



Women's International League for Peace and Freedom **WILPF Minnesota NEWS**

NEW ADDRESS!

WILPF-MN | P.O. Box 17293, Minneapolis, MN 55417 | www.wilpfn.org

Summer 2023

U.S. Sends Cluster Bombs to Ukraine

By April Knutson, Ph.D.

The Biden Administration approved sending cluster bombs to Ukraine in early July. As has been the case with other weapons and military machinery sent to Ukraine, President Biden at first hesitated to send the material that Ukraine requested before agreeing to send everything. There is very little transparency as to how these decisions are made. Are the Pentagon and the military services calling the shots? Are the Secretary of State and the National Security Advisor involved? The U.S. people have no idea. Many peace activists are against sending any weapons to Ukraine.

Yet this latest shipment to Ukraine has generated almost universal censure. Many countries in the world, including some of our NATO allies, have outlawed cluster bombs and destroyed their stockpiles. They have signed the International

Convention on Cluster Munitions which prohibits the manufacture, stockpiling and transfer of cluster bombs. The U.S., Russia, and Ukraine are not signatories to this agreement.

Many countries in the world, including some of our NATO allies, have outlawed cluster bombs and destroyed their stockpiles.... The U.S., Russia, and Ukraine are not signatories to this agreement.

Cluster bombs are very dangerous weapons. Once the bomb is launched, it opens while still in the air, releasing numerous tiny bomblets that land over a large area. Many of these bomblets explode, damaging buildings and killing people. But others, so-called duds, do not explode, thus creating landmines over large areas. The U.S. deployed cluster bombs in Vietnam. Today, nearly 50 years after the end of

the war, there are still unexploded cluster munitions in fields all over Vietnam. Children playing in these fields are being maimed by the bomblets which can explode on contact.

Minnesotans were active in the protesting the use of cluster bombs during the Vietnam War. The Honeywell Project in the 1970s involved protests against the manufacture of cluster bombs at the Honeywell plant in south Minneapolis. Many peace activists protested weekly and many were arrested.

Appropriately, two of our Representatives in Congress, Betty McCollum and Ilhan Omar have condemned the transfer of cluster bombs to Ukraine. Please contact your representative and senators to express your opposition to the use of these weapons and to urge them to call on the U.S. to join the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

SOME GOOD NEWS

U.S. Destroys Stockpile of Chemical Weapons

On July 7, 2023, President Biden announced that under his order all chemical weapons held by the United States had been destroyed.

Ironically, that was the same day that President Biden announced that he had approved the transfer of cluster bombs to Ukraine.

We need to insist that the U.S. get rid of cluster bombs as well as chemical weapons. All these dangerous, anti-personnel weapons should be destroyed.



With permission of the artist, Len Munnik

In this issue:

- US Sends Cluster Bombs to Ukraine
- US Destroys Chemical Weapons Stockpile
- Minnesota Peace Project in Washington DC
- The Ukraine War: No Military Solution
- Book Review: *Still Hopeful* –Paula Staff
- Jane Addams Books to Marcy School
- Apartheid Free
- Global Gender Gap Report, 2023

MINNESOTA PEACE PROJECT IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

By April Knutson, Ph.D.

The Minnesota Peace Project sent four members to Washington, D.C. for the week of May 8-May 12 to speak with our representatives and senators. Only one member of Congress met with us, Dean Phillips. We also had brief conversations with Senator Tina Smith and Senator Amy Klobuchar at their breakfast gatherings for constituents. Otherwise, we met with aides in congressional offices, usually foreign policy advisors and chiefs of staff.

NUCLEAR WEAPONS



The big take-away from these meetings was the near unanimous concern about the danger of nuclear accidents and even nuclear confrontations. In previous years, many Congressional staffers told us that nobody in Congress talks about nuclear weapons! Now with the war in Ukraine and the tensions with

China over Taiwan, everyone is worried.

We presented our requests and questions to the Congressional offices:

1. Please endorse the 1985 Geneva statement made by Presidents Reagan and Gorbachev that "A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought."
2. What are you doing to prevent a three-way nuclear arms race between the United States, Russia and China?
3. Would you be willing to make a statement expressing support for U.S. efforts to negotiate new arrangements to keep Russian and U.S. nuclear arsenals below the new START levels even after that treaty expires on February 5, 2026?
4. Please co-sponsor the bicameral Lieu-Buck and Markey bipartisan bill barring Artificial Intelligence from deciding to launch a nuclear weapon.

There was unanimous support for this last request. Concern was also voiced about a three-way arms race and the tensions between the U.S. and Russia and those between the U.S. and China.

Most offices were skeptical about the possibility of any negotiations with Russia on START negotiations due to the war in Ukraine.

All offices acknowledged that they hear from their constituents in Minnesota that they are concerned about nuclear confrontation.

OTHER ISSUES DISCUSSED

We presented several other issue briefs and requests to Congressional offices. One of our team is originally from Ethiopia, coming to Minnesota in 1971, so he talked about continuing the efforts for peace and justice in all regions of Ethiopia, with particular attention to the Oromo people.

- **Cutting the Pentagon budget** by supporting the People Over Pentagon Act, H.R. 1134, authored by Representatives Barbara Lee and Mark Pocan.
- **Arms Sales Accountability:** Join Senators Murphy and Lee in requesting information about Saudi Arabia's human rights practices. Representative Ilhan Omar from Minneapolis has introduced a House bill, Stop Arming Human Rights Abusers Act.

MEETING WITH THE FRIENDS COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL LEGISLATION

During our week in Washington, D.C., we also met with three staff members at the FCNL headquarters, located just a few blocks from Capitol Hill. We discussed nuclear disarmament, the interrelated issues of climate change and displaced populations, cutting the defense budget, not social services, increasing funding for diplomacy and peacebuilding efforts. They presented us with proposals for increased funding of three programs: Increase Investment in Reconciliation Programs, Increase Investment in the Complex Crises Fund, Increase Investment in Atrocities Prevention.

NONVIOLENT PEACEFORCE (NVP)

A NVP representative joined us one day for meetings in several Congressional offices. She has worked in Sudan. The head office of NVP is in Minneapolis. They are working there and in cities in New York and California with communities to reduce gun violence. NVP is asking for \$25 million in a dedicated account for unarmed civilian protection.

All in all, we feel that we had very productive talks and learned much so that we can craft new proposals and keep updating the issues we presented. We keep communicating with our representatives and senators throughout the year, through meetings in their local offices and emails and zoom meetings with their D.C. offices.

April Knutson, Ph.D., is Lecturer, Master of Liberal Studies Program, University of Minnesota
knuts001@umn.edu

The Ukraine War: No Military Solution

By Regina Bircherm

Austria, one of the few European countries neutral to NATO, was the site for an International Summit for Peace in Ukraine. The Conference, held in Vienna 10-11 June 2023, was called by the International Peace Bureau based in Berlin and a coalition of organizations. About 300 attendees from 32 countries issued a Declaration calling for a ceasefire and negotiations. A Global Week of Action is planned September 30—October 8.

The WILPF International President, Sylvie Jacqueline Ndongmo (Cameroon), convened an open virtual conversation 18 July on Ukraine with participants who attended the Vienna Summit and others.

Nina Potarska, WILPF International Coordinator for Ukraine, opened the discussion, laying out in personal terms the painful realities of the war and the struggle to end it.

“We analyze what we have to stress for the international community, for donors and investors. The reality is that Ukraine is now a bankrupt country 100% dependent on donors, on countries that invest money or help with the social care system.”

— Nina Potarska

This is a summary of Nina’s words.

Adapted from WILPF International conversation via Zoom July 18, 2023.

“It is hard for me to talk about the same war now 500 days since its beginning. As for many Ukrainian activists, the war has become routine with no relief from the tension of war even for a short time. All attention is on news from morning to evening... shelling every day.

“When war is your daily routine, every morning you feel lack of sleep, exhausted, angry; release anger around you and destroy your life. ...

“People in Ukraine wait for productive counter offensive actions with expectations heated up from media. In general people believe we can bring back our past, our life that we had before. With lack of weapons, lack of aircraft it is impossible to make counter offensive actions just with their human bodies.

“Being inside Ukraine changes your perspective and analysis of the war. That is my experience and that of many people who in Ukraine try to help in a humanitarian way or help to prevent the advance of the Russian army.

“You are always in between a theoretical understanding of peace building, how to reach actions that lead to peace, or what kind of actions are conflict drivers.

“Since the last autumn there has not been any change of the front line. It seems like at a halt. ... The idea of starting negotiations is still like a defeat... It is really hard to change this point of view when you are inside.

“We analyze what we have to stress for the international community, for donors and investors. The reality is that Ukraine is now a bankrupt country 100% dependent on donors, on countries that invest money or help with the social care system.

“Many countries think about the social problems of refugees. Ukraine is a big country with huge population so it is difficult for many European countries to share their social care system for so many newcomers and refugees. Many are women, women with the kids... For us, it is also not easy. Many refugees don’t want to assimilate; they are thinking about how they can get back home.

“They have already lost their house, their home, jobs, territories and places where they lived before. They have no place they can go to back home.

“After the recent July 17 bombing of the Crimea bridge and the rejected grain deal we expect a negative unpredictable side effect...

“To just stop fighting or cease fire is not so easy... We can support the discussion about rules of war or feminist peace, and how we can collaborate and build new solidarity. How can we stop the shelling without intervention from Russia? How can we collectively build structures that prevent conflict or have justice in the re-construction programs already on the high-level table? How can we discuss our peaceful future and manage our divisions?”

Thank You

For continuing to work for peace and planet

For renewing your membership

For contributing time, personal & financial support.

Donations make possible our PO Box, the JAPA book awards, newsletters and more.

To make a tax deductible donation to WILPF-MN Branch:

- Send a check to **Peace Development Fund** (fiscal sponsor).
- In the memo line write: **WILPF-US (Minnesota)**.
- So that Chris Wilbeck, Administrator, knows the check is coming, mail the check to:

Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom –
US Section, PO Box 13075, Des Moines IA 50310

Still Hopeful by Maude Barlow (2022)

Book Review by Paula Staff

It is said that good things come in small packages.

Still Hopeful by Maude Barlow is one of these good things. Her book published in 2022 is just over 200 pages long, the content of which belies the length. It documents her lifetime of activism. Ms. Barlow, known for her attention and action regarding water justice, has given herself to other equally important causes that have spanned the globe. She is known for her commitment, courage, and hope.

In this compact book, the richness of her activism is revealed. She learns from Joan Halifax, an American Zen Buddhist, the important of “wise hope.” Halifax wrote, Barlow documented, “...wise hope is born of radical uncertainty, rooted in the unknown and the unknowable. Wise hope requires that we open ourselves to what we do not know, what we cannot know, and to being perpetually surprised. Wise hope embraces the possibility of transformation and the understanding that what we do matters, even though how and when it will matter, who and what it may impact, are not things we can know beforehand.” (p.3)

In her book, Barlow outlines her history of advocacy and activism. She has acted on justice for women, indigenous people, fair



economics, water, and the restoration of our environment. Barlow quotes from a book, *Hope in the Dark*, (2004) by Rebecca Solnit.

“Yes, she posits, the future is dark, but it is inscrutable, not necessarily terrible. Many transform this unknowability into something certain and awful, the ‘fulfillment of their dread.’ She gently reminds us, ‘Far stranger things happen than the end of the world.’ (p.8) Solnit adds, “That is because we do not see the myriad of changes happening in the area of human rights and justice, for example, that would been thought impossible only decades ago. The world is wilder than our imaginations. Causes and effects assume history marches forward, but history is not an army. It is a crab scuttling sideways, a drip of soft water wearing away stone, an earthquake breaking centuries of tension. Sometimes one person inspires a movement, or her words do decades later; sometimes a few passionate people change the world; sometimes they start a mass movement and millions do; sometimes those millions are stirred by the same outrage of the same ideal and change comes upon us like a change of weather.” (p.9)

Barlow emphasizes the importance of taking pause from activism and healing oneself from the impact of that important work. She advised, “Be kind to yourself

as well. Take time for yourself. Keep good health practices. Allow yourself to be tired and discouraged and turn to those who care to help you through. Step away when you feel overwhelmed. Set limits on what you will expose yourself to. It is crucial to be open to valid criticism, but you don’t have to expose yourself to abuse and you owe no one to take it.” (p.164) We have all heard helpful recommendations, such as those listed above. It is up to us learn how to accept and apply that wisdom to our own lives.

Ms. Barlow concludes her book on a hopeful note. She articulates, “This book has been a personal journey, for it reminded me of the possibility of the human spirit to change and the world to change. I end it with a sure knowledge that we will only find our way by remembering what went wrong ‘in the beginning’ and letting it guide what we must do now.” (p.221) Her book is inspiring and fulfills the promise of hope. There is nothing that would deny a read. In fact, it is recommended as the book to read to offer lessons and pathways to activism of the heart, mind and body. My only complaint is the tiny typeface, which challenged my aging eyes. I sincerely believe there must be large print copies of her exceptional book. Take the opportunity and read to restore hope in the evolving future of our lives and planet.

Jane Addams Book Awards for 2023



Zehra Keye (left); Pinar Basgoze, parent member of school Library Committee (right); Children of Marcy School for the Arts.

For 70 years the Jane Addams Peace Association (New York) through a committee of parents, teachers, and educators select children’s books “for literary and aesthetic excellence to deepen understanding of peace and justice for children and their adults.”

Zehra Avsar Keye (Minnesota WILPF) makes this her annual project to donate and arrange a presentation of the books to a local school. This year in May the selection went to Arvonne Frazer Library, Marcy School for the Arts Elementary (PreK-5).

Thank you to Zehra Keye; to Principal, Trinity Raw; Librarian, Jennifer Kennedy-Logan; Assistant Principal, Jessica Driscoll and to Marcy School.

APARTHEID -FREE



The situation of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories continues to deteriorate. The Israeli occupation since 1948 and furthered in 1967 has gone from an illegal military occupation to an apartheid regime, a crime against humanity. Last November discussions began under leadership of the American Service Committee to urge collective action by organizations of conscience to end apartheid, settler colonialism and military occupation of the Palestinian territories.

What would society in Israel and Palestine be like if it were Apartheid-Free? What if all communities were without elements of exclusionary institutions, laws and practices, and had economies that work for all?

WILPF-US and WAMM have endorsed the Pledge for Apartheid-Free Communities. The social justice committee, your local anti-war or civil rights group, tenants' council, food co-op, book club, WILPF branch or any "community" can **fill out this form to take the Pledge** <https://apartheid-free.org/pledge/> :

THE PLEDGE FOR APARTHEID-FREE COMMUNITIES
We affirm our commitment to freedom, justice and equality for the Palestinian people and all people: and

We oppose all forms of racism, bigotry, discrimination and oppression; and

We declare ourselves an apartheid-free community and to that end,

We pledge to join others in working to end all support to Israel's apartheid regime, settler colonialism and military occupation.

APARTHEID IN CONTEXT

Apartheid is defined in international law <https://legal.un.org/avl/ha/cspca/cspca.html> as a crime against humanity that involves "inhuman acts committed for the purpose of establishing and maintaining domination by one racial group of persons over any other racial group of persons and systematically oppressing them." These inhuman acts include murder, torture, arbitrary arrest, legislative discriminatory measures, the persecution of people resisting apartheid, and more.

ACTIONS TO LIVE INTO YOUR PLEDGE

Each community has a different context and way toward addressing the evils of apartheid and all forms of racism, bigotry, discrimination and oppression. Check out the action guide <https://apartheid-free.org/actions/> for ideas for your community.

Global Gender Gap Report for 2023

Provided by Lois Herman, WUNRN, <http://www.wunrn.com>



The annual World Economic Forum Gender Gap Report measures the gender gap globally using statistics that indicate the level of gender equality. Factors are measured across politics, economy, health and education. The Report issued in June 2023 of factors in 146 countries indicate that no country has yet achieved full gender parity. Iceland again takes the top overall position, followed by Norway, Finland, New Zealand, Sweden, Germany, Nicaragua, Namibia and Lithuania.

In the four categories used, the United States of America ranks 63 in Political

Empowerment, 21 in Economic Opportunity, 78 in Health and Survival and 59 in Educational Attainment.

Direct Link to Full 382-Page 2023 World Economic Forum Gender Gap Report: [WEF_GGGR_2023.pdf](https://www.weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2023) [weforum.org](https://www.weforum.org)

"The report shows that while progress has been seen in the education and health sectors, there has been a regression in the economic participation gap that is currently tipped against women. The report refers to it as a "post-pandemic crisis" in need of urgent action."



SAVE THE DATES:

AUGUST 16 & 17 EVENINGS 5 pm - 7 pm CT
WILPF-US 2023 Virtual Gathering for all WILPF members

Hear from the WILPF-US Board, national staff, issue committee chairs and other branch members. Watch for eAlert and wilpfmn.org in mid August for agenda and details.

SEPTEMBER 30 - OCTOBER 8, 2023
Global Week of Action for Peace in Ukraine

Details when available at WILPF.org and other coalition websites.

2024 - MAY 30 - JUNE 2
WILPF-US Triennial Congress Minneapolis/St. Paul Details on venue and program when available at wilpfus.org and wilpfmn.org



WILPF-Minnesota
 PO Box 17293
 Minneapolis MN 55417

Women's International League for Peace & Freedom
WILPF-MN, PO Box 17293, Minneapolis, MN 55417

Annual Dues: \$35 Other as you are able \$ _____

\$ _____ An additional contribution of any amount makes you a Local MN Branch Supporter

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email _____

Membership in U.S. WILPF includes International WILPF membership and membership in the MN Branch.

Annual dues are set by National at \$35.

Dues may be paid online at www.wilpfus.org OR WILPF-US, PO 13075, Des Moines, IA 50310

Local support checks to WILPF-MN, Att: Paula Staff, PO Box 17293, Minneapolis, MN 55417

OR—make it easy for yourself—send MN Branch a single check made out to

WILPF-MN for membership and local support and we will send the dues portion

on to National.

Single check enclosed \$ _____

Let Regina Birchem know if
 you would like to get a full-
 color newsletter in email.
regbirchem@earthlink.net

SAVE PAPER & POSTAGE!