & Member Support	\$41,463
WILPF International dues	\$335
Misc	\$260

Total Expenses **\$154,255**

NET INCOME **\$388,301**



Technology – the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

Continued from page 6.

9. Lee and Qiufan, *AI 2041*, 311.
10. There are already tutorials on the web that explain how to program a drone to kill; one describes Slaughterbots and on July 26, 2020, there was a posted training on how to set up a swarm of drones.
11. See Jared Gereau, "U.S. Army to test drone swarm over Utah desert," Utah Public Radio, April 26, 2022.
12. www.un.org/disarmament/the-convention-on-certain-conventional-weapons/

Acknowledgement: Much appreciation goes to Ellen Thomas and Wendy McDowell for tightening up, double-checking, and better organizing this complex article.

Poor People's Campaign

Continued from page 17.

NOTES:

- 1 Robin Bleiweis, Diana Boesch, and Alexandra Cawthorne Gaines, "The Basic Facts About Women in Poverty," Center for American Progress Fact Sheet, August 3, 2020. www.americanprogress.org/article/basic-facts-women-poverty/
- 2 "Women and Poverty in America," Legal Momentum, www.legalmomentum.org/women-and-poverty-america
- 3 From the conclusion of Bleiweis, Boesch, and Gaines, "The Basic Facts About Women in Poverty".

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Remembering Joan Ecklein

Peacemaker, Storyteller, Traveler

By Eileen Kurkoski

Boston Branch



Joan A. Ecklein, a longtime member and co-chair of WILPF's Boston Branch, passed away on April 3, 2022, at the age of 86. Tributes poured in after her death, not only from WILPFers but from other peace activists who knew Joan to be an expert in commu-

nity organization and a stalwart protester of what she considered to be interconnected issues: banning nuclear weapons, promoting diplomacy and not war, and calling for systemic change to rectify injustices to women and people of color.

Joan was born in Washington, DC, to the late Isadore Levin, MD, and Miriam (Kaplan) Levin. In his declining years, Joan's father, a pioneer in preventative and alternative medicine, informed her that her mother had been very active in WILPF. Joan remembered the women who frequently came to their home to plan actions over tea and cookies. She recalled answering the door at 10 years old to see an elderly African American woman, Mary Church Terrell, coming to pick up her mother to go to a restaurant...not to eat, but to protest segregation in DC eating establishments. In Joan's teens, she and her favorite maternal uncle often went to protests and events on various progressive issues.

Given these experiences, it's not surprising Joan chose to study and teach sociology. She received her PhD from Harvard University in 1964 and taught at Brandeis University, Boston State College, and for many years at UMass Boston. On one sabbatical with her then baby daughter Ingrid, she taught English in east Berlin where she witnessed how women were better treated in a socialist country. She returned to the US with long-lasting beliefs in socialism.

Joan was foremost a peace activist. She was one of the cofounders of Women Strike for Peace in 1961, an early opponent to the Vietnam War, and she continued to protest actively the rest of her life. She worked with other peace organizations in coalitions to end wars and ongoing conflicts in Iraq, Yemen, Israel, and other places. One remembrance that arrived after her death highlighted the Raging Grannies protest activity Joan led which included knitting a net around an Army tank!

Not only was she an active member and a co-chair of the Boston Branch for more than ten years, but in 2011, she and Audley Green began going to other progressive events in the area to promote and rebuild WILPF Boston membership. In retirement, she enjoyed hosting WILPF events on interesting topics at her home in West Newton, MA.

Joan was also an author, and wrote convincingly about the causes she cared about. In the Spring 2012 issue of *Peace & Freedom*, she wrote, "The United States government must not escape responsibility for the horrible carnage wrought upon Iraq. The people of this country, who have borne the cost of the war and its aftermath, must demand nothing less than a full accounting and full compensation by our government for the disaster that lingers after the withdrawal of most U.S. forces. It is a matter of basic morality."

She gave human rights talks to many organizations, including WILPF. She started a multi-year film series at the Central Square Public Library in Cambridge, MA, on conflagration, race, US policy, world peace initiatives, and climate change. In one particularly memorable film showing Joan organized, a whistleblower raising awareness about sexual abuse in the army came to the event, at some risk to this woman's safety.

Joan loved to travel and would bring back tastefully selected decorations from the countries she visited that were displayed throughout her home. She went to multiple WILPF international conferences as well as to the national ones. Some of the fascinating people she met on these trips later stayed at her home, including WILPF leaders.

In 2017 I started to know Joan better on our commutes to No Drone meetings, films, and protests. We took trips together to her cottage in New Hampshire and to Robin Lloyd's family farmhouse in Rochester, Vermont, for summer WILPF retreats. Through Joan's talent as a storyteller, I kept learning more about the world and how to be an activist. She was the best of mentors for me.

I would also cat sit for her two cats – the extroverted Felix, who loved to go outside, and his introverted brother Love, who liked to cuddle with Joan in bed. If you believe in reincarnation, you can bet Felix and Love will return as socialistic internationalists, following Joan's lead in making a safer world for all. They, and we, miss her and will never forget her.

Editor's Note: In the online versions of the magazine, you can [view a slideshow](#) with additional images and remembrances of Joan from other WILPFers.

Many Methods, Common Goals

Branches Rally for Peace



Protesters rallying before PNC headquarters in downtown Pittsburgh, January 22, 2022.

The **Fannie Lou Hamer Branch (Columbus, GA)** celebrated its one-year anniversary in early 2022. In 2021, the branch organized a motorcade and press conference to support the passage of the John Lewis Voter Advancement Act. The first annual Fannie Lou Hamer Branch Human Rights Conference was held on December 11, 2021. Ninety people joined the conference via Zoom, with at least 65 of them participating in breakout sessions on topics including: “Ending Mass Incarceration/Abolishing the Death Penalty”; “Immigration Justice,” and “The UN International Decade for People of African Descent/Reparations.”

Pittsburgh WILPF partnered with other local organizations to celebrate the first anniversary of the Entry Into Force (EIF) of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) on January 22, 2022. About 20 people rallied in frigid weather outside PNC headquarters to restate their demand that PNC stop investing in companies involved with nuclear weapons then marched to the City/County Building. Several days later, WILPF Pittsburgh and Stop Banking the Bomb (SBTB) presented the webinar, “Nuclear Weapons: Abolish Them or

Be Abolished” featuring Susan Smith, a WILPF representative, physicist, lawyer, and activist.



On Valentine's Day (February 14, 2022), **Des Moines Branch** members picketed for a Factory Farm Moratorium outside the state capitol. Holding pink and red hearts with Valentine's Day-themed messages, picketers called on the Iowa legislature to pass a factory farm moratorium. They heard from speakers about the environmental and health problems caused by factory farms and distributed information about the movement for a moratorium.

The **Cape Cod Branch** invited everyone from WILPF to attend an International Women's Day Zoom program, “Racial Reckonings,” on March 8 from 7:30-9 pm (EST), which included three short plays and post-performance discussions. A pre-recorded discussion was led

by Charles Everett Pace. Two of the plays, “No Surrender” and “Kinfolk,” were written by WILPF member Candace Perry.



The **Greater Philadelphia Branch** participated in the Poor People's rally in Washington, DC, on December 13, 2021, and at one of the street actions on the anniversary of the January 6 attack on the US Capitol. The branch also joined with other peace groups in Philadelphia to say “No to NATO, No to War with Russia” at a rally on Independence Mall on March 6, 2022. Branch members were excited to join the Poor People's Campaign “MORE” tour in Philadelphia on April 25.

TPNW First Anniversary



On the weekend of January 22, 2022, WILPF members gathered around the country to celebrate the first anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). The following branches shared information about their events:

Martha Spiess reported that Christine DeTroy of the **Maine Branch** and Rosalie Paul of PeaceWorks launched the 2022 Maine #NuclearBan Banner Caravan from Brunswick, Maine, which would

travel to General Dynamics/Bath Iron Works in Bath next. Over the next few months, the Caravan will visit landmark people, places, and things in Maine that have advocated for this Milestone Treaty.

According to Robin Lloyd, four members of the **Burlington (VT) Branch** tabled and leafleted in the atrium of the Davis Center at the University of Vermont to talk to students and ask them to sign up to help lobby our state house of representatives to make Vermont free of nuclear weapons delivery systems.

Judy Adams helped coordinate **Peninsula/Palo Alto branch** involvement and did publicity for an event at the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory, organized by Marylia Kelley. Judy Adams, Cherrill Spencer, Chuck Jagoda, and a new member who recently moved to our area, Lotus Yee Fong, attended, as did two WILPFers from **Berkeley/East Bay** (Ed Thacker, for Sandy, and Anne Henny). Five people from the Peninsula/Palo Alto branch of WILPF held a demo celebrating the first anniversary of the EIF of the TPNW at the busy corner of El Camino Real and Embarcadero Roads.

Church bells rang in a new era of No Nuclear Weapons in **Madison, WI**, on January 22, 2022. Abolish Nuclear Weapons and No F-35 Nuclear weapons bombers in WI or anywhere! Pamela Richard sent a short video clip of the church with bells ringing.

Barbara Nielsen, Deetje Boler, and Betty Traynor, three members of **WILPF San Francisco**, went to Japantown to put up some signs and gave out small business cards on TPNW (made by Barbara Nielsen) to people there for about an hour.

March 6 Global Day of Action against War

An international coalition of peace groups chose March 6, 2022, as the day for activists all over the world to take to their hometown streets to pro-



test against war and militarism. Many focused on the illegal Russian invasion of the sovereign nation of Ukraine while another theme was opposition to NATO. The following branches posted photos and information about their demonstrations to the WILPF SMART Facebook page: **Greater Phoenix, AZ; Humboldt, CA; Peninsula/Palo Alto, CA; Columbus, GA; Brunswick, ME; Detroit, MI; and Philadelphia, PA**. Here are some details of these and other protests:

The **Greater Phoenix Branch** posted a collage of photos from their event on March 6 at 24th and Camelback, a busy office and retail area in downtown Phoenix. Signs displayed included one in vibrant blue that read: "Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)".

The **Peninsula/Palo Alto Branch** designed a flyer that they distributed around the community and listed on calendars with a coalition of peace and justice activists. On March 6, the local Raging Action Grannies stood together in their traditional costumes on our usual corner at a busy intersection near the Stanford University campus and were joined by more than 130 other vigil attendees who answered the call for peace and nuclear disarmament.

A coalition of North Carolina peace and justice organizations, including WILPF's **Triangle Branch**, joined in a Triangle-area vigil for peace from 2 to 3 p.m. on March 6, at Peace and Justice Plaza in Chapel Hill. Protesters called for an immediate ceasefire, sincere negoti-

ations, and the delivery of humanitarian aid to those in peril and to war refugees.

The **Fannie Lou Hamer Branch** (Columbus, GA) demonstrated with a press conference on Sunday, March 6, from 3-4 pm at the Columbus Consolidated Government Center.

Tax Day



To recognize #TaxDayEarthDay this year, **Maine Branch** WILPFers participated in a Pop-Up Art Exhibit at Congress Square Park in Portland featuring the #DefundClimateChaos project's six artist panels that were assembled at home and transported to the park. Organizers handed out Veterans for Peace (VFP) Climate Crisis & Militarism Project bumper stickers: "US militarism fuels climate crisis" and posted National Priority's Pie Chart of discretionary tax dollar spending.

Marchers on April 15th, including members of the **Peninsula/Palo Alto Branch**, arrived at the Lockheed Martin facility at the top of the hill. Afterward, they stood on both sides of the road with signs and banners while cars, trucks, and bicycles passed by. The Grannies led the group in song, then delivered a petition with 4,000 signatures urging Lockheed Martin to immediately convert from weapons manufacturing to "peaceful industries" for economic, environmental, and survival reasons. Marchers refreshed themselves for the mile walk back down the hill by cutting into a pentagon-shaped cake to symbolically cut the Pentagon's budget and redirect it to peaceful production.



Support Listening to Women for a Change Take the LOVE Donation Challenge!



WILPF US members like you are passionate, experienced activists who advocate for a wide range of peace and justice issues. The picture above captures that passion at the Factory Farm Moratorium protest that the Des Moines branch organized on Valentine's Day – February 14, 2022. Jan Corderman, Des Moines Branch leadership team, states: "We picketed...to let our legislators and the public know our true motivation: LOVE. Love for clean water, love for independent farmers, and love for future generations of Iowans who deserve the best Iowa we can give them."

Love Put Into Action

At WILPF we believe that as feminist peace and social justice activists we have a unique voice to offer to this world – one that advocates for the peace and well-being of all life on this planet. We understand that we are all connected, and we want a world that works for everyone. It's truly OUR LOVE put into action, and it's time that folks **listen to women for a change!**

At this time, we need **your individual LOVE put into action to help WILPF continue our collective love actions.** We so appreciate your dues payments and any extra donations you have made after the Spring Appeal. However, as the one WILPF family (just like other families), we

need to make sure money is consistently coming into our WILPF house to make our budget.

Take the LOVE Donation Challenge

Will you take the LOVE donation challenge TODAY? Sign up now to make a **recurring LOVE donation** that will be made once a month to your credit or debit card. A recurring donation can be as small as \$5 or \$10 and can help us get our voices out there – so we can be heard!

Visit www.wilpfus.org
and take the LOVE donation
challenge now!