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PEACE & JUSTICE NEWS

SEPT/OCT/NOV
2019



In This Issue:

Rohingya: Burma's Forgotten People

August 5th & Kashmir's Imperial Oppression

Free West Papua!

Unsung Hero: Coretta Scott King

Edinburgh Peace & Justice Centre

Working in Scotland since 1980 to promote:
Nonviolence ♦ Conflict Resolution ♦ Human Rights ♦ Ecological Sustainability
Creating a Culture of Peace

Opposing War Memorial Campaign – Diary of Events
 Peacebuilding for Primary Schools Programme - Campaigning for Nuclear Disarmament
 Origami Cranes Project — Mailbox facility for Centre Users –
 Desk & meeting space available – Peace & Justice News

Coordinator and Editor: Brian Larkin **Cover Design:** Jane Herbstritt

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 Membership is £25 per year (more if you can!) £12 concession. Members receive P&J News by post or email. Peace & Justice News is published quarterly in January, April, July & October. Contributions do not necessarily reflect the views of the Centre. We invite contributions to by the 18th of the month before publication news@peaceandjustice.org.uk.*

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Staff working hours Wed – Friday
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Open for Drop In: Wednesdays
12:30 – 2:30pm. We're usually in
most times Wed – Friday 10am –
2pm. You are welcome to pop in.

Editor's Introduction

In this issue of Peace & Justice News Nay Nay Htun remembers the forgotten people and writes about the Rohingya Muslims that are currently undergoing an ethnic cleanse in Myanmar. This article is an update from the news that went viral in early 2017 and explores what the current environment is for the Rohingya Muslims.

Eeman Talha explores Kashmir and adds historical context to one of the most disreputable humanitarian crises challenging what some thought they may have known about Kashmir while still recognizing their self-determination.

Cindy Kamtchoum takes a deep dive into the Free West Papua movement and why it's often not discussed. Explaining that West Papua's demand for autonomy has been a long and hard battle and is, unfortunately, far from over.

In our Centre News the Peace and Justice centre has exciting updates. First, we have an important milestone in our Origami Cranes Project, and still have more workshop dates! Second, our collaborative classroom project is ready to kick into high gear for this upcoming school year. Last, we have updates on arms trade and nuclear weapons but to find out more please read our Centre News Updates.

It's time to celebrate another unsung hero and in this month's edition we are recognizing Coretta Scott King and all the peace work she did in her lifetime.

Lastly, we have a call to action, after reading our West Papuan article please read our call to action to find out ways you can be apart of the movement.

We hope you enjoy! The Editors



Photo credit: Brian Larkin. Origami Crane by Margaret Ferguson Burns.

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Centre News

Peacebuilders Primary Schools Programme

Collaborative Classrooms A new element of the programme, Collaborative Classrooms will involve teachers and other adults in primary schools. Providing bespoke training, it will integrate the sustainable practices of nonviolent Communication, Restorative Practice, Peer Mediation and Circle Work into school practice. We plan to pilot the new programme after half term. The programme is funded through grants from Anglican Peace Fellowship, Pumphouse Trust, Fellowship of Reconciliation, Network for Social Change Charitable Trust and Big Lottery Fund Awards for All.



Thank you Summer Interns!

We say goodbye to **Cindy Kamtchoum** and **Elizabeth Mitchell** who were with us over the summer. Cindy is a student at Pace University, New York City. She worked on the Don't Bank On The Bomb Scotland project and has two articles in P&J News.

Cindy's passion for peace through education will aid her as she finishes her degree in Peace and Justice Studies. Elizabeth graduated from Glasgow University. She organized stalls, doing outreach and fundraising for us. We will miss them both.



Welcome New Interns Two new interns have joined us. Nay Nay Htun comes to us from Burma via Ohio State University. Nay Nay has done research among refugees in Greece and has an article in this issue on the Rohingya. Eeman Talha is a recent graduate with an LLB from Aberdeen and is pursuing a Masters in Human Rights Law at Queen Mary University in London. Eeman has an article on Kashmir in this edition.

Arms from Scotland to Saudi Arabia

We are working on a joint publications with Campaign Against the Arms Trade that exposes the role Scottish companies play in funding and manufacturing of arms that are being sold to Saudi Arabia. Look out for the briefing in October.

Don't Bank on the Bomb

The P&J is active in the Don't Bank on the Bomb Scotland Network. We launched a guide to nuclear weapons divestment last year. The 2019 version of the report will be launched on 15 Sept. Watch out for launch event details on website and Facebook and Twitter. Print versions available upon request. The event will also highlight a milestone in the campaign for a nuclear weapons ban treaty: 25 countries so far have signed on. When 50 countries sign up the TPNW will become international law.

Take Action!

*We've learned that RBS Group is undertaking a review of its defence sector investment policy. Information about the bank's investments in nuclear weapons and its current policy is at: <https://nukedivestmentscotland.org/royal-bank-of-scotland-group/> RBS has acknowledged the TPNW but won't change its policy to exclude all nuclear weapons producers unless the UK ratifies the treaty. However, the bank is concerned about reputational risk. Customer concerns are passed to the review team. **Please write to the bank** to request it change its policy. You can use the template letter as a guide but it's better if you compose your own: <https://nukedivestmentscotland.org/template-letters-2/>*

Opposing War Memorial

We have now raised almost £64,000 for the memorial, so we're more than a third of the way to our goal! To commission the sculpture we need to raise £130,000 more. Our grant applications will be strengthened by the public support that has been demonstrated by donations received. If you have not already done so **please consider donating to the Memorial or if you've already donated consider inviting a friend to do so!**



Donate By Bank Transfer: Bank of Scotland account: Edinburgh Peace & Justice Centre. A/C No: 00207018 / Sort Code: 80-11-30 Ref: Opposing War

By cheque made out to Edinburgh Peace & Justice Centre. Post to Edinburgh Peace & Justice Centre, Central Edinburgh Methodist Church, 25 Nicolson Square, Edinburgh EH8 9BX with a note that the donation is for the Opposing War Memorial.

To Donate by bank card or credit card visit www.opposingwar.scot/donate/

Fly Kites Not Drones took place at Meadows Pavilion Café - Again!



The early spring event was very wet. This time the weather was great. We've organised these popular Kites Not Drones events in solidarity with people living under the threat of drones annually since 2014. The events were inspired by the Afghan Peace Volunteers, an interethnic peace community of young people. Afghans fly kites at the Nao Ruz, or New Year.

The event was again a joint one with **Refugee Community Kitchen** who offered soup, chutney and music.

Thanks to Amanda and Meadows Pavilion Cafe for hosting and warm coffees and to Jan Benvie and Coady and the other volunteers who helped on the day.

Upcoming Events



Peace Walk and AGM.

Sunday 15 September, 2-3pm.

Meet at the Peace Pole on the Terrace of St John's Church, off Lothian Rd, Edinburgh EH2 4JB.

Join us for a gentle Peace Walk through Princes St Gardens.

2:45 - 3:15pm. Tea and cake at St Columba's by the Castle.

2:45 - 3pm. P&J AGM.

XR Peace: Militarism and Climate Change: What can we do?

**St Columba's by the Castle Episcopal Church,
14 Johnston Terrace (blue door)**

We urgently need to cut greenhouse gas emissions to zero by 2025 to avert climate catastrophe. That won't be possible unless we transform the militarism at the heart of the global industrial system that relies on fossil fuels. Come join the discussion on the rebellion so far, how to get involved in the new XR Peace alliance and support the October Rebellion.

Speaker from Extinction Rebellion and Discussion



Peacebuilders facilitator training

Sun 22 September. 10am - 5pm. Edinburgh location given upon registration. One day training for anyone interested in becoming a facilitator for our peacebuilding in schools programme. Upon successfully completing the first day you are eligible to continue on our 8 week training programme one afternoon per week. Upon completion of the course you will be eligible to be a Facilitator on our schools programme. More about the programme and application form at <http://peaceandjustice.org.uk/want-to-join-our-team/>

Conscience International conference.

Thurs 28 Nov – Sunday 1 December. Quaker Meeting House, Edinburgh.

Speaker Thurs 28 Nov. Vijay Mehta on the idea of a Minister for Peace.

Presentation Saturday on the Opposing War Memorial. Full programme at:

<http://www.conscienceonline.org.uk/international-conference-2019/>



Origami Cranes Workshops

**Saturday 14 September. 12 October.
9 November. 2 – 4pm.**

**At the P&J, City of Edinburgh
Methodist Church,
25 Nicolson Square, EH8 9BX**



So many Peace Cranes!

Thanks to Frank and Hilary for organizing cranes workshops on the Fringe in *the Quaker Meeting House*. *We now have 134,000 cranes – just 6,000 short of our total. Drop in to a workshop and help us reach the goal!*

Volunteers needed: Photographer – Videographer -

Graphic Artists - Fundraising - Stalls. **Internships and work placements:** Opposing War Memorial Research; Events Organiser; Blogger & Writer; Social Media; Policy Research - Origami Cranes Exhibition Curator. *We open to ideas for projects on sustainability, peacebuilding, conflict resolution, nonviolence, human rights and refugee issues. Get in touch!*

The Rohingya: Burma's Forgotten People

By Nay Nay Htun

Have we forgotten about one of the world's most vulnerable minority people known as the Rohingya? The news of Rohingya went viral on the internet two years ago when the Burmese government was accused of committing genocide against them. Today, the topic of the Rohingya is hardly mentioned in conversation or news.



Photo: UN Women: Rohingya women in refugee camps share stories of loss and hopes of recovery. CC BY-SA 2.0

[flickr.com/photos/unwomen/42486733185/in/photostream/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/unwomen/42486733185/in/photostream/)

The Rohingya are an Indo-Aryan ethnic group. Before the 2016-2017 crisis, there were about 1 million Rohingya living mainly in Rakhine state, Myanmar. The first Rohingya ancestors, known as Bengali Muslims settled in Arakan (Rakhine) in 1430-34. During the British colonial rule, the Bengali migrated to fertile valleys to work as farmers. After Myanmar gained independence in 1948, the Bengali were recognized as

an ethnic minority group of Myanmar. In 1962, racism against people who have links to Indian origins increased and the military forced many to leave the

country. Though, the Rohingya have been residing in the country for a long period of time, they were not listed in “national races” of Myanmar, enacted by the Burmese military government. Between 2016-2017 the Rohingya population in Myanmar decreased as the Burmese government continuously attacked them by burning their homes and villages forcing them to seek refuge in Bangladesh, Thailand, Malaysia, U.S.A and other countries.



Image: Schwedagon Pagoda, Myanmar by FarFar on Unsplash

Rohingya people were unknown to the world prior to this crisis. The crisis began when Jihadists attacked three Burmese border on the 9th of October, 2016. The Burmese government immediately accused the Rohingya of participating in these attacks because Rohingya, who are Muslims made up 4.15% of Myanmar population while 87.9% of Myanmar’s population believed in Theravada Buddhism.

The country has been under military rule and for many decades, it had little interaction with the world. The civil war between the Burmese government and other ethnic groups has been ongoing until today. The country often received international attention for their poor human rights record. The majority people were conservative nationalist so when the so called “terrorist attack” took place, people were ready to support the government carrying out what United Nation officials called “ethnic cleansing” against the Rohingya. The situation was worsened when a Buddhist monk named Ashin Wirathu who preached hate against the Rohingya came to power. He said that “you can be full of kindness and love, but you cannot sleep next to a mad dog (referring to the Rohingyas and Muslims).” He threatened Burmese Buddhists by saying that “if we are weak, our land will become Muslim.” His million Buddhist followers spread hate across the country which effected the Rohingya’s way of daily life.

Near the end of October 2017, over 600,000 Rohingya refugees had fled to Bangladesh to avoid ethnic and religious persecution carried by Myanmar’s security forces. The living condition inside the refugee camps were described

as “inhumane.” Many refugees arrived there in large groups and the camp was not well prepared to host them with clean water and food. In the refugee camp in Bangladesh, over 25% of Rohingya children are suffering from malnutrition and 12% of children suffer from stunting, a condition resulting from starvation.

Many children, pregnant women, and elderly people also suffer from respiratory infections, diarrheal, and diphtheria which are only a few of the many infectious diseases outbreaks which occurred within the camp due to poor sanitation. In February 2018, 35 refugees were reported to have died from diphtheria. On the 1st of March, 2019, Bangladesh announced that it would not accept another refugee in the camp. Recent news on the Rohingya situation shows the Rohingya are unwanted in the camps. On the 22nd of August 2019, the Bangladeshi officials “arranged for buses to start repatriating refugees,” however, no one voluntarily show up at the bus stop to return to Myanmar and the plan failed.

Bangladesh is losing patience over the Rohingya crisis and an agreement for resolving the situation has not been reached. The Rohingya wanted to be recognized as an ethnic group in Myanmar by the Burmese government. Dil Mohammed, a leader of Rohingya said “We won’t return unless we are recognized as Rohingyas in Myanmar.” However, Myanmar denies citizenship to Rohingyas, and referred to them as Bengalis who migrated to the country illegally.

The fate of the Rohingya is unknown. Will they reach the agreement? And if they do, will they return to Myanmar?

August 5th and Kashmir’s imperial oppression

By Eeman Talha

August 5th became another significant date in the history of Kashmir’s imperial oppression. It will be marked as another day the country silenced Kashmiri voices pleading for their state independence and freedom. On this day, India’s Hindu nationalist government repealed the special constitutional status of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, as previously underlined in Article 370 of India’s constitution. Following this, the Indian parliament has passed the Jammu and Kashmir reorganisation act. This means the once independently governed

state will now become a 'union territory' under the direct rule of the Indian government upon the act's effect in October. The Indian authorities imposing unprecedented lockdowns, suspending communication lines, and restricting movement is simply another devastating attack of nationalism by an ignorant group of elites. What is even more distressing is Kashmir has been fighting a war to gain its basic right of self-determination, as enshrined to it under Article 1(2) of the United Nations Charter, for over four centuries.



Photo: Kenny OMG. Pahalgam Valley.jpg CC BY-SA 2.0

Kashmir has been caught in the crossfire between India and Pakistan since 1947. Yet, Kashmir's oppression began long before the formation of the two post-colonial nations. In fact, since the late 15th century, the valley of Kashmir has not

been ruled by Kashmiris themselves. After the Mughal empire annexed the region in 1589, the Afghans, in the 17th century, and Dogra dynasty, 18th century, took over. During their separate rule, all three groups may have gained millions in economic wealth but they made sure the Kashmiris, especially those from the Muslim working class, lost out in every aspect of life- including their dignity. During the Dogra rule, after Kashmir was 'sold' to them as if it was a commodity, extortionate taxes were forced upon the Kashmiris, they were banned from holding any land, many were burdened with forced labour and more than 70 percent of crops were given to the Dogra rulers. The Dogras were a Hindu dynasty and their treatment of Kashmiri Muslims was far worse than that of Kashmiri Hindus. Muslims were forced to pay a tax for getting married among other abuses, and at the height of taxation, a 'zaildari tax' was affected to pay for the cost of taxation itself.

The region's situation did not recover, but worsened following the British departure from and chaotic partition of India into two nation-states- the Hindu majority India and Muslim majority Pakistan. Amidst the turmoil of partition, some princely states were given the choice to join either country. Under the Indian Independence Act, Kashmir was given two options: to become an independent state or accede to India or Pakistan. This was a tricky choice as

Kashmir was a unique state which had a Muslim majority led by a Hindu Dogra ruler, and thus would not fit into either of the two nations unless one religious ideology was compromised. Subsequently, the ruler wished for Kashmir to gain independence.

But after Pakistan's attempted invasion of the state in fear that the region would join India, India promised to protect Kashmir and thus the state became part of India in 1947. Following this, Article 370 which guaranteed Kashmir's autonomy in the Indian union, was added to the Indian constitution. However, imperial aggression made clear that India had no intentions to protect Kashmir's autonomy. This was exemplified by the Indian imperial force upon the region's persecuted Muslim population. Moreover, India's promised election for the Kashmiris to vote and determine the fate of their state was never upheld and soon forgotten.



Image: Locator map for the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Source: wikimedia. CC BY-SA 2.0

Since Article 370 was signed, India and Pakistan engaged in their first war over Kashmir claiming to have the best interests of the local population in mind. Yet, the people of Kashmir experienced only the opposite. The UN Security Council brokered a ceasefire in 1949, which established a line of control between Kashmir for Pakistan to control one side, and India the other. The ceasefire also demanded the withdrawal of both Pakistani tribesmen and Indian troops for Kashmir to hold a

direct vote to decide its future. However, neither party withdrew from the region. Pakistan argued that the Muslim majority Kashmir belonged to them, whilst India claimed Kashmir was agreed to it by its Hindu Dogra ruler. The vote for independence was again, never held.

Over these last 70 years, Kashmir has been the bloodstained battleground over its disputed borders. The cycle of violence and exploitation has resulted in 4 wars, that have each left devastating effects upon the region. The Indian army's suppression in Kashmir in an attempt to gain control against Pakistan

has driven some Kashmiris to join Pakistani- backed militant groups. These militias carry out violence against Indian troops to thwart the oppression of their people, and the Indian troops react. It is a cycle that Kashmiris are reduced to be hopelessly stuck in- especially the youth of Kashmir who are recruited by these militant groups. In this short history of Kashmir, the colossal damage it has endured is undeniable. What underpins this damage, is the Kashmiris' mere wish to make a choice. A wish that has been painfully rejected again and again, by ignorant violence. The most obvious solution has always been for Kashmir to choose their fate, an option becoming increasingly impossible as the Modi government pursue their recent agenda. It seems shameless and power-hungry imperial aggression has triumphed and we can only hope international organisations intercede to protect the rights of the people it promised to.

Sources: aljazeera.com/ restlessbeings.org indiankanoon.org/doc/666119/

It's Time to Finally Free West Papua!



Image: AK Rockefeller. Free West Papua. CC By-SA 2.0

By Cindy Kamtchoum

In 1970, an armed guerrilla group called Free Papua Movement (OPM) formed to resist the colonisation of West Papua. According to FreeWestPapua.org “The OPM carried out a number of guerrilla attacks on the Indonesian military and on the holdings of multinational companies who had taken Papuan land and resources – including a successful attempt to close down the Freeport gold and copper mine”. Although

only a small guerilla group, the OPM was determined and fought a discreet war against Indonesia for decades.

Recently a new independence organisation, National Committee for West Papua (The KNPB) has become prominent. The KNPB has held enormous independence rallies across West Papua. In retaliation, members, including college students, have been arrested, raped, tortured and murdered. Former

KNPB chairman Mako Tabuni was killed in 2012 by the Indonesian police, and in 2013 five West Papuan were sentenced 15 - 18 years in prison for raising the West Papuan Flag, Morning Star Flag. The sixth man was beaten so badly his case was dismissed because he received mental health issue and wasn't able to stand court.

In 2016 a highly significant meeting occurred at the UK parliament in Westminster. According to FreeWestPapua.org "West Papuan leaders and other leaders from Pacific countries gathered together and affirmed their support for the people of West Papua being able to choose their own future to live in a free and independent nation". Groups such as the International Lawyers for West Papua (ILWP) and the International Parliamentarians for West Papua (IPWP) are engaging with other international politicians and lawyers. The World Council of Churches (WCC) visited West Papua in February 2019 and found human rights violations and discrimination against West Papuans. In spite of increased international awareness however being more discussions surrounding West Papua they are still having their human rights stripped.

Visit FreeWestPapua.org for more detailed history and documents referenced in this article including 1962 New York agreement and the letter from President John F. Kennedy to Dutch Prime Minister Dr Jan de Quay. Follow Free West Papua on Twitter and Facebook for updates @FreeWestPapua.

Call to Action

The Peace and Justice Centre has recently received a call to action from War Resisters International (WRI) affiliate Pasifika in West Papua.

Currently all internet has either been restricted or switched off entirely and Indonesian troops have stormed the streets. Their two demands are to "turn the Internet back on" and that all Indonesian combat troops and police be withdrawn.

We urge peace activists to use the hashtag #KeepItOn being promoted by SAFENET and #FreeWestPapua on all social platforms to spread awareness.

Help West Papua on their journey of self-determination because for too long they've had their human rights restricted.

If you want to help organize or be part of a demonstration, contact the P&J. We can support and promote.

West Papua: Historical Background

West Papua is a province bordering Papua New Guinea and includes two most western peninsulas of New Guinea and smaller islands surrounding them. West Papua was colonised by the Netherlands and Papua New Guinea was colonised by both the German and British. However, while Papua New Guinea became an independent nation-state in 1949, West Papua was colonised by Indonesia in 1961. This caused conflict between the Netherlands, Indonesia and West Papua concerning control of the country. During this time the Indonesian government sought aid from the Soviet Union.



Image: Coat of Arms, Republic of West Papua. Free West Papua . CC BY-SA 2.0

The United States fearing a domino effect worried that communism would spread across South-East Asia if the Soviet Union helped Indonesia secure West Papua. This caused President Kennedy to write to Dutch Prime Minister, Dr Jan de Quay, asking he relinquish West Papua to Indonesia. The United States facilitated a secret meeting between the Netherlands and Indonesia that resulted in the 1962 New York Agreement.

This gave the United Nations control of West Papua which was later given to Indonesia through the Act of Free Choice. In theory, the agreement gave West Papuans the choice of whether to become part of Indonesia through a referendum. However, West Papua was coerced into participating in the Act of Free Choice which saw 1,026 men and women, pre-selected by the Indonesian militia, voted unanimously in favour of Indonesian control. The conditions in West Papua were volatile. The Indonesian military was killing and imprisoning thousands of Papuans up until the vote. The United Nations agreed to oversee the referendum but stood idly by and claimed the election was free and fair.

Since then West Papua has been under the rule of Indonesia though its people continuously fight for their own sovereignty. Recently the United Nations has been criticised for their actions during the referendum. FreeWestPapua.org says “the principal aim of the Free West Papua Campaign is to persuade the UN to review its role in this event and for the world allow the Papuans a true act of self-determination”.

An example of the exploitation of the Papuans is the killing and displacement of thousands of Papuans to make space for Freeport mine, the largest gold mine in the world, ironically owned by the US and Britain. This has seen their sacred mountain diminished to a mere crater and the local river system poisoned. There has been a news blackout and a ban on foreign agencies in West Papua since the Indonesian occupation.

Coretta Scott King: Unsung Hero

By Cindy Kamtchoum

Coretta Scott King, born Coretta Scott, is commonly referred to as the wife of Martin Luther King Jr. and not much else. Described as ‘soft-spoken’, ‘quiet’, and ‘obedient’, Scott King was a civil rights activist in her own right and often pioneered different peace campaigns within the Civil Rights Movement. She said: “Often, I am made to sound like an attachment to a vacuum cleaner: the wife of Martin, then the widow of Martin, all of which I was proud to be. But I was never just a wife, nor a widow. I was always more than a label”. She highlights an important problem history has in how it remembers women.



Image: Coretta Scott King.
Photo Credit - Library of
Congress. CC BY-SA 2.0

Both Scott King and Rosa Parks have been described as matronly women. Though she never had children of her own, Parks was deemed the “accidental mother of the Civil Rights Movement”. Nothing about the actions of either of these women were accidental. Parks attended the Highlander Folk School, overseen by Septima Clark, which focused on training and education for some of the most prominent Civil Rights Movement leaders including Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee members Anne Braden, Martin Luther King, Jr., James Bevel, Hollis Watkins, Bernard Lafayette, Ralph Abernathy and John Lewis. However, this edition’s unsung hero focuses on Coretta Scott King because of how often she’s disposed within the conversation of Civil Rights leaders. She worked as a liaison to peace and justice organizations and worked as a public mediator,

among other endeavours.

Coretta Scott was born in Marion, Alabama on April 27, 1927. Being exposed to racial discrimination during childhood, Scott saw her childhood home and her father’s sawmill burn down, as a teenager. Coretta was commonly known for her singing and violin abilities and often said she did not aspire to live a religious life until she met her husband, Martin Luther King Jr. She graduated valedictorian in 1945 from Lincoln High School and later attended Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio, earning her Bachelor of Arts (BA) in education and music in 1951. While attending Antioch College, Scott became politically active joining the campuses NAACP, the Race Relations and Civil Liberties Committees, and various peace organizations. Coretta then attended

a fellowship at the New England Conservatory (NEC) of Music in Boston, Massachusetts. Here she would meet her soon to be husband MLK Jr., a then-doctoral candidate at Boston University's School of Theology. They married on June 18, 1953, in Marion, at her family home.

Once she obtained her baccalaureate in violin and voice from NEC in 1954, King and Scott King moved to Montgomery, Alabama, where King served as a pastor at the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church and she became a pastor's wife. This would be where King would first receive national attention as a young leader during the Montgomery Boycott.

While King was often the face of the Civil Rights Movement, Scott King often worked closely alongside him. Seven weeks into the Montgomery boycott, while Scott King and their ten-week-old daughter, Yolanda, were alone in the house, the King's house was bombed. Fortunately, they escaped uninjured. This made both Coretta and Martin's fathers terrified and both travelled to Montgomery to pressure Coretta and Yolanda to move. She refused. Scott King was recorded saying "During the bus boycott I was tested by fire and I came to understand that I was not a breakable crystal figurine," she said. "I found I became stronger in a crisis".



Image: Coretta Scott King speaks to students from the U.S embassy school in New Delhi India, Jan 1969. Tim Brown. CC BY-SA 2.0.

Coretta Scott King was an earlier adversary of American involvement in Vietnam, often pushing her husband to speak out against the war. She continued to speak out against the American government by critiquing American war and economics decades after King's death. Scott King's vision was for peace on a global scale and, in many ways, her peace activism inspired Martin's. She was one of the founders of the Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy, in 1957. She spoke at the Youth March for Integrated Schools, on her husband's behalf, finding inspiration from India's Salt March, led by Mohandas Gandhi. After her husband's assassination, she pioneered the effort to create a national holiday in King's honour and initiated the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change in Atlanta. She also travelled to Ghana to honour the nation's independence, journeyed to India on a pilgrimage, and led the Sanitation Workers March four days after her husband's death. Lastly, in Scott King's memoir, she said it was difficult to find her position in a "male-dominated culture".

News from Around the Movements

Common Threads- Making the Links



The Gareloch Hortis Women's Peace Group took to the streets of Newcastle in May to make the links between their anti-nuclear campaigning and other concerns. Their colourful banners attracted curious passers-by who wanted to discuss climate justice, an end to austerity and poverty, and the effect of ATOS assessments on people with disabilities. The banning of nuclear weapons and the ICAN campaign was news to some. People's responses ranged from 'you have made my day: I am so happy that you are making the links'; to disbelief that the UK has nuclear weapons!

In general there seemed to be an agreement that we have a government which fosters corruption and perpetual warfare and that small actions of concerned citizens will bring about change.

Hong Kong Activists Arrested

At 7 a.m. on 29 August HKT Joshua Wong, Demosisto political activist, was arrested outside a metro station. He was one of three prominent protest leaders apart of the group that was rounded up by Hong Kong Police. These arrests were on the eve of the anniversary of the 2014 Umbrella Movement led by Wong demanding more fair and transparent elections in China. Despite these arrest the group still plans to hold their anti-government march and strike.



Photo: Demosisto Leaders. By Iris Tong.
Voice of America. CC BY-SA 2.0

Obituary: Ellen Moxley: 12/3/1935 to 8/7/2019

By Sheila MacKay of Iona Community and Trident Ploughshares

Ellen Moxley was a powerhouse of a woman whose profound belief in the sacredness of all life and all creatures was the driving force of her life. She was the beloved mother of Marian Beeby and deeply loved civil partner of Helen Steven who died in 2016. She received both the Right Livelihood Award in 2001 and the Gandhi International Peace Prize in 2004.



Photo: Ellen fasting at Scottish Parliament. Courtesy Trident Ploughshares

She was born in Nanjing China in 1935. Her mother Marian had left New York to go to China with her Mandarin teacher, Sun, to teach English. She married Sun and they had Ellen. The political situation was worsening rapidly and Marian and her baby daughter escaped back to the USA just before the Japanese invasion in 1937. In 1945 Ellen's mother married Jim Moxley.

Ellen went to high school in San Francisco and then went on to the Ivy League College for women, Mt Holyoke in Massachusetts, where she graduated in Zoology in 1957. It was in studying zoology that she discovered the sacredness and beauty of all life and all creatures.

While working at San Diego Zoo in a summer job Ellen rescued Nebbie the raccoon, hiding him in her bag to smuggle him out – possibly her first time practicing nonviolent direct action. It was

also at University that she first attended Quaker Meeting and became part of a community that was a wellspring of strength and support and a focus for her commitment for the rest of her life. Ellen and her mother moved to Europe around 1961 first to live in Paris and then London where Ellen taught for a year and then worked as a research assistant in St. Bartholomew's Hospital for 4 years.

In 1971 Ellen was appointed by the Gordon Barclay Vietnam Fund, a Quaker organisation, to manage an orphanage in Saigon. She lived and worked in Vietnam from 1972 to 1974 and during that time made life-long friends, met Helen Steven who was to become her life partner and also met Marian, a baby in the orphanage whom she adopted formally in 1975.

By 1981 Ellen had moved to Scotland and she, Helen and Marian were a family. Ellen became involved with the Peace Movement in Scotland, and was a founder member of the Gareloch Horticulturalists Nonviolent Direct Action Group. She was an active member of Amnesty International and she joined the Scottish National Party as they were the only party with an anti-nuclear stance.

In 1985 with the support of Quakers and the Iona Community Ellen and Helen opened Peace House in Braco near Dunblane. They ran residential courses on peace and justice themes most weekends for 12 years. They worked as a most effective team, planning programmes and developing material together while Ellen also provided beautiful food. More than 10,000 people were challenged, inspired and nurtured over the years.

In 1999, after closing Peace House Ellen became more involved with Trident Ploughshares. Along with two other women she boarded the nuclear weapons facility Maytime in Loch Goil and emptied it of all its computers and equipment – leaving only the first aid kit. For this action they were arrested and kept on remand in Cornton Vale Prison for 3 months until the trial. They were acquitted by the sheriff in a historic judgement. It was this daring action that led to the Right Livelihood Award in 2001.



Photo: The Trident Three.
Courtesy Trident Ploughshares.

In 2002 Helen and Ellen ‘retired’ to Burnside, their house in Raffin in the far north- west. Ellen loved her life with Helen at the edge of the Atlantic Ocean in this wonderful community of neighbours who supported each other and enjoyed a rich social life. Ellen became known for her great food and welcome, and her activism was channelled through Assynt for Peace and her ongoing Iona

Community commitment. Generosity and nurture characterised Ellen’s life as did her courage, her fierce intelligence, and her unswerving focus on working for

peace for which she and Helen were recognised when they were awarded the Gandhi International Peace Prize in 2004.

From her mid -70s Ellen’s health began to deteriorate as a result of a lung condition. But this didn’t stop her undertaking a 4 day fast for peace outside the Scottish Parliament to commemorate Hiroshima Day and Nagasaki Day in August 2015 when she was 80. As she reduced her work she had more time to enjoy opera – especially when it was streamed from the Met on TV, and tried out stained glass work and pottery. She and Helen had wonderful trips to Florence, to Orkney and on the Norwegian Arctic cruise.

The last three years of Ellen’s life, after Helen died, were an enormous struggle for her. As well as grieving deeply she could not reconcile herself easily to her frailty. However, she was glad she moved to Kirk Road in Lochinver in 2017 and was relieved to live in a house where the post was delivered through her front door and her bin emptied from her back door. She was always warm and enjoyed its beautiful micro climate and the generous support of the Assynt Centre. A lifetime of compassionate activism and a lively mind ensured that she was always interested in what was happening in anti- nuclear and environmental struggles around the world.

Ellen died peacefully at her home in Lochinver on July 8th 2019, with close friends at her side.