

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



WILPF

Newsletter November 2019

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Megan Hutching reports

At our Section AGM on 4 May we held a planning session to develop activities for the Section that are aligned with the WILPF International Programme.

The International Programme has 4 areas of work:

- Building the Movement
- Redefining Security
- Leveraging Feminist Perspectives on Peace
- Promoting Socio-economic Justice

Most of our discussion focussed on Building the Movement, especially engaging with younger women, but we

also came up with some ideas to raise the profile of WILPF Aotearoa.

These included:

- Increasing our digital profile through the website and the Facebook page.
- Including podcast interviews with activists from our membership on the website.

We also thought we would host Zoom meetings once a quarter where we can meet as a section online.

One way of engaging young women in WILPF is to focus on issues rather than meeting attendance, and to keep the network informal. We agreed that making the connection between climate change and militarisation is an area where WILPF can contribute.

Young people are leading the way in the campaign around climate change so there is an opportunity for us to engage there.

An obvious area where WILPF could contribute to the discussion and provide resources is with regard to the immense cost of militarism vs what could be spent in climate action.

At the end of the session, we decided that in two years' time, WILPF Aotearoa would have:

- doubled our membership
- started a Young WILPF network
- held quarterly online meetings for members
- expanded the profile of WILPF and climate change

It is important that we figure out who we are and what is different about our organisation – what makes WILPF special. What can we do to differentiate ourselves from other organisations?

I look forward to your contributions and ideas as well as your active participation in helping to achieve these aims over the next two years.

WILPF Ōtautahi



Ōtautahi WILPFer Lucy Stewart presents on nuclear disarmament and climate change for the Security and Disarmament Centre



Lucy with Angela Woodward, a nuclear disarmament verification expert, who also spoke at Ōtautahi's Hiroshima/Nagasaki memorial event in August

We wish Lucy well with the birth of her child.

WILPF Tāmaki Makaurau Discussion series

WILPF Tāmaki Makaurau held a series of three discussions in late August and early September. Topics covered were:

What is white privilege?
What do 'peace' and 'security' mean to you?
What is the Women Peace and Security Agenda?

We planned the series because we often start interesting discussions at our branch meetings but do not have the time to talk about topics in depth. Each session had a facilitator who gave a brief introduction and then opened up the floor for comments and discussion.

The first session was useful in raising awareness of how opinions that we might take for granted can be rooted in assumptions of white privilege.

Session two gave us the opportunity to reflect on peace and security, and we came to the understanding that encouraging people to seek 'security' is often predicated on manipulating their fears and concerns. We also need to define 'peace' in a positive way, rather than just the lack of conflict.

In the third session we discussed the Women Peace and Security Agenda and New Zealand's underwhelming National Action Plan to implement the agenda in this country.

Sessions were from 6-7:30 and started with food. Feedback has been positive and we will probably hold another series in 2020.

Ihumaatao: Standing for the land



The tino rangatiratanga flag on the land at Ihumaatao as the day draws to an end for 'protectors' on the land, July 26. Photo: Radio New Zealand.



Pania Newton, (second from left) one of the occupation organisers speaks with tamariki, on the land. Photo: Radio New Zealand.

For history, background, informative videos and up-to-date information log onto Save Our Unique Landscape's (SOUL) home page at:

<https://www.protectihumatao.com>

WILPFers joined the hikoi from Ihumaatao, in South Auckland, to Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern's office in Sandringham, in Central Auckland on August 22.

Photos below: Ruth Coombes



Operation Burnham Inquiry: In the ‘fog of the office’

Suzanne Loughlin considers the current state of the inquiry.

In a welcome move, the Inquiry members Sir Terrance Arnold (chair) and Sir Geoffrey Palmer determined that given the statements by New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) and ministers related to civilian casualties resulting from Operation Burnham were made publically they ‘should be explained publically.’

The ‘basic questions of what NZDF personnel knew, what they reported and what was said publicly should ... be addressed in a public forum.’ That forum was Public Hearing Module 4 Monday 16 September – Friday 20 September 2019. At issue is what the NZDF knew about the possibility of civilian casualties caused during the raid, what they did given what they knew, their own reporting of the issue and that provided in support of ministers’ statements.

International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) press releases of 29 and 30 August 2010 confirmed the possibility that civilian casualties resulted from Operation Burnham. An ISAF Incident Assessment Team (IAT) report, dated 29 August 2010, a week after the Operation, stated that there was a ‘likelihood of civilian casualties.’ None of this found its way into a memorandum of 10 December 2010 from now retired Chief of Defence Force (CDF) Jerry Mataparae to the then Minister of Defence Wayne Mapp.

The memorandum claimed the allegations were baseless and, moreover, that the IAT report had not been released beyond Headquarters ISAF. An NZDF statement of 20 April 2011 reiterated that position.

Jump to June 2014, when investigative journalist Jon Stephenson sought

confirmation that NZDF stood by its statement of 20 April 2011 that the allegation of civilian casualties in Operation Burnham was baseless.

On 30 June 2014 NZDF issued a statement confirming that it stood by its original claim. However, the minister’s office had requested, and been provided, all NZDF briefings and notes to the minister on Operation Burnham amongst which was the ISAF IAT report. The report had clearly been read as it was underlined and highlighted. It was duly registered on 7 September 2011 and placed in a secure safe where it lay ‘forgotten’ until July 2014 when its retrieval was promoted by Stephenson’s questions.

Coleman responded to Stephenson’s *Collateral Damage*, aired on Native Affairs, with the comment that ‘you probably can’t rule out’ civilian casualties caused by a faulty gun on a helicopter gunship but New Zealand troops were not responsible for those casualties. Coleman and NZDF seemed to miss the point, or refused to even contemplate, that having initiated and led the raid they were culpable for its outcome. Moreover, what had they done on the day to check to see who had been killed and injured?

Skip to 2017 and the launch of Nicky Hager and Jon Stephenson’s *Hit and Run*. NZDF were again asked for comment and on 21 March 2017 issued a statement reiterating the 20 April 2011 statement that the ISAF ‘investigation concluded that the allegations of civilian casualties were unfounded.’ The ‘forgotten’ IAT report had gone back to the safe and was again ‘forgotten.’

In his evidence, Commodore (retired) Ross Smith said, ‘We ought to have remembered the Native Affairs programme and the IAT report, but we didn’t ... so many things happen in the Office of the CDF in the course of each and every day,

that does not excuse our oversight but it does go some way towards explaining it.’ While the ‘fog of war’ might go some way to explaining some of the more dreadful incidents of war given war itself is dreadful, the ‘fog of the office’ is hardly an adequate explanation for what increasingly appears like efforts to mislead ministers and the New Zealand public.

It is quite remarkable, moreover, to read one senior military officer after another claim that they had ‘never seen’ the report and had ‘no idea’ how it ended up in the safe. Moreover, the issue of who put the report in the safe is a ‘red herring’ as it serves to detract from the key concern about why the Chief of Defence and other senior military personnel did not make every effort to ensure NZDF had all the evidence to hand however unpalatable it might be? The Senior National Officer at the time simply asked staff ‘to keep an eye out for it’ as he left for home.

NZDF’s over-riding concern for its reputation and distinct lack of concern for civilian casualties at the time and in the aftermath of Operation Burnham raises serious concerns about its leadership and organisational culture. Tim Keating, (CDF 2014-2018) claimed that rather than seek to rebut *Hit and Run* he was motivated to gather more information so as to evaluate *with greater precision* the allegations of wrongdoing. His efforts then went into finding out who was at fault for the civilian casualties but so far appears not to have turned his attention to or reflected on the process whereby information was selectively presented and interpreted so as to ensure no mud stuck to NZDF. But curses are like chickens; they always come home to roost.

The adjourned ‘cover up’ allegations hearing will resume Tuesday 15 and Wednesday 16 October 2019 at the Royal Society of NZ, 11 Turnbull St, Thorndon, for those interested in the next episode.

Arming the New Zealand Police

Please write and/or visit your local MP and tell them you do not agree with the introduction of Armed Response Teams by the New Zealand Police. Though this is a six-month trial, in Auckland, Waikato and Christchurch, this may be the first step towards police carrying weapons at all times.

Please also write to the Minister of Police, Stuart Nash and the Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern stating your concerns. MP email addresses can be found here: <https://www.parliament.nz/en/mps-and-electoralates/members-of-parliament/>
Stuart Nash: s.nash@ministers.govt.nz
Jacinda Ardern: j.ardern@ministers.govt.nz

Below is some information and possible wording you could include:

The case has not been made for introducing these teams. The case has not been made that there is a gap in current tactical options that the Police have.

For example: firearms were involved in less than 1% of alleged assaults on police officers. The rate at which firearms are used against police has been declining since 2015, when records began. There is no evidence to support the claim that police are less safe now than they were four years ago. Nor does the data support the idea that firearm violence is worsening. Firearms are used in less than 1% of all crimes, a rate which has barely changed since 2013.

Racially-biased way in which policing operates. 66 percent of all New Zealanders shot (fatal and non-fatal) in the 10 years from January 2009 to January 2019 were Māori or Pasifika - a shameful statistic in a country that claims to be egalitarian. It seems inevitable that Armed Response Teams would increase these statistics.

Asia Pacific Region Report by Celine Kearney

Korea Peace Now

In response to requests by the Korea Peace Now women's initiative we have written to the government urging it to bring home any NZ troops from the Korea, and to take action to bring a formal end to the Korean War.

The October edition of WILPF Membership News reports that in September a Korea Peace Now delegation attended the [DMZ Forum](#) hosted by the Gyeong-gi Province. The forum started on 18 September with speakers from abroad and members of the hosting organisation [visiting the Korean Demilitarized Zone](#). On 19 September the Korea Peace Now campaign organised a session on "Women Crossing Borders: From the DMZ to the Women's Peace Movement" with renowned feminist Gloria Steinem. Kozue Akibayashi, WILPF IB Regional Representative for the Asia-Pacific, was also among the panelists and later that week spoke at the press conference in front of the US embassy in Seoul, South Korea.



Kozue Akibayashi discusses the need for Japan to be active in ending the Korean War. Photo: Jean Chung

West Papua: Irian Jaya

We have also written to the Minister of Foreign Affairs asking for support for a United Nations monitor to be allowed to

investigate the killings of West Papuans which seem to have been carried out by Indonesian military.

Radio New Zealand reported on 21 October that "Indonesia's human rights commission has called for a probe into the deaths of as many as 43 people who were killed last month. This came amid some of the largest protests to sweep the region in years.

Indonesia's Commission on Human Rights called for a full investigation into the fatalities, which activists say were at the hands of the military. The agency's deputy chairman called on Indonesia's government to solve the crisis in West Papua."



Map downloaded from Bing.com images

West Papua gained independence from Dutch colonisation, only to be taken over by Indonesia. Physically a part of Papua New Guinea, the people are Melanesian, and an independence struggle has been sustained since the province was absorbed into Indonesia in the early 1960s.

To understand the New Zealand governments' complicity in the violence against Melanesian West Papuan's read Marie Leadbeater's book *See No Evil: New Zealand's Betrayal of the People of West Papua* published by Otago University Press in 2018.

International WILPF

by Megan Hutching

WILPF 2021 Congress

The 2021 WILPF Congress will be held in Brisbane, Australia. WILPF Aotearoa is keen to get feedback from members about how we can participate in the Congress. Some suggestions received so far have included raising funds to help women from the Pacific Te Moananui a Kiwa attend, and offering workshops. Let us know if you have any other suggestions: wilpfaotearoa@gmail.com

WILPF International has also been participating in United Nations meetings – the 2019 High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, see www.peacewomen.org

The Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty, see

<http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/news/newsletters-archive/14047-september-2019-e-news>

and many other activities.

Feminist Activism

On 9 July in a conference room in a hotel that once was a target of shelling, in a city besieged for 1,425 days by the Army of Republika Srpska sits a group of Bosnian and Syrian women activists. They are eagerly discussing peace activism. Invited by WILPF and the London School of Economics and Political Sciences Centre for Women, Peace and Security, they have come together for three days to learn from each other's experience in dealing with conflict and feminist activism – and ultimately finding solutions for their paths forward. More here:

<https://www.wilpf.org/syria-bosnia-feminist-solidary-dialogue-2-0/>

October 2019 marked the 19th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda - that historic moment

when the highest security body in the world recognised that women and gender issues were part of peace and security.

This year, the focus of the annual Security Council Debate is on accountability, which is sorely needed. Under the presidency of South Africa, Security Council members are negotiating an outcome in the Council. Yet today what is missing is not words, but action. Further, as we saw in April, attacks on women's rights, including sexual and reproductive rights, as well as blocks on other issues from women human rights defenders to disarmament threaten to undermine the holistic nature of the WPS agenda.

More information here, thank to WILPF's Peacewomen programme:

www.peacewomen.org/e-news/looking-ahead-women-peace-and-security-agenda-2019-and-beyond

Contact us:

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E: wilpfaotearoa@gmail.com

And see us on Facebook

www.facebook.com/wilpfaotearoa.newzealand

Young WILPF – Y-WILPF

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

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