

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom: *Aotearoa Section*



Newsletter June 2019

*WILPF women attended the March for Love, on 23 March, which was held in response to the mass shootings at the Linwood Avenue and Al Noor Mosques in Christchurch on 15 March. Otautahi WILPF woman **Irinka Britnell** reports and shares her photos.*

Everyone has been in shock and grief, but doing positive actions has made us feel better. You could really feel the love on the March for Love.

There was several thousand people there on a lovely sunny day. We assembled in Hagley Park with music and speeches from Muslim and Community leaders. The Mayor, Lianne Dalziel, praised the young student organisers for their initiative.

Once we arrived at the Floral Tributes at the Botanical Gardens (pictured right) we got 'stuck' with the WILPF banner because so many people wanted to be photographed with it. We felt really proud to be carrying such a positive message that was so appropriate.

WILPF is more relevant than ever.



Photos by Irinka Britnell (above left)



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President's report for 2018 *Megan Hutching*

In August I attended the 32nd WILPF International Congress held in Accra, Ghana. I had been a member of the Congress Standing Committee, helping to organise Congress which was the first to be held in Africa. The Congress theme was 'Building a Feminist Peace Movement'.

WILPF now has a new international structure, with an international president (Joy Onyesoh), two vice presidents (Melissa Torres and Margrethe Tingstad), and an International Board with representatives from the five WILPF regions. The Asia-Pacific International Board member is Kozue Akibayashi (and the alternate is Janette McLeod). Celine Kearney is our Aotearoa liaison person for the regional meetings, with Lucy Stewart as alternate.

I circulated a report from Congress to WILPF Aotearoa members after my return. Thank you for the opportunity to attend.

The Section AGM was held in Auckland on 24 March 2018. Thanks to WILPF Tamaki Makaurau for hosting us. The Section Executive Committee is currently MH (president), Celine Kearney, Suzanne

Loughlin and Edwina Hughes (co-ordinators), Claire Gregory (treasurer), Prue Stringer (Otautahi branch), Joy Davies-Payne (Wellington branch), Ruth Coombes and Helen Sumich (Tamaki Makaurau branch). We have been having meetings every two months via Zoom.

In the afternoon of the AGM, we held a brainstorming session on the future of WILPF Aotearoa, with a particular focus on encouraging young women to get involved. A major theme was the need to develop projects which women could be involved with, and that we need to make the effort to engage with students at secondary and tertiary level. Currently, we take part in activities that are organised by other groups, but we do not have any projects that are focused on WILPF and WILPF priorities.

The notes from that session have been circulated to members. At this 2019 AGM, we will spend the afternoon developing a plan of work for the next few years using the WILPF International Programme, and I hope that part of that will be a project which we can work on together as a Section and in the branches.

One outcome of our discussion at the last AGM is that Kate Dewes and the Otautahi branch have been working to encourage new members. The plan is for the Otautahi branch to become a wider, South Island group.

In May I attended a meeting with the Minister of Disarmament, Winston Peters in Wellington along with representatives from other peace and disarmament groups. Suzanne Loughlin and I also met with MP Louisa Wall to brief her on the Women Peace and Security agenda, and New Zealand's National Action Plan. In January this year I spoke at the launch of the photographic exhibition, 'Women and War: Voices for Peace'.

Communications

Newsletters – Celine Kearney has produced two newsletters during the year which have been circulated to members by email. We no longer produce printed newsletters. We have also circulated information and notices of events by email.

I also circulate the monthly international WILPF News by email. Our Facebook page is managed by Edwina Hughes, Del Abcede, Suzanne Loughlin and me, while I manage the website.

Section Co-ordinators' 2018 Report *Suzanne Loughlin, Edwina Hughes and Celine Kearney*

Letters and submissions went to:

Finance Minister, Grant Robertson
- about funding for nurses vs military
Associate Minister of Education, Kelvin Davis
- about teaching Te Reo in schools
Minister of Conservation, Eugenie Sage
and Housing Minister, Phil Twyford
- about Ihumaatao
Minister of Justice, Andrew Little
- about prison numbers
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Winston Peters
- about Women Peace and Security
National Action Plan and Official
Development Assistance Review
Labour MP, Louisa Wall
- re Women Peace & Security Agenda
The New Zealand Jewish Council
- solidarity after terrorist attack in United States
The Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern, and others
- urging a change in gun legislation
Letters of sympathy and solidarity to the Muslim Federation and Muslim Association of New Zealand after the Christchurch terror attacks in March.

Submission on Draft Guidelines for Schools Developing a Firearms Policy.
Joint submission on Child Poverty Reduction Bill.

AGM notes recorded and circulated.

WILPF Otautahi branch report 2018 *Irinka Britnell and Prue Stringer*

After the mosque massacres our WILPF banner/message was very well received at the March for Love.

A WILPF stall was held at Culture Galore festival in February. Eve Walker, who attended the stall (below) spoke to a lot of people, gave away lots of badges, and made a few sales.



We are booking the World Peace Bell site for our Hiroshima/Nagasaki commemoration on Sunday 11th August.

We are delighted to be sending two Dunedin women up to the AGM in Auckland. We are developing plans for a South Island WILPF network.

WILPF Tamaki Makaurau branch report 2018

Megan Hutching

We combined our annual Matariki meeting with our branch AGM on 30 June. The branch co-ordinator is Megan Hutching, and committee members are Del Abcede, Ruth Coombes, Claire Gregory, Tamsin Kingston (treasurer), Nola Smith, Helen Sumich, and Angelina Weir.

The branch hosted the Section AGM in March 2018.

We ran our annual commemoration of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the Auckland Domain Wintergardens on Sunday 5 August.

Branch member, Kathy Ross co-ordinated a peace craft stall at the Myers Park Medley in the city in February, and at the Festival of Roses in Parnell in November. Members helped out on the stalls which were a good opportunity to publicise WILPF and our work.

This year was the 125th anniversary of women voting in New Zealand, and we held our usual celebration of the event at the Devonport Library on 25 November. Thanks, as usual, to Ruth Coombes who organises the event.

At our end of year meeting in December, Rebekah Jaung and colleagues from the Aotearoa Statue of Peace Association spoke to us about the history of Japanese military sexual slavery during the 1930s and the Second World War, and their wish to erect a statue to commemorate the women used as sex slaves during this time.

Issues that we have worked on during the year are the compulsory teaching of te reo in schools, and Education Ministry firearms in schools guidelines. We have maintained our connection with SOUL (Save Our Unique Landscape) at

Ihumaatao, who are struggling to reclaim their land which was confiscated during the New Zealand Wars, and has been sold to Fletchers for a housing development. WILPF TM members have attended events at the kaitiaki village there.

Branch members also organised and participated in Anzac Day vigils and Armistice Day vigils to remind passers-by that war is not the solution to international conflict.

We continue to raise funds through catering events for other NGOs and community groups.

Ruth Coombes and Del Abcede attend the monthly meetings of the Auckland branch of NCWNZ on our behalf. Branch members Nola Smith and Beverley Turner manage the Human Rights Network email message list.

Peace Movement Aotearoa (PMA) 2018 Report to WILPF AGM

Claire and Linley Gregory

Since the last WILPF AGM, Peace Movement Aotearoa has continued to produce their own publications, to provide information on specific topics on request, to meet with peace and related groups around the country, to speak at local and national meetings, to regularly update their web site and Facebook page, to provide information for publications by others on a variety of peace related topics, and to publicise peace events and funding opportunities, including the QPSANZ Local Peace Grants and Loxley Award.

Peace Movement Aotearoa provides national coordination for six global humanitarian disarmament campaigns: Child Soldiers International, International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons - the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate - Aotearoa NZ (iCAN ANZ), ANZ Cluster Munition and Landmines Joint Working

Group, ANZ Campaign to Stop Killer Robots (ANZCSKR), ANZ Campaign on Military Spending (ANZCOM), and the Network on Explosive Weapons; and for the WW1 Centenary Peace Project.

They maintain extensive topic focused national networks for each campaign, and on other issues including conscientious objection, Christian peace solidarity, the Treaty of Waitangi and human rights, depleted uranium weapons, and support for non-violent initiatives. They provide web pages for member groups such as the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship; for ANZCSKR, ANZCOM, iCAN ANZ, Matike Mai Aotearoa, White Poppies for Peace and the White Poppy Peace Scholarships; and the NZ disarmament statements online resource.

PMA has produced updates and alerts on a wide range of issues, including: NZ military spending, deployments and exercises; militarism, militarisation, divestment, climate change and climate justice; socio-economic inequality; issues around firearms in schools and gun control; Waitangi Tribunal reports; a variety of UN peace, disarmament and human rights developments; and opportunities for submissions to parliament, as well as to a range of UN bodies. In addition, they have continued to publicise and provide resources for specific national and international days throughout the year, from Waitangi Day in February to Human Rights Day in December.

The Coordinator, Edwina Hughes, has spoken and provided presentations at meetings, conferences and events throughout the country over the past year. Last October, MFAT nominated her to serve on the Public Advisory Committee for Disarmament and Arms Control (PACDAC) in recognition of her longstanding work for peace. Other highlights over the past year include:

hosting iCAN's Nobel Peace Prize, participation in the Pacific diplomatic and youth conferences on the nuclear ban treaty, hosting 'Peace, Peoples and Planet' (the 2018 National Peace Workshops), coordinating NGO reports for NZ's third Universal Periodic Review, the development of Peace Movement Aotearoa's Youth Disarmament Project and the Disarmament Hub, and progress on gun control.

WILPF member Ema Tagicakibau's Doctoral thesis entitled 'Gender and Militarization in Fiji' was submitted for examination at Auckland University, in July 2018, and successfully defended in January 2019.



Ema is pictured above speaking in 2017 at a celebration for New Zealand's nuclear free legislation

The thesis examines the way that militarism shapes the construction of gender and its intersection with other social identities such as ethnicity, class and status, in Fiji's four military coups between 1987 and 2006.

The research highlights three key findings: First, that the coups are a manifestation of violent, culturally-sanctioned masculinist norms. These intersect with race and status, and are aided by the military's abuse of its legitimate access to arms and the use of force.

The study highlights a contradiction between two key roles of the Fiji military

following independence, its participation in global peacekeeping and perpetrating local coups, which generates a “crisis” in masculinity. This crisis arises from the discrepancy of a soldier who is trained for combat, doing peacekeeping instead. As they struggle to cope with the crisis, returning peacekeepers have subjected women and children to violence in the home. Women’s burden of violence in the home, parallels that borne by Fiji citizens at national level through successive coups.

Secondly, the long-standing patronage (patron-client) relationship between the chiefly ruling classes and senior military officers, which goes back to pre-independence era, has benefited only a select group in Fiji to the detriment of the nation.

While the original coups were justified to restore power to the ruling chiefly class who had lost out in the elections, ironically, each coup had become a symptom of the declining power of the chiefs. As the Great Council of Chiefs became the biggest casualty of the coups, its place had now been taken over by a military elite emboldened by the success of their coups, and to whom the chiefs were now beholden.

Thirdly, while women in general – apart from a few women of chiefly status or related to the military elite – were excluded from the benefits of patronage relations, they were able to develop and strengthen their capacity for political and social agency in response to the oppressive conditions of militarization, instead of seeing themselves as victims of circumstances. Women’s capacity for agency is a key highlight of this research.

Ema has also been appointed a member of the Public Advisory Committee for Disarmament and Arms Control (PACDAC).

Liz Remmerswaal, WILPFer from the Hawkes Bay, and World Beyond War Aotearoa coordinator reports

Almost 50 people attended the Peace Picnic on the Parliament lawn in Wellington on the first day Parliament met for 2019, 12 February, where we presented our petition to Green MP spokesperson on Defence, Golriz Ghahraman on the steps of Parliament.

The petition asks the government to reconsider spending \$2.3 billion on four Poseidon aircraft with highly sophisticated international equipment which kill submarines. They are far in excess of what is required to patrol our waters and safeguard New Zealand's security, which would cost a fraction of this amount.



Pictured above: Green MP and Defence Spokesperson, Golriz Ghahraman and Liz Remmerswaal on the steps of Parliament

The Daughters of Gaia celebrate Pauline Tangiora’s work with the Indigenous Grandmothers through creating and facilitation of a Labyrinth of Light.

In April a group of women from Arboleda de Gaia from a number of European countries, accompanied by several men folk, honoured Pauline at her home on the Mahia Peninsula, on the East Coast of the North Island.

WILPF women Ruth Coombes and her son, and Celine Kearney and her partner Andy, made the journey to honour Pauline's work. **Celine** backgrounds the women of Arboleda de Gaia, and describes her experience of the labyrinth. (Photos: Andrew Hammond.)

A blog about the women explains, 'The Grove of the Daughters of Gaia was created by Marianna García Legar and forty women who came to her call in February 2002, after 10 years of different experiences working with women's circles.

They understand that in a world where patriarchal neoliberalism does not cease to lead men and women to war, and the extermination of nature, it is the feminine aspect of life that needs to be healed.

Their mission is to honour the feminine nature in the world so that this change of consciousness expands towards the whole environment and heals, remedies, nurtures, shelters and defends the survival of all beings and our home: the Earth.

Arboleda de Gaia is formed by free circles of women who in 18 cities of the Spanish state celebrate the festivities of the Wheel of the Year meeting in synchrony with the Moon

The labyrinth of light is a tool of contemplation, from mental silence or prayer, to offer its light invoking peace, and unity among all beings and commitment to the recovery of the health of the earth.

Going through it, we make a pilgrimage to the center until we merge into a single heart that awakens and radiates the consciousness of love and unity towards all sentient beings."

www.lavozdelaarboleda.blogspot.com

The Labyrinth on the Mahia Peninsula

It had been raining and wild weather on the peninsula for several days beforehand. But the evening of the ritual was clear, if cold.

The labyrinth of at least two hundred jars with candles was set up on the grounds of the local Mahia school. The two colours of the labyrinth represent female (red) and male (white). The incense the women waved around the labyrinth came from Pauline's log fire, carried in formal procession down to the labyrinth site by the women. Local people, young and older, gathered to join the celebration.

It was very touching to listen as one of the women of Arboleda de Gaia spoke of their admiration for Pauline's work and their love for her.



The ritual began with the sound of a conch. Pauline was invited to walk the labyrinth first. She was assisted as she wasn't able to walk comfortably. Outside the labyrinth, the women circled individually, dancing in their flowing white garments, spreading incense.



Once Pauline had completed the labyrinth, local children and adults, and visitors, then the women proceeded in their own ritual through the labyrinth.

I can only imagine the stories the children would have had for school the next day.



For me the ritual was mesmerising.

The labyrinth, as a symbol and a practice, is thousands of years old, and powerful for that. The realisation too that the women and their men had flown across the world, to offer this gift to Pauline underlined how extraordinary it was to have the Labyrinth of Light ritual here in Aotearoa.

There was a magical moment when the clouds parted and the moon shone clearly on the women, who seemed to me priestesses of this ancient tradition which honours women and the feminine, while they circled in celebration and prayer, affirming the preciousness of the Earth and of life and the need to nurture it.



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Young WILPF – YWILPF

<https://www.wilpf.org/our-members/#young>

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Vice-President: Pauline Tangiora

Section Treasurer: Tamsin Kingston

Section Co-ordinators

Edwina Hughes, Celine Kearney,
Suzanne Loughlin

Congratulations to two WILPF members: Beverley Turner has been awarded an ONZM in the Queen's Birthday Honours. Jane Prichard has been awarded a CNZM. The contribution of both women to women's organisations has been long and distinguished.

Korea Peace Now

This is a women-led initiative and is a global coalition of women's peace organizations calling on the United States, North Korea, South Korea, and China to end the Korean War, sign a peace agreement, and to include women in the peace processes. New Zealand military personnel are still stationed on the Korean

peninsula as part of an international military force, so WILPF Aotearoa will be asking our government that they be brought home, and that the government also works towards a formal end to the Korean War.

Women have been at the forefront of social movements calling for peace on the Korean Peninsula. Despite this, there are very few women involved in the official Korea peace process.

For the Korea peace process to be successful, women must have a seat at the table.

Research shows that the participation of civil society groups, including women's organizations, makes a peace agreement 64 percent less likely to fail. And when women participate in peace processes, the resulting agreements are 35 percent more likely to last at least 15 years. From Liberia to Northern Ireland, women have been instrumental in making peace agreements.

Including women's equal participation and meaningful involvement in peace processes is also a commitment of both UN Security Council Resolution 1325 of 2000 and the U.S.'s Women, Peace and Security Act of 2017, which recognize the crucial role that women play in conflict prevention, management, and resolution.

More information here:

www.koreapeacenow.org

