



Winter
2014

Planted by the Waters

Ecumenical Peace Institute/CALC • P. O. Box 9334 • Berkeley, CA 94709 • (510) 990-0374 • www.epicalc.org

Jim Forsyth ¡Presente!

The peace and justice community lost a great activist on the Fourth of July last year.

Over the years you saw Jim Forsyth at every demonstration. He came to Berkeley for the KPFA struggles. He was at all the peace marches. He was a central figure in the Hayward vigils against racism and in support of the rights of the Palestinian people.



Jim and his late first wife, Fran, were among the founders of the Hayward Demos Democratic Club, which was “founded on a peace premise, and whose original forty founders went against the Democratic Party to call for an end to the Vietnam War.” (Jim’s wife, Silvia Brandon Pérez, writing in the Demos Sept 2013 newsletter).

Haywardites frequently saw Jim running on the streets in the hills. Forsyth was an avid runner; he competed in a marathon and came in 10th in the challenging Dipsea Race one year.

In the Demos newsletter the range of Jim’s work is sketched out. <http://haywarddemos.org/>

- Jim was an active union member and labor supporter.
- Jim participated in Occupy Oakland and donated food and supplies to other Occupy encampments.
- Jim worked for immigration reform.
- Jim was active in SOA Watch, attending their vigils over the years, both at Fort Benning and also in D.C.
- Jim worked for the rights of seniors, was active in Gray Panthers & the California Alliance of Retired Americans.
- Jim worked with Vote Health and Just Health, seeking single-payer health care in California.
- Jim and Fran were among the original founders of South Hayward Parish, a faith based service organization.
- Jim worked in Full Picture, the counter-recruitment project of AFSC and Grandmothers Against War.

Jim and EPI

Jim Forsyth served on the EPI board of directors for some years. He was always at the Good Friday Witness at the Livermore Nuclear Weapons Lab, galvanizing Hayward activists into attendance. He frequently served as a monitor, keeping people out of passing traffic and helping to take up the collection. Walking with a flag, he frequently held one end of the EPI banner as we walked to the gate. When EPI organized a Holy Week peace pilgrimage from Richmond to Livermore, Jim and several of his children brought us lunch on the day we were nearest to Hayward. He also helped plan and attended other events. Jim and Silvia have brought food to the annual dinners.

—from the Board President

by Janet Gibson

Whistle Blower/Burglar — A Matter of Conscience

Peace & Justice activists have a long history of engaging in non-violent and occasionally illegal actions. Sometimes illegal actions are symbolic — an effort to draw attention to a critical issue. EPI’s Good Friday Witness at the Livermore Nuclear Lab is a symbolic action. We recognize that throughout history, people of conscience have taken illegal actions in response to what they consider moral or ethical imperatives. Supporting or condemning such actions is a complex decision. For example, we each might consider how we feel about a list of challenging names and situations such as: Edward Snowden, OCCUPY, Bradley Manning, Daniel Ellsberg, William C. Davidon, Fr. Philip Berrigan, etc.

On New Years Day a New York Times editorial, “Edward Snowden, Whistle-Blower” wrote: “Considering the enormous value of the information he has revealed, and the abuses he has exposed, Mr. Snowden deserves better than a life of permanent exile, fear and flight.” Six days later, anti-war burglars confessed to a 1971 FBI office break-in. Since the statute of limitations had long ago run out for these anti-Viet-

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Good Friday — Plan Ahead !

On Good Friday, April 18, at the Livermore Nuclear Weapons Lab, we will gather at 7:00 AM on the corner of Vasco and Patterson Pass Road to worship and to witness for peace in our time.

Our preacher will be Kathy Kelly, whom many of us remember for her work and leadership in breaking the deadly sanctions on Iraq.

She writes from Kabul that she will describe how war has exacerbated impoverishment and displacement in Afghanistan. She will also encourage people to wear the borderfree scarves being distributed by Afghan Peace Volunteers as a response to Chomsky’s challenges to envision and work toward a world unencumbered by borders which militarists and corporate elites have used to divide and conquer. Jesus’ refutation of divisions between people and groups, calling for love of enemies, is consistent with peoples’ movements in the world today that reject militarism, greed, socioeconomic inequity and environmental degradation. Read more details about Kathy’s current work in Afghanistan at <http://vcnv.org/locked-in-winter>.

We are very grateful that Kathy can join us in Livermore for the Good Friday Witness this year. (Kathy will also be speaking at the Berkeley Fellowship of Unitarian Universalists Thursday evening.) Don’t miss these events!

A cruel immigration system, Part I

by Silvia Brandon Pérez de Forsyth

The year ended not with a bang, but with a whimper. . . . I spent three hours on the 30th of December in immigration court (San Francisco) and watched a judge with a reputation for it, order the deportation of three separate respondents.

This judge has an 87% rate of denials, and although I asked for a 10-day extension, he denied that too. He did allow me to speak up in the case, as a member of the community helping the respondent, and speak up I did, vigorously, but although he thanked me, in the end he was unwilling to grant this man any favors.

The man who was ordered to be deported, who has been in the US since 1995, was gainfully employed prior to his arrest, and has two US born children. After more than a year in prison waiting to be tried, he had finally plead guilty to a DUI misdemeanor, despite the fact that at the time of his arrest he was sleeping in a parked car. The police had to wake him up to take him out of the parked car. . . . The police officer that had arrested him was out on disability.

But His "Honor" found that he did not meet the requisite good moral character and also did not meet the requirements of "exceptional and extremely unusual hardship" for purposes of qualifying for cancellation of removal under the 1996 immigration law. The 1996 law changed removal proceedings for what were formerly known as deportation proceedings, and "cancellation of removal" became the new name for "suspension of deportation." Cancellation of removal can provide relief from deportation for those persons who can prove a number of years of continuous physical presence in the U.S., good moral character, and hardship to family members. Prior to the 1996 law, the physical presence standard was 7 years, which the new law increased to 10. The "hardship" requirement went from "extreme hardship" to "exceptional and extremely unusual hardship."

The legislative history of the 1996 law indicates that "exceptional and extremely unusual hardship" means that a person undergoing removal proceedings must provide evidence of hardship to his qualifying spouse, parent or child which is "substantially beyond that which would be expected to result from the alien's deportation." Even under the old law, it was very difficult to prove simple "extreme hardship," although deportation for most people is the equivalent of cruel and unusual punishment.

In 1952 Congress discussed the concept of "exceptional and extremely unusual hardship" and stated that:

[T]o justify the suspension of deportation the hardship must not only be unusual but must be exceptionally and extremely unusual. The bill accordingly establishes a policy that the administrative remedy should be available only in the very limited category of cases in which the deportation of the alien would be unconscionable.

It is useful to look at legislative history, because the discussion while a bill is being considered, as gathered in congressional records, shows us what legislators were thinking about and what they meant to do. The discussion shown above equates exceptionally and extremely unusual hardship with unconscionable treatment.

The Board of Immigration Appeals later rejected the 1952 standard in *Matter of Monreal* (2001). The 1996 Illegal Immi-

gration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRAIRA) as previously indicated made it even more difficult to obtain relief from deportation, and hardship, which prior to IIRAIRA could be hardship to the alien applicant, now referred only to members of the applicant's family, such as a spouse or children. But the new law included no definition of what would constitute "exceptional and extremely unusual hardship." Accordingly, that earlier legislative discussion continued to apply.

Judges have talked about IIRAIRA changing the parameters of the definition of "exceptional and extremely unusual hardship" but that is a fiction. There are over forty years of case law that show that the IIRAIRA hardship standard is unconscionable hardship. We continue to destroy families and creating a whole class of people who are practically orphans, widowers and widows who lose a father or mother or spouse because humanitarian leniency has almost disappeared.

We are deporting at least 1,000 people per day, and because one of the last acts of a Bush appointee before he left office was to state that the right to counsel does not apply to non-citizens, these men and women are held without legal representation unless they have thousands of dollars to pay for help. As I stated recently at an immigration town hall, almost no one wants to emigrate out of their country of birth, but our predatory and imperialist economic policies make life impossible for most people south "of the border."

When I went up to the lockup to speak to the person I was helping, and to have him sign a notice of appeal, there was a woman in line with two small babies and a suitcase, weeping unabashedly, while the father of her babies was getting ready to get on that plane back to his country. . . .

Until next time, keep protesting.
January 1, 2014

Whistle Blower, *continued*

nam War activists, it is probably no coincidence that they are telling their story now, at the height of our country's discussion about Edward Snowden. Some of you might remember these events.

After 43 years, five members of "The Catholic Left", anti-Vietnam War activists have announced that they were responsible for the 1971 Media, Pennsylvania FBI office break-in. Like Edward Snowden, they were willing to put their lives and futures in great jeopardy in order to expose factual documentation of immoral and illegal surveillance activities. The killing of students at Kent State had jolted the group into the conclusion they had to do more than protest marches, vigils and letters. They were probably also buoyed by the 1968 "Catonsville Nine" napalm burning of draft records under the fearless anti-war leadership of Fathers Philip and Daniel Berrigan.

William C. Davidon, Haverford College physics professor who died last year, plotted the action. Other admitted participants were Bob Williamson, Keith Forsyth, an electrical engineer, John Raines, professor of religion at Temple University, and his wife Bonnie Raines. Knowing that they would face imprisonment if caught, John and Bonnie Raines' involvement was particularly extraordinary because they had to face the possibility of being separated from their three small children. Although they did months of pre-planning so as not to be caught, the Raines arranged for family members to raise their three children should they be sent to prison.

The break-in group, who named themselves the "Citizens

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Focus on the Pacific — Pacific Pivot and the TPP (Trans-Pacific “Partnership”) *What are they and what shall we do about them?*

The EPI community gathered in October to hear about the planned expansion of the U.S. military and economic reach into Pacific rim nations. Victor Menotti of the International Forum on Globalization and Christine Hong with the Korea Policy Institute shed a lot of light on these related moves. The menu of the dinner was drawn from some of the countries of the proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership. Cooking was done by several hardworking members of the inter-faith community.

The Pacific Pivot and the Trans-Pacific “Partnership” (TPP)

Victor began his talk with the map Vivian Zelaya had prepared which centered on the Pacific Ocean. He led us in looking across the Pacific on the converging peace issues and possible war between the US and China over the grab for resources and military domination and imperialism. Victor raised up the Pacific Pivot, initiated two years ago when President Obama announced it at the meeting of the APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) nations. The Pacific Pivot includes both a military expansion throughout the region, countering the rise of China, and also the TPP, a trade and investments agreement — a corporate rights agreement threatening people’s access to water, to land and seed and other things necessary for their survival.

A History of Resistance to “Trade” Agreements

Twenty years ago the International Forum on Globalization, which Victor heads, was formed in response to the correctly perceived impacts of NAFTA and the “trade” agreements being promoted by the World Trade Organization. These agreements continue to be a threat to the environmental, health, labor, food sovereignty and other protections people have passed in their countries. The WTO consolidated the system of rules which were opposed by activists in 1999 in Seattle. Cynthia Johnson and Victor were there together on the streets when a lot of groups worked to challenge this global injustice agenda of big corporations and investors and banks to “discipline” other countries’ governments who were going to regulate commerce and protect the environment. Prohibitions of such protections were being slipped into “trade” agreements. That was their purpose really.

The militarization and imperialism agenda

First they establish the trade and investment “agreement” and if you don’t agree to the rules, then they bomb you. It’s open markets or open fire. The two have worked together for U.S. policy for a long time. The Pacific Pivot sees China as the opponent.

Victor, however, noted that China and the U.S. have a complex relationship. There is a lot of U.S. investment in China. China is both an economic competitor and also a major source of cheap labor, although Vietnam and Bangladesh’s low wage work forces are undercutting China. We dragged China into the WTO in 2000 after Seattle. We dropped our tariffs; a lot of U.S. jobs went to China. Chevron is a big investor (\$4 billion) in Vietnam’s offshore gas and oil to expand Vietnam’s energy resources needed for sweatshop manufacturing. Look at the resource war in the region,

as you hear more. The South China Sea, or as some in the Philippines call it the West Philippine Sea, China considers a Persian Gulf of energy in the region. The U.S. has brought Vietnam into a trade/investment agreement so Chevron has rights such as those under NAFTA which would allow U.S. investors in Chevron to sue for loss of profits.

That’s what these trade and investment agreements do is they establish rights for the corporations and shift the power over resources to them, away from fishing, farming, forest, indigenous communities. For example, if we in Canada and the U.S. managed to stop the Keystone XL Pipeline we could be sued by the big oil companies for their loss of anticipated profits. The trade agreements on the table particularly threaten the many peoples of the world who rely on “natural capital” — that is half the world’s population who rely on the resources of the earth.

The Trans-Pacific Partnership—resistance

People power is going to stop the latest of these agreements, the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). This is a massive “trade and investment” agreement being negotiated secretly among 12 Pacific Rim countries in both the western Pacific and in the Americas. The Obama administration is pushing hard for the passage of Fast Track authority, which would limit Congressional debate and discussion of the TPP and preclude any amendments.

The text of the TPP has been kept secret from both the public and from Congress. Some leaked information is all we have to go on, and it is very alarming. Faith groups, labor groups, farmers’ groups, and others who are affected by the destruction of the laws we have struggled for over the years are working together with other people overseas who will also be impacted. Leaked text tells us that corporations will be given the right to sue any governmental body, from the city to the federal government, for loss of anticipated profits resulting from any regulations or requirements relating to everything from labor rights to environmental degradation to occupational health and safety — you name it. The deciding body would be a panel of corporate lawyers who take time off from their usual jobs to sit in judgment; no appeal possible. This is how it is already done under NAFTA.

What we can do now, crediting Diana Bohn for the TPP alert, is to stop Fast Track. This is a mechanism which limits democracy and democratic debate in Congress. Under our Constitution, Congress regulates foreign commerce. Fast Track shifts that role to the executive branch; a U.S. trade representative negotiates under consultation, not necessarily with citizens organizations or workers but with big corporate advisors. That’s why the proponents of TPP want to ramrod this through with undemocratic mechanisms like Fast Track. Call and urge our representative not to let Fast Track get attached to any of the bills being worked on in Congress.

The TPP is very complex with all sorts of special deals for various corporations built into it. Most Congress people will not be reading it. That’s why they need to hear from us all — from faith groups, from farmers and fishers groups, from indigenous people, from consumer protection groups, labor — so we won’t see the protections we fought to get into law undone, here and overseas, through these trade agreements.

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Focus on the Pacific, *continued*

That's how the TPP fits into the imperialist, military impulses of the U.S. that it is today. The rest is about the front line of the militarization. Victor wants to put the peace back into the Pacific. There have been a couple of teach-ins about what is going on in the Pacific, with a number of peace and justice leaders from across the Pacific. He is very concerned about the drift toward war with China. He points out that in his latest book *Kissinger*, a man with blood on his hands, projects the likelihood of war with China. Our challenge is to reach across the Pacific and get to know each other. Otherwise there is going to be a war.

Korea — the connection

Christine Hong, a professor in the English Department at UC Santa Cruz and active with the Korea Policy Institute spoke next, beginning with the "Pacific Pivot." It's not "pivot", Christine said. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton a couple of years ago spoke on the need to keep our eyes on the prize and that prize is Asia, not the Middle East. Christine told us that Clinton had said that Asia represents America's economic future. Clinton indicated that the U.S. would animate its historic military infrastructure within the region to secure its economic future. This creates a condition in which we can very precariously march to war.

Christine told us that "The structure of unfinished U.S. wars represent a very volatile foundation upon which we might very well go to war again," as was the case with Iraq. She told us that there has never been a peace treaty that ended the Korean War, only an armistice which should have been followed by a negotiated treaty. North Korea has been under U.S. sanctions since the middle of the last century. North Korea has been under the existential threat of possible total annihilation by the U.S. since mid-century. War not peace is the volatile foundation of the U.S. presence in Korea. This situation is like that which was in place at the end of the First Gulf War, which ended with no peace treaty and harsh sanctions, followed by an all out attack.

Ever since World War II the U.S. has begun wars with a pretext. The official story of the start of the Korean War is that the U.S. rushed to the defense of South Korea when North Korea invaded it. Christine pointed out that at the end of WWII two Americans, with absolutely no input from any Korean, armed with a National Geographic map drew a line at the 38th parallel which divided Korea into two occupation zones, one under Russian authority and one under American authority. Korea had been occupied by Japan for a number of decades and longed for self-rule. In the south the U.S. created a dictatorial government with no support from the Korean people. The line between the south and the north was not an internationally recognized border. You can't invade your own country.

South Korean progressive activists observe the date of armistice because they want to draw attention to the fact that the Korean War is not over. The 1953 armistice agreement called for all parties to sit down within 3 months time and negotiate a permanent peace agreement. It also called for the removal of all foreign troops from the Korean peninsula. China did so within 5 years. To this day the U.S. maintains a considerable military presence in Korea — almost 30 thousand in about 100 military installations.

Profound human cost of asymmetrical war

Asymmetrical war is a war in which one side is much

more heavily armed than the other. In such conflicts, the risk is disproportionately born by the poor in our own country and the civilian population of the attacked country. In Korea the idea of "collateral damage" was crystallized; during the three years of hot fighting, an estimated 4 million people were killed of whom 70% were civilians. North Korea was treated as a giant free fire zone. Even dams were bombed; that's a war crime. The capitol of North Korea was carpet-bombed.

The U.S. economy, revitalized by World War II, was yet to be put in gear for a civilian economy. Former Secretary of State Dean Acheson said "Korea came along and saved us." As early as 1952, journalist I.F. Stone observed that the Korean War rehabilitated a U.S. economy geared toward total war. The Korean War established the U.S. as a national security state, run by and for the military industrial complex in a perpetual war economy. It tripled U.S. defense spending, it also established the bilateral linking of the U.S. to a host of client states in Asia. It justifies what Chalmers Johnson calls a U.S. empire of bases in Asia and the Pacific. It ensures that the U.S. posture toward the rest of the world is a forward deployed military one. General James Van Fleet, commanding officer of U.S. and UN forces in Korea, described the war as "a blessing" and remarked "There had to be a Korea either here or some place in the world."

Even today North Korea serves as the bogeyman when the ultimate enemy is China. At several points in her talk Christine quoted President Obama's speech at the 60th anniversary observance of the Korean War last July. In addition to celebrating the "heroism" of the troops and asserting the democratic structure and vibrant economy of South Korea, President Obama made the hegemonic statement: "Our allies and adversaries must know the United States will maintain the strongest military the world has ever known, bar none, always."

Christine showed us slides from that same day, of the rally in front of the White House and the peace march put on by Koreans and supporters calling for a peace treaty now and the reunification of their country — a small handful, but totally heartened by each other's presence. South Korean progressives look at the 60th anniversary of the Korean War as a good time to begin a time of peace.

Many Koreans come from divided families. When they see suffering in North Korea and starvation it is their families who are suffering. Christine showed us a slide of the destruction of Pyongyang, the capital of North Korea after the bombing. The U.S. rained down over 420,000 bombs — more than one bomb per person. The picture is very reminiscent of photos of Nagasaki or Hiroshima.

Christine noted that U.S. "information" regarding the current situation in North Korea derives from "the perspective of the bomber," from aerial photographs, or from the statements of defectors. She pointed out that this is the same sort of "information" that was used by Colin Powell to assert the weaponry of Saddam Hussein -- satellite images and defectors' testimony such as "Curve Ball".

Jeju Island

After Christine's talk, we heard a presentation about Jeju Island, and the drive of the U.S. to build a naval base there. Jeju Island is some 60 miles off the coast of the Korean peninsula. The following description of the situation there

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Focus on the Pacific, *continued*

is derived largely from a resolution on the subject recently passed by the Berkeley City Council.

Jeju Island, off the coast of South Korea, was designated as an Island of Peace and is UNESCO's only triple honoree: a Global Geological Park, Biosphere Reserve and World Heritage Site.

Jeju is one of many island communities around the Pacific that are now at great risk of militarization and despoliation from the Pentagon's "Pacific Pivot." According to statements by former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Defense Secretary Leon Panetta, U.S. naval resources are rapidly shifting from Europe and the Middle East, to boost the Asia-Pacific region to 60% of the total.

A military base on Jeju Island will be home to warships using the U.S. Navy's Aegis Combat System, which uses powerful computers and radar to guide weapons to destroy enemy targets. Former U.S. Senator Fritz Hollings describes the Jeju base proposal as part of "the U.S. policy of encirclement of Russia and China."

Plans for the Jeju submarine base set the depth of the submarine dock at 12 meters, far more than the 9.3 meters required for South Korean submarines, enough to accommodate U.S. nuclear-powered SSN-776 submarines. South Korean legislator Kim Kwang-jin has said, "If it is built this way, we can't even guarantee that it will be a South Korean military base, let alone a civil harbor."

Residents of Gangjeong Village on Jeju Island have been organizing nonviolent protests to stop the construction of the massive naval base which would destroy their community, way of life, and rich marine ecosystem which the famous haenyo or women sea divers, fishermen and farmers depend on for their livelihoods. Mayor Kang Dongkyun of Gangjeong Village, who has been arrested for his opposition to this destructive project, has appealed: "The U.S. government is trying to put its power in different places like Jeju Island . . . Guam . . . I think that not only people in the City of Berkeley, but people in general in the United States are not aware of that fact. . . . I want to work with the people of the City of Berkeley and not only the people of Berkeley. . . . to create peace."

Where Do We Go From Here?

EPI hopes to help to bring in this time of peace:

- You can see the videos of Christine's talk and Victor's at our website www.epicalc.org
- More on Jeju Island can be found at <http://savejejunow.org/appeal/>
- EPI has obtained two recent films regarding Korea, which may be borrowed: "Ghosts of Jeju" and "Memory of a Forgotten War" Highly recommended, history and current struggle.
- EPI hopes to work with others in the community to head off the Trans-Pacific "Partnership" and the Fast Track legislation which will be its enabler.

*Please be in touch
if you want to work with us on these issues.*

School of the Americas Watch

November 22 - 24 was the 23rd annual School of the Americas Vigil at Fort Benning, Georgia — a dense schedule of rallies and workshops. Among EPI's attendees was Silvia Brandon Pérez who has been on the SOAW team for a number of years translating, reading names of the dead, and singing, not to speak of a lot of organizational work. Among the names she spoke was that of our dear friend and her beloved husband Jim Forsyth. They had met at SOAW. Silvia blew some of Jim's ashes through the chain-link fence during the procession.

In case not all our readers know the history, on August 9, 1983, Father Roy Bourgeois climbed a tree outside the barracks of Salvadorian soldiers training at the SOA and played the last homily of murdered Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Romero loudly enough that they all heard the words he was saying as he celebrated the Eucharist and was at that moment shot by graduates of the School of the Americas.

Carolyn Scarr came in the delegation from Haiti Action Committee, helped to staff Haiti Action's table at the gate and to put on Haiti Action's Saturday evening workshop.

Sunday morning the vigilers gathered at the gate to remember the martyrs, those who have been killed by soldiers trained at the School of the Assassins -- as it has been renamed by the many who have suffered at the hands of the "students." People processed by the hundreds, carrying the names on white crosses as the readers -- including our Silvia -- read the names of the murdered and the people responded "Present!" No one tried to scale the fence or crawl under this year, but bubbles were blown through the chain-link gate as the procession approached the gate and wheeled away from it to proceed up the road away from the gate to circle back and blow more bubbles through the fence as they turned away once more toward freedom.

Maybe all that freedom got under the skin of some police person circling the vigil in a helicopter.

Black and white copter
Swoops down upon the marchers
Making them stagger.
Papers blow, canopies shake,
Copter rises, swoops again.

Carolyn S. Scarr

Whistle Blower, *continued*

Committee to Investigate the FBI", concluded (like Snowden) that "the prospect of enduring harsh punishment in prison for revealing the immoral acts of our government was not appealing." Their careful planning included Bonnie Raines' visit to case the office while posing as a Swarthmore College journalism student researching job opportunities for women at the FBI. They broke in on the night of the Mohammad Ali/Joe Frazier boxing match when millions of people were glued to their television sets. After they walked out with thousands of files packed in suitcases, they copied and mailed them anonymously to newspaper reporters and at least two congressmen. The congressmen (one was George McGovern) mailed them back to the FBI. Betty Medsger, a reporter at the Washington Post, received the files and two weeks after the burglary the Post published her article. Other papers followed their lead. Some 200 FBI agents tried unsuccessfully to find the burglars.

The overall effect of the Media, Pennsylvania documents was to expose how the FBI was conducting a secret war

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Report from Sabeel Conference in Jerusalem

by Vivial Zelaya

On December 1, 2013, the first Sunday of Advent (the opening of the Christmas Season) we were in Manger Square in Bethlehem. It was a joyous place, marked by The Church of the Nativity on one side and The Mosque of Omar directly opposite, and crowded with Palestinian Christians and Muslims and hoards of foreigners from all over the world, Indonesia, Bulgaria, India, Romania, Scandinavia, Nigeria, etc. Bands from everywhere played Jingle Bells while local school kids with balloons (from U.S. AID!) poured into the Square from ancient, narrow, streets.

We had spent a week in East Jerusalem at the Sabeel 9th International Conference entitled The Bible and the Israel/Palestine Conflict. The Rev. Naim Ateek, at the opening of the conference, said: "The Bible has been used to justify slavery, war, apartheid, silencing of women, and now the oppression and killing of the Palestinians." The Rev. Dr. Nancy Cardoso Pereira, of the Porto Alegre (Brazil) Institute of the Methodist Church, called biblical fundamentalism and Christian Zionism "defenders of western political domination of the world" and viewed "Israel, supported by us, as an ideal of white Europeans invading a country far from home, emptying it of its inhabitants, and saying 'It's all God's will.'" In a small group I was fortunate enough to meet a fourteen year veteran of Christian Peacemaker Teams who was a Catholic priest working in Hebron, an ancient West Bank city where Israeli soldiers protect and enable some of the most abusive settlers in all of Palestine. We got a powerful reality check from Norwegian physician Dr. Mads Gilbert co-author with Dr. Erik Fosse of Eyes in Gaza. Both Dr. Gilbert and Dr. Fosse served at Al Shifa Hospital in Gaza during the horrific 2008-2009 assault on Gaza.

For my husband and me, December 1st was our last day in Palestine. After the Sabeel conference, we had our own list of Wise Men and Women, including Israeli nuclear whistleblower, Mordechai Vanunu, who after being kidnapped in Rome completed eighteen years in prison (12 in Solitary) for telling the world about Israel's Nuclear weapons. Mordechai would love to come to Berkeley to meet friends and long time supporters, but he is prevented from leaving Israel and forbidden to talk to foreigners like us.

In Bethlehem, we met Mazim Qumsiyeh, a U.S. Citizen, author of Popular Resistance in Palestine, who taught biogenetics at Duke, then returned home to Beit Sahour (Shepherds' Field) next door to Bethlehem to join the Palestinian struggle for human rights. He now teaches at Bethlehem University and Birzeit. Check Mazim's videos (available on line) in which he nonviolently confronts armed Israeli soldiers in demonstrations at THE WALL. Like the seasoned teacher he is, he scolds them for their misbehavior and cruelty while waving their weapons out of his face. He took us to a women's cooperative, Aida refugee camp, and the Cremisan winery where Salesian, Catholic sisters and their elementary school are being cut off from the community they serve. Parents are forced to detour many miles out of their way to get their kids to school because of the incursion of THE WALL (and an illegal colonial settlement) separating families and communities from their land.

Friends of Sabeel – North America Conference — March 21 & 22

VOICES FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE IN THE HOLY LAND

Christ The King Parish in Pleasant Hill, and Northern California Friends Of Sabeel are pleased to announce a timely regional conference, **VOICES FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE IN THE HOLY LAND**

March 21 & 22
Christ The King Parish,
199 Brandon Road,
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523.

Sabeel is a grassroots movement based in the Holy Land, founded in Jerusalem by Palestinian Christians working for a just peace in Palestine and Israel. Sabeel strives for a spirituality based on justice, peace, non-violence, liberation and reconciliation.

Friends of Sabeel – North America supports the work of Sabeel in the U.S. and Canada joining International Friends of Sabeel chapters throughout the world. For information on the program see www.fosna.org

Bethlehem is surrounded by colonial settlements (in violation of International Law.) Palestinian homes (even in Israel) are easily recognizable by the large black water tanks that sit atop their roofs. This is because there is great discrimination in the amount and price of water available to Palestinians. THE WALL expropriates Palestinian aquifers as well as land.

There is only one hill around Bethlehem that remains in Palestinian hands. This is because of the amazing steadfastness of Daoud Nassar, whose family had the foresight to procure all the paperwork from the Turkish Empire, through the British Mandate, through Jordanian rule, to the present Israeli occupation. So far Daoud has defeated all attempts (both physical and (il)legal) to drive him from his ancestral farmland. In spite of physical attacks, the destruction of 250 of his olive trees, prohibitions against access to water and electricity and prohibitions against building anything on his land and the blocking of the access road to his property, Daoud has steadfastly used lovingly nonviolent means to continue building community as well as international and local support. His vision extends beyond the occupation to a time when justice and peace will become a reality. International Peace Camps at his Tent of Nations (the Israeli military demolished the actual tent) are a reality. Meetings and meals are often held in the beautifully decorated natural caves that abound on his property. Youth groups and cultural workshops find a home in his Tent of Nations. We were totally inspired and encouraged by the gift that this wise man is to all who have the good fortune to meet him. www.tentofnations.org

Mother Agnes Mariam in Oakland

—*Syria*

by Carolyn Scarr

This November, EPI was able to help the Syria Solidarity Movement organize the visit to the Bay Area of Mother Agnes Mariam, one of the main organizers of Mussalaha (“Reconciliation”), a popular movement in Syria that mediates disputes and organizes ceasefires between opposing forces.

Mother Agnes and Mussalaha had hosted the delegation of peace activists led by Mairead Maguire last May, a delegation including local activist Paul Larudee. As Mairead writes, true to the meaning of reconciliation, “Mother Agnes Mariam has sat at a table with the prime minister of Syria and has eaten olives with a rebel leader. And she has risked her life to negotiate the safe passage of thousands of civilians and of many fighters from a conflict zone.”

Blessed are the Peacemakers

As my father used to say, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall get knots on their heads.” Mother Agnes has been criticized from all sides for the fact that she is not spending her time taking potshots at Syrians on either side of the struggle. She was early in doubting the allegation that Assad’s forces had used chemical weapons in an attack last August. For that skepticism she was labeled a supporter of the Assad regime.

Later skeptics include Seymour Hersh, who in December’s *London Review of Books* asks “Whose sarin?” wherein Hersh reports that U.S. intelligence and military officers were angry over what they saw as a “deliberate manipulation of intelligence,” including the omission of the fact that it was known that both the Assad regime and the al-Nusra Front had the capacity to produce sarin gas.

Another skeptic “Ake Sellstrom, the head of the United Nations mission investigating chemical weapons use in Syria, agrees that the vector analysis – at the heart of the New York Times’ indictment of the Syrian government for the deadly Aug. 21 sarin gas attack – doesn’t stand up to scrutiny.” (Consortium News, confirmed by webtv.un.org video cast of Sellstrom’s news conference) Sellstrom accepts as accurate the estimated range of the rockets which carried the gas as about 2 kilometers, entirely undercutting the administration’s vector analysis purportedly establishing the source of the rockets to be the Syrian Republican Guard, which was based 9.5 kilometers away. This entirely debunks the New York Times and Human Rights Watch in their assertions.

Getting away from the math and back to Mother Agnes

In her talk with us in Oakland, Mother Agnes was harshly critical of the foreigners who have come into Syria to establish a fundamentalist sectarian government in Syria. She was, however, very clear in her belief that in order to make peace you need to talk to both sides of a conflict. This has angered some who feel that it constitutes actual support for the Assad government. There seem to be in the movement some who think that the “rebels,” even fundamentalists, are working toward a revolution similar to those seen in North Africa or even in Latin America or Russia.

There are some who will not support her work since Mother Agnes does not subscribe to a strictly pacifist posi-

tion. However on that matter I am going to have to track down in my files the article “Nonviolence, not for export only.” As I recall it, the basic proposition is that we cannot sit in our comfortable studies and tell other people to be nonviolent. Mother Agnes considers it appropriate to accept from the state protection from assault by the rebels or other possible assailants. She considers it is the appropriate role of a state to protect its citizens and to provide services such as health care, education, etc. A strict pacifist would reject an armed protection. Some local pacifists believe Mother Agnes should refuse the protection of the state in its police role. Mother Agnes does not hold that the state has the right to attack its citizens. Interestingly, her monastery has been bombed by government forces.

Let us look to Mother Agnes herself to know where she stands. As they determined to exclude her from a conference in London, she wrote to the steering committee of the International Anti-War Conference:

“The basis of our work toward peace is reconciliation and forgiveness. This means extending an olive branch to some who may initially refuse it, and accepting an olive branch from others who are despised, even by our friends.

“In the case of Syria, I am guided by the terrible events of human provenance that are reaping misery and death without end in sight. I and my fellow members of the Mussalaha movement feel compelled to find a path toward national redemption that applies the principles of reconciliation and forgiveness that is different from either the way of the sword or even the nonviolent exclusion of other Syrians, whatever their views or affiliations may be. This is by its nature a difficult path but I am a cleric and am guided by my love for all. We are all children of God.”

So where do we go from here?

One place we need to go is to increase efforts to ensure that the many refugees in this conflict receive necessary humanitarian aid. This involves both raising the necessary funds – UNICEF is pleading for help there – and making sure that aid reaches refugees in spite of the fact that the many warring parties take territory back and forth, and refugees become hostages with dizzying speed.

Another place we can go is to try to assist in the efforts of such organizations as the Nonviolent Peaceforce. Mel Duncan, who was part of the delegation to Syria last May, wrote in the Minneapolis Post this September: “Unarmed civilian peacekeepers could be deployed to protect civilians and support Syrian civil society in preventing violence and building peace from the ground up. Such nonviolent peacekeepers could come from international civil society and thus, not represent national or multinational interests.” Mel also wrote: “On the international level President Obama and other leaders can decrease the violence to allow civil society to do their work. They can help stop the flow of weapons. The U.S. can start by withdrawing our support for armed actors and engaging Russia to follow suit. The two nations could exert tremendous pressure on their respective allies to stop supplying weapons. They could jointly offer a Security Council resolution sanctioning any nation supplying arms to any group in Syria.” This is a political decision we can work for within our own country.

You can keep in touch with the Syria Solidarity Movement at <http://www.syriasolidaritymovement.org/>

10 Steps to Dictatorship: Why The Grassroots Movement in Haiti Is Taking To the Streets Against President Michel Martelly

by Charlie Hinton

At great personal risk Haitians have been demonstrating massively in cities throughout the country for the last several months calling for President Michel Martelly to step down, including September 30 and October 17, dates of important coup d'états in Haitian history, and November 29, the date of an election day massacre in 1987.

By choosing these historically significant dates, the Haitian grassroots majority is clearly saying they want an end to Martelly and to the 10-year UN military occupation that has followed the coup that overthrew elected president Jean-Bertrand Aristide on February 29, 2004. Martelly's police force brutally broke up some demonstrations with tear gas and beatings.

Demonstrators have reported the police used a very "powerful" gas, which surprised them in its potency and aerial reach.

In late October, students in Cap-Haïtien, demonstrating to support teachers demanding an increase in pay, were tear gassed so viciously that 60 were injured, 4 seriously.

The next day, students in the State University of Port-au-Prince, demonstrating in support of attorney Andre Michel (see #7 below), were gassed for hours, even after they had been pushed back to their campus. The gassing went on so long that some legislators went on the radio to demand that it be stopped.

On November 6th, lawyers marched in Port-au-Prince demanding an end to threats and harassment for those willing to take on cases involving Martelly's corruption. They also called for the resignation of the chief prosecutor.

And on November 7th, thousands marched, chanting "Aba Martelly" (Down with Martelly). Haitian police attacked the demonstration with tear gas and beatings. Three people were shot and wounded.

1. Who Is Michel Martelly? Martelly grew up during the 27 year dictatorship of Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier and his son, Jean Claude "Baby Doc." He reportedly joined the Duvalierist death squad, the Tonton Macoutes, at the age of 15, and later attended Haiti's military academy. Under Baby Doc, Martelly, a popular musician, ran the Garage, a nightclub patronized by army officers and members of Haiti's tiny ruling class.

After Baby Doc's fall in February 1986, a mass democratic movement, long repressed by the Duvaliers, burst forth and became known as Lavalas ("flood"), from which emerged Jean-Bertrand Aristide, a popular liberation theology Catholic priest, who was elected president in 1990 with 67% of the vote in the first free and fair election in Haiti's history.

Martelly quickly became a bitter opponent of Lavalas, attacking the popular movement in his songs played widely on Haitian radio.

Martelly "was closely identified with sympathizers of the 1991 military coup that ousted former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide," the *Miami Herald* observed in 1996, and ran with members of the vicious FRAPH death squad from that period, infamous for gang rapes and killing with impunity.

On the day of Aristide's return to Haiti in 2011, after 8 years of forced exile in South Africa, and two days before the

"run-off" election, Martelly was caught in a video on YouTube insulting Aristide and Lavalas: "The Lavalas are so ugly. They smell like s**t. F**k you, Lavalas. F**k you, Jean-Bertrand Aristide."

2. The Fraudulent Presidential Election of 2010-2011: In the presidential election cycle of 2010-2011, Haiti's Electoral Council banned Aristide's Fanmi Lavalas Party from participation, which de-legitimized the whole corrupt process. Voter turnout was less than 25% in the primaries and less than 20% in the "run-off." The top two candidates announced after the sham primaries were the wife of a former pro-Duvalier president and the son-in-law of Rene Preval, the president at the time. Martelly was declared third, but his supporters demonstrated violently. An OAS commission, with the full support of Secretary of State Hilary Clinton, who flew to Port-au-Prince at the height of the Egyptian revolution, ruled that Martelly had finished second. He received \$6 million from an anonymous donor in Florida to hire a PR firm that had worked on the campaigns of Felipe Calderón in Mexico and John McCain in the U.S.

3. Corruption: Corruption scandals have followed Martelly since he refused to divulge who funded his campaign for president.

- **Bribes** - Award-winning Dominican Republic journalist Nuria Piera broke the story in April 2012 (later reported in Time) that Martelly was alleged to have accepted \$2.6 million in bribes during and after the 2010 election to ensure that a Dominican construction company would receive contracts under his Presidency.

In addition, the vote to make Laurent Lamothe the Prime Minister is known in Haiti as the "*tout moun jwenn vote*" ("everyone got their cut" vote).

- **Surcharge on international calls and money transfers for "education"** - Questionable new taxes have also fed controversy. A \$1.50 tax on money transfers and a 5 cent per minute tax on phone calls to Haiti are alleged by Martelly to support education, but the poor majority continue to face unaffordable school fees, and critics say no money from this tax has gone to schools. Moreover, Haitian teachers have been marching to demand back pay. Martelly's new taxes were not ratified by or presented to Haiti's Parliament, making them illegal.
- **Travel Expenses** - When traveling, which he does often, Martelly's entourage receives an outrageous per diem from the Haitian government. According to Senator Moïse Jean-Charles, Martelly gets \$20,000 a day, his wife \$10,000 a day, his children \$7,500, and others in his inner circle get \$4,000 daily.
- **A plan to establish an illegal parallel customs system to circumvent legislative control** - This allegedly involved the selling of a membership card and gun to anyone who wanted to be part of the Martelly gang. The membership privileges included tax-exempt status at customs. The program had to be scratched when US DEA complained about members facilitating drug transport on the strength of their membership.

4. Rewriting and Undermining Haiti's Constitution: The overthrow of Baby Doc in 1986 led to the creation of a new democratic Constitution in 1987, ratified in a referendum by an overwhelming majority of Haitians. It recognized Haitian

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Haiti, *continued*

Kreyol as an official language, along with French, and legalized Vodun, the spiritual practice of the majority of Haitians. It provided for grassroots participation in national decision-making, decentralized the nation's finances and political structure, and provided for protection of human rights.

On June 12, 2012 Martelly announced new amendments, which concentrate executive power and herald the return of Duvalier-style dictatorship. The new illegally amended Constitution, written by non-legislators, and never seen nor voted by the Parliament prior to its publication creates a top down method of choosing a Permanent Electoral Council to run elections, undermining grassroots participation and centralizing control from above.

It allows the president to appoint the prime minister after merely "consulting" the heads of the two chambers of Parliament instead of requiring Parliamentary ratification. In cases of "presidential vacancy," the new amendments make the prime minister the provisional president, so presidents can resign, appoint the prime minister to succeed them, and thereby maintain perpetual control.

New amendments provide that a "general budget" and a "general expenditures report" can replace line item annual budgets, thus limiting parliamentary oversight of the budget.

New amendments return Duvalier era and other retrograde laws, including:

- A 1935 law on "superstitious beliefs," which would ban Vodun once again.
- A 1977 law establishing the Court of State Security to increase state surveillance and repression.
- A 1969 law that condemns all "imported doctrines", thereby attacking freedom of thought and freedom of association. Violation of this new law can result in the DEATH PENALTY. The 1987 Haitian Constitution had eliminated the death penalty.

5. Restoring The Army: In one of the most popular moves of his administration, President Aristide disbanded the hated Haitian army in 1995. Since the coup that overthrew Aristide for the second time in 2004, UN troops and police, currently numbering 8,754 uniformed personnel, have occupied Haiti. One of Martelly's campaign promises was to restore the Haitian Army, and now new Haitian troops are being trained by Ecuador and Brazil. In addition, well-armed former military and paramilitary personnel have occupied militia camps since early 2012, supported by Martelly.

6. Return of the Death Squads: Martelly has issued pink identity cards with a photo for \$30 to selected supporters, promising many benefits to those who hold them, like jobs and impunity from prosecution. During the Duvalier period, every Tonton Macoute received a card that provided many privileges, like free merchandise from any store entered, entitlement to coerced sex, and fear and respect from people in general.

Senator John Joel Joseph has identified Senators that he claims are marked for assassination. He identified the people who have been paying the "hit squads" on behalf of Martelly. He denounced one of the men as an escaped criminal who had been caught red handed with a "near death" victim behind his vehicle. Said victim sent the police to a house where two more victims could be found. Senator Joseph identified the leader of the death squad and his vehicle, denouncing the group as the one which recently assassinated a grassroots militant. He accused the president and his wife of pressuring the chief of po-

lice to remove the senators' security detail, in order to facilitate their assassinations. He denounced a previous instance when Martelly tried to pressure former police chief Mario Andresol to integrate a hit-man into the police, to assassinate Senator Moise Jean Charles.

7. Death of a Judge: Martelly set up his wife and son as head of governmental projects, but with no parliamentary oversight. A Haitian citizen, Enold Florestal, filed suit with attorney Andre Michel before Judge Jean Serge Joseph, maintaining that the Martellys were siphoning off large amounts of state monies, which the Haitian Senate has no jurisdiction over. Judge Joseph moved the case to the next judicial level, which required depositions from the Martellys and various governmental ministers. Enraged, Martelly and Prime Minister Lamothe called two meetings with the judge (which they deny took place) to demand he kill the case, the second on July 11. The judge drank a beverage offered him at that meeting.

On July 12 Judge Joseph became violently ill and died on July 13. Haitian police arrested Florestal on August 16 after viciously beating him, and Haitian authorities have issued a warrant for the arrest of Attorney Michel, who has gone into hiding. A commission of the Haitian Parliament is now calling for the impeachment of Martelly based on illegal meetings with the judge, interference in legal matters, and threats to those involved in the case.

Since then Enold Florestal and his brother, who's completely uninvolved with the case, have been arrested and remain in jail. On October 22, police stopped Attorney Andre Michel and demanded to search his car. He refused without a judge present to prevent tampering or planting of evidence. The action quickly turned into a standoff between police forces and a large crowd that was gathered to defend Michel. Michel was eventually summoned to appear in court the next day.

In court the prosecutor told the judge he did not have charges to file, but for Michel to not leave the courtroom. Several Deputies and Senators who were present whisked Michel out of the courtroom and took him to an unknown location, where he remains at the time of this report.

8. Corrupting the Judiciary and Parliament: The Martelly regime is working to establish executive control over the judicial system through the use of "controlled" prosecutors and judges. In violation of the constitution, he appointed as Supreme Court chief justice, Anel Alexis Joseph, who is 72. Haitian law says a judge must be 65 or under to be named to this position. The chief justice also leads the commission that regulates the entire judicial system, so Judge Anel Alexis Joseph is using his power to block an investigation into the death of Judge Jean Serge Joseph and to protect Martelly and his henchmen from all legal challenges, thereby granting impunity.

Martelly has also corrupted the legislative branch that could bring charges against members of the executive. He ordered the arrest of Deputy Arnel Belizaire in spite of parliamentary immunity and his legal counsel's advice. He has so far failed to call elections for 10 Senate seats in January, and is trying to force the 10 Senators whose terms he says are up (they say in 2015, not 2014) to leave office. Since elections have still not been held for 10 additional seats, if these new 10 seats are vacated, it would leave the 30 member Senate without a quorum, allowing Martelly to dissolve the Parliament and rule by decree.

9. Reactionary Economic Policy: Martelly enforces the

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Clinton Bush plan for economic “development” of Haiti through sweatshops, tourism, and the selling of oil and mining rights to transnational corporations. Under this plan, money donated for earthquake relief has been used to build a duty free export manufacturing zone in the north of Haiti, which was not affected by the earthquake, and several luxury hotels in Port-au-Prince. The Clinton Bush Haiti Fund made a \$2 million equity investment in a hotel called the Royal Oasis, to give foreign tourists and investors an “oasis” to escape the miserable conditions under which the majority of Haitians live.

At the same time, the Martelly regime viciously represses the economic activities of the poor super majority. The phone and money transfer taxes cut into their incomes. Taxes have been arbitrarily increased on imports, affecting small merchants. Thugs wearing masks have burnt markets in different cities, causing merchants to lose capital they had been accumulating for years, forcing them to raise new capital through usury loans. Street vendors are harassed and removed forcefully, then after hours, their stands are looted.

10. Duvalierism Returns to Haiti: Martelly warmly welcomed the January, 2011 return to Haiti of Jean Claude “Baby Doc” Duvalier, one of the most brutal dictators of the 20th century, after his decades of luxurious exile in France. Duvalier still has many supporters in Haiti, some of whom are armed and have a history of killing political opponents.

Martelly’s government is filled with Duvalierists: hard-line former Haitian army officer David Bazile is now Interior Minister. Magalie Racine, daughter of notorious former Tonton Macoute militia chief Madame Max Adolphe, is Martelly’s Youth and Sports Minister. Public Works Secretary of State Philippe Cinéas is the son of longtime Duvalierist figure Alix Cinéas, who was a member of the original neo-Duvalierist National Council of Government (CNG) which succeeded Duvalier after his fall in 1986. In addition, Duvalier’s son, Francois Nicolas Jean Claude Duvalier, is a close advisor to Martelly.

Conclusion: A major objective of the Duvalier dynasty was to institutionalize dictatorship through death squad brutality, supported by the United States and other powers. Martelly is an example of their policies having come to fruition. He’s restoring a government of impunity per the Duvalier era, building an administration of right wing ideologues who believe in dictatorship, and who collaborate to sidestep all legislative and judicial controls.

His goal is to implement extreme neo-liberal economic policies on behalf of Haiti’s less than 1% with control over all natural resources. The people will be at their mercy for factory work and other “subservient” positions, under the boot of a UN occupation force of 8,754 army and police personnel, the beginnings of a restored army, paramilitary training camps, death squads, gangs and mafias that use the cover of the corrupted executive and judicial systems to operate.

The Haitian majority does not accept this return to the bad old days, however, and has been actively and massively protesting this repression for the past year. They deserve the support and solidarity of freedom loving people everywhere.

This article appeared in the October, 2012, issue of *Haiti Solidarity*, and is reprinted with permission from Haiti Action Committee. Visit Haiti Action Committee’s website to read the other articles in *Haiti Solidarity*.

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Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran

Where are we, and where are we going?

by Carolyn Scarr

In the midst of anger following the September 11th attack on the World Trade Center the United States bypassed international extradition procedures and attacked Afghanistan. It is not entirely clear how that attack was supposed to produce the alleged perpetrator of the attack, Osama Bin Laden. It did result in the overthrow of the Taliban government. According to a report by Conn Hallinan last May we had spent more than \$1.4 trillion dollars in a war lasting more than a decade. We have lost 2,303 U.S. soldiers dead. Total coalition fatalities are 3,411 at the time of this writing. Wounded are U.S. 12,309, coalition total 17,674. (<http://icasualties.org/>) We don’t have an official count of the dead and wounded Afghan civilians, but local Afghan activists believe Afghanistan and Pakistan have lost at least two million dead. I keep track of these numbers for the monthly Living Graveyard we have held at the Oakland Federal Building these many years.

For this immense price of human life and money — which we should have been using constructively — we have put in place a client state heavily dependent on U.S. military support and financial assistance. The financial assistance does not filter down to the poor, many of whom are starving and freezing in tents in the refugee camps which have grown up to house people who had fled the fighting and returned to find their homes and land “now belong to victorious warlords, and . . . that safety is painfully elusive in conditions of poverty and social disintegration that follow years . . . and decades of war.” (Kathy Kelly, <http://vcnv.org/locked-in-winter>) Kathy quotes a

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Whistle Blower, *continued*

on dissent, primarily against anti-war activists and African Americans. Those revelations sparked a national debate about surveillance that has been reignited by Edward Snowden’s revelations about the NSA. Just as this burglary is credited with having led to the undoing of J. Edgar Hoover’s massive web of surveillance, Snowden’s disclosures are stimulating American debate over government intrusion in the name of rooting out supposed threats. In both cases, critical information continues to unfold for months and years after our initial exposure to released materials.

The most explosive aspect of the Media documents was the revelation of a program called “Cointelpro” (Counterintelligence Program). At the time, no one knew what Cointelpro was, but it turned out to be a massive FBI effort to infiltrate and disrupt the peace, civil rights and black power movements and put many of their leaders under surveillance. Conintelpro’s mission was to destroy lives and ruin reputations by using dirty tricks and smear tactics. FBI agents were required to have at least one informant reporting to them on the actions of black people every week. One document revealed a blackmail attempt by agents to have Martin Luther King commit suicide. A Senate group later declared of Cointelpro: “What happened to turn a law enforcement agency into a law violator?”

No doubt we will be hearing lots more about Edward Snowden. It’s difficult to know how we can be part of the debate, but it’s important to take any opportunity to voice one’s convictions. And, while probably not on the front pages, the story of the Media anti-war activists will continue to unfold and intrigue us.

Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, *continued*

New York Times article from February, 2005, titled "In Frigid Capital, Lack of Housing and Planning Is Fatal." These conditions are further described in Kathy's article of this January.

Political analysts differ on whether we can expect to see a major withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan this year as President Obama pledged. The war has cost American taxpayers over \$1.4 trillion, and according to a study reported in the *Washington Post*, March 28, 2013. They find that the final bill for Iraq and Afghanistan together will top \$6 trillion. Furthermore Con Hallinan writes: "The decade-long conflict has put enormous strains on the NATO alliance, destabilized and alienated nuclear-armed Pakistan, and helped to spread al-Qaeda-like organizations throughout the Middle East and Africa." http://fpif.org/afghanistan_is_it_really_the_end_game/

A *Washington Post* article published December 28 reports that a new National Intelligence Estimate assessment "predicts that the Taliban and other power brokers will become increasingly influential as the United States winds down its longest war in history" and "that Afghanistan would likely descend into chaos quickly if Washington and Kabul don't sign a security pact that would keep an international military contingent there beyond 2014 — a precondition for the delivery of billions of dollars in aid that the United States and its allies have pledged to spend in Afghanistan over the coming years." The article also reports that the Obama administration is trying to get Kabul's permission to keep U.S. troops in Afghanistan past the promised 2014 withdrawal date for "counterterrorism and training missions." We who remember Vietnam know about "advisors."

The New Iraq War, With al-Qaeda

There are repeated reports of attacks in Iraq by fundamentalist Sunni militants on Shi'a neighborhoods, markets and mosques. *Democracy Now!*, January 9, 2014, reports that "Iraq is facing its worst violence in six years, with more than 7,000 dead in 2013." Fallujah, which was massively bombed by U.S. forces, is and continues to be the site of battle between al-Qaeda forces and Iraq's Shi'a dominated government forces trying to retake that city.

The sectarian battle has its roots in the Divide and Rule practices of the invading U.S. forces. Noted journalist Robert Fisk wrote in *The Independent* on 2 January, 2004,

Paul Bremer's "Governing Council" is made up of Shi'as, Sunnis and Kurds in direct proportion to their share of the population. The Shi'as, who form 60 percent of the country, expect to take effective power in the Iraqi national elections this year - this, after all, is the only reason why the Shi'a clergy have not urged their people to join the anti-American insurgency - and the Americans and British understand this all too well. Like so many of those Arab nations created by the French and British amid the wreckage of the Ottoman empire after the First World War, Iraq is to be governed along sectarian lines.

Anyone who remembers the civil war in Lebanon knows what a confessionally based governance will lead to. Yet the U.S. occupiers of Iraq designed the Iraqi constitution along sectarian lines.

Naomi Klein wrote in the *Globe and Mail* January 22, 2004:

Mr. Bremer wants his Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) to appoint the members of 18 regional organizing committees. The committees will then select delegates to form 18 selection caucuses. These selected delegates will

then further select representatives to a transitional national assembly. The assembly will have an internal vote to select an executive and ministers who will form the new government of Iraq. That, Bush said in his address, constitutes "a transition to full Iraqi sovereignty."

Two years later Robert Fisk, who has lived in the Middle East and for years said on Australian news (ABC 03/02/2006):

Somebody is trying to provoke a civil war in Iraq. The real question I ask myself is, who are these people who are trying to provoke the civil war? Now the Americans will say it's Al Qaeda, it's the Sunni insurgents. It is the death squads. Many of the death squads work for the Ministry of Interior. Who runs the Ministry of Interior in Baghdad? Who pays the Ministry of the Interior? Who pays the militia men who make up the death squads? We do, the occupation authorities. . . . Iraq is not a sectarian society, but a tribal society. People are intermarried. Shiites and Sunnis marry each other. It's not a question of having a huge block of people here called Shiites and a huge block of people called Sunnis. . . . But certainly, somebody at the moment is trying to provoke a civil war in Iraq. Someone wants a civil war. Some form of militias and death squads want a civil war. There never has been a civil war in Iraq."

Sinan Salaheddin, of Associated Press writes on 05 January 2014: "It bears repeating that there was no significant presence in Iraq by al-Qaeda prior to the US invasion in March of 2003. The regime of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, whatever its transgressions, was staunchly repressive of Islamist militancy and specifically al-Qaeda. The US overthrow of Hussein's government opened the door to al-Qaeda."

Peace with Iran is possible — if we work for it

Right now we sit at the precipice of peace with Iran. The world is the closest it's been in decades to a deal with Iran that would guarantee its nuclear program would not be used in the future to make nuclear weapons.

Yet, as we sit on the delicate edge of success, hawks in Congress threaten diplomacy by trying to pass more crippling sanctions. Sanctions, by the way, that affect ordinary Iranians disproportionately. Sanctions that would send a bad message to Iran's new moderate government, who by all accounts have been negotiating in good faith. Sanctions that might scuttle success. Senator Robert Mendez [D-NJ] and Senator Mark Kirk [R-IL] have introduced legislation miscalled the "Nuclear Weapon Free Iran Act", which is numbered S. 1881. This legislation would also increase the possibility of US military intervention. The moderate J Street points out that S.1881 "sets an essentially impossible condition for a final deal, namely that Iran renounce even a peaceful nuclear program with intrusive international inspection."

Some technical details about weapons grade uranium, and is Iran "approaching" it? Weapons grade uranium consists of at least 90% U235. Iran has uranium containing no more than 20% U235. This cannot reasonably be considered "approaching" weapons grade — do the math.

Moreover, Iran is turning much of its 20% uranium into fuel rods. Being metal, uranium fuel rods cannot be further enriched; the technique is to centrifuge a gas compound of uranium. It would be like trying to spin a block of solid ice in a cream separator.

The offers on the table are not a trick. Iran will remain under the close eyes of the UN inspectors.

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There is an envelope included in each issue of *Planted by the Waters*. If each person who receives *Planted* puts a check into the envelope and mails it to EPI/CALC, it will greatly improve our ability to do the work for justice and peace which we are called to do together. It doesn't have to be a lot. Every little bit counts.



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You are invited to read *Planted by the Waters* online at <http://www.epicalc.org/> and download articles to share. Upcoming events which EPI is involved in planning will be found at the website.

Calendar & Announcements

Friday, January 31 An Evening with Fr. Roy Bourgeois "30 Years of Hope in Action" a benefit for the SOAW Youth Summit of the Americans at Uptown Body & Fender, 401 26th Street, Oakland 94612, Refreshments provided. Doors 6:30; Event 7:00 - 9:00
\$20 general admission, \$10-15 Students *no one turned away for lack of funds*. For info contact Bob Nixon 510-917-3235

Wednesday, February 5th, 6-8 pm Forum/fundraiser "How Can We Put Movement Back in the Labor Movement?" City College of SF, 1125 Valencia St., SF, Rm. 109 Help young labor activists attend the *Labor Notes* conference in Chicago; a discussion of key union building issues & a book party for a new work from *Labor Notes* on the lessons of the Chicago teachers strike & for Steve Early's *Save Our Unions*. Contact Bill Balderson, 510-436-5138

Friday, February 7, 7:00 Newman Hall 2700 Dwight Way @ College Ave, Berkeley. "Understanding Islamophobia" will examine the roots of Islamophobia, the funding that makes it possible, the overlaps between it and other forms of bigotry and how best allies can challenge it. **Zahra Billoo**, a civil rights attorney and the Executive Director of the Bay Area office of the Council on American-Islamic Relations

Saturday, March 1, 5:30 - 8:30 dinner and program. Haiti Action Committee invites you to a gathering in observance of the 10 year anniversary of the coup d'etat in Haiti. Humanist Hall, 390 27th Street, Oakland. See www.haitisolidarity.net.

March 21, 22, Sabeel Conference in Pleasant Hill, see p.6

Thursday, April 17, Kathy Kelly speaks at Berkeley Fellowship of Unitarian Universalists.

Friday, April 18, Good Friday at Livermore Lab, see p.1

Actions

Living Graveyard and Reading of the Names, third Mondays, Oakland Federal Building, 1301 Clay Street, two blocks from 12th Street BART.

Covered with sheets to represent the dead of the wars of occupation in Afghanistan and Iraq, some of the participants lie down on the city sidewalk in front of the Federal Building. The names of Californians in the U.S. military who have died in Iraq or Afghanistan and the names of some of the Iraqi dead are read. Flyers are handed out.

This is legal, non-violent witness. People stop, look and think. Please bring a white sheet to cover yourself with. A pad to lie on is recommended. The designated Monday may be changed due to federal holidays and other factors. Please check EPI website for changes.
www.epicalc.org

Weekly Vigils

Thursdays, 4:30 - 5:30, Five Flags Park, Foothill, Jackson & Mission, Hayward. Justice for Palestinians. South Alameda County Peace and Justice (SAPJC) & Tri-City Peace and Justice (TCP).

Fridays, 12:00 - 1:00, Telegraph & Bancroft, Berkeley
Women in Black, for justice and peace in Palestine.