



Planted by the Waters

Summer 2015

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Beyond Nuclear Weapons Beyond Empire/ Beyond Racism Report on Good Friday 2015 Witness

by Carolyn S. Scarr

The annual Good Friday witness at the Livermore Nuclear Weapons Lab opened at sunrise to the strains of "Morning Has Broken" sung by Daniel Zwickel. We were blessed by the invocation by Zahra Balloo who reminded us how distant we are from the suffering of people in Yemen being bombed by Saudi forces with funding and support from the U.S. "I start in the name of Allah, the entirely merciful, the especially merciful. All praise is due to God, Lord of the world, the entirely merciful, the especially merciful, master of the day of judgment . . . We ask Him to guide us to the straight path, to the path of peace, the path of salvation . . ."

Marylia Kelley, of Tri-Valley CAREs, spoke of their work opposing the environmental contamination caused by the work of the labs. She directed our attention to what goes on behind the fence — the tracking of the poisoned ground water, the Lab's continuing work, 85% of their budget for "nuclear weapons activities" compared with small fractions for nonproliferation, "science", cleanup. Nuclear weapons scientists, she told us, are developing a new nuclear warhead called a "long range stand-off weapon" to go in a new cruise missile which will hug the ground, evade radar, in a sneak attack. This new missile can also carry a conventional weapon creating dangerous uncertainty in a target country. New tests on plutonium are in the works at the National Ignition

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August 6, 8:00 a.m. Livermore Lab 70 Years of Nuclear Weapons: At What Cost?

EPI and peace & justice groups around the Bay Area invite you to mark the 70th anniversary of the U.S. atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the Livermore Nuclear Weapons Lab, where 85% of its budget goes for nuclear weapons activities.

Participants will gather at the northwest corner of the Livermore Lab (Vasco Road and Patterson Pass Road in Livermore). At 8:15 AM, there will be a solemn moment of silence to honor radiation victims worldwide. The U.S. dropped the first nuclear bomb used in war on Hiroshima at 8:15 AM local time, August 6, 1945.

Next will be a "call to action," in which participants will be invited to march a short distance to the Livermore Lab West Gate. Those who choose will nonviolently risk arrest. Others will conduct a legal witness and support. For more information, contact Tri-Valley CAREs at 925-443-7148 or EPI at 510-990-0374.

Women Walk for Peace and Reunification of Korea

by Gwyn Kirk

I was thrilled to join an international group in May, who walked with Korean women, north and south, to call for an end to the Korean War (1950-53). We crossed the 2-mile wide Demilitarized Zone (DMZ – a serious oxymoron, it's highly militarized) that has separated millions of Korean families for decades. We held peace symposiums in Pyongyang and Seoul where we heard Korean women's experiences of war and shared our experiences and ideas of mobilizing women to end violent conflict.

2015 marks the 70th anniversary of Korea's division into two separate states by Cold War powers, which precipitated the Korean War. Nearly 4 million people were killed, most of them Korean civilians. Fighting was halted when North Korea (representing North Korean and Chinese forces) and the United States (representing the UN command) signed a ceasefire agreement. This urged the governments to meet within three months to negotiate a peace treaty. Over 60 years later we're still waiting.

The 30-woman delegation, from 15 nations, included Leymah Gbowee and Mairead Maguire, Nobel Peace laureates from Liberia and Northern Ireland, US feminist writer and activist Gloria Steinem, scholars, organizers, filmmakers, and a social media whiz who sent live bulletins via periscope. We met for a short orientation in Beijing then flew to Pyongyang where our North Korean hosts -- members of the Korean Committee for Solidarity with World Peoples, and the Democratic Women's Union of Korea – gave us a warm welcome.

To help us understand more about their isolated country they'd planned two days of site visits. Our hectic itinerary included, first off, the birthplace of Kim Il Sung, then a kindergarten specializing in the arts, a women's hospital, and a new dormitory for women workers at a textile factory. We lunched at a popular noodle restaurant, enjoyed a multi-media show extolling the country's accomplishments, visited the oldest Buddhist temple in Korea, and toured the International Friendship Exhibition where official gifts presented to the Korean leaders are displayed. Officials from the host committees, including a group of women in their twenties and thirties, were our guides and interpreters.

As well as the peace symposium in Pyongyang we participated in two short marches, the first at the Reunification Monument, a huge white arch with two women holding up one Korea. A women's marching band led us down the wide boulevard. We wore white, the symbol of

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Facility (NIF), which tests are not being well contained to prevent contamination.

Good Friday this year fell one day before the anniversary of Dr. King's Beyond Vietnam speech at Riverside Church in which he spoke clearly against the U.S. war on Vietnam. Dr. King called upon us to oppose "the giant triplets of racism, materialism and militarism." He said, "A true revolution of values will soon look uneasily on the glaring contrast of poverty and wealth." Good Friday was also the day before the anniversary of Dr. King's assassination.

In our responsive reading we heard Dr. King's words from Beyond Vietnam antiphonally with segments of reports about the Lab's work found in their monthly publication *Science and Technology Review* in which the Lab writes "Nothing Conventional about Livermore's Conventional Weapons Development," and describes their "Next-Generation Manufacturing for the Stockpile." The response of the congregation gathered was "A nation that continues . . . to spend more money on [the] military . . . than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death."

Among Dr. King's words quoted in the responsive reading: "The desperate, rejected and angry young men . . . asked if our own nation wasn't using massive doses of violence to solve its problems, to bring about the changes it wanted. . . . I knew that I could never again raise my voice . . . without having first spoken clearly to the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today — my own government. . . . We are called to speak for the weak, for the voiceless, for victims of our nation and for those it calls enemy, for no document from human hands can make these humans any less our brothers."

The reading closed with "We must move past indecision to action. We must find new ways to speak for peace. . . and justice throughout the developing world — a world that borders on our doors. If we do not act we shall surely be dragged down the long dark and shameful corridors of time reserved for those who possess power without compassion, might without morality, and strength without sight. Now let us begin. Now let us rededicate ourselves to the long and bitter — but beautiful — struggle for a new world."

Carla DeSola, joined by two other dancers, Pastor Jaqueline Duhart and Sr Martha Ann Kirk led the congregation in movement as Silvia Brandon Pérez sang Dr. King's favorite hymn, *Precious Lord*.

David Hartsough was our speaker. He had worked with Dr. King in the early days of the civil rights movement and spoke largely of answering the call for non-violent action to build the Beloved Community. He drew together the themes of this year's Good Friday witness.



First he raised up the tremendous destructive power of nuclear weapons: "They could put an end to human life on our beloved planet if we were to have a full scale nuclear war. And make no mistake about it. The U.S. and Russia are playing Russian roulette in the Ukraine which could easily lead to nuclear war."

He challenged the double standard of our country:

According to our country's leaders it is OK for the U.S. to continue to possess and even improve our nuclear weapons, with the present plan to spend \$1 trillion over the next 30 years on nuclear weapons — much of it to be spent here at Lawrence Livermore Lab. At the same time we are threatening to bomb and attack other countries if they even think of developing nuclear weapons . . . That's why we are here — to say NO with our hearts, our voices, and our bodies to the crime of nuclear weapons.

David went on to speak about empire:

The U.S. treats much of the rest of the world as our empire. We have over 1,000 military bases in 130 countries around the world. We have what is in reality economic, political, cultural and military domination of countries all over the world. This is causing resentment and hostility and even violent resistance to U.S. domination.

As Martin Luther King said, our vision is of a world in which we can be a Beloved Community, but Pax Americana is the exact opposite. . . . Our government talks of peace while reigning down bombs on people in far away lands. This has to stop.

We the American people have a choice — we can fight one war after another to hold on to our privilege and power and control of the world's resources OR we can work with the world's people to make the transformation from empire to living at peace with the rest of the world as peaceful as possible, and build a world with a much more equitable sharing of resources.

David called upon us to recognize the racism that has permeated American society from the beginning when we took this land away from the native people who lived here. Racism has continued with slavery, segregation, and the way we still treat people of color — the New Jim Crow and mass incarceration of young black men by police who kill them with impunity. Martin Luther King and the Freedom movement in the 50's and 60's made great strides, but we still have a long way to go before we practice what we profess — that all people are created equal and there is justice for all.

David invoked the power of nonviolence, quoting Gandhi: "Nonviolence is the most powerful force in the world." He reminded us of the study by Erica Chenowitz and Maria Stephen recounted in *Why Civil Resistance Works*, which found that nonviolent movements were twice as successful and twice as likely to lead to democracy. He touched on some of the acts of nonviolent resistance described in his book, *Waging Peace: Global Adventures of a Lifelong Activist*. Among the many stories of peacemaking and nonviolent movements around the world he tells in his book is that of the founding and ongoing work of Tri-Valley CAREs. David also reminded us that we were in the season of taxes and that tax resistance was a choice to consider.

David called upon us to renew our commitment to

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building a world where all God's children can live a life free of nuclear weapons, empire, war, injustice and racism. He called on us to remember that: "We shall overcome. We do have the power to change history. We can continue to Speak Truth to Power, live by the values we believe in, build nonviolent movements to challenge nuclear weapons, war and injustice, and create the Beloved Community where we all live and in the whole world!"

Stations of the Cross focused on Black Lives Matter

This year our Stations of the Cross focused on Black Lives Matter, including figures which represented the pain and suffering of the African-American and Latino communities whose sons and daughters are in the crosshairs of police and vigilante "security" forces. New-



man Nonviolent Peacemaker Ben Smith constructed from PVC pipe and hooded sweatshirts figures representing Oscar Grant, Eric Garner, "Hands Up Don't Shoot", "Sleeping Dragon" protesters, and "Lady Justice." At each of the five stations we read the names of some of the people of color who have been killed.

After his Beyond Vietnam speech Dr. King was subjected to a lot of criticism from "mainstream" media for "diverging" from the message of civil rights to speak against the war. The *Washington Post* wrote that King had "diminished his usefulness to his cause, to his country, and to his people." James Lawson told me at the recent meeting of Elders that most people actually in the struggle supported King's taking on the issue of the Vietnam War. They saw the connections of which Dr. King spoke.



This history came to mind as we were reproached by a member of the Lab's security team for presenting a message with our Stations of the Cross figures which he felt diverged from our proper focus on nuclear weapons. The lab lieutenant wrote "this art and the message it represents takes away from the main point of the demonstration."

"We Who Believe in Freedom Cannot Rest"

At the gate Carla led us in dance, circling figures from the stations to the music of "Ella's Song" by Bernice Johnson Reagon as recorded by Sweet Honey in the Rock. As the dance concluded some stood or knelt at the Lab gate.

We who believe in freedom cannot rest
We who believe in freedom cannot rest until it comes
Until the killing of Black men, Black mothers' sons
Is as important as the killing of White men,
White mothers' sons

We who believe in freedom cannot rest
We who believe in freedom cannot rest until it comes.

Photos for this article by Justin Yasonia

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mourning in Korea. A delegation of North Korean women marched with us, and some 5,000 others, wearing colorful traditional dresses, cheered us on. After maybe a kilometer we were bussed to Kaesong, an ancient city close to the DMZ. The next morning, May 24th, International Women's Day for Peace and Disarmament, we marched with more North Korean women, cheered on by members of the Democratic Women's Union. This was a Sunday, so people were home and leaned out of their windows and balconies, smiling and waving, moving signs of spontaneous support.

At the DMZ we visited the building where the Armistice Agreement was signed, now a museum on the north side. We sang, read a joint Declaration -- written by women in North and South Korea and the international delegation -- and flashed peace signs to the South side.

We crossed the border near the Kaesong industrial park, as agreed by both governments, amid tearful goodbyes. We got out of the North Korean buses, went through immigration and customs, and boarded a South Korean bus. As we pulled away our hosts stood side by side across the road, waving. A telling and poignant moment: we could cross this border but they cannot.

A short drive brought us to the South Korean immigration station, where our bags were checked again, and a huge crowd of reporters lay in wait. Gloria Steinem, Leymah Gbowee and Mairead Maguire made strong statements about what we'd accomplished on this journey, which many people had said was impossible, and affirmed the importance of communication and dialogue in resolving the current dangerous standoff between the two states.

Our next stop was Paju where we joined 1,200 South Korean people who'd marched along the south side of the DMZ. We walked the last kilometer with them to a peace rally. Then on to Seoul, for a welcome reception by the South Korean organizing committee, which included local groups such as the Gyeonggi Women's Network, Korea Women's Political Solidarity, and Iftopia as well as several leading national organizations: Women Making Peace, YWCA of Korea, Korea Women's Association United, and the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan. The final event was the symposium at City Hall the following day, where mayor Park Won Soon welcomed us -- in contrast to the detractors protesting outside and telling us to Go To Hell.

Indeed, this initiative opened up thorny questions concerning the division of the country and people's deep desire for peace. We were urged by people on both sides to continue our bridge building, with several offering suggestions for "next time". There's a great deal to digest from this first step and a lot to learn to work more effectively in this highly polarized situation where, if you're not on one side, you're automatically assumed to be on the other. I trust we can move beyond the scripted conversations and gather more allies—in Korea, the United States, and around the world—who can imagine a new future for Korea and who will help to bring it into being.

For more information see: www.womencrossdmz.org

Gwyn Kirk is a member of Women for Genuine Security:
www.genuinesecurity.org

The Iran Nuclear Deal and Some Context

by Carolyn S. Scarr

For some years now the Iran nuclear deal being worked on by the international group referred to as the P5 + 1 has been under attack in U.S.

It is hard to understand why anyone would oppose a deal whereby a potentially nuclear power would agree to limit their enrichment of uranium to 20%, the level scientifically recognized as appropriate for civilian uses, such as power plants and medical treatments and not usable for nuclear weapons. What Iran would get in exchange would be the right to be treated as one nation among the world's nations, engaging in trade, travel and communication.

Iran has enemies in the Middle East, many of whom are our close allies -- Turkey, Saudi Arabia & Israel. Saudi Arabia is taking a very hostile approach, accusing Iran of having "regional ambitions of glory and influence dating back to the Persian Empire," as also alleged by Admiral James Stavridis (U.S. Navy, ret) in *Foreign Policy* magazine. Just to put things in context, Stanford history professor Joel Beinin, writes to me that Iran has not attacked any country in recent decades. The Iran/Iraq war (1980 - 1988) was initiated by Iraq (*Encyclopedia Britanica*). The U.S. supported Iraq in that war.

We are seeing a situation develop in which Saudi Arabia, with U.S. and Israeli support, is forming a regional alliance with Turkey, many of the other Sunni Gulf States, and some very nasty Sunni fundamentalists who are a significant force in the attempts to overthrow Assad in Syria in addition to their aspirations to acquire most or all of Iraq. Backed by Russia and perhaps China, Iran is allied with the legitimate non-sectarian government of Syria — however repressive; with Hezbollah, which began as an armed resistance movement opposing the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982; with Hamas, which was initially supported by Israel to weaken the non-sectarian PLO; and with the Houthis who have taken over Yemen, deposing, "the unpopular and widely discredited Yemeni president, now in protected exile in Saudi Arabia" (as per Phyllis Bennis). Iran's having regional allies is not the same thing as having imperial ambitions.

In some of these countries where the divisions are being fought out militarily, a negotiated settlement might be achieved if the arms embargo Bennis recommends were instituted and the bombing and drone strikes of the U.S. and its principal allies ended. It is also necessary to recognize the legitimacy of Iran's playing a role in these negotiations.

Getting back to the nuclear deal, the National Iranian American Council (NIAC) reminds us that to be successful in the negotiations between Iran and the P5+1 need to be on an equal basis. Part of this equality includes not changing the terms on which inspections will take place. President Obama said in an interview that "the process is that of managed access as provided by the Additional Protocol, with some additional configurations. There was never any hint of the completely unrealistic 'any time any where' concept. . . Secretaries John Kerry and Ernest Moniz stated in interviews that the access would be 'anytime, anywhere.'" (NIAC, 2 July, 2015)

Besides undermining Obama's efforts, this upping of the ante gives the warmongers in Congress tools for undermining the deal altogether.

Haiti — What's going on?

According to Pro Publica and NPR, donations made to the Red Cross for earthquake recovery in Haiti, amounting to half a billion dollars, built six homes. Some of the money also went for the construction of a luxury hotel and conference centre. As EPI has reported in recent issues of *Planted*, aid has also been diverted into the building of sweatshops, tourist sites, and other projects to benefit the ruling classes and their foreign (U.S. & other) allies. In the process Naomi Klein calls *Disaster Capitalism*, resources and land of Haiti that survived the earthquake and cholera epidemic are being stolen from small scale farmers and fisherfolk, so that the rich will profit. In fact, the recently passed Fast Track authority (H.R. 1295) included language to provide for the "extension of preferential duty treatment program for Haiti." Thus "duty-free" exports may be shipped to the U.S. from Haiti. This is likely to lead to an expansion of sweatshops.

Mass Deportations of Haitian-Dominicans by the Dominican Republic

A racist policy of ethnic cleansing in the Dominican Republic threatens 250,000 people with deportation to Haiti. Second and third generation Dominicans who are classified as Haitian have been stripped of citizenship and declared "migrants." Vigilante mobs and legal authorities alike are pushing people out of their homes and taking their property. Anyone who is Black and under the age of 85 may be classified as Haitian, even if they were born in the DR and have no ties to Haiti. They are being expelled from the country and made stateless. For good analysis and history see <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/06/opinion/the-dominican-republic-must-stop-expulsions-of-haitians.html>

What about elections?

Despite decades of attacks including a well-orchestrated disinformation campaign, the Fanmi Lavalas party is highly popular among the people. The party's presidential candidate is a long-term Fanmi Lavalas member and spokesperson for President Aristide throughout the years of the coup and exile, Dr. Maryse Narcisse, an epidemiologist. According to a number of people on the ground, if the elections are not stolen by the so-called international community and the UN-Minustha occupation forces, Dr. Narcisse is likely to be the first woman to be elected President of Haiti.

Parliamentary elections are scheduled for August 9th, 2015. Presidential and municipal elections are scheduled for October 25th with a run-off if necessary on December 27th. Honest election watchers must pay close attention to the logistics of elections — including locations of polling places and computerized registration and voting machines which are being used to exclude grassroots candidates and are also very useful for jiggering the vote.

Call to Action: Voice your outrage to the embassy of the Dominican Republic in Washington, DC 202-332-7670, 202-387-2459; email: consular@us.serep.gov.do

Call your Representatives & Senators: 1-866-338-1015
Call or email the Haiti Special Coordinator at the State Department, Thomas C Adams, to urge U.S. pressure to avert a humanitarian disaster in the Dominican Republic. PH: 202-647-9510 FX: 202-647-8900
e-mail: HaitiSpecialCoordinator@state.gov

Restorative Justice: In Disgrace with Fortune and Men's Eyes

by Silvia Brandon Pérez

Sonnet 29

When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
I all alone bewep my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,
Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising, . . .
W. Shakespeare

On Sunday I will have my first contact visit with my youngest son since his incarceration on December 5th. He was recently removed to a prison facility in Chino, California, about 6 six hours away. His case is on appeal, the stop and subsequent arrest unwarranted, the crime non-violent. He was in "Reception" at San Quentin for the past five and a half months, Reception being the first step in the state imprisonment system, supposedly lasting between one month and three, as it is a harsh time of almost solitary confinement, in which you are in your cell 23 hours a day, with 15 minutes every 3rd day for a cold shower, no television or radio, a maximum of two hours per month of visits to the law library, and no contact visits. Visits, in fact, had to be made by telephone, and the lines were only open on Wednesdays and Sundays between 8 and 10 a.m., but most of the time you would call and reach a busy signal, or it would ring and then disconnect. My last visit at San Quentin was on May 3rd, and I couldn't get another appointment until the 29th, but when I arrived I was told he had been moved.

The system is a very punishing one, designed to humiliate and denigrate not only the prisoner but his/her visitors and family, almost as if you were guilty because you had a friend or relative behind bars. I know this because I practiced criminal law as an attorney for close to thirty years, and the treatment of prisoners (and their families/friends) has not improved in that time or in the ten years since I retired, but rather worsened, as we are now imprisoning more and more people, in a continuing exercise of the Jim Crow system, as Michelle Alexander so well explains in her book, *The New Jim Crow*. My experience as an attorney was that Jim Crow practices never died and were alive and well as far north as New Jersey, where I lived and practiced. Even then we could see a terrible increase in inmate populations, and the disproportionate prosecution and sentencing of people of color, including, then and now, minors.

Years ago I watched the film *Fortune and Men's Eyes*, and it had a tremendous impact on me. It is based on a play by Canadian writer John Herbert about sexual slavery and violence in prison. It was difficult to cast and to produce, because it shows the seamy underside of the system. As someone who has made it her life's work to show and fight that seamy underside, whether it be about the cruelties of the immigration system (worldwide), the plight of refugees and of occupied peoples everywhere, including Palestine,

and the criminalization of poverty and homelessness, right here in the land of plenty, where the veterans and the hungry children, rather than the deer and the buffalo, roam, I can tell you that for me it is frequently a case of "kill the messenger" because people would rather NOT find out what is going on, so they can continue to do nothing about any of it. The play eventually led, by the way, to the creation of the Fortune Society, an advocacy and support organization for prisoners reentering society after incarceration.

I belong and contribute to such initiatives as The Innocence Project, which works to exonerate convicted prisoners through the use of DNA evidence. I have seen quite a few reversals of convictions, one of the most damning (as far as our society is concerned) being that in the Central Park jogger case, where prosecutors bullied kids into pleading guilty. I remember the furor at the time; I was a frequent visitor to Central Park, and the story of these five Latino and Black kids and their apparent brutal beating and rape of a white jogger was constantly in the news. Only years later when another prisoner admitted his own guilt and DNA tests proved without a doubt that these kids had not committed the crime, were they exonerated, but the years and years of imprisonment can never be returned to a prisoner. See <http://www.theguardian.com/commentis-free/2012/oct/05/central-park-five-rape-case>

I am also writing to prisoners whom my son has met, and who may have no one writing to them; two of them are in San Quentin. One of them is a penpal from a program founded by Sharon Martinas that I joined last month called The Human Rights Pen Pal Program. Most of the prisoners who have requested letters have participated in the hunger strikes and other human rights protest actions throughout the state. My penpal has been in solitary confinement for most of his life.

We are in the midst of a wave of police and official abuse of and slaying of people of color and of state violence.

In our monthly vigils in Oakland, we now read the names not only of those dead in Iraq or Afghanistan, but those who are victims of state violence in the U.S. -- one every 28 to 36 hours, day after day. www.epicalc.org



Living Graveyard, November 2006,
Berkeley Daily Planet

This, unfortunately, is not unprecedented. When I first went to interpret for torture survivors at Fort Benning, Georgia, I heard many tales of the sale of slaves in some of the historical sites in the area. Families were separated, lives were destroyed at the auction block, and many who are now respected because of their wealth and power made their start in this execrable business. Yet today our prison industry is an industry worldwide, with no downside. You get free labor, the prisoners pay (at excessive prices) for the privilege of being enslaved, and we throw away tens of thousands of lives every day. Who invests in these things, you ask?

At least 37 states have legalized the contracting of prison labor by private corporations that mount their operations inside state prisons. The list of such com-

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panies contains the cream of U.S. corporate society: IBM, Boeing, Motorola, Microsoft, AT&T, Wireless, Texas Instrument, Dell, Compaq, Honeywell, Hewlett-Packard, Nortel, Lucent Technologies, 3Com, Intel, Northern Telecom, TWA, Nordstrom's, Revlon, Macy's, Pierre Cardin, Target Stores, and many more. All of these businesses are excited about the economic boom generated by prison labor. Just between 1980 and 1994, profits went up from \$392 million to \$1.31 billion. Inmates in state penitentiaries generally receive the minimum wage for their work, but not all; in Colorado, they get about \$2 per hour, well under the minimum. And in privately-run prisons, they receive as little as 17 cents per hour for a maximum of six hours a day, the equivalent of \$20 per month. The highest-paying private prison is CCA in Tennessee, where prisoners receive 50 cents per hour for what they call "highly skilled positions." At those rates, it is no surprise that inmates find the pay in federal prisons to be very generous. There, they can earn \$1.25 an hour and work eight hours a day, and sometimes overtime. They can send home \$200-\$300 per month.

<http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-prison-industry-in-the-united-states-big-business-or-a-new-form-of-slavery/8289>

Eric Schlosser wrote well about the prison-industrial complex in the 1998 issue of the Atlantic Monthly:

The prison-industrial complex is not only a set of interest groups and institutions. It is also a state of mind. The lure of big money is corrupting the nation's criminal-justice system, replacing notions of public service with a drive for higher profits. The eagerness of elected officials to pass "tough-on-crime" legislation—combined with their unwillingness to disclose the true costs of these laws—has encouraged all sorts of financial improprieties. The inner workings of the prison-industrial complex can be observed in the state of New York, where the prison boom started, transforming the economy of an entire region; in Texas and Tennessee, where private prison companies have thrived; and in California, where the correctional trends of the past two decades have converged and reached extremes. In the realm of psychology a complex is an overreaction to some perceived threat. Eisenhower no doubt had that meaning in mind when, during his farewell address, he urged the nation to resist "a recurring temptation to feel that some spectacular and costly action could become the miraculous solution to all current difficulties." <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1998/12/the-prison-industrial-complex/304669/>

Of course, all of my work for prisoners did not prepare me for being the mother of an imprisoned man, a homosexual man who was brutally attacked while awaiting trial by another prisoner in what was clearly a homophobic crime. In disgrace with fortune and men's eyes, my son has joined the legions of the harshly punished, and I am just one more of the mothers protesting, with tears at the ready, a system of greed and cruelty that surely damns us all.



Cuba and Venezuela

by Silvia Brandon Pérez

I have a similar distrust about our government's intentions regarding both countries. Cuba, where I was born, has experienced a special relationship with the U.S. government and its "hand of friendship," which sometimes hid weapons or bribes.

Cuba's history is replete with misdeeds — from the gratuitous intervention in the war of independence against Spain by the sinking of the USS Maine, an action blamed on Spain, which led to the Platt Amendment, which took away Cuba's right to sovereignty, as the U.S. was able to come in whenever it was felt that Cuba was not being "democratic," (read: whenever Cuba was not being sympathetic enough to U.S. economic interests), compelling Cuba to grant the U.S. a base in Guantánamo, which the U.S. has used most recently to house and torture war prisoners. The U.S. provided support, economic and military, to every one of Cuba's dictators, trained an invasion (Bay of Pigs) against the government, forbidden by international law, and then installed a punishing embargo for more than fifty years, as well as placing Cuba on the list of terrorist nations.

José Martí, the father of our nation, during the war against Spain wrote a letter to his brother found in his pocket at his death, in which he warned that when we had gotten rid of the Spanish boot, we had to be careful with the monster to the north, referring to the U.S.. As he said, "*he vivido dentro del monstruo y le conozco las entrañas*" (I have lived inside the monster and I know its entrails).

I worry about the marvelous ecological environment, pristine waters and seas... How long will it be before Cuba becomes a carbon copy of the mall-ridden, Disney look-alike Caribbean countries?

In Venezuela, the same holds true. In April 2013, after Venezuela's presidential election, ours was the last government in the world to recognize the result. Yet their elections are more transparent than ours, as voters press computer touch-screens and receive printed receipts which are deposited in ballot boxes.

During most of Chávez' presidency, despite changes for the poorest of the poor, despite Venezuela's help of our own poor with cheap oil, despite the doctors and clinics set up with Cuba in countries with no health care, such as Haiti, the U.S. maintained undisguised hostility.

The so-called protests in Venezuela reminded me of Chile — the right wing campaign of *cacerolazos*, with orchestrated runs on basics in the economy by middle-class and wealthy women, who would buy out supplies and then meet with pots and pans to protest the "lack" of supplies. This happened in Venezuela after Chávez' death... right-wing militias killing people and burning up free health centers, to create chaos and force an armed response against the *chavistas*.

Secretary of State Kerry recently sent his "best wishes to the people of Venezuela as you celebrate 204 years of independence on July 5" and further said "I look forward to further cooperation between our people and governments." Very kind of Mr. Kerry. The U.S. has yet to convince me of its good intentions.

I pray for both Cuba and Venezuela. May we remain free.

“Water is for Fighting” some reflections

by Carolyn S. Scarr

Water has always been of great interest to me — I have a family connection. My father was a hydraulic engineer with the U.S. Geological Survey. Even on vacation trips, he would stop at every gauging station we saw, unlock the door, wind the clock that powered the recording drum, fill the ink well and initial the chart. I still have his old flowmeter on my mantle. My mother worked on the California League of Women Voters’ study project on California’s water system.

Los Angeles v Owens Valley

Many Californians don’t realize the extent to which we live in a desert. A quip attributed to Mark Twain, “Whiskey is for drinking — Water is for fighting,” well describes the history of water stealing by the powerful from the poor and weak within and outside of California. In the early 1900s the rich and powerful in Los Angeles managed to arrange the diversion of the river serving Owens Valley east of the Sierras to Los Angeles to irrigate LA farms and orchards and provide for the growing population in the city. In time the farmers in the fertile Owens Valley were left high and dry. Most accounts of that history leave out the fact that when European-descended people arrived in the valley, it was already populated by the Paiute people who farmed the land.

They irrigated crops along the Owens Valley, a highly arable and ecologically diverse region in the southern Sierra Nevada. . . . The tribe had both medicine men and women. Hereditary chiefs led the tribe’s communal activities. Irrigator was an elected tribal position.

Indian ricegrass and pine nuts were important crops. Hunting supplemented farming, and the tribe hunted rabbits, quail and deer, especially in the summer. The tribe fished for suckers, minnows, and pupfish, as well as brine shrimp. Caterpillar larvae was eaten after being baked and dried. Wild foods were gathered, such as acorns, cattails, and berries. (*Wikipedia*)

California v California

Within California we look at the conflict between big alfalfa growers and almond growers versus small farmers and householders. One factor in water distribution in California used to be the 160 Acre Rule which, under the Newlands Reclamation Act (1902) limited the size of a farm which could be supplied by cheap federally funded irrigation water. For decades, large, corporate farming enterprises, as well as the Bureau of Reclamation charged with enforcing the law, ignored this restriction. Finally, Congress repealed the law to allow the open supply of low cost government water to agribusiness. Nowadays big farmers sell cheap water that exceeds what they need to large Southern California Cities at a profit. The depletion of ground water is resulting in massive subsidance.

California v the rest

Other California water wars have related to who gets the water of the Colorado River. California v Arizona was fought out in the courts. The Mono Lake battle was based on Los Angeles’ purchase of the streams of that watershed (I don’t know from whom). In this case of environmentalists v. business interests environmentalists won.

Pyramid Lake

Control over Pyramid Lake in Nevada has in recent decades occasionally reached the level of “newsworthy” as the Pyramid Lake Paiutes contend with others interested in the water — and the land. The Truckee River Water Quality Settlement in 1996 was supposed to recognize the Pyramid Lake Paiute’s rights over the lake and its resources. However recent news seems to indicate that, after a legal battle with Fish Springs Ranch, LLC, a subsidiary of Vidler Water Company, the Paiutes may have agreed to relinquish their water rights in exchange for \$3.6 million and several hundred acres of land. Sept 29, 2014 <http://indianz.com/News/2014/015202.asp> Vidler Water Company, founded in 1997, got the support of Senator Harry Reid, in their efforts to import water from the Pyramid Lake watershed to developers in the Reno area. The headline says it all “Bill is final step in Reno water import project.” *Reno Gazette-Journal*, Dec. 13, 2013.

Grand Canyon and the Havasupai

The Sierra Club is working to stop the construction of a “huge resort development, which will almost exclusively benefit a private company, foreign-owned Gruppo Stilo USA.” From Sierra Club’s appeal, June, 13, 2015:

This development is considered by Grand Canyon National Park to be one of the gravest threats to the Park in its nearly 100-year history, because it threatens groundwater pumping that could reduce flows of seeps and springs that support wildlife and recreation on the Park’s South Rim.

In addition to negatively impacting Grand Canyon, Havasupai, and Hualapai springs, groundwater pumping accompanying the development could also lower the aquifer that is the exclusive source of all water for—and is the cultural foundation of—the Havasupai Tribe.

Detroit --

Christian Peacemakers write:

The city of Detroit is systematically denying thousands of people the human right to clean water and housing . . .

In 2014, more than 35,000 Detroit households — an estimated 96,000 individuals — lost water service due to nonpayment.

According to Michigan Welfare Rights Organization, between 17,000 and 18,000 Detroit households remain without water.

Last week alone [in May 2015], the Water and Sewage Department shut off water to nearly 1,000 delinquent accounts, despite the city council resolution calling for a moratorium on shutoffs.

Facilitated by the regionalization deal of Detroit’s bankruptcy settlement, appointed emergency manager Kevyn Orr has increasingly privatized public services, turning systems of operation and management over to profit-driven corporations and banks. The profiteering of this corporate takeover is not only drastically raising the cost of utilities — water and sewer bills have more than doubled in the last decade — but it is also forcing thousands of people into poverty.

This summer CPT will be working with people in Detroit to non-violently stop shutoffs, restore service and implement water affordability.

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Water, continued from page 7

Florida & nukes

Wetlands in Florida are threatened by the proposed construction of two nuclear power plants to be added to the Turkey Point Nuclear Generating Station near Miami. Ten million cubic feet of coastal wetland will be destroyed for these nuclear reactors. Once construction is done, the operation of the two reactors will demand more water than this area can afford to give. Nuclear power plants require a lot of water for cooling; the hot water does a lot of damage when it is dumped, often into nearby tidal areas.

Palestine

It is important to look abroad at water conflicts, which our country's policies may have a role in. My mother told me decades ago that Palestinians could not drill a water well on their own land. Permits for Palestinians are still not granted by the occupying Israeli government.

When Israel occupied the West Bank in 1967 the military took control of the water there. In 1982 West Bank waters were taken over by Israel's water company, Mekorot, and integrated into Israel's overall water network, supplying 25 to 40 percent of Israel's water. Israel uses 82 percent of the West Bank water for household use (lawns, laundry, and swimming pools) and for industry as well as for Israel's extensive industrial agriculture.

Vandana Shiva in *Water Wars* writes:

... Israel's very formation was based on ensuring access to water. "It is necessary that the water sources, upon which the future of the Land depends, should not be outside the borders of the future Jewish homeland," wrote Israel's former prime minister David Ben-Gurion in 1973. "For this reason we have always demanded that the Land of Israel include the southern banks of the Litani River, the headwaters of the Jordan, and the Hauran Region from the El Auja spring south of Damascus."

Recall that the Israelis did their level best to occupy Lebanon up to the Litani River, to be forced back by Hezbollah fighters. You can read more excerpts of *Water Wars* at http://www.thirdworldtraveler.com/Vandana_Shiva/Water_Wars_VShiva.html

Dams & more dams —

Egypt

The Aswan High Dam has been touted by some as a major success, providing for the irrigation of hundreds of thousands of new acres and generating enormous amounts of electricity. However 90 thousand people had to be relocated. Furthermore, "The Aswan High Dam has produced several negative side effects, however, chief of which is a gradual decrease in the fertility and hence the productivity of Egypt's riverside agricultural lands. This is because of the dam's complete control of the Nile's annual flooding. Much of the flood and its load of rich fertilizing silt is now impounded in reservoirs and canals; the silt is thus no longer deposited by the Nile's rising waters on farmlands. Egypt's annual application of about 1 million tons of artificial fertilizers is an inadequate substitute for the 40 million tons of silt formerly deposited annually by the Nile flood." *The British Online Encyclopedia*

The Mekong Delta "Progress" v local food production

Some 60 million people rely on fish caught in the Mekong River and on rice grown in its fertile delta. . . China

has built seven major dams in the past two decades and has 21 more under construction or planned. . . Eleven more are expected along the main stem in Laos and Cambodia. Those plans are pitting the region's need for electricity against its need for food and against the livelihoods of fishermen and farmers who depend on the river's free-flowing waters. See "Harnessing the Mekong or Killing It?" *National Geographic*, May 2015

Turkey v Iraq's Fertile Crescent

Turkey controls the headwaters of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, which since antiquity have supplied agriculture in what is present day Iraq. For nearly a decade, Turkey has been constructing the Ilisu Dam on the Tigris River, which will inundate the ancient town, Hasankeyf. Julia Harte describes in the *National Geographic* (Feb. 21, 2014): Neolithic cliff dwellings, 15th century minarets, the crumbling towers of the Artqid bridge. She writes, "Almost every major Mesopotamian civilization has occupied this 12,000-year-old settlement site on the banks of the Tigris River in southeastern Turkey, not far from the border with Syria. But today's reigning power, the Turkish Republic, has a unique plan for Hasankeyf — submerging the ancient town beneath 200 feet (60 meters) of water."

This is the impact upstream of the dam. Members of the Iraq Civil Society write of the loss of water already suffered downstream by Turkey's water projects. They refer to international laws and covenants mandating "equitable and reasonable utilization of water resources, prevention of significant harm, and prior notification of planned measures, none of which Turkey has complied with to date." Iraq Civil Society writes:

In the past, extensive ecological damage to the marshlands and the displacement of much of its indigenous population was identified by the United Nations Environment Programme as "one of the country's major environmental and humanitarian disasters". The marshlands' restoration will require adequate quantities of water, properly managed. Yet the Ilisu Dam threatens this process and will lead to further droughts that will cause habitat loss, wildlife decline and extinction, population migration, and community unemployment; all violating the rights of thousands of indigenous Marsh Arabs as expressed in the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People, Articles 8, 20 and 26. (letter 12/6/2012)

For more, visit <http://www.iraqicivilsociety.org/campaigns/save-the-tigris-and-iraqi-marshes-campaign>

The Money

Many of these large dams are financed by foreign capital. In 1999 when the Ilisu Dam was just getting underway it got major funding from the British government. ECA Watch reports that Export Credit Agencies financed the Atatuerk Dam, also in Turkey, the Bujagali Dam in Uganda and the Three Gorges Dam in China whose construction was watched with horror by environmentalists and human rights activists around the world. (<http://www.eca-watch.org/>)

Canada v First Nations

Canada plans a hydroelectric dam on Trout River at Big Falls which will impact members of the Lac Seul First Nation at nearby Red Lake who say they were not adequately consulted by the government. This dam may be related

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Water, continued from page 8

to a gold mine operated in the area by Goldcorp, the same company which is operating two controversial mines in Guatemala which are washing arsenic into rivers and lakes.

Pollution, destruction, privatization and misallocation

In the midst of water shortage, we have to remember pollution and misallocation of water resources. In California in the midst of drought we are looking at fracking, which in the pursuit of gas puts unidentified chemicals into the ground water. Surface water will also be contaminated.

Dan Jacobson, Environment California Legislative Director, says "High concentrations of heavy metals, chemical additives, even cancer causing compounds such as benzene have been found in wastewater produced by fracking...this toxic wastewater can be sent to sewage treatment plants that were never designed to treat all of the pollutants found in it. This would allow pollutants to directly enter our waterways putting at risk downstream rivers and streams including sources of drinking water for millions of Americans.... There is no safe way to dispose of this toxic waste."

Around the world Nestle is mining for water to put into plastic bottles for well off customers, most of whom have clean water coming out of their taps. Water is drying up the wells in Bhati Dilwan, Pakistan. Nestle's two plants on the Colorado River Basin, one in Salida, Colorado and one in the San Geronio Pass in California near Indio draw a total of 50 million to 510 million gallons of water per year. Nestle is not the only company selling bottled water. There is no reason to believe the others are any better.

Private water companies, both in the United States and abroad, are attempting to take over water systems built and managed by public agencies. Pressured by the World Bank, in 1999 Bolivia privatized the water service for the city of Cochabamba and signed a contract with a subsidiary of Bechtel. The rates rose to close to one fifth the wage of a worker and widespread protests were held. After some time, including a 2002 demonstration at its San Francisco headquarters, Bechtel agreed to leave without trying to enforce its contract or get any more money out of the community. Similar stories abound worldwide.

We don't plan how water could be allocated to the growing of crops with optimum food value and manageable water usage. In Oregon the battle is between potato growers and salmon fishermen. In Clear Lake the expansion of vineyards threaten walnut and pear orchards. Nuts and pears are actually food; wine is not, if I may say so. Yet vineyards are expanding all over California, using heaps of water. We may need to change our eating habits. Texas State University Professor James McWilliams says beef requires roughly four million gallons per ton produced; vegetables use 85,000 gallons per ton; starchy roots it's about 102,200 gallons per ton. *NYTimes* March 7, 2014

Maybe someone is doing it right?

The regional government in the Kurdish region of Iraq is working to improve water management and clean water supply. They are beginning with a hydrological study of the Kurdistan Region, both quality and quantity of natural water sources. From that data they will develop a water resources management plan. They have had experience in the Great Zab river watershed. They will develop a Region-wide sewerage plan and invest in a treatment system.

Here's hoping that the "Islamic" State fighting will not get in the way of this work.

In the U.S. Struggles for Palestinian Rights

by Vivian Zeleya

The First Amendment and Anti-Semitism

Would distribution of Amnesty International reports on a University of California campus be anti-Semitic? What about a United Nations condemnation of violations of international law, which obstruct Palestinian access to water? Could a Human Rights Watch condemnation of different legal systems, based on race and ethnicity, be anti-Semitic? Sharing this information on campus might soon be "anti-Semitic" if the UC Regents adopt and implement a State Department redefinition of anti-Semitism conflating criticism of the State of Israel with anti-Semitism. Besides violating First Amendment Rights of free speech, such an action fails to distinguish between Israel and Jewish people. Because many Jews, neither identify with the State of Israel, nor endorse its policies, many regard this conflation of Judaism or Jewishness with Israel to be, itself, anti-Semitic, much as many Catholics would regard the conflation of their faith with Franco's Spain to be anti-Catholic. Students for Justice in Palestine, and others, have recognized that there is very heavy pressure on the UC Board of Regents and President Napolitano to stifle First Amendment Rights and academic freedom by redefining anti-Semitism for UC campuses. Will we witness another Free Speech Struggle at UC Berkeley?

BDS and Kairos Palestine

We rejoiced when we heard them say on June 30th 2015: The United Church of Christ votes for divestment, boycott of companies that profit from the occupation of Palestinian Territories. We rejoiced when we heard them say that support for the resolution was 80%, 508 votes out of 632 cast. We rejoiced when we heard Rev. Richard Edens say, "We are calling and urging all UCC-related entities to stop bringing wood to the fire of this conflict of human rights." The UCC, the largest Protestant denomination in the U.S., joined the Presbyterian Church (USA), the United Methodist Church, and various Quaker bodies in the nonviolent effort to assist the Palestinian people in their liberation struggle.

Kairos Palestine 2009, a moment of truth: a word of faith, hope and love from the heart of Palestinian suffering, endorses BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions), the call of Palestinian civil society for nonviolent support from people of conscience worldwide. What a blessing for us!

What a blessing for people of conscience worldwide seeking a nonviolent way to bring about justice, peace, and human rights for the occupied, imprisoned, oppressed, and besieged people of Palestine. The *Kairos Palestine* document, written by Palestinian Christian theologians and endorsed by the heads of all the major Christian Churches of the Holy Land, states in Article 7, "we call for a response to what the civil and religious institutions have purposed as mentioned earlier: the beginning of a system of economic sanctions and boycott to be applied against Israel. We repeat once again that this is not revenge but rather a serious action that will put an end to Israeli occupation of Palestinian and other Arab territories and will guarantee security and peace for all."

Woe to the arms profiteers if this idea catches on!

Environmental Racism/ Environmental Justice

by Nancy Taylor

How timely that I should be writing an article on Environmental Justice, and so was Pope Francis! His encyclical called "On Care of our Common Home" is a sweeping and detailed commentary on The State of the Planet, in terms of its degradation, in terms of humanity's selfish and neglectful attitude toward Planet Earth, and in terms of the toll this all takes on the poorest of the world. Planet Earth is over-used and under-protected. This article will just touch on some of the areas of concern for the environment that we are more directly faced with. This is what Environmental Justice is about: looking at the problems with the environment and the added toll these problems take on the poor – usually communities of color.

Several thoughts/asides before we go further:

1. In my personal opinion, one of the root causes, maybe the main root cause, of this over-use is the continued explosion in the Earth's population. The population of Earth has swelled from 1 billion to over 7 billion in just two hundred years. The United Nations estimates that it may rise to 16 billion by the end of this century (if we last that long!). It is not popular to discuss the matter of over-population these days. In the late 1960s the zero population growth movement (ZPG) became prominent in the Western world, with strong links to environmentalism and feminism. The ZPG activists believed "that a constantly increasing population is responsible for many of our problems: pollution, violence, loss of values and of individual privacy." A founding father of the movement was Paul Erlich, author of *The Population Bomb*. Ehrlich stated: "The mother of the year should be a sterilized woman with two adopted children." This is NOT where Pope Francis has tread in his encyclical. This is a very difficult subject to deal with for many reasons: how do we decide who has how many children? How is this enforced? But being against birth control, in my opinion, is totally counterproductive to the care of the environment. We will look at how our beloved planet Earth is being under-protected, and in fact, being exploited, to the point of possible extinction of our race, by the greedy wealthy. I believe one thing is certain, however: the Earth will live on and regenerate itself.

2. If the Earth gets to the point where it can no longer sustain all of human life – and that would be/is a slow process - very likely the wealthy will find ways to get the resources needed to sustain themselves: those that can pay will live. The remaining gene pool will be made up of those with the strongest abilities in competing. But what if you're not good at competing, but you have other gifts: the gifts of or appreciation for music, art, beauty, nature, animals, people, children, fellowship, laughter, dancing – gifts of the spirit? Will those be left out of the gene pool?

3. Areas Of Concern and What Can We Do?

Water. Water is considered a fundamental human right, but many communities of color lack safe, clean drinking water, swim near waste-contaminated beaches and live near polluted flood waters. Poor water quality is also attributed to higher rates of complications related to kidney failure and diabetes among blacks.

Until recently, there had always been the sense that, "well, at least water and air are free!" It always did cost to take it out of the ground, but somehow it got taken up for everyone. You didn't have to pay to get a drink out of a lawn hose, or a public drinking fountain (generally speaking). Is this still the case? Water is becoming scarce and those with the money are buying up water rights for self-serving purposes. Pope Francis' *Laudato Si* says that resources for all are threatened: "30. Even as the quality of available water is constantly diminishing, in some places there is a growing tendency, despite its scarcity, to privatize this resource, turning it into a commodity subject to the laws of the market. Yet access to safe drinkable water is a basic and universal human right, since it is essential to human survival and, as such, is a condition for the exercise of other human rights. Our world has a grave social debt towards the poor who lack access to drinking water, because they are denied the right to a life consistent with their inalienable dignity. This debt can be paid partly by an increase in funding to provide clean water and sanitary services among the poor. But water continues to be wasted, not only in the developed world but also in developing countries which possess it in abundance. This shows that the problem of water is partly an educational and cultural issue, since there is little awareness of the seriousness of such behavior within a context of great inequality."

Climate Change. Most of the wealthy and powerful deny the realities of climate change – either because their minds won't let them think about the fact of it and pursue interests that are contrary to the solution at the same time, or because they just want to distract the rest of us from this reality. It's easy for most of us that are reading this to be distracted from the reality of global warming, because we are among the fortunate whose survival doesn't hinge on the fact. We aren't among those who lost everything during Hurricane Katrina (mostly poor people). We aren't among those whose livelihood depends on farming in areas that can no longer water their crops. We aren't among those who can no longer catch enough fish to feed their families. We aren't among those who lost everything during Hurricane Katrina (mostly poor people). We aren't among those, all over the world, whose livelihoods depend on farming in areas without enough water for their crops. We aren't among those, all over the world, who can no longer catch enough fish to feed their families. These who suffer from the various effects of climate change are the world's poor, mostly Black and Brown people.

Per *Laudato Si*: "25. Climate change is a global problem with grave implications: environmental, social, economic, political, and for the distribution of goods. It represents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day. Its worst impact will probably be felt by developing countries in coming decades. Many of the poor live in areas particularly affected by phenomena related to warming, and their means of subsistence are largely dependent on natural reserves and ecosystemic services such as agriculture, fishing and forestry. They have no other financial activities or resources which can enable them to adapt to climate change or to face natural disasters, and their access to social services and protection is very limited. For example, changes in climate, to which animals and plants cannot adapt, lead them to migrate; this in turn affects the

continued on page 11

livelihood of the poor, who are then forced to leave their homes, with great uncertainty for their future and that of their children. There has been a tragic rise in the number of migrants seeking to flee from the growing poverty caused by environmental degradation. They are not recognized by international conventions as refugees; they bear the loss of the lives they have left behind, without enjoying any legal protection whatsoever. Sadly, there is widespread indifference to such suffering, which is even now taking place throughout our world. Our lack of response to these tragedies involving our brothers and sisters points to the loss of that sense of responsibility for our fellow men and women upon which all civil society is founded.”

Air Pollution. Poor communities are more likely to live near to polluting industries, because they are less expensive. They bear the brunt of the harmful health effects associated with pollution, and they are less likely to have access to health care to treat these effects. These poor communities are likely a majority of Black and Brown people. Farmworkers have historically been subjected to pesticides and the subsequent health consequences. These are mostly Brown people. Who is it that lives along the freeways and major highways? Generally, people whose property values are lower than the ones up in the hills, away from the pollution. Do I think about what’s along the freeways and who’s breathing in the pollution that my car is putting out as I’m out driving? Do I think about the chain reaction of events that produced the gasoline that I pump into my gas tank? My husband and I are among the lucky ones who could afford to get electric cars. But we haven’t.

Materialistic Consumerism. We live in a society that is driven by consumerism. We have our cars, we have to have the right outfit for the “special occasion.” It’s hard to imagine how much we could really scale back our lifestyle if we really wanted to/needed to. Sometimes I think I’ve got it under control, and then I come up with all these good reasons why I should remodel my porch, or get a new flat screen TV, which then means I need an entertainment center that it will sit on. And what do I do with the old stuff? I justify what I’m doing as being good for the economy and/or in other ways. Maybe it can all be justified. But there’s still a price that Earth pays for what I’ve just done. And every time I get into my car. How often do we connect the dots? What about the habits of shopping as a form of entertainment? “When the going gets tough, the tough go shopping.” This culture of consumerism is more a part of some of our lives than we’d like to admit. What have we taught our children? And what are we teaching our grandchildren?

Industrial Sites And Illegal Waste Dumping. Many communities of color live near power plants, oil refineries or waste management facilities. Industrial waste that is not disposed of appropriately (or legally) can get into the water system and land used for housing and agriculture. As a matter of fact, according to the report “Air of Injustice: African Americans and Power Plant Pollution”, 68 percent of blacks live within 30 miles of a coal-fired power plant, as compared to 56 percent of whites — the distance within which the maximum effects of the smokestack plume are expected to occur. Industrial waste that is not disposed of appropriately (or legally) can get into the water system and land used for housing and agriculture. Improper waste

dumping creates a host of health problems, ranging from asthma to lung cancer.

Food Deserts. Communities of color are more likely to live in “food deserts” — areas where communities lack access to supermarkets and other sources of affordable, nutritious foods necessary for maintaining a healthy diet. Food deserts play a major role in poor health and environmental degradation. According to a report by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) released in 2009, 2.3 million Americans live more than one mile from a supermarket and do not have access to a vehicle. The report also notes that minorities and lower-income communities are often affected, as “urban core areas with limited food access are characterized by higher levels of racial segregation and greater income inequality.” It is not uncommon to go into these communities and the only food outlets found are fast food restaurants and convenience stores stocked with products that are highly processed and genetically modified – both characteristics that contribute to poor health and environmental degradation. Food deserts have been a major contributor to obesity and other related health problems in these communities. Activists across the country have attempted to address access to healthy food with increasing farmers’ markets and community gardening. See <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/AP/AP036/#2009-6-25>

Urban Green Space. As urban areas are developed, less green space becomes available, especially for the communities of color that live there. Although there have been recent challenges to land use, increasing open spaces in these communities can be beneficial in many ways, including providing more recreational opportunities, improving air and water quality, developing community gardens and creating great scenic views for nature buffs. Research has shown that children who have more access to green space had lower rates of obesity than children whose activities were limited to streets and sidewalks.

In closing, a section of *Laudato Si*:

iii. The Crisis And Effects Of Modern Anthropocentrism
115. Modern anthropocentrism has paradoxically ended up prizing technical thought over reality, since “the technological mind sees nature as an insensate order, as a cold body of facts, as a mere ‘given’, as an object of utility, as raw material to be hammered into useful shape; it views the cosmos similarly as a mere ‘space’ into which objects can be thrown with complete indifference”. [92] The intrinsic dignity of the world is thus compromised. When human beings fail to find their true place in this world, they misunderstand themselves and end up acting against themselves: “Not only has God given the earth to man, who must use it with respect for the original good purpose for which it was given, but, man too is God’s gift to man. He must therefore respect the natural and moral structure with which he has been endowed”. [93]

What can we do?? This is what we must be reflecting on constantly, as we become more knowledgeable and more aware.

I would recommend reading, or at least skimming, Pope Francis’ Encyclical *Laudato Si* in its entirety. The link is attached here:

http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html
(On the Care of our Common Home)

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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.
- If you want email notification of events, send us your address. Write to epicalc@gmail.com.

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

Saturday, July 25th 3-5 p.m. Join Haiti Action Committee, East Side Arts Alliance, 2277 International Blvd., Oakland, to remember the **100th Anniversary of the 1915-1934 U.S. Marines Occupation of Haiti** and learn what's really happening in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Haiti Action activists will report back from Haiti.

Thursday, August 6, 8:00 a.m. Livermore Nuclear Weapons Laboratory. **70 Years of the Bomb: At What Cost?** Details at <https://www.facebook.com/AugustAction>

Saturday, October 17, 10:30 - 1:00 Raise the United Nations flag, Jack London Square.

Sunday, October 25, 5:00 United Nations Association dinner, International House, Berkeley

Sunday, October 25, East Bay Sanctuary Covenant dinner, St. John's Presbyterian Church, Berkeley

EPI Fall Gathering, being planned, subject and location to be announced.

Inside:

1. Report on Good Friday Witness at Livermore Lab
1. Women Walk for Peace & Reunification, Korea
4. Iran
4. Haiti
5. Restorative Justice
6. Cuba & Venezuela
7. Water, some reflections
9. Struggle for Palestinian Rights
10. Environmental Racism/Environmental Justice

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.

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.