

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom: Aotearoa Section Newsletter December 2017



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WILPF International president Kozue Akibayashi visits WILPF Aotearoa

Megan Hutching writes:

In early August WILPF Aotearoa hosted a visit by Kozue which was a mixture of meetings, interviews and the commemoration to mark the anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.

We began with a shared meal with members of the Tamaki Makaurau (Auckland branch) on Friday 4 August. On Saturday we met at the Friends Meeting House for the Asia-Pacific regional meeting organised by WILPF Australia and hosted by Kerry McGovern, using Zoom. It was great to see other WILPF members from around the region – Roti Make from Tahiti Polynesia, Cherry Padilla from the Philippines, Noriko Tada from Japan and

many, many WILPF sisters from Australia, as well as members here in New Zealand. We really appreciated hearing Kozue talk about the work being done on WILPF's organisational structure and constitution.



Kozue addresses the Hiroshima/Nagasaki commemorations in Tamaki Makaurau

Kozue spoke about feminist peace making, disarmament and the United States bases in Okinawa at a well-attended public meeting, on Sunday 6 August before taking part in our annual Hiroshima and Nagasaki commemoration where she told the story of Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes. There were also musical items and speeches and then we lit candles to mark the deaths of those who perished in 1945.



(Back, L to R) Rae Martell, Helen Sumich, Linley Gregory, Suzanne Loughlin, Megan Hutching, Claire Gregory, Robyn Short . (Front) Pauline Tangiora, Kozue Akibayashi. Photographs: Ruth Coombes

Nobel Peace Prize congratulations

Edwina Hughes iCAN-ANZ Co-ordinator reports

iCAN Aotearoa (**iCAN-ANZ**) is the national campaign of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons. Established in 2011, it is coordinated by Peace Movement Aotearoa, and has 19 supporting groups, including WILPF Aotearoa.

iCAN-ANZ's goal has been encouraging the NZ Government to take a leading role in negotiations for a nuclear ban treaty (the focus of the petition to parliament in 2012), and we were very pleased with the shift in policy towards that goal in the middle of last year.

Nobel Peace Prize awarded to iCAN

On 6 October, the Nobel Committee announced it had decided to award the Nobel Peace Prize for 2017 to **iCAN**: "The organization is receiving the award for its work to draw attention to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and for its ground-breaking efforts to achieve a treaty-based prohibition of such weapons. We live in a world where the risk of nuclear weapons being used is greater than it has been for a long time. Some states are modernizing their nuclear arsenals, and there is a real danger that more countries will try to procure nuclear weapons, as exemplified by North Korea. Nuclear weapons pose a constant threat to humanity and all life on earth. Through binding

international agreements, the international community has previously adopted prohibitions against land mines, cluster munitions and biological and chemical weapons.



"Nuclear weapons are even more destructive, but have not yet been made the object of a similar international legal prohibition.

"Through its work, ICAN has helped to fill this legal gap." ... "It is now 71 years since the UN General Assembly, in its very first resolution, advocated the importance of nuclear disarmament and a nuclear weapon-free world. With this year's award, the Norwegian Nobel Committee wishes to pay tribute to **iCAN** for giving new momentum to the efforts to achieve this goal."

iCAN-ANZ's statement in response to the Nobel Peace Prize:

"Congratulations from **iCAN** Aotearoa New Zealand to international **iCAN**, the other **iCAN** national campaigns and **iCAN** partner organisations, and the countless organisations and individuals who have worked so hard for a nuclear weapons-free world since 1945.

With this news today, we remember those around the world who have paid the price for the nuclear weapons states insane pursuit of nuclear weapons supremacy with their health and lives, particularly the indigenous communities in the Pacific who have been so harmed by uranium mining, nuclear bomb blasts and nuclear waste dumping, and the courageous campaigners for a nuclear free and independent Pacific who have opposed - and continue to oppose - colonisation in its many forms.”

Radio NZ picked up the Pacific theme in a lengthy interview with the iCANZ Coordinator, and the brief written story included “the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize is a timely reminder of the impact the weapons have had on the Pacific”.

The Treaty text, the Nobel Committee’s announcement, and media releases and coverage of these three developments are available on the iCANZ web site, <http://www.icanw.org.nz>

Backgrounder

Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons - the UN negotiating conference reached a successful conclusion on 7 July with the adoption of the new ban Treaty text, the first global prohibition on nuclear weapons. NZ was a Vice President of the UN Conference and played a leading role in building support for a ban treaty, with the MFAT disarmament team working tirelessly over the past five years as the humanitarian disarmament initiative to ban nuclear weapons gathered momentum to achieve this long awaited and crucial goal - its potential to end the threat of nuclear destruction is a gift for future generations.

The Treaty bans the development, testing, production, manufacture, possession, transfer, use or threat of use, deployment, installation or stationing of nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices, as well as assistance,



Edwina Hughes speaking at the 30th anniversary of NZ's nuclear free legislation at Devonport Artspace

encouragement or inducement of any of these prohibited activities. It provides a pathway for nuclear-armed states to join the Treaty and destroy their nuclear weapons in a time-bound, verifiable and irreversible manner.

The Treaty recognizes the ethical imperatives for nuclear disarmament, the urgency of achieving a nuclear weapon-free world, and the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons. It acknowledges the unacceptable suffering of the atomic bomb and nuclear test survivors, and the disproportionate impact that nuclear weapons and related activities have on indigenous peoples, women and girls.

The Treaty contains provisions for assistance to those affected by nuclear weapons testing and use, as well as for environmental remediation of areas affected by nuclear weapons testing and use - a welcome development for the Pacific, a region that has been irreparably harmed by more than 350 full scale nuclear weapon detonations conducted by Britain, France and the USA since 1 July 1946.

The Treaty will enter into force 90 days after the 50th ratification.

Treaty opening for signature New Zealand was one of the first 50 states to sign the new Treaty when it opened for signature at UN Headquarters in New York on 20 September; and there were three ratifications (Guyana, Thailand and the Holy See) on the day. Then Foreign Minister Gerry Brownlee described NZ's signing at the first opportunity as "consistent with New Zealand's long-standing commitment to international nuclear disarmament efforts".

The NZ Nuclear Free Zone, Disarmament, and Arms Control Act 1987 will need to be amended before NZ can ratify the ban Treaty - iCANZ is closely monitoring what's happening around that, and will send out an update as soon as the new government's legislative programme is confirmed.



Natasha Barnes and Kate Dewes on a panel in Otautahi Photos supplied by Kate Dewes.

Aotearoa WILPF celebrates 30 years nuclear free

In June 1987, the Nuclear Free Zone, Disarmament and Arms Control Act, was passed. This legislation made Aotearoa New Zealand a nuclear-free zone.

WILPF women were a part of the movement that achieved this, active in the neighbourhood peace groups, on marches, at meetings, writing letters and pushing our politicians to pass the legislation. We

celebrate them, remembering the energy and commitment of our WILPF sisters who have passed on.

Kate Dewes reports from Otautahi:

WILPF Otautahi joined with the Disarmament and Security Centre to organise an event at the World Peace Bell to mark the 30th anniversary of New Zealand's nuclear free policy.

We marched from the Bell to the Museum carrying anti-nuclear banners into the Museum where we held a panel discussion featuring speeches by City Councillor Phil Clearwater, former Labour MP Graeme Kelly, Natasha Barnes and Kate Dewes.



Left to right: Libby Rees, Kathleen Gallagher, Kate Dewes, Irinka Britnell, Diana Laws, Jeanie Murtagh, Prue Stringer. In front is Anne Marie Thompson (Left) and another supporter.

There was a museum display featuring the nuclear free legislation and the World Court Project which has been travelling around local libraries over the last year. On 6 August we also gathered at the Peace Bell at 11am to mark Hiroshima Day.

Celine Kearney reports from Tamaki Makaurau

A gathering at Devonport Artspace gallery, supported by the Devonport Peace Group, shared in the memories brought back by the

photographs of documentary photographers Gill Hanly and John Miller.

Megan gave the welcome, in her role as WILPF president, and was followed by speakers who momentarily brought back those heady days. Among them were several WILPF women: Ema Tagicakibau who spoke from her experience in the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific (NFIP) movement said that the greatest challenge now to encourage young people to continue to be active. Claire Gregory spoke on behalf of The Society of Friends, and Edwina Hughes for Peace Movement Aotearoa. Dr David Robie reminded us that in the wider Pacific other nations made similar nuclear free declarations and faced significant opposition.



Above: Dr David Robie, Megan Hutching and Pauline Tangiora who cut the ceremonial birthday cake.



Above: WILPF member Irene Johnson and event co-ordinator Ruth Coombes

Below: Ema Tagicakibau Photos: Megan Hutching



Remembrances

Remembering Leona Fay: Died 16 May 2017, in Otautahi/Christchurch, aged 81.

Leona Fay was an early member and secretary of WILPF Otautahi. She was very involved in the group giving guidance and support especially to our younger members, and sage advice to some of the older ones too. She was also active in a Women's Spirituality group and attended U3A meetings.

When she moved into the Merivale Retirement Home, after being diagnosed with MS, she initiated 'Sharing our Stories' sessions for the residents and conducted 'Remembrance' gatherings for residents and bereaved families.

She had been a Vice President of the Christchurch Teacher's College Executive, and taught at Ilam Primary's new entrants' class, and at Leeston Consolidated Primary School. Later she worked for the Education Department doing teacher training and reading recovery at Ellesmere College. She described herself as 'top student, top grades and teacher's pet' as a pupil herself. Later she trained in information technology and

in the final phase of her career she taught this as the Teacher Librarian at Papanui High school.

She loved surfing the internet and was more concerned with world issues than Bridge. According to her grandson 'no matter how often she was knocked back, she carried on with optimism, determination and positivity.' These challenges, included losing her first husband at 26, following the death of her baby son, and living with MS for 20 years, were overcome with 'resilience and grace'. She loved nature.



(L to R) Kate Dewes, Leona Faye and friend Bun Hashizume - an hibakusha from Hiroshima

She was involved in Playcentre and was a member of the Anglican Synod and a lay reader. She attended the Mother's Union and the Women's Institute. After moving to Christchurch, Leona read widely on spirituality and became a Baha'i. She embraced Maori tikanga, and in particular Maori grieving rituals. She trained as a celebrant and conducted family funerals and naming ceremonies. Her guiding principle was 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you'. Her words of advice to her family and friends were, 'This world is a beautiful, beautiful place, enjoy it. Just look at the colours in the trees and the flowers. And have fun. I love to laugh. Yes, laugh a lot and have fun.'

Thanks to Jen Margaret and other members of Leona's family for these memories shared at Leona's funeral. (Kate Dewes)



Prue Stringer signs the remembrance book for Leona's family

Remembering Dame Nganeko Minhinnick

Dame Nganeko Minhinnick led environmental stewardship and kaitiakitanga in the Auckland and Waikato region. Her loss will be sorely felt amongst her people of Ngāti Te Ata and Waikato iwi. Dame Nganeko was a formidable presence who spent her lifetime advocating for environmental issues. She spearheaded the Manukau claim which was heard in 1985 and challenged the effects of development on the health of the Manukau harbour.

Consequently Dame Nganeko was also a leader in achieving policy and legislative change that provided for Māori aspiration. The Manukau claim highlighted the lack of regard that the Town and Country Planning Act had for Māori concepts and values such as mauri and kaitiakitanga which have since become commonplace in modern environmental practices. Some would attribute the strength of her advocacy to the inclusions of such concepts in the Resource Management Act.



She was a mother, a grandmother a matriarch for her whānau and people of Ngāti Te Ata, growing up for most of her life in Waiuku near the Manukau harbour and the Waikato River. Nganeko fought long and hard to see the protection and care of wāhi tapu impacted by Glenbrook Steel Mill. In recent times Dame Nganeko had been invited to address several indigenous forums to share her perspectives, experience and encourage other indigenous groups to take a stand for social, cultural and environmental justice.

Story and pictures from Maori Television: June 2017

Ra Maumahara, October 28, 2017: A National Commemoration

Celine Kearney reflects:

There is now a national day of commemoration set aside to remember the war that took place in this land, the war which alienated Maori from their land. It is held on October 28. It began this year.

To help Pakeha WILPF members understand our own history I recommend Vincent O'Malley's book, *The Great War for New Zealand: Waikato 1800-2000*.

Coinciding with commemorations of the New Zealand Wars is a documentary which highlights Northland's most infamous armed conflict. Entitled 'The Stories of Ruapekapeka' it is hosted by Radio NZ's Māori Issues Correspondent Mihingarangi Forbes, and was made alongside Great Southern Television with funding from NZ on Air. You can access it at the link below -

<http://www.radionz.co.nz/programmes/nz-wars/story/2018619186/nz-wars-the-stories-of-ruapekapeka>

WILPF International News

I am involved in the planning for next year's WILPF Congress which will be held in mid-August in Accra, Ghana. After the celebrations of 100 years in The Hague in 2015, this Congress will be a return to the business meetings of the past. Holding it in Ghana means we will have the opportunity to learn more about the issues facing women there, and in other African countries.

One of the issues we will be discussing at Congress is a change to the international constitution to change the governance structure. At present, we have an international president (Kozue Akibayashi) and four international vice presidents who make up the international Executive Committee, along with the treasurer (Kerry McGovern) and Madeleine Rees, the Secretary General. There is also an International Board which consists of one person from each Section. It's all a bit unwieldy and so the proposal is for WILPF to be divided into regions, and a representative from each region will be elected. These representatives, along with the international office holders, will make up the new decision-making body.

Not everyone thinks it is a good idea. Individual Section's voices may get lost.

Some regions are geographically vast – ours of the Asia Pacific is a good example – and yet have few Sections, while others are smaller but have higher numbers of Sections. In some regions – and again, ours is a good example – the issues for Sections are vastly different.

It will be interesting to see what happens.

You can always keep up with what is happening at international WILPF here: www.wilpf.org

Megan Hutching

Celebrating women's first vote in Aotearoa in November 1893

Ruth Coombes reports:

Women voted for the first time on 28 November 1893. The primary polling booth for the Eden electorate was the Devonport Borough Council building, where the Devonport library is now. On Sunday 26 October about 50 people gathered in the library to celebrate this momentous occasion.

Megan Hutching introduced the event and managed the order of the afternoon.

Sonia Wilson supported by her partner, Nigel Gavin who are members of local band Tainui Tuesdays, sang several songs with the audience joining in the chorus. She has a most beautiful and expressive voice. Sonia chose songs that reflected the role of men who supported the suffrage movement without whom the Bill would never have passed.

Two women shared their stories of family connections to names on documents from that time.

Tessa Duder is related by marriage to Mary Anne Duder who lived in Devonport and

was recorded on the Eden electoral roll of 1893. Tessa has done some research into the family and made the point that there is a lack of information about women's activities in the historical record. Unless women kept diaries or saved letters that have been passed down, their voices have vanished.

Helen Pollock's grandmother signed the 1893 petition. She worked as a tailoress in Dunedin and probably belonged to the Dunedin Tailoresses Union whose secretary was Harriet Morison. Morison's strong support for the suffrage campaign is recognised by her inclusion on the Christchurch Suffrage Memorial.

One of the Devonport - Takapuna Community Board members, Mike Cohen raised concerns about the youth vote and their lack of interest in politics. Certainly an issue we are all concerned about. He commented that the vote for women was a hard fought campaign with many sacrifices made by those involved and much more education and promotion is needed.

The other musical contribution came from the Rose Singers whose songs from the protests movements of the '60s and '70s were much appreciated, particularly as we knew all the words and could join in. Fruit cake made using a recipe from that era, quickly disappeared and few crumbs were left behind.

There is such a wealth of creative talent in our community, and we are so lucky that people are prepared to give their time to share their music.

The event was organised by WILPF, and supported by the National Council of Women and locals Corelli's Café, The Depot Artspace and the Bunker Folk Club.



Sonia Wilson. Photo: Ruth Coombes

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Ruth Coombes. Photo: Del Abcede



WILPF member Del Abcede reminds us there is no peace without justice