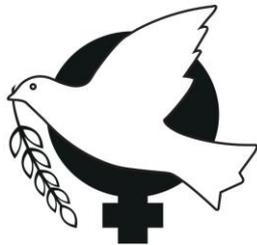


Women's International League for Peace and Freedom: Aotearoa Section



WILPF

Newsletter June 2018

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2017 Aotearoa Section report: President, Megan Hutching

Communications: WILPF Aotearoa website and Facebook page. I manage the website, while Suzanne Loughlin, Del Abcede, Edwina Hughes and I manage the Facebook page. **Newsletters** – Celine Kearney has produced a number of formal newsletters during the year which have been circulated to members by email. A very small number are still printed. We have also circulated information and notices of events by email.

Communications between WILPF International and the Section. These are more frequent, partly because of the changes mentioned below, but also because the international secretariat is working to make all members and sections feel they are part of an international organisation, not just a member of their section.

WILPF International president, Kozue Akibayashi, visited New Zealand 4-9 August, hosted by Tamaki Makaurau branch. (A report of her visit is in the branch report below).

Changes to WILPF International constitution and international representation.

These have been discussed, and an Asia-Pacific regional meeting was organised (via Zoom) while Kozue was here. The changes will mean that instead of an international executive committee consisting of the international president, international treasurer and four international vice presidents, and an International Board made up of representatives from each of the WILPF Sections, there will be a new International Board consisting of the president, treasurer, two vice presidents, and a representative (and alternate) elected from each of the WILPF regions. The new Board will be elected at the next Congress in Ghana in August this year. Nominations for these positions are being sought at the moment. Possibilities to be discussed at the 2018 AGM.

International Congress 2018. I am a member of the Steering Committee. Congress will be held in Accra, Ghana in August. (Update later in this newsletter)

NCWNZ. While I did not attend the annual meeting in 2017 I did draft and submit remits on water quality and military versus social spending on behalf of WILPF. Neither were adopted. Remits for 2018 were due in May.

The Section AGM was held in Wellington on 21 and 22 April 2017. Thanks to Wellington branch for hosting us. It was the usual business meeting, with a public session on Saturday afternoon, 3-5 p.m. – a panel of NGO women spoke on the domestic application of the Women Peace & Security agenda in Aotearoa NZ. Liz Remmerswaal resigned from the Section executive during the year. We accepted her resignation with thanks for her work during the time she held the role.

Letters and submissions: Media release asking for public enquiry into reported SAS murder of civilians in Afghanistan, as reported in *Law and Order* book. Letter to Minister of Defence, asking same. Letter about water quality sent to Minister Nick Smith. Submission sent to NCW regarding changes to constitution (make up of nominations committee for NCWNZ board members). Reply from Green MP, David Clendon re letter on prisons, suggesting a meeting. Letter to Australian High Commissioner regarding Australia's refusal to participate in UN nuclear ban negotiations

Co-Vice President Pauline Tangiora's 2017 report.

Letter written to Minister of Environment challenging sewage outflow into the Wairoa river. Attended a Human Rights Commission meeting in Gisborne which focused on our inhumane prison system: women prisoners in Arohata in Wellington are being doubled-up in order to be able to house them. Supported mothers being placed outside the prison walls. Continuing to push for our government's ratification of the United Nations Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Involved in a blessing with The Grandmothers Circle in the United States Santa Fe: asked to bless a new pyramid made of rocks, dedicated to the universe. Spoke at four schools, a university, two polytechnics and did a radio interview. Travelled to Bremen in Germany to receive an international peace prize: money from the

prize went to a local school for books and IT requirements. Received a fellowship from the Sacred Fire Foundation, to be awarded July 26th (More details later in the newsletter).

Co-Vice President Liz Remmerswaal 2017

Last year I was re-elected co vice president at the AGM. During that time I was engaged in family business in Australia and also found time to meet up with Wilpf members Kerry McGovern, Chris Henderson, Elvan Turak, (Brisbane), Barbara O'Dwyer and Margaret Bearlin (Canberra) and Stella Boyages (Sydney). In May we wrote an open letter to the Australian High Commissioner, Peter Woolcott, chiding them for the refusal to support the United Nations nuclear weapon ban treaty negotiations, which he replied to.

In July I received the Sonia Davies Peace award which I used to study Peace Literacy with Paul K Chappell of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation in Santa Barbara, as well as a Peace and Conscience course with Nadine Hoover from the Conscience Studio in Ann Arbor. I was also able to attend the WILPF USA Triennial in Chicago. (Read Liz's report on this further on in this newsletter). Following this I was asked to become the new Aotearoa/New Zealand national coordinator for international group World Beyond War, which is lead by Wilpf-er Leah Bolger in the US.

This responsibility led me to step down from my role in Wilpf in October, though I have remained active in the Hit and Run Inquiry Campaign also. World Beyond War plans to put on a forum in Auckland on 'Anzacs in Afghanistan' at the Auckland City Library-will let you know when details are finalised. I took part in the Wellington Weapons Expo in October in conjunction with Quakers and Peace Action Wellington, and attended the 'Beyond Pacifism' conference in Dunedin in November, presenting a paper on 'Peace Witness in a time of Endless War.'

Wishing my sisters in WILPF Aotearoa all the best for 2018 and especially the Congress.
Rangimarie, in peace

***Section Co-ordinators' report 2017
Suzanne Loughlin, Celine Kearney,
Edwina Hughes.***

Supported the visit from WILPF president and public address plus marking Hiroshima Day.

Sent a letter from WILPF congratulating Jacinda Ardern on her political success, also seeking Labour support for changes to NZ NAP 1325 and support for national women's organisations in areas of armed conflict. Forwarded to Minister of Women Affairs Julie Anne Genter.

Support for attendance at the presentation of a petition seeking an independent inquiry into the allegations against the NZ Defence Force in the book *Hit and Run* by investigative journalists Hager and Stephenson.

Letter sent to Housing Minister, Phil Twyford, calling for protection of land at Ihumato, also sent to Minister for Conservation Eugenie Sage, who has agreed to visit the land.

Two section E newsletters compiled.
Notes from AGM completed and circulated

Branch reports

Otautahi 2017: Prue Stringer ad Irinka Britnell report .

The Otautahi branch is very small, but we are working on extending the group to become a South Island network. Kate Dewes has promoted WILPF when she visited Dunedin, Nelson and Takaka for public meetings and in schools and 8 extra women are now part of this network. We are particularly keen to involve young women, including interns from the University of Canterbury working with the Disarmament and Security Centre (DSC). We organised the annual Hiroshima/Nagasaki commemoration at the

Peace Bell in August, which was well attended. Members also ran a WILPF stall at a large multicultural event. Mostly our efforts go towards supporting each other in our individual peace-related endeavours, in particular supporting the work of the Disarmament and Security Centre



Figure 1 Lyn Curtain (left) with Wilpf members Eve Walker and Irinka Britnell, in Macedonian costume. Photo WILPF Otautahi.

The WILPF Peace Stall was among over 100 stalls at the annual Culture Galore Multi Cultural Festival held at Ray Blank Park, Christchurch, 10 March 2018. Different cultures took to the stage exhibiting their songs and dances. It was a lovely sunny day with thousands attending. The success is about 60 different cultures gathering sharing food and entertainment. A positive example to the rest of the world, showing nations working and playing together in harmony.

WILPF Tamaki Makaurau branch report 2017: Megan Hutching, Branch co-ordinator, reports

In June we worked with The Depot Artspace in Devonport to have a photographic exhibition to mark the 30th anniversary of New Zealand's nuclear free legislation. The exhibition was open from 27 May to 14 June. On 10 June, we had an afternoon of memories and reminiscence as people who were involved in the campaigns

of the 1980s spoke about that time. The mayor, Phil Goff attended and spoke. There was an adjunct exhibition at the Devonport Information Centre, and the festivities ended with an evening of song at the Devonport Folk Club. Thanks in particular for making this such a successful event are due to the staff at The Depot, and to Ruth Coombes, Del Abcede, and Claire and Linley Gregory.

We combined our annual Matariki meeting with our branch AGM on 24 June. The branch co-ordinator is Megan Hutching, and committee members are Del Abcede, Ruth Coombes, Claire Gregory, Rae Martell, Nola Smith, Helen Sumich (treasurer), and Angelina Weir.

From 4-9 August, the branch hosted WILPF International president Kozue Akibayashi on behalf of the Section. Kozue's visit coincided with the branch's annual commemoration of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki which was held at the Grey Lynn community centre. Kozue spoke about feminist peacemaking, disarmament and the United States bases in Okinawa at a well-attended public meeting on 6 August. During the commemorations she read the story of 'Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes' and took part in the candle ceremony.

Branch members took part in a WILPF Asia-Pacific regional meeting by Zoom while Kozue was here – meeting with members from Australia, Tahiti Polynesia, Japan and the Philippines. On Monday 7 August, Kozue was interviewed by student radio at the University of Auckland and met with postgraduate students from the Political Studies department at the university. Thanks to Del Abcede and David Robie for publicity work for Kozue's visit.

Branch member, Kathy Ross co-ordinated a peace craft stall at the Festival of Roses in Parnell in November, and another at the

Myers Park Medley in central Auckland in February. Members helped out on the stalls which were a good opportunity to publicise WILPF and our work.

We held an afternoon tea on December 2 to commemorate Joan Macdonald's work and invited members of other social justice groups that Joan was involved with to come and share their work.

Guest speakers were women from SOUL, Save Our Urban Landscape, at Ihumatao in south Auckland, who spoke of their struggle to maintain their land, and reclaim land which had been confiscated as a result of the New Zealand Wars. We have maintained contact with the group – WILPF members took part in the SOUL hiko on Karangahape Road, and attended at the kaitiaki village during the filming of the Heritage Rescue television programme by Top Shelf productions in early February 2018.



WILPF supported the 'Take a stand for the land' action at Ihumatao, South Auckland, in May. Celine Kearney, second from right, and other Wilpfers Trish Cheng, Nola Smith, Helen Sumich and Ruth Coombes took part. Photo from the Spinoff website story written by Qiane Matata-Sipu

November 26 saw our usual commemoration of women casting their vote for the first time – an event at Devonport library, organised by Ruth Coombes. There was music and story telling and singing, and afternoon tea. 2018 will be the 125th anniversary of this event.

Issues that we have worked on during the year are the compulsory teaching of the role of women in schools, and Education Ministry firearms in schools guidelines. 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. A number of us attended the Section AGM in Wellington in April.



Jude Lowry sells white peace poppies in Devonport, on Auckland's North Shore before Anzac Day. Photo Ruth Coombes.

Four boxes of school supplies were sent to the project we support in the Philippines, Project Lingat Kapwa. 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.

Liz Remmerswaal reports on attending the WILPF USA triennial, while travelling on her Sonia Davies Peace Award.

Fortuitously, the timing of my visit coincided with the WILPF USA triennial congress which brought together 100s of women together in Chicago for a very interesting four day programme. It was lovely to meet up with women I had met in the Hague two years earlier, included one, Robin Lloyd, who had accompanied a group of us to the ANZAC day ceremony

there where we presented an olive tree to mark the occasion, and shared her reflections about it later.

The WILPF women of the US are faced with the great challenge of building a resilient, creative force to counter the policies being propagated within the new US administration and cabinet, Congress, and the military/industrial/security state complex. The congress promised 'strong and feisty women from across the U.S. who are rising up and organizing for action to create an effective, sustainable global grassroots movement.'

Its theme was Rise Up, Revolt, Remember, Reimagine and Reclaim, with featuring workshops on relevant issues, skills workshops on diversity and anti-oppression, building effective alliances and networking, and leadership training.

One of my favourites was called 'Move the Money: From War to a Peace Economy' which brought a range of groups and ideas together in a lively debate. These meetings were punctuated with interludes including local group singing 'political folk' and a transformative gospel choir developed in the poorest suburbs, and songs from the 'Raging Grannies', and all against a backdrop of beautiful handcrafted quilts from the 'Drones Quilt Project' made by women from all over as creative way to engage and educate the public.

There was also a special appearance of 98 year old artist Peggy Lipschultz who has been an activist for 50 years and has worked alongside Pete Seeger creating chalk illustrations of his peace songs. She reminds us that Wilpf women live long!

The congress walked down to nearby Hull House to visit the Jane Addams museum. WILPF pioneer and Nobel peace laureate Jane was instrumental in starting an extraordinary settlement home for migrants

in which gave them much more than a place to stay-it build a community which taught them skills, provided education for the children of working mothers, an employment bureau, an art gallery, libraries, English and citizenship classes and theatre, music and art classes as well as clubs and activities. Unfortunately, it has now closed but had a huge impact on Chicago and further afield and on the lives of all those associated with it.

There was extraordinary energy and diversity at the congress which made it an exciting place to be and I would say WILPF USA is in good heart, although still keen to expand its younger membership.



Liz Remmerswaal (left) with 98 year old Peggy Lipschultz and long-time WILPF friend

Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific Day: PMA reports

For justice, for truth and for independence, wake up, stand up!

1 March, was Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific Day - the 64th anniversary of the 'Bravo' nuclear bomb detonation by the United States close to the surface of Bikini Atoll, in the Marshall Islands, which blasted out a crater more than 200 feet deep and a mile across.

Particles of radioactive fallout from the blast landed on the island of Rongelap (100 miles away) to a depth of one and a half inches in places, and radioactive mist appeared on Utirik (300 miles away). The US navy did not send ships to evacuate the people of Rongelap and Utirik until three days after the explosion.

Fallout from this one nuclear weapon detonation spread over more than 7,000 square miles, and traces were detected throughout the Pacific, in India, Japan, the United States and Europe.



Bravo nuclear detonation, Marshall Islands and leaking radioactive dump, Runit

The Marshallese, and other Pacific peoples subjected to more than 350 full scale nuclear weapon detonations in the Pacific - conducted by Britain, France and the US - were used as human guinea pigs in an obscene experiment to 'progress' the insane pursuit of nuclear weapons supremacy.

Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific Day is a day to remember that the arrogant colonial mindset which allowed, indeed encouraged, the horror outlined above continues today - the Pacific remains neither nuclear free nor independent. While the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (adopted 7 July 2017, opened for signature 20 September 2017) provides a pathway towards removing the threat of nuclear annihilation, the vote in the UN General Assembly also highlights issues around the lack of independence in the region.

Much of the Pacific remains under foreign control, military or illegal occupation, including “American Samoa”, Cook Islands, “French” Polynesia, Guam, Hawai’i, Kanaky, Niue, Norfolk Island, Northern Marianas, Pitcairn Island, Rapa Nui, Tokelau, Uvea mo Futuna, and West Papua. Ten Pacific island nations voted in favour of the adoption of the Treaty, but that vote could have more than doubled if all Pacific nations were independent UN member states. The Pacific is one of the regions that is being, and will continue to be, most impacted by climate change and extreme weather events which are affecting low-lying islands and Pacific peoples who are dependent on natural resources for food, clothing and shelter, and on water sources that are vulnerable to salinisation by rising sea levels and high seas. Yet the overwhelming majority of fossil fuel use and greenhouse gas emissions do not come from the Pacific island nations.



Rising sea levels, Kiribati

The Pacific is also one of the most highly militarised regions in the world - but only four Pacific island nations have armed forces. The overwhelming majority of militarisation in the Pacific comes from outside the region - military bases, military training exercises, and military occupation by the armed forces of Indonesia, France and the United States, in particular, along with Australia, Britain, China, New Zealand, Russia and others.

Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific Day is a day to think about the many faces of colonisation - physical, cultural, spiritual, economic, nuclear, military - past and present; the ongoing issues of independence, self-determination and sovereignty here in Aotearoa New Zealand and the other colonised and occupied countries of the Pacific; and the ability of Pacific peoples to stop further nuclearisation, militarisation and economic globalisation of our region.



Rimpac military ‘exercise’, Hawaii in which New Zealand forces participate.

It is a day to acknowledge and remember those who have suffered and died in the struggle for independence around the Pacific; those who have opposed colonisation in its many forms and paid for their opposition with their health and life; and those who have suffered and died as a result of the nuclear weapons states' use of the Pacific for nuclear experimentation, uranium mining, nuclear bomb blasts and nuclear waste dumping.

It is a day to celebrate the courage, strength and endurance of indigenous Pacific peoples who have maintained and taken back control of their lives, languages and lands to ensure the ways of living and being which were handed down from their ancestors are passed on to future generations. It is the day to pledge your support to continue the struggle for a nuclear free and independent Pacific.



Free West Papua
Images: Peace Movement Aotearoa: NFIP Day 2018

Link to share:

<https://www.facebook.com/PeaceMovementAotearoa/posts/1620016278045735>

2018 Wisdom Fellowship Award

Aotearoa WILPF Vice President, Pauline Tangiora will receive this award in July in the USA.

The **Wisdom Fellowship Award** is presented annually to honour the work of an elder who has demonstrated lifelong achievement in bringing wisdom, leadership and learning to their people and their community.

In this time of turmoil and change, the deep knowing that Indigenous Peoples hold is invaluable if we are to survive. The wisdom of their ways, the respectful relationship they maintain with everything around them, the way in which they demonstrate gratitude, are qualities we could all learn from.

Elders the world over are the keepers of tradition, of profound relationship with the living world and the Sacred. They are the ones who look out for their communities, guiding and teaching them. The work they do is vital, not only to their own communities, but to each one of us. By acknowledging and honouring them, we bring awareness to the importance and relevance of their wisdom and perspective.



Pauline Tangiora



Ruth Coombes (right) and Anna Lee (left) at the 'Take a stand of the land' action at Ihumatao, South Auckland.

NEWS

Mentorship opportunities

At this year's AGM there was discussion of WILPF members formally mentoring younger women. This would enable younger women to become involved with WILPF work and through this to learn about the organisation. Projects could range from doing background research on a government policy issue, in preparation for a WILPF submission, to an initiative of particular interest to the younger woman or women, which also fits within WILPF's wider policy agenda.

If you know someone who might be interested, or if you are interested to learn more, please contact us.

2018 Ghana Congress

Registration is now open for the Congress in Accra, Ghana, which will be held from 20-22 August. (Registrations close on 30 June.) There will be a seminar before the Congress on Saturday 18 August on women and feminist peacemaking in Africa, and the Gertrud Baer Seminar for young women will be on Sunday 19 August.

Information on the Congress is at the website:

<https://www.mywilpf.org/congress/>

You will need to register for myWILPF to get access to the website. Send an email to membership@wilpf.org to do so.

Changes to the international WILPF constitution will be made at this Congress to enable the new membership governance structure. (see p.1 of this newsletter for more information about this.) And some new WILPF Groups will be welcomed as Sections and some new country groups welcomed as formal WILPF Groups. Our wonderful organisation is growing!

Megan Hutching

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And see us on Facebook

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Young Wilpfers – YWILPF
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Section Co-ordinators: Edwina Hughes,
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Pleiades for Matariki