



Listen to Women for a **CHANGE**

Women's International League for Peace & Freedom • MN Metro Branch

Winter 2011

Minnesotans Building a Movement to Shift Funding from War to Meet Pressing Needs

by Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer*

Although there are no military solutions to most of the problems we face—hunger, poverty, inequality, unmet health care needs, climate change, erosion of civil liberties, and even terrorism itself—our nation continues squandering vast financial and human resources on war and to project military power worldwide. Meanwhile, elected officials at all levels of government have become managers of austerity. It doesn't have to be this way.

The Minnesota Arms Spending Alternatives Project (MNASAP.org) is a nonpartisan citizen based initiative using a simple resolution process to build political support to shift federal spending priorities from war to meeting essential needs. Our goal is to build sufficient political power and influence statewide, from representatives at all levels of government and from non-governmental organizations and civic groups, to effectively demand a shift in priorities from war spending to meeting essential needs.

The resolution reads in part:

Whereas Minnesota recently faced a \$5 billion two-year budget shortfall that led to a state shutdown, causing great harm to many Minnesotans; and,

Whereas Minnesota taxpayer spending for war far exceeds the state's budget deficit with Minnesotans set to spend \$8.4 billion over the next two years for the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan bringing Minnesota taxpayer spending for these wars to approximately \$35 billion; and,

Whereas in addition to paying for these costly wars Minnesota taxpayers, even during these times of economic crisis and fiscal

austerity, are poised to pay approximately \$26 billion over the next two years for their share of the base Defense Budget of the Federal government, a budget that has doubled since the collapse of the Soviet Union; and,

Whereas 59 cents of every dollar of federal discretionary spending is devoted to military purposes;

Therefore be it resolved that we, * _____ call on Senators Klobuchar and Franken, and Representatives Walz, Kline, Paulsen, McCollum, Ellison, Bachmann, Peterson and Cravaack as well as President Barack Obama, to shift federal funding priorities from war and the interests of the few, to meeting the essential needs of us all. ■

*e.g. the Legislature of the State of Minnesota or Duluth City Council or Minneapolis Library Board or Trinity Church, etc...

To get involved visit: www.mnasap.org

*At the February 11, 2012 "Coffee With," Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer will discuss this initiative which addresses an issue long at the heart of WILPF priorities.



COFFEE WITH...

WILPF Coffee With
Saturday, February 11, 10 a.m.
to noon, Van Cleve Community
Center, 901 15th Ave. SE, Mpls

"Minnesotans Building a Movement to Shift Funding from War to Meet Pressing Needs"
— presented by Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer

The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence



The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence is an international campaign originating from the first Women's Global Leadership Institute sponsored by the Center for Women's Global Leadership in 1991. Participants chose the dates, November 25, International Day Against Violence Against Women, and December 10, International Human Rights Day, in order to symbolically link violence against women and human rights and to emphasize that such violence is a human rights violation. This 16-day period also highlights other significant dates, including November 29, International Women Human Rights Defenders Day, December 1, World AIDS Day, and December 6, the Anniversary of the Montreal Massacre. The 16 Days are a time to:

- ▶ Honor the rights of women, and of all people
- ▶ Challenge militarism and end violence against women
- ▶ Work for Peace at home and Peace in the world

Minnesota Alliance of Peacemakers

On November 8, Susu Jeffrey, Zehra Keye, Donna Malum, Doris Marquit, Leslie Reindl and Elizabeth Shippee were among our members who attended the annual meeting of the Minnesota Alliance for Peace (MAP) to which MnMetro WILPF belongs.

An hour of tabling preceded the program. We attracted a certain amount of attention with a display of tee-shirts calling for an end to “corporate personhood.” Move to Amend, the theme for the evening, is a reincarnation of an issue that WILPF has long supported and the shirts Doris found among our souvenirs date back two decades or more. Robin Monahan, who was a “coffee with” speaker earlier in 2011, received one as a gift from his wife. (You may remember that he and his brother walked across the U.S., from Pacific to Atlantic, in order to draw attention to the adverse effects of granting the legal status of “persons” to corporations.)

David Cobb, the national chair of Move to Amend, spoke at 7 p.m., rallying support for action through the courts and state elections. He also reached out to the Occupy Minneapolis demonstrators by sharing the podium with one of their leaders.

In a recent email, the national campaign to Abolish Corporate Personhood and Defend Democracy reports:

- Voters in Missoula, MT, and Boulder, CO, approved a resolution for a Constitutional amendment to declare that corporations are



Above: WILPF's display of T-shirts hit the theme of "Move to Amend: Abolish Corporate Personhood" at the Minnesota Alliance of Peacemakers celebration. At left: Leslie Reindl and Elizabeth Shippee at the WILPF literature table.

not people by an almost 75% margin in each city.

- More than 200 House Parties for Democracy were held Nov. 9, 2011, to connect concerned citizens and begin planning local actions for January 2012 to protest the second anniversary of the notorious *Citizens United v. FEC* Supreme Court decision.

- Move to Amend has launched Occupy the Courts—a call to action for a one-day occupation of Federal courthouses across the country, including the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington, D.C., on January 20, 2012. ■

WILPF ARTS COMMITTEE REPORT



Our “Stirring the Waters” band was invited to play at the opening of the 4th traveling exhibition of Women and Water Rights: Rivers of Regeneration, Oct. 27 at Finlandia University in Hancock, Mich. It was a great experience. We were warmly received by the Gallery Director Carrie Flaspohler, the contributing artists, and the enthusiastic audience of guests. Congratulations to them all on producing a beautiful and meaningful exhibition!



The mother and son team — Liz Dodson, video artist, of Minneapolis, and James Brenner, sculptor, of Chicago, with their creation in the Finlandia University Gallery. Dodson helped organize the Minnesota Women and Water Rights exhibit, working with Marilyn Cuneo of WILPF and Diane Katsiaficas, art professor at the University of Minnesota. (Photo by Keweenaw Now)

Our band's presentation included Naima Richmond narrating our script which is made up of four sections: Water is Life; Water is Peace; Water is Justice; Water is Regeneration. The band is made up of “instruments” connected to the sounds and uses of water. Paula Staff opens the performance by pouring water into a chalice which she

then uses as a bell; Luella Greene plays the rain stick along with a DVD of rain gently falling; Marilyn Cuneo makes waves with an ocean drum; Donna Malum keeps the heart beat drumming on a water jug; Liz Dodson plays a slosher and a shaker; Paula's husband, Ron Staff, took over for two of our members who were unable to come by

distributing water bottle shakers to everyone in the audience and encouraging them to interact with the band.

Four artists from our 2010 exhibition at the Nash Gallery had their works in this show along with local and regional artists. It proved to us all that encouraging other galleries to continue the theme of women and water rights is an effective way of spreading the message and promoting action. The next one will be in Hudson, Wis., next July. Be there!

- You don't have to be a drummer to join the Million Women Drummers Gathering slated for 2013 but beginning now. Tree lovers and huggers and planters are also urged to become involved in this environmental, community organizing event to bring people together to keep the rhythms of the earth alive and well. Meetings are being held to prepare for this event in Minnesota at the Women's Drum Center, 2242 University Ave. W., in St Paul, on second Saturdays of each month from 10 - noon. The next one will be Dec. 12. Join us in learning about trees in our state and forests in the world. Check the website: www.womensdrumcenter.org

- Liz Dodson and Marilyn Cuneo were invited to a dialog with Lynn Hershman Leeson, internationally acclaimed artist and filmmaker whose works are now at the U of M Nash Gallery and the Walker Art Center. On Nov. 17, she showed us through the exhibit and told the stories behind the works. Probably of greatest interest to WILPF members is the film “Women Art Revolution” (WAR), a documentary detailing the U.S. feminist art movement in the United States from 1968 to the present. The exhibit closes Dec. 3.

—Marilyn Cuneo, Convenor, WILPF Arts Committee

Hiroshima-Nagasaki Days Commemoration Aug. 6



Participants in the Meditative Walk down the Pathway to Peace, sponsored by WILPF and Women in Black, during the Hiroshima-Nagasaki Days Commemoration August 6.



Naima Richmond and Liz Dodson speaking at Hiroshima-Nagasaki Days ceremony.



Coldwater Closed

by Susu Jeffrey

The National Park Service announced that Coldwater Spring is closed for construction from November until September, 2012. “Ranger led tours” will be held on selected Saturdays to “escort” people to the Spring and allow for “unstructured” time for the public to “quietly visit the site.” What?—no drums, no kids?

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, former property managers, closed Coldwater in 2005, which prompted a federal Dakota treaty rights case for 18 months before charges were dropped. Public safety is given as reason for the closure once again.

Coldwater supporters are pleased that the old Bureau of Mines buildings and infrastructure will finally be removed from the 27-acre property. However extensive deforestation and re-contouring the land is criticized as excessive, even detrimental to the thin topsoil above the Mississippi bluff.

“It will be beautiful,” John Anfinson, MNRRA Chief of Resource Management said about Coldwater plans that look like a suburban textbook park. He says it won’t look as “manicured” as the drawings indicate and will be managed as a prairie, with “created wetlands,” re-contoured “restored landscapes,” an “earth mound” and few “existing trees.”

Coldwater is not prairie habitat. It’s oak savanna—a “rare,” “practically extinct,” “globally imperiled” zone between the tall grass prairie to the west and the eastern hardwood forest. Think of the density of oaks in Minnehaha Park just north of Coldwater.

But prairie is cheaper. Oaks need 100 years. Meanwhile a reactionary Congress is threatening to defund the National Park Service.

Sacra-Phobia

MNRRA’s antipathy toward the Native American view of Coldwater as sacred might be labeled sacra-phobic as well as prejudicial. Friends of Coldwater was astonished to learn that NPS employees were instructed to remove offerings left around Coldwater.

MNRRA’s attitude is especially perplexing in view of the fact that its own ethnographic study concluded that the Spring is

indeed Traditional Cultural Property. The Minnesota State Historical Society has “put on record ... Coldwater Spring meets the criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as a Traditional Cultural Property” (4/4/10).

The Spring landscape is also considered sacred by non-Indians. In 2003 the University of Minnesota Design Institute included Coldwater as a sacred site on a Knowledge Map of the Twin Cities. Specific sacred foci at Coldwater have been routinely removed by MNRRA: the seven-circuit labyrinth, the Dakota men’s hilltop fire circle, and now the trunk of the “Spirit Tree” is scheduled to go.

Where Does the Water Come From?

Coldwater is about water. That’s why soldiers camped there in 1820 and carted barrels of spring water to Fort Snelling until the 1880s before building a system to pump water to the Fort until 1920.

Before MNRRA’s park planning started, Friends of Coldwater requested that limestone fracture research showing groundwater routes to the Spring be extended so sources to Coldwater could be mapped and protected. MNRRA responded that it would be years before such a study could happen.

Coldwater is a 10,000-year-old spring and the last natural spring of size in Hennepin County. The Great Medicine Spring in Theodore Wirth Park and historic Glenwood Spring are both permanently dewatered into the sewer system from I-394 construction in the late 1980s. The William Miller Spring in Eden Prairie comes out of a pipe on the downhill side of Spring Road.

Urban Wilderness

Coldwater hosts a coyote clan, an 8-point buck and eagles that stare down from the old cottonwood. Cottonwood trees are scheduled for removal. Daylighting Coldwater Creek and razing the abandoned, graffitied buildings and remnant roads is universally applauded but Coldwater, unlike any other local park, is large enough to remain an urban wilderness. The vision Friends of Coldwater holds is for America’s first Green Museum, a place where the land is the museum. Info: www.FriendsofColdwater.org ■



Food Security—What Does It Mean for Us?

by Leslie Reindl, MN Metro Member

A summary of the presentation made at the WILPF Coffee With, September 2011.

A favorite macabre joke among Germans after WWII was the question: “How do you know when the war is over?” The answer? “When the British eat rats and the Germans eat rat substitute.”

This joke is appropriate to a discussion of food security. Because, unlike the obviousness of “rats,” we don’t always know what is in our food. Some substitutions are chosen by us, like margarine, artificial sweeteners, “coffee whiteners.” Some are not, like sugar or corn syrup in some brands of honey (“honey laundering”) and synthetic chemicals in vitamins.

Food security is the term usually applied to people suffering hunger or injustice. But it is a bigger topic than who gets to eat. Food First defines it as people having access to sufficient food that is nutritious, appropriate to their diet, safe, and affordable.

The food Americans eat is provided mainly by the industrial agriculture system. This system depends on economy of scale (gigantic farms) and comparative advantage (monocropping), concentration of ownership, and factory farming of animals, and leaves much to be desired in terms of security. Dependent as it is on oil and chemicals, it is not only tied to availability and price of these resources but also responsible for many environmental hazards.

What does it mean to be dependent on the industrial ag system? How secure does this system leave us?

• Sufficient Food

Industrial ag provides plenty of food. However, its major crops are corn, soybeans, and wheat. Corn is used for ethanol production and feed for beef cattle, and there is world competition—price depends greatly on the commodity markets (speculation). Debt and free trade agreements have driven thousands of small farmers off their land here and abroad. Weather calamities have created grain shortages. Dependence on long-distance shipping leaves us vulnerable.

• Nutritious Food

As our rates of obesity and diabetes increase, and information reaches us about dead soil,

further depletion of vitamins and minerals by food processing, ingredients that in themselves are unhealthy, such as trans fats, and the distance fresh food travels, we are beginning to see an unhealthy food system. After decades, “food deserts” in city and country are finally being addressed, with both community gardeners and food purveyors like Walmart (helped by government funding), responding.

• Appropriate to Diet

For most Americans, finding food appropriate to our diet is not a problem. But what is our diet? Spurred by advertising and coupons, our diet has changed from a once home-cooked, small-meat/large-grain and vegetable portion to a processed-food, meat-heavy/vegetable-light one.

• Safe Food

Who is not aware of frequent food recalls, illnesses, and deaths from various foods? Because factory-farmed animals are kept in crowded, unsanitary conditions and given abundant antibiotics, animal products are the most often linked to human illness. Cases of fresh produce causing illness or death are often associated with unsafe irrigation water from animal operations. And much non-organic fresh produce is contaminated with pesticides.

Another unknown food safety factor is genetically modified organisms (GMO); most prevalent in corn and soy products. GMOs have never been tested for safety in the food supply or for effects on the environment.

The origins of food can be obscure. Adulterated food from China makes news, but finding out which ingredients come from China can be next to impossible. Steve Ettinger, in *Twinkies, Deconstructed*, writes that most vitamin ingredients now seem to come from China, created from coal and oil in an extremely polluting process.

• Affordable Food

Inflation may be to blame for the astonishing prices I now see at my co-op, but many other factors make good food unaffordable for many: growing populations and competition for basic foods such as grains and oils, the use of food-fuel, speculation, and extreme weather. To keep food inexpensive today something has to give, and it is either quality or quantity, or both. (I finally

realized that the 1-pound package of tofu I usually buy had shrunk to 14 ounces.)

• Access to Food

Is access to food guaranteed to us in the U.S.? We have never suffered through a real shortage, as people in Africa now face. Could a huge weather event, or interruption of the oil supply, cause serious shortages here? Could scarcity and speculation cause actual starvation?

Land prices everywhere are rising. China and land-poor countries are buying up arable land, especially in Africa. Food crops are being converted into ethanol; mining and oil and gas exploration take more land.

Since the 1980s end of anti-monopoly laws, food and agriculture production has become one of the most concentrated sectors in the U.S. economy. Monsanto, ADM, Cargill, and Walmart are major players. Monsanto, once a chemical company, now has a major role in seed ownership, and controls a major supplier of organic seeds (Heritage). What if concentration reaches the point that food and farming corporations can decide to stop supplying certain kinds of foods, or supplying only their GMO-modified cousins (thus replacing them with “rat substitute”)?

Conclusion

Americans cannot take their food security for granted. They must create it, and growing numbers of community gardens, home gardens, CSAs, young people interested in farming, and seed saving organizations are steps in the process. This movement needs acceleration, the widespread realization that people must regain their access to the food-producing land itself. The price of land and lack of knowledge about farming are great obstacles, but can be overcome.

Community-owned agriculture (COA) is my answer to the obstacles—small-group pooling of time and money to lease land and hire a farmer. Food is basic to life, and its provision should not be left to the free market. The COA means achieving not just food security but food sovereignty—control over one’s own and the community’s food supply. The window of opportunity is still open, but land prices will eventually close it. ■

For more information please contact me—alteravista@usfamily.net

Global Women's Submission for the Rio+20 zero-draft document

The Women's major group has submitted its input for the zero-draft for Rio+20. The submission was developed over the last 6 months by more than 70 women's organizations from over 40 countries worldwide.

Throughout the world women are key actors in maintaining the sustaining livelihoods and welfare of their families and communities, and in making a transition to a more equitable and sustainable world.

The Women's major group asks that governments in Rio+20 commit to:

- Sustainable and equitable economies : Commit to gender-sensitive development of binding international and national measures

- Governance of sustainable development: Commit to gender-sensitive development of binding international and national measures
 - Commit to targets and indicators for women's engagement
 - Include gender equality goals in Sustainable Development Goals
- Also, Women ask attention for the following "emerging issues" and agreed upon actions for each in Rio+20:**
- Food security and food sovereignty: Women's voice over agriculture and biodiversity
 - Rush for Land: Women's land rights and ownership tenure, and prevention of land grabbing

- Halt privatization and commodification of the commons: Women most affected
- Women and children's greater harm from radiation: Need for phasing out of nuclear
- Promotion of clean renewable energy technologies and phasing out of unsustainable energy
- Strengthen gender priority in Climate Change policies
- Women and migration
- Women and children at risk: Need for new approaches to minimizing risks of novel technologies and chemicals
- New challenges to water availability: Burden for women ■

The Women's Peace Movement Comes Home

Last month women worldwide were delighted to hear that three women from the global south were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Leymah Gbowee and Tawakkul Karman were honored for their nonviolent struggles for justice in Liberia and Yemen, and for the right of women to fully participate in peacemaking. What was especially noteworthy was that the chairman of the Nobel Peace Prize committee, Thorbjørn Jagland, placed their achievements within the context of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. This resolution stresses prevention, protection and participation: prevention of violence, protection of women and children during war, and participation of women at the peace table, ensuring that their voices are heard and their demands taken seriously.

How can the intentions of this resolution be implemented? The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), of which I am a part, has been grappling with this issue for a long time. In fact, we were founded by women who tried to stop World War I. Although SCR 1325 was adopted a decade ago, we

are concerned that little has been done in the way of implementation.

Now, at last, things are beginning to move. SCR 1325 requests that every U.N. member nation develop a National Action Plan (NAP) to implement the resolution. Liberia and 31 other countries have established NAPs, but the U.S. is not one of them. However, on the 10th anniversary of 1325's passage last year, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton declared that she was going to push for the development of a U.S. NAP. "Countries are more peaceful and prosperous when women are accorded full and equal rights and opportunity," she said.

Her announcement was met with excitement, and also many questions: How would we as women be impacted by the NAP? Would it have a domestic component? "We don't want a document that will make war safe for women," said WILPF National Director Tanya Henderson. "WILPF strongly believes in preserving the original spirit of 1325: to advance the status of women and prevent future wars." ■



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Join the U.S. Section of WILPF (includes MN Metro Branch membership) and become a local supporter.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Membership Dues: \$35 (Individual) \$40 (Household) \$15 (Student/Limited Income)

\$500 (Life Member) Supporter Contribution (*any amount welcome*) \$ _____

Single check for membership and contribution may be made out to "MN Metro WILPF."

MAIL TO: WILPF, P.O. Box 14752, Minneapolis, MN 55414-0752

Local2Global delegation

Zehra Keye, active with the Minnesota Metro Steering Committee, has applied to be a member of the WILPF Local2 Delegation at the UN Commission on the Status of Women in February 2012. This program initiative is intended to build the capacity of WILPF members to effectively advocate on internal issues through UN processes and organs. Eight participants will be chosen.

Their travel and hotel expenses will be covered with a grant established by a generous member. Doris Marquit and Elizabeth Shippee have submitted letters of endorsement as requested. Zehra has a background of leadership in the UNUSA as well as in the Minnesota UN branch. She is an American citizen who was born in Turkey. ■

“Who Killed Emmett Till?” film shown

Adapted from a summary prepared by Carol Masters of WAMM

Forty people attended each of the showings of the documentary “Who Killed Emmett Till?” on Oct. 6 and 9. We learned that the men who kidnapped, tortured, and murdered this 14-year-old boy from Chicago (while he visited Mississippi relatives) were not convicted despite evidence and the testimony of witnesses.

The case was reopened 50 years later due to the efforts by historians, filmmakers and the family. Although the Till case was closed again in 2005, a bill bearing his name, the Emmett Till Civil Rights Crime Act, was passed in 2008 as a tool to re-open and prosecute similar crimes that have been ignored.

Along with WAMM, sponsors included Veterans for Peace, Trinity Lutheran Church and WILPF. ■

MARK YOUR CALENDAR...

December 10: Holiday Party. 11 am to 1 pm. A celebration of the winter season and our history of PEACE-MAKING. 1666 Coffman Condominium (entrance off of Larpenteur in Falcon Heights, just west of Cleveland) Beverages provided; bring finger food to share...invite a guest if you wish. *See postcard for details.*

February 11: WILPF Coffee With 10 a.m. to noon, Van Cleve Community Center, 901 15th Ave. SE, Mpls. Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer presents “Minnesotans Building a Movement to Shift Funding from War to Meet Pressing Needs”

Please visit
www.wilpfn.org
for updates!



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