

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR PEACE & FREEDOM

Aotearoa Section newsletter July 2013

Nuclear disarmament initiatives



Beatrice Fihn and Anina Dalbert of WILPF's Reaching Critical Will report:

In October 2012, the General Assembly decided to convene an open-ended working group (OEWG) to develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons.

The OEWG will be chaired by Ambassador Manuel B. Dengo Benavides of Costa Rica, and has met between 14-24 May, 27-28 June, and will meet again 19-30 August 2013.

A half-day session on 27 June was to 'collect proposals and ideas on taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations that would serve as a basis for the consultations in the Group during its meetings in 19-30 August 2013.'

States seemed to take the suggestion from the Chair to 'put things on paper' seriously, circulating several working papers for further consideration by the OEWG. While some of the proposals are quite

similar to the NPT 2010 Action Plan, and a few included tired suggestions such as 'resuming substantive work in the Conference on Disarmament,' all participating states expressed a sincere interest in moving forward. However, wide differences on how to proceed and what the OEWG should do continues to be seen in these papers.

The paper by NATO and other nuclear reliant countries suggests that 'building blocks' could complement the 'step-by-step' approach. However, the proposed building blocks appear to contain the same elements as the step-by-step approach. For example, negotiations of a treaty banning fissile materials production, ratification and entry into force of a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty, universalization of the NPT, and increased transparency and reporting by nuclear armed states are all elements of the step-by-step approach that has been pursued unsuccessfully for decades. These steps all require action by nuclear-armed states, of which the majority are not participat-

ing in the OEWG.

Some suggestions stood out as new and fresh. In particular, Austria's suggestion that the OEWG could challenge the patterns of attaching value and status to nuclear weapons could provide an interesting platform for discussion in August. In addition, Mexico's suggestion that delegations discuss what legal instruments are needed to maintain a world free of nuclear weapons, and assess which of these currently exist and which would need to be developed, is also promising. These steps are something that could be realistically achieved by the OEWG and would contribute to creating a more conducive climate for achieving substantial progress on nuclear disarmament.

With two remaining weeks of meetings for the OEWG in August, it will be essential to utilize the time efficiently to get as much done as possible. A new momentum on nuclear weapons is taking place, and the OEWG represents an opportunity to capitalize on this movement.

Inside this issue:

<i>Tamakai Makaurau branch report</i>	2
<i>Aotearoa Section co-ordinators' report</i>	2
<i>Justice Reinvestment</i>	3
<i>Vice President's report</i>	3
<i>Hiroshima Day commemorations, Tamaki Makaurau</i>	3

Tamaki Makaurau branch report

The Branch AGM was held at the end of March 2012 and included a discussion on privatisation of prisons and the lobbying we could do on this issue.

Several members were involved in the many coordinating meetings that were held to organise celebrations for Auckland becoming a City of Peace. We were represented at the official functions and we also had a stall in Aotea Centre at the public celebration activities on 8/9 June.

Also in June we held our annual Matariki/ Winter Solstice lunch with speakers from The Depot Gallery in Devonport which was holding an exhibition to celebrate 25 years since the passing of the Disarmament and Arms Control legislation. The Depot was also host for our Hiroshima Day

commemoration on 5 August which was a very popular event.

At our end-of-year meeting in late November we had a shared lunch followed by a discussion about "The 16 Days of Activism Against Violence" – causes and what we could do. A number of actions for the branch were agreed to.

At our branch meeting in January we were host to several members of the California Branch of WILPF who were interested to hear our activities and to tell us what they are doing.

Also in January a number of our members with our WILPF banner joined a gathering of men and women in Aotea Square at a silent protest in solidarity with the anti-rape movement in India.

We continue to hold a trading table at our meetings which helps to boost our funds and we have also done several catering jobs which are also a great help in increasing our funds.

Several of our members have passed away during the year – Eleanor Senior who had been in hospital for quite a long time, and Sheila Brokenshire who had also been ill for some time.

We have continued to have representation and been involved in the local NCW Branch and have representation at the Auckland Human Rights Network, Tamaki Treaty Workers, Indonesia Human Rights Committee, Living Wage Campaign, Auckland Action Against Poverty, and Philippines Support.

Joan Macdonald

Section co-ordinators' report

During the year we have made submission on the Crown Minerals Act on deep sea drilling and fracking; to the Social Services Committee on the Social Security (Benefit Categories and Work Focus) Amendment Bill the Social Security (Youth Support and Work Focus) Amendment Bill; to the Education Committee on the Education Amendment Bill, including an oral submission and; to the Justice and Electoral Committee on the Family Court Proceedings Bill, also including an oral submission.

A number of letters have been written to government ministers on issues such as rehabilitative care for women in prison, building of a private men's prison; asking for support for Depleted Uranium Bill; the Arms Trade Treaty and gender violence; teaching of te reo Maori as part

of core curriculum; sale of land for a private prison; funding for HELpline; money being spent on War Memorial Park. We have responded to several NCWNZ Action Items on some of the issues on which we have also made

our own submissions. We have kept in touch with the International office, circulated information from them and responded to requests for information. **Edwina Hughes, Megan Hutching, Joan Macdonald**

Below: Pauline Tangiora at Section AGM 2013 Photo: Del Robie



Justice Reinvestment

'Justice reinvestment' is a topic on the Rethinking Crime & Punishment website. Justice reinvestment is a new approach that redirects money spent on prisons to community-based initiatives which aim to address the underlying causes of crime.

In an address to the Restorative Justice Aotearoa conference held recently in Auckland, Kim Workman of Rethinking Crime & Punishment said,

'This last year the number of recorded offences is at its lowest since 1989, and the rate of recorded crime is the lowest since 1979. The youth crime rate has also decreased significantly. The rate of apprehensions of children and young people fell by 23 per cent between 2002 and 2011. What hasn't changed is the level of

imprisonment – it was 8,600 a year ago, and is 8,600 today.

'The limited effectiveness of imprisonment is well documented, and the evidence is clear. Too put it bluntly, prison is a cause of crime. The current paradigm is that if you reduce reoffending, the prison population will reduce. That has not happened. The more effective paradigm is that if you limit the use of prison, reoffending will reduce. There is good evidence to support that view – the challenge then is to develop alternatives.

'A target to reduce the imprisonment rate by 25% to 150 per 100,000 would reduce the imprisonment rate to the 1999 level. It would bring New Zealand just below the current imprisonment level in England and

Wales (152), but above that of Australia (134). It represents a potential annual saving of \$200m per annum.'

More here: <http://www.rethinking.org.nz/Default.aspx?page=3655>

Vice President's report

As I travel the world, I have come to realise that there are very few organizations that can claim to have worked for peace for 100 years. I feel proud and humble to be part of a group in which women have continued on to promote peaceful international dialogue. Whenever I attend meetings round the world where the issue of peace is raised, WILPF crops up.

In December a group of Aboriginal women were very interested in how we work so I suggested they touch base with the WILPF group in Queensland.

At meetings of the World Future Council we are concentrating on the future generations, as we hope they will lead us to an environment free from all forms of violence and discrimination. We are grateful for the help that WILPF International can offer to us in our struggle for indige-

nous rights.

Within Aotearoa we need to try and become more involved in working against the violence that is within our country, and thinking about the 'children' who are becoming parents and who have no support systems.

Finally, I would like to personally thank those who have come forward to support the Grandmothers' visit to Aotearoa. This has been postponed to 5-8 December 2013, and will be held at Te Wananga o Aotearoa Gisborne campus.

Thank you for allowing me to carry the mantle for indigenous issues round the world,

In peace, Pauline Tangiora.

Hiroshima Day commemorations

You are warmly invited to attend a Candle Floating Ceremony to remember those who died at Hiroshima and Nagasaki as a result of the atomic bombs dropped on their cities at the end of the Second World War.

This will be held on

Sunday 11 August 2013

from 5pm to 7pm at the Auckland Domain Wintergarden.

Each year we pause to commemorate this occasion and to continue our work for peace, which WILPF has been pursuing for the last 98 years. WILPF members will be speaking about the present situation regarding nuclear testing and particularly about what is happening in the Pacific. There will also be an opportunity for others to speak.

The programme will also include crane-making, music and candle-floating. Candles will be supplied.

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WILPF International, Geneva
www.wilpfinternational.org

WILPF Aotearoa

WILPF was established after an international meeting of women at The Hague, Netherlands, in April 1915. By December 1916 a New Zealand branch of WILPF was established in Auckland by Marianne Jones and Annette D'Arcy Hamilton. Branches in other cities were soon organised.

From the 1920s until 1964, the New Zealand Section of WILPF consisted only of an Auckland branch. The corresponding secretary, Emily Gibson, almost single-handedly kept it alive during the early 1920s and late 1930s when membership was small and there was little activity.

During the 1939-45 war activities ceased, but in 1955 WILPF was re-established in Auckland after a visit to New Zealand by Quaker physicist, Kathleen Lonsdale, and a branch in Wellington was set up soon afterwards. We now have three branches.

In 1989 we changed our name to WILPF Aotearoa.



WILPF Tamaki Makaurau Matariki meeting, 22 June 2013 Photo: Del Robie