



Planted by the Waters

Winter 2018

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Diplomacy: Its Uses and Misuses

This fall at our Autumn Gathering we heard from Colonel Ann Wright who spoke on *Diplomacy: Its Uses and Misuses*. It was an especially good topic



now with the current administration threatening war on North Korea and Iran, to be added to the ongoing wars in Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Somalia, Mali, Niger and the U.S. support for Saudi Arabia's assault on Yemen and the U.S. de facto backing of Israel's ongoing expansion into Palestinian West Bank territories and the devastating siege of Gaza.

Dinner this year was again provided by Food Not Bombs. It was a delicious spread of pasta salad, green salad, fruit salad, braised kale and collards, a green bean dish, rice donated by Massa Organics, red beans donated by Berkeley Natural Grocery, with coffee and other groceries donated by Berkeley Bowl and bread donated by Acme. EPI board members and friends brought hors d'oeuvres and dessert.

Ann focused first on the need to continue the Iran nuclear deal, saying, "Trump is opposed to Iran's influence in the region — in Iraq and in Syria. It is their region. It seems like every president feels like 'the whole world is our region, thank you very much, and we will do whatever we want to wherever we want to.'" She pointed out that a U.S. withdrawal from the deal will tell North Korea that the U.S. can't be counted on to keep our agreements.

Ann went on with a detailed history of the need to negotiate with North Korea as called for by the terms of the 1953 armistice. With Trump now trying

continued on page 2

Good Friday — 2018 Plans

March 30, 6:45 AM

Vasco & Patterson Pass Rd. Livermore

Theme: (undecided) April 4th is the 50th anniversary of the death of MLK. April 3rd is the 50th anniversary of his last speech — "I've been to the mountaintop..."

Livermore Lab is where weapons of mass destruction are designed and developed. Since the early 1980's, people have been gathering there on Good Friday to raise up the issue of the proliferation of nuclear weapons and the role of this Lab in America's being the #1 distributor of the worlds weapons of all kinds. Nuclear weapons is potentially the most deadly aspect of the militarization of our society. We have witnessed other forms of militarization in recent years with the increased activity of ICE and the increased militarization of our local police departments.

This year, Good Friday falls four days before the 50th anniversary of the assassination of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Our speaker will be Rev. Ben McBride who is a long-time an activist for peace and justice in the Bay Area, currently serving

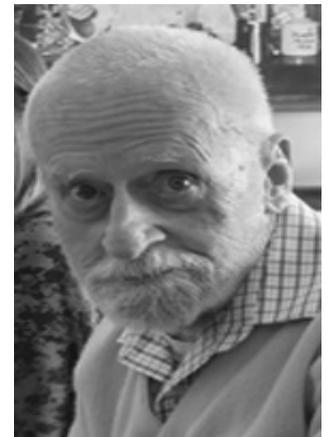
continued on page 11

Bob Forsberg -- ¡presente!

EPI activists will remember Bob as a leader in the Northern California Ecumenical Council and for nearly 20 years the editor of its newspaper *Sequoia*. Many of us didn't learn until his memorial service that he had played the cello.

Inspired by the Quakers and FOR, Bob was a CO during World War II, doing his alternative service through AFSC. He was a life-long civil rights activist and was also active in housing rights, employment opportunity, criminal justice, and many peace and justice initiatives.

Bob, we will miss you.



Diplomacy: Its Uses and Misuses, *continued from p.1*

to throw out the Iran nuclear deal, will North Koreans be able to believe that the Americans won't continue to try to overthrow their government? Looking at the military exercises right on the border, and the names we give these exercises, like "decapitation," it gives an idea as to what our intentions are. So what is their defense; how will they keep America at bay? It's called "their nuclear program." Scholars and analysts recognize that is their reason. It's not that they want to attack us. They just don't want us to invade their land.

Ann encouraged us to work to defuse the situation and toward that end to educate ourselves and our communities. Remember that the U.S. bombed North Korea until there was nothing left. North Korea wants a peace treaty. Ann was part of the women's peace walk crossing the border between North and South Korea.

Ann moved us around the world, to Europe and the U.S. encirclement of Russia in violation of the agreement between President Bush and Gorbachev. When the Soviet Union fell apart, President Bush agreed with Gorbachev that we would not try to bring the countries along Russia's borders into the NATO pact. We would leave them as buffers. But that hasn't happened. President Clinton started the "Partnership for Peace" going to all the countries along the former Soviet Union border and bringing them into NATO or semi-NATO status.

There was Ukraine where the U.S. was instrumental in overthrowing an elected pro-Russian government. Not being willing to wait for the next election, the U.S. hired people to overthrow the government. Ann noted that the people living in Crimea voted to stay affiliated with Russia. Over the last three years the U.S. and NATO have doubled the number of military exercises on Russia's border. The U.S. now has artillery batteries in Poland and other border countries. Russia has responded with large military exercises on their territory.

Then she looked at the wars in which we are bombing — Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Somalia, Mali, Niger, Libya. We have active military in these many countries.

Ann noted that ISIL arose in Iraq in response to the U.S. attack and invasion, pointing out that it began in the prisons where the U.S. locked up countless men. It also grew out of the dismantling of Iraq's army.

Ann next focused on the incredible destruction of Yemen where the Saudis enjoy massive U.S. military support in their genocidal campaign which has brought about both cholera and starvation. The siege of Yemen includes Saudi's blocking Yemen from getting international aid.

Ann spoke about Israel/Palestine. Israel plans to create 4,900 more housing units in the West Bank. The U.S. has pulled out of UNESCO because the agency

opposes Israel's destruction of Arab and Muslim historical and cultural sites. Cemeteries are being destroyed to build more Israeli housing. On the good side, we see thousands of Israeli women with Women Wage Peace marching with Palestinian women from the West Bank.

Gaza — the Palestinian Authority (PA) has collaborated with Israel in denying Gazans adequate electricity and clean water. This has caused numerous deaths. The agreement between Hamas and the PA must be seen in this light. This agreement is largely a relinquishment of political power by Hamas, which in fact won elections throughout Palestine. [Editor's note — we must keep in mind that modern medicine requires electricity, as do sewage treatment and the pumping of water, not to speak of other essential uses.]

Ann spoke of the flotilla project begun in the San Francisco Bay Area to break the blockade of Gaza with little boats. Since 2009 Israel has attacked these boats on the high seas in international waters. Ann is part of a lawsuit for the attack on the flotilla she was a part of in 2010 in which nine people were executed right on their boat. The five boats were stolen, the people on them beaten up and kidnapped to Israel. The flotilla projects continue each year and provide an important chance to educate the world about conditions in Gaza. They will sail until Gaza and the rest of Palestine are free.

After Ann's talk we enjoyed fiddle music by Marilyn Jackson; and Rick Dougherty (Limelighters, Kingston Trio) gave us the song "Abraham, Martin and John" (Dick Holler, first recorded by Dion DiMucci) and then led us in "Last Night I Had the Strangest Dream" (Ed McCurdy) which concluded our wonderful evening.

Check the EPI website www.epicalc.org for the recording of the evening's program.

On the Threat of War against North Korea

Professor Hong, in her article *Learn to Love the Bomb*, opens with observations concerning Trump's threatening approach toward North Korea, giving it the context of Seymour Melman's observation that "US foreign policy, like all 'major policy orientations of US governments since World War II, has required the active use of military power.'" Professor Hong reminds us that "current US-North Korea tensions stem, in the first instance, from the historical reliance of the United States on catastrophic military power to underwrite its coercive foreign policy on the Korean peninsula." This policy can be seen in President Obama's expansion of US military presence from Guam to Japan and South Korea. Professor Hong points out that Obama refused to engage at all with North Korea — did not work to conclude a lasting peace agreement. He slapped repeated rounds of sanctions on North Korea and denied humanitarian aid, in spite of pleas by the North Korean government.

Professor Hong challenges the all too common belief even among liberals and progressives that the US/North Korean confrontation can be seen as a stand off between a pair of possibly insane adolescents engaged in a contest of wills with overtones of sexual dominance. Some of Trump's remarks about his button can reasonably be interpreted in that way. But as Hong points out, the exchange is not parallel:

In the Trump era, Western media caricatures tend to reduce the crisis between the United States and North Korea to a monumental clash of personalities, a farcical mudslinging contest between laughable yet monstrous figures: Mentally Deranged Dotard and Rocket Man. The implication is that these opponents make for an unlikely match of equals, with the one as rash, egomaniacal, and trigger-prone as the other. Yet in suggesting equivalence between the United States and North Korea, this smackdown narrative ignores the structural asymmetry that has conditioned US-North Korea relations from the unrestrained US air campaign against North Korea at mid-century to the present day. By lampooning North Korea's defensive crouch against the world's greatest military power as incomprehensible belligerence by a thin-skinned madman, this facile and ultimately jingoistic portrait inverts cause and effect, enabling the present-day consequences of the Korean War's irresolution, including North Korea's defensive steps to nuclearize, to be decontextualized as "provocations" that justify catastrophic "pre-emptive" violence.

The demonization of North Korea is, of course, nothing new. Donald MacIntyre, former Seoul bureau chief for *Time* magazine during

the George W. Bush "axis of evil" years, noted that by adhering to a "demonization script" and "dehumanizing the other side," Western media played its part in priming the public for war with North Korea. Perhaps unsurprisingly, although 65 percent of US voters, according to a recent Quinnipiac University poll, want Trump to negotiate with North Korea, a plurality of Republicans support the prospect of a US first strike. In this regard, "Rocket Man," Trump's derisive epithet for Kim Jong Un, serves as a warmongering device. By separating North Korea's leader from the people and thus figuratively decapitating North Korean society in advance, it allows for the soothing fiction that US wars of intervention are surgical strikes against isolable bad guys rather than far-reaching humanitarian catastrophes. With its whiff of antiquated technology, "Rocket Man" casts North Korea as a throwback to the Cold War, diminishing its acquisition of nuclear weapons technology. Yet it paradoxically also exposes Trump's weakness, his militarized hubris and ahistorical failure to recognize that the US military, fresh off victory in World War II and technologically unrivaled in the world, proved no match for North Korea's and China's peasant armies during the Korean War.

It is no coincidence that post-Cold War, regime-change narratives routinely feature burlesque versions of tinpot dictators. Instead of viewing these figures, and the societies they reference, as intimate relations — what Arundhati Roy has described as "America's family secret [...] sculpted from the spare rib of a world laid to waste by America's foreign policy" — Americans all too often perceive them as distant and inexplicable dangers that call out for further US war violence. Racist personifications of societies deformed by US war power soothe the American conscience and they do so by pitting the presumed illiberalism of incomprehensible social worlds against the freedoms of home. In this regard, it is revealing that US presidents insistently refer to the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), the world's most heavily militarized border, as "freedom's frontier."

Yet the dictators that feature in America's regime-change pretexts are incomprehensible because our relationship to those societies remains shrouded in a persistent fog of war. As a nation, the United States is afflicted with what Chalmers Johnson described as the amnesia of imperial powers. Few Americans realize that at the root of the present US-North Korea crisis is the unresolved Korean War, a remarkably dirty war that set the paradigm for subsequent US wars of intervention. Fewer still understand the

continued on page 4

Korea, continued from p.3

key role Korea played in consolidating US war power by justifying the creation of a formidable crisis-generating, self-perpetuating, institutional architecture — the national security state, the military-industrial complex, and the perpetual war economy. From mid-century onward, this is to say, the Korean War, although cushioned in a self-serving regime of forgetting, has been crucial to US imperial state-building and global capitalist hegemony. For those of us in the United States, the postwar peace “masks a reality in which we are all a product of Korea whether we know it or not.” (Bruce Cummings, *War and Television*)

. . . For [Koreans], “fire and fury” is not an off-the-cuff bombastic comment, and “they won’t be around much longer!” is not a chest-thumping tweet. For North Koreans, the genre of war is tragedy, not farce.

The United States reduced North Korea to rubble during the Korean War, taking out even civilian infrastructure in heedless violation of international humanitarian law. . . . Less than half a year into the US bombing campaign of North Korea, “there was nothing left worth the bomb to blow it up.” (Sven Lindqvist, *A History of Bombing*) . . . Of the four million Koreans killed during the hot-fighting phase of the war, seventy percent were civilians.

Hong’s hopeful conclusion: “In the hubris of Trump’s gaze on North Korea, we might extract a powerful and broad argument, one that moves people to action, for peace at last on the Korean peninsula.”

Christine Hong is Associate Professor of Critical Race and Ethnic Studies and executive board member of the Korea Policy Institute. The complete text of Professor Hong’s article can be found at <http://www.rosalux-nyc.org/learn-to-love-the-bomb/>

If you want to work against a US attack on North Korea, please call the EPI office or email us at epicalc@gmail.net

U.S. v. Iran, Syria et al

by Carolyn S. Scarr

Patrick Cockburn writes in his *Counterpunch* article “The U.S.-Iran confrontation is already destabilising parts of the Middle East that were starting to settle down after the defeat of ISIL in the second half of last year. ‘The escalating American threats against Iran mean that the Iranians will be more vigorous in safeguarding their position in Iraq and Syria,’ said a former Iraqi minister who did not want his name published. . . . U.S.-Iran tensions increased last Friday when President Donald Trump said he had signed a waiver on the reimposition of draconian U.S. sanctions on Iran for the last time. He would not do so when the issue comes up again in 120 days unless the nuclear deal agreed with Iran two years ago is substantially modified, something that is unlikely to happen. Uncertainty about sanctions has already cut the economic benefits to Iranians stemming from the agreement because foreign banks and companies do not want to risk spending money doing business in Iran and then find that they have to stop because of sanctions.” (<https://www.counterpunch.org/2018/01/18/the-destabilizer-trumps-escalating-threats-against-iran/>)

Cockburn goes on to say, “Iraq has been enjoying its least violent period since the U.S. and British invasion of 2003 – but the unaccustomed peace is still fragile, as was shown on Monday when two suicide bombers killed 38 people and injured dozens more in an explosion in a market in Baghdad. This was the worst attack in the capital since the Iraqi security forces, backed by U.S. airpower, captured Mosul in July after a nine-month siege – a major victory over ISIL. . . . The US periodically hopes to establish a pro-American government in Baghdad, but the former Iraqi minister said that in present circumstances Iran would be determined, more than ever, to prevent this happening. He believed that American officials underestimate Shia solidarity and exaggerate the significance of the very real differences between Shia clerical leaders in the two countries. ‘At the end of the day the *marjaiya* [the vastly influential Iraqi Shia hierarchy] would stand with Iran,’ he said.”

Someone in Washington has forgotten that the Iran deal was negotiated with Iran, the five permanent members of the UN security council plus Germany. The U.S. does not have the authority to rewrite the terms of the agreement. If the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in its ongoing inspections finds that Iran is cooperating with the agency and that it continues to abide by the restrictions mandated in the agreement (which it does), Trump does not have the authority to impose international sanctions on Iran nor to demand that Iran submit to other requirements, either in its support of its allies in the region it is a part of, nor any other restriction that pops into Trump’s mind.

Iran, Syria et al, continued from p. 4

In his recent speech at the Hoover Institute, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson accused Iran of attempting to “create a northern arch, stretching from Iran to Lebanon and the Mediterranean” extending to Syria where it would “deploy the Iranian Revolutionary Guard.” Completely ignoring Iran’s major role in driving ISIL out of Syria, Tillerson says “Through its position in Syria, Iran is positioning to continue attacking U.S. interests, our allies, and personnel in the region.” (https://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2018/01/277493.htm#_ftnref1)

Jan Oberg in *Counterpunch* points out that among U.S. interests are “policies and goals for its future presence in Syria such as building permanent bases – in a kind of base race with Russia – and supporting Kurdish forces in the Syrian side of the border to Turkey – the second largest military power in NATO that is of course furious and calls it a terrorist army that it is ready to fight.” Oberg goes on to write, “U.S. under the Trump administration has chosen to promote and support the new fundamentalist Islamist-Zionist team, Saudi-Arabia and Israel, supported by the Gulf States, to gang up against the Iran that is seen as a huge threat to the U.S., the world and the region. But which – unfortunately for that view – isn’t.” Oberg’s article is at <https://www.counterpunch.org/2018/01/19/the-new-us-syria-strategy-arecipe-for-continued-disaster/>

Tillerson openly stated that one of the five key end states the U.S. desires for Syria is: “the underlying conflict [whose military aspects are promoted and supported by the U.S.] between the Syrian people and the Assad regime is resolved through a UN-led political process prescribed in UN Security Council Resolution 2254, and a stable, unified, independent Syria, under post-Assad leadership, is functioning as a state” [emphasis editor’s]. Tillerson said, “it is crucial to our national defense to maintain a military and diplomatic presence in Syria, to help bring an end to that conflict, and assist the Syrian people as they chart a course to achieve a new political future.” Any ongoing U.S. military presence will be there without the permission of the internationally recognized government of Syria.

Cockburn writes “The U.S. has about 2,000 specialist soldiers in Syria, but its military strength depends on the use of airpower in support of Kurdish ground troops who belong to the Syrian branch of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party, which has been waging a guerrilla war in Turkey since 1984.” At the time this *Planted* article is being written, it has been reported that Turkey has attacked the Kurdish forces in Syria, which of course has angered the Syrian government. Israel has also bombed Syria recently.

The Yemen connection and more on the “arch” — Serge Halimi in *Le Monde diplomatique* (mondediplo.com) describes the scene in which U.S. ambassador to the UN, Nikki Haley appeared with huge fragments

of what she claimed was an Iranian missile that she maintained had been fired from Yemen at a Saudi civil airport. She claimed that the CIA had discovered documents which were supposed to prove the existence of links between some of Bin Laden’s successors in al-Qaeda and Iran’s (Shia) leadership. This is extremely unlikely. Evidently Washington has forgotten that al-Qaeda and ISIL are fanatically Sunni and they murder Shias. Halimi goes on to remind us “President Obama noted two years ago that Iran’s military budget was only one-eighth of that of U.S. allies in the region and one-fortieth of the Pentagon’s. Nonetheless, the sound of war drums against the ‘Iranian threat’ is almost deafening.”

Focusing on the Lebanese segment of his “arch” Tillerson said he wants Hizballah to “move away from Israel’s border”, evidently forgetting that Hizballah was formed as a self-defense force by Lebanese when Israel invaded and occupied Lebanon in 1982.

Recurrent in Tillerson’s remarks at the Hoover institute was the theme that Syria’s President Bashar al-Assad must be removed from power. He proposes to use the United Nations to hold elections for that purpose, notwithstanding the requirements of the UN charter that:

“All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state.”

“Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state or shall require the Members to submit such matters to settlement under the present Charter.”

UN Charter Article 2 paragraphs 4 and 7.

Two Minutes to Midnight on the 2018 Doomsday Clock

from Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists

The year just past proved perilous and chaotic, a year in which many of the risks foreshadowed in our last Clock statement came into full relief. In 2017, we saw reckless language in the nuclear realm heat up already dangerous situations and re-learned that minimizing evidence-based assessments regarding climate and other global challenges does not lead to better public policies.

... Major nuclear actors are on the cusp of a new arms race, one that will be very expensive and will increase the likelihood of accidents and misperceptions. Across the globe, nuclear weapons are poised to become more rather than less usable because of nations’ investments in their nuclear arsenals. ...

More at <https://thebulletin.org/>

Trump's Racism Toward Haiti Is not an Aberration

by Nia Imara

Published in *The Progressive*, January 24, 2018

Trump's racist comments about Haiti and African countries — made January 11 on the eve of the eighth anniversary of the terrible earthquake in Haiti — were vulgar and unacceptable, but they are not an aberration. Rather they reflect the reality of U.S. policy toward so-called “underdeveloped” black and brown nations.

In the wake of Trump's comments, politicians and media figures rushed to defend Haitian and African immigrants, asserting how hardworking they are; what unique, important contributions they make to America; and reminding us of the hackneyed fallacy that “America was built by immigrants.” By reasoning on these grounds, commentators allow Trump and those with similar anti-immigration rhetoric to dictate the terms of the argument.



On January 22, thousands in Haiti's capital protested vulgar comments made by Donald Trump about the nation.

U.S. policy toward Haiti has been consistently racist, violent, oppressive, and exploitative. Trump's particularly crude brand of racism is only the most recent manifestation of timeworn, bipartisan discrimination against black and brown people.

The exclusion of Haiti by the United States began with the Haitian Revolution, more than 200 years ago. Between 1791 and 1810, more than 25,000 whites and free blacks who supported the old regime fled the island to port cities like New Orleans and Philadelphia, sparking an early American refugee crisis. The free black migrants were viewed with suspicion by slaveholding politicians, including President Washington and his Secretary of State, Thomas Jefferson.

After Haiti defeated France in 1804, President Jefferson refused to give the new nation diplomatic recognition. France's coffers were drained by years of war to preserve its most valuable colony, and Jefferson exploited this opportunity by acquiring the Louisiana Territory (stolen Native American land) for a song. The United States, predisposed to be conciliatory toward a fellow slave-holding nation, aided France and other European powers in implementing a diplomatic quarantine of the new black nation.

As noted by Robert Lawless in *Haiti's Bad Press* and Paul Farmer in *The Uses of Haiti*, the United States prevented Haiti's participation in the Western Hemisphere Panama Conference of 1825. U.S. slavery continued for more than half a century following its abolition in Haiti; it wasn't until 1862 that the U.S. Government recognized Haiti's independence.

Democratic President Woodrow Wilson, widely known as a racist, sent the U.S. Marines to invade Haiti in 1915. The Marines transported Jim Crow customs to the island, instituted forced labor, and massacred thousands of Haitians, all in the name of “stability.” In 1919, the troops murdered thirty-two-year-old Charlemagne Peralte, leader of the Cacos peasant movement that resisted the occupation. As a warning against continued rebellion, they attached his dead body to a wooden door for public display. Washington's lasting legacy was the creation of the Haitian Army.

For decades after the official end of the nineteen-year-old occupation, dictators used the American-made army as an instrument of repression against the people.

The infamous dictator, François “Papa Doc” Duvalier, was given tens of millions of dollars by Washington during the first four years of his reign, which coincided with the Eisenhower Administration. In his book, *An Unbroken Agony*, Randall Robinson discusses how Papa Doc and his notorious *Tontons Macoutes* killed an estimated 50,000 people during his rule. Later on, in Paul Farmer's words, JFK “provided the bloodthirsty killer with military assistance as part of the general program of extending U.S. control over the security forces in Latin America.”

After Papa Doc died in 1971, U.S. support of the dictatorship under his son, Jean-Claude “Baby Doc” Duvalier, became even more entrenched. In the 1970s, both Haiti and El Salvador—another poor Latin American country maligned by Trump—were ruled by U.S.-backed regimes that violently repressed their populations, in order to ensure a submissive, cheap labor force for U.S. companies.

Under the repressive Duvalier dictatorship, which denied labor rights, the assembly sector proliferated in Haiti, and by 1980 the country became the ninth largest manufacturer of assembled goods for U.S. consumption. Today, Haiti's export economy is dominated by apparel manufacture — such as cheap clothes sold at Walmart, and even parts of U.S. military uniforms. More recently, after the earthquake, the State Department under Hillary Clinton pushed to build a new sweatshop in Haiti with money from USAID.

Even after the Haitian masses successfully ousted Baby Doc in 1986, the momentum of Duvalierism persisted, as the American-trained and -armed military continued its brutal terrorism against the people.

Haiti, *continued from p.6*

In the next two decades, Washington sponsored and actively participated in two coup d'états against the democratically elected governments of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Each resulted in years of violence and repression; each resulted in the killings of thousands of people; tens of thousands more were imprisoned without due process or were forced to flee their homes.

Soon after the first coup in 1991, President Bush ordered the Coast Guard to return refugees to Haiti. As a presidential candidate, Clinton denounced Bush's handling of the crisis, but upon taking office he further extended the blockade. In a cynical move, he conveniently defined fleeing Haitians as "economic refugees," in order to deny them political asylum.

In early 1992, acclaimed dancer Katherine Dunham went on a forty-seven-day hunger strike, urging George H. Bush to change U.S. policy toward Haitian refugees who, under his administration, were being held in deplorable conditions at the U.S. base on Guantanamo. Among other actions, a series of hunger strikes by students and faculty, as well as one by Randall Robinson that lasted nearly a month in 1994, were undertaken to pressure President Clinton to change U.S. policy toward Haitian refugees.

Many gains made under President Aristide's second administration were reversed after the U.S.-led coup in 2004. The Aristide government, for the first time in Haiti's history, implemented a universal schooling program. Between 1994 and 2000, more public schools were built in Haiti than during the entire period following the 1804 Revolution — 195 primary schools and 104 high schools.

In 2001, Aristide mandated that 20 percent of the government budget go toward education. The aborted Aristide administrations also dedicated a greater percentage of the national budget on health care than any previous administration. His government advocated for improved labor rights and, in 2003, it doubled the minimum wage to 70 gourdes a day (about \$1 today), affecting the livelihoods of more than 20,000 assembly factory workers.

But after the 2004 coup, many considered Haiti to be under a continued state of occupation. The country's infrastructure steadily worsened over the next several years, and the 2010 earthquake was devastating. Far too many homes and lives were lost, and the Haitian people continue to suffer the consequences.

Obama's response to the initial natural disaster was to send troops to Haiti. Let's recall how the U.S. military held up thousands of tons of life-saving aid at the Port-au-Prince airport, since its first priority was to provide "stability." Let's remember, too, the stories and images — reminiscent of Hurricane Katrina — in which Haitians searching for food and supplies were depicted as "looters" or as members of "gangs." But ultimately, perhaps, the more significant parallel

between Katrina and the Obama Administration's response to the earthquake is that the U.S. Government used reconstruction as a tool to aid the Haitian elite and multinationals.

If we consider Trump's racism in the light of history, it is quite in keeping with that of his forty-four predecessors.

Black and brown immigrants do not have to prove their worth. When people try to defend them by asserting how hardworking and deserving they are, these assertions conveniently skirt around the looming truth that centuries of American and European colonialism, neocolonialism, and capitalist exploitation are responsible for the impoverishment that is so widespread amongst today's black and brown nations. It's as if a band of robbers looted a home, set it on fire, and then magnanimously defended the fleeing family's right to sanctuary.

Additionally, the idea that "America was built by immigrants" conceals a larger, racist myth about the origins of this country. This country was built, in the first place, on genocide. It was built on stolen labor, on centuries of kidnap and the brutal separation of families, on the systematic oppression of the descendants of Africa.

It is not an accident that Trump mentioned Haiti and Africa together; the exploitation of African nations and Haiti by the United States and European allies is historically inseparable. Haiti has always proudly identified with its African roots, and the Africa in Haiti is still evident today.

In order to forge strong, meaningful bonds of solidarity with movements in Haiti and Africa struggling to rebuild their nations, after centuries of exploitation, let's model ourselves after Katherine Dunham, who understood that our ties to each other go far deeper than any man-made borders.

Nia Imara is an artist, an astrophysicist, and an activist working with the Haiti Action Committee (<http://haitisolidarity.net/>)

<http://progressive.org/dispatches/trump-racism-toward-haiti-is-not-an-aberration-180123/>

Some thoughts on Puerto Rico and colonialism Algunas reflexiones sobre Puerto Rico y el colonialismo

by *Silvia Antonia Guillermina Brandon y Pérez*

This is a bilingual article. The Spanish version may be found on EPI's website www.epicalc.org.

*Cuba y Puerto Rico son de un pájaro las dos alas,
reciben flores o balas sobre el mismo corazón...*

Lolita Rodríguez de Tió

We are living in the end times, not as in the Biblical end times, but certainly the end times for this latest, nastiest, most violent, cruel and unjust empire. I come from a beautiful small island in the Caribbean that was a victim of US Empire since its earliest battles for independence from the Spanish Empire. I was there when Fidel Castro Ruz, Ernesto "Ché" Guevara, Camilo Cienfuegos and the rest of the milicianos de la revolución cubana marched into La Habana. It took me many years to realize, in an exile which I didn't seek but had to accept, because I was only eleven years old when my family decided to emigrate, that my country had been a colony of Empire since its foundation, free in name only. When I joined the efforts to close down the fetid jail in Guantánamo, which had been used for torturing and killing the freedom fighters of other countries, labeled terrorists to excuse the violence of Empire, and I began to study the history of my homeland in great depth, I realized I had been taught lies throughout my life. History, after all, is written by the victors.

This most recent disaster in Puerto Rico is heartbreaking. I studied and graduated from la Universidad de Puerto Rico at Río Piedras, a vibrant, excellent center of education. I graduated the year UPR President, Jaime Benítez, called in the shock troops because of a nonviolent protest against the ROTC on campus. It was one more protest against Vietnam. A young woman outside the campus, 21-year-old Antonia Martínez Lagares, who was watching the mess from the sidelines atop a balcony, was shot to death by a cop not because she was doing anything, but because of her words about racism in the United States. It was after the Civil Rights Act in the United States, in 1970, but it was at a time when segregation was still practiced everywhere.

Puerto Rico had fought for its independence from Spain at the same time as Cuba, and at meetings in New York City, had adopted a flag inspired by the Cuban flag, which had been designed by Venezuelan Narciso López. Our Puerto Rican brothers in the fight for freedom had adopted the design, reversing the colors, to symbolize the brotherhood between the Cuban and Puerto Rican freedom fighters, but after the United States sank its own ship, the U.S.S. Maine, in the harbor at La Habana, and used that as an excuse to enter the fight for independence, Puerto Rico became, with the Philippines, part of the spoils of war. Puerto Rican separatists in their struggle for freedom then became "subversives." Much

as happened in the first US genocide of the 20th century, when the US massacred a million Filipinos who were also fighting for their freedom, until 1952 raising the Puerto Rican flag was a crime, and in the early days of annexation, speaking Spanish was also forbidden. Puerto Rico has been a victim of United States violence and depredation since its annexation as a colony of the United States.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in his Beyond Vietnam speech in 1967 had spoken about the war in Vietnam as imperial in nature, fought at the expense of the poor. Vietnam was "the symptom of a far deeper malady within the American spirit," which, if left untreated, would surely drag the United States "down the long, dark, and shameful corridors of time reserved for those who possess power without compassion, might without morality, and strength without sight."

Many think King signed his death warrant with that speech, which refused compromise and false diplomacy. King recalled visiting cities in the wake of riots and the guilty thoughts that attended his pleas for nonviolence: "And I knew that I could never again raise my voice against the violence of the oppressed in the ghettos without having first spoken clearly to the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today: my own government."

Mass imprisonment, both in the criminal system and in the dank immigration pens where people die for the crime of escaping war-ravaged countries, is one of the systems we use to divide and conquer. In immigration and asylum practice in particular, many times the ravages to those countries whose unfortunate citizens are forced to flee have been paid for and instituted by Empire.

The training of torturers has long been undertaken in schools such as the recently renamed School of the Americas, presently in Fort Benning, Georgia. Casualty reports in all our wars, and we are always at war, although we don't always call them wars but downgrade them to police actions or use other euphemisms for the murder of people, show a disproportionate share of poor and people of color. Our jails show the same thing. King bravely described our arrogance, "the deadly Western arrogance that has poisoned the international atmosphere for so long."

Throughout the world, camaradas and compañeros have spent lives fighting for true freedom, true social and economic justice, and this cannot happen within the confines of any Empire. I find, more and more, that I am a socialist anarchist, or perhaps an anarchist socialist. In February I will turn 69 years old, and after almost three decades of practicing law and of fighting the good fight, I note as a student of history that most governments (whether State or corporate) eventually become corrupt. They develop bureaucracies to deal with everyday problems; these choke out the life of countries, societies, businesses, and now the planet. They take over with the aim of preserving either the status quo, or the prerogatives of power.

I am announcing the establishment of a new publica-

Puerto Rico *continued from p.8*

tion, to be called *El nuevo malcriado*, in remembrance of César Chávez's broadsheet, *El malcriado*. When I was growing up, *malcriado* (badly "raised") referred to those of us who were disobedient in some ways. In these days and times, disobedience is necessary to survive the ravages of Empire. Please join me in disobedience, far and wide. One of the ways to do this is to study history and to share it with others, no matter their ages. Everyone needs to learn what went before in order to figure out what must come after.

There are days when I "don't speak English." Days when the surfeit of lies and hypocrisy and bad politics make me loathe the language as a symbol of violence and decay. But as Seamus Heaney beautifully explains in the introduction to his translation of *Beowulf*, Shakespeare's language is too beautiful to be given up for good. So I write poems in my *lengua materna* and in English, as well. My bones and sinews and blood are multilingual; I sometimes pray in Spanish and English and French, and sometimes even curse in Italian.

I have written before about having been exposed to massive racism and cultural disrespect since my arrival on the shores of Miami, Florida at the end of October, 1960. As a young student at a local public school I had the parent of a classmate spit on my face and tell me to go home, that "America" didn't want me. This was neither the first nor the last time I encountered this odious reaction.

As I have aged, and worked with numerous organizations for peace and social justice, I have come up against colonial disrespect again and again. Although I realize my native language is another imperial language, since Spain conquered and massacred indigenous settlers and forbade the speaking of their various native tongues, Spanish itself is threatened daily by the effort of empire and its unwitting minions to make it "mirror" the dominant language of this most cruel empire.

From Miami, my family moved to the Dominican Republic at the time of the counter-coup, after the violent ouster of President Juan Bosch and the fight to bring him back. After all, much as would happen in Haiti years later with Jean Bertrand Aristide, Dr. Bosch was the first democratically elected president after years of dictatorships, the latest by the vile Rafael Leonidas Trujillo and his cadre of US sponsored murderers. This was par for the course for this latest version of empire, which sent out people to bribe and corrupt, and if that didn't work, murder, important government and business officials. *Shades of the Empire Strikes Back...*

On the economic front, I have spent years helping the marginalized. My late lamented husband, Jim Forsyth, a lifelong communist who had begun a "Democratic" political club when his efforts to change things as a socialist were not fruitful, had been my partner in sheltering homeless individuals at different times in our home. He worked for international democracy most of his life, and dedicated endless hours to efforts such as the passage of

single payer health insurance as a first step toward socialized medicine.

Basically, I have had it. I am sick of the use of the term "America" for a country rather than the continents of the Américas, and the term "Americans" for its denizens. What will happen to the "American" Empire is not in doubt or to be determined. All bad things must come to an end, and in this case the Empire has overstayed whatever welcome it ever had. Racism and cultural disrespect in this country is pervasive, the disregard for people who do not "fit" the exclusively white, Anglo-Saxon parameters, is legion. The only question is how bloody the monster's demise will be. All Empires have died, some more bloodily than others. But in the United States of Atrocities, the incidence of violence and of "othering" of anyone who does not fit the paradigm keeps rising. President #45 is a symptom of advanced decay, a multiple myeloma on the national body.

Standing Rock, for many reasons, gelled these feelings. That the original settlers of Turtle Island could be so mistreated, abused and disrespected in the name of "the law" added insult to injury. A part of me felt like volunteering for a mission to another planet. But I have realized in the last few years with great clarity that as victims of empire, we are all colonized. Even as we attempt to grow in non-imperial ways, in ways that are free of racism and "othering," we can no more escape imperial and racist attitudes than we can stop requiring sleep or sustenance or water. This, then, is our greatest mission, to "grow out of" those attitudes that permeate and pervade our daily lives. We must work to look at all our problems in a universal rather than a local or national way. The system is the problem. The system is the endemic illness. The system is our enemy, across race lines, national lines, cultural lines, economic lines. Class and race, used to divide and conquer us all.

I am still a follower of a subversive Palestinian Jew who fought Empire all his life. Subversion is usually given a bad name, but to subvert is literally to turn over. Crucifixion in Roman times was for those seeking to subvert empire. The problem with accepting the system is that you become entangled in its self-serving bureaucracy, a bramble of choking vines that encroach upon, and devour, all life. Corporate bureaucracy is the worst of this, and our system of government is nothing other than a corporatocracy. To the victor belong the spoils, but the victor is that infinitesimal fraction which is less than 1 percent and which chokes, encroaches upon, and devours, all life upon this planet.

As one of the greatest revolutionaries of all time, and one of the leaders of the Cuban revolution famously said, *hasta la victoria siempre*: Onward forever until victory!

Challenging Oppression: Working for Justice from Palestine to The USA

by Vivian Zelaya

When the oppressor has his foot on the neck of the oppressed, the oppressor can't move either. This insight from Tarek Abuata, the U.S. director of Friends of Sabeel North America (fosna.org), elucidates the Christian perspective behind Palestinian Liberation Theology. Liberation for the oppressed is also liberation for the oppressor. When Jesus says, "Love your enemies, pray for those who persecute you" (Matt 5:44), He is not telling us to pray for an increase in their wealth, status, political, or military success. He is telling us to pray for our enemies that the Holy Spirit may come to them and change their hearts. As the scripture says: "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh" (Ezekiel 36:26).

This was the beautiful spirit with which our seventh Northern California Sabeel conference began at St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church in Santa Rosa. There was no room for a vengeful spirit, nor was there any whitewashing or watering down of the inhumane cruelties and ethnic cleansing suffered by our Christian and Muslim Palestinian sisters and brothers in Palestine. The spirit of Truth and the spirit of Love are one and the same. African-American Rev. Ron Lister from Houston, joined Abuata in providing scriptural resources for this point.

Huwaida Arraf, co-founder of ISM (the International Solidarity Movement), former chairperson of the Free Gaza Movement, international lawyer, and leader of five successful sea voyages to the Gaza Strip, spoke first thing Saturday morning, December 2. She gave a brief overview of the European colonization of Palestine, the Nakba, the expulsion of 750,000 Palestinians from their homeland, the destruction of 500 Palestinian villages, and land and water grabs in violation of international law.

The panel of intersection featured speakers of various backgrounds, bound together by a common struggle for human rights. Rev. Michael Yoshii spoke of the legacy of World War II's Japanese internment, and how it sensitized his congregation to a common need for equality and human rights across ethnicities and religions. Texas-born Mexican-American, Alicia Sanchez, shared her experience of discrimination, the farmworkers' struggle and her legal work with Cesar Chavez and the farmworkers union, recognizing the racial and ethnic prejudices common to Mexican and Palestinian suffering. Madonna Thunder Hawk, a Cheyenne River Sioux, and life-long advocate and activist for indigenous rights, illuminated the common struggle for indigenous rights in Palestine and the U.S. Lara Kiswani, executive director of AROC (Arab Resource and Organizing Center), energized confer-

ence attendees with her brilliant analysis and charismatic determination to advocate for justice, equality and humanity from Palestine to the U.S.A.

Saturday's workshops covered such topics as BDS (boycott, divestment and sanctions), academic and cultural boycott, the role of the churches, Jewish resistance to occupation, Zionist harassment and legal warfare.

Dr. Mona El-Farra came all the way from Gaza, braving the arduous difficulties of getting out of Gaza through the Rafa exit into Egypt, knowing that she was taking a certain risk that once she got out of Gaza she might not be allowed to return to her beloved home and her work. In spite of the great suffering involved and the horrendous destruction visited upon Gaza by the last three Israeli assaults, it was clear that Dr. Mona had a deep and abiding love for her people, her work and her homeland. She told us of patients, friends and relatives who had died there while waiting and hoping for Israel's permission to pass through the checkpoint to reach an Israeli hospital, because Israel forbade the entry into Gaza of basic medical necessities. She recalled the once beautiful Mediterranean waters now unspeakably polluted because Israel will not allow necessary building materials into Gaza to repair the sanitation facilities, which Israel had intentionally destroyed in its last merciless bombing of Gaza. Dr. Mona spoke of the hardships, injuries, and deaths caused by Israel's unrelenting siege of Gaza.

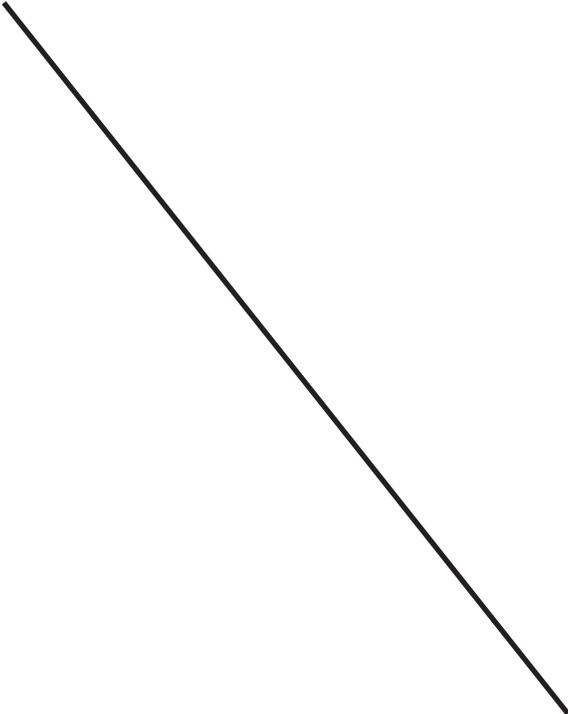
In addition to seeing patients in Gaza, Dr. Mona also spoke of her work, sponsored by MECA (Middle East Children's Alliance), working with children traumatized by the terrors of the occupation and Israeli assaults, and her work with MECA's water project (MAIA), using a process of osmosis to bring a glass of clean water to Gaza's schoolchildren. For more information on Dr. El-Farra's tireless, humanitarian work, go to mecaforpeace.org.

The Sunday, December 3rd, session of the conference took place in the welcoming and beautiful St. John's Presbyterian Church of San Francisco. Liz Jackson of Palestine Legal together with graduate student Saleem Shehadeh from San Francisco State University, informed us about the latest Canary Mission campaign of slander and calumny spread on the SFSU campus to discredit and suppress Students for Justice in Palestine and Palestinian SFSU professor, Rabab Abdulhadi. Some of us had seen the slanderous, cartoonish posters from the David Horowitz Freedom Center demonizing Students for Justice in Palestine and Professor Rabab Abdulhadi. We were appalled to learn the extent of the attacks on academic freedom and free speech suffered by anyone who dared to speak up for Palestinian human rights on a university campus.

Ali Paris graced us with an exquisite musical break and personal story before the final panel of three

continued on page 11

Saving for Rabia's article



Good Friday *continued from p.1*

as Co-Director at PICO California in a program that focuses on the relationship between law enforcement and the community.

The service includes liturgical dance led by Carla DeSola. At the main gate, there will be chanting for peace, liturgical dance and an opportunity for non-violent acts of witness. At the Stations of the Cross on the way to the gate we will remember some of the many struggles for justice in this world of empire and weapons of mass destruction.

Look for updates at www.epicalc.org. You may also phone 510-990-0374 or 510-654-4983.

Palestine *continued from p. 3*

brilliant and powerful Palestinian women: international lawyer Huwaida Arraf, Dr. Mona El-Farra, and founding member of Students for Justice in Palestine and executive director of AROC, Lara Kiswani. Their combined intelligence, compassion, commitment to humanity, determination, and love for their people provided a dazzling and eloquent leadership for our common struggle for justice, equality and human rights.

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Upcoming events which EPI is involved in planning will be found at the website.

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Regarding that Envelope

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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Calendar & Announcements

Friday, March 30, 6:45 a.m. Good Friday witness
Livermore Nuclear Weapons Lab.

Inside:

1. Report on Autumn Gathering
1. Good Friday plans
1. Bob Forsberg, *!presente!*
3. Korea
4. U.S. v. Iran, Syria et al
5. The Doomsday Clock
6. Haiti
8. Puerto Rico
10. Palestine
11. _____

Winter 2018 edition of EPI's quarterly newsletter

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. Rain cancels. Please check EPI website for changes. www.epicalc.org.

Ongoing 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.

First Saturday of each month, 11:00, West County Detention Center, 5555 Giant Highway, Richmond. Witness & vigil to oppose ongoing imprisonment of ICE detainees.