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VETERANS FOR PEACE NEWS

MINNEAPOLIS/ST. PAUL VETERANS FOR PEACE, CHAPTER 27

Veterans For Peace News is published quarterly by Mpls./St. Paul Veterans For Peace, Chapter 27.

Veterans For Peace works to increase awareness of the costs of war, restrain our government from intervening in the internal affairs of other nations, end the arms race, reduce and eventually eliminate nuclear weapons, seek justice for veterans and victims of war, and abolish war as an instrument of national policy.

We pledge to use democratic and non-violent means to achieve our purpose.

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"There won't be any trumpets blowing come the Judgement Day — on the bloody morning after, one tin soldier rides away..."

(Potter & Lambert)

Check the Rearview Mirror Before Looking at Gaza

(The ungovernable mess in Israel didn't begin on Oct 7, 2023)

by David Cooley

What can an old white guy with lingering farmboy sensibilities from the Midwest possibly have to say about Israel?

Much has been said and written about the ongoing tragedies in Israel since October 7, 2023, by people with at least some skin in the game. A human catastrophe is obviously what is happening and I could start with that, but jumping into those details without context ultimately leads to misunderstanding. There are numerous sources that can give you a blow-by-blow account of the suffering and heartbreak in Gaza. For this and much more try the two links below from Palestinian author, scientist and founder/director of the Palestine Museum of Natural History Professor Mazin Qumsiyeh, who lives in occupied Palestine: <http://qumsiyeh.org> and <http://palestinature.org>

The current conflict has roots that go back to the creation of the modern State of Israel during 1947–48 and beyond. Not to take you too far into the weeds, because there is much to study about Jewish history, but Israel was first mentioned in about 1590 BCE. Suffice to say the Jewish diaspora had its start around the time of 720 BCE. Since then, Jewish people have been persecuted or accepted, flourished and declined during different historical periods in numerous countries or empires with Christian and/or Muslim traditions.

It was during the 19th century that Zionism as an idea for organized nationalism took hold due to European/Jewish conversations going on between 1870 and 1880 about establishing a political state in the Ottoman-Syria region of Palestine. With the fall of the Ottoman Empire, Britain took control of



Palestine after WWI only to find that Zionist nationalism coupled with Palestinian anger was more than it could handle. So it proposed through the League of Nations, a “limited” home for Jews in Palestine with the signing of the Balfour Declaration in 1917. Before this mandate, Jews made up around six percent of the total population in Palestine.

With the Arab unrest and riots of 1936–1939 over Jewish immigration and Jews agitating toward statehood, Britain considered backtracking on the Balfour proposal in favor of a single state with a Jewish minority. WWII delayed the action and the Holocaust boosted sympathy for a Jewish state. However, the Jewish Resistance Movement in Palestine began attacking Arab and British forces in 1945 which was accompanied by a massive illegal migration of Jews to Palestine. This led Britain to leave it up to the United Nations (UN) to determine the fate of Palestine after Europeans failed to provide a safe environment for Jews.

The State of Israel was proclaimed on May 14, 1948, by David Ben-Gurion, the head of the Jewish Agency, and things got rough quick. The First Arab-Israeli War between 1948 and 1949 resulted in the forced

Rearview Mirror, cont'd on page 5

Prez Says . . .

By Dave Logsdon
dlvfp27@gmail.com

“If my thought-dreams could be seen, they’d probably put my head in a guillotine.” — Bob Dylan

This has been quite an interesting year for our ragtag veterans group largely because world events have challenged the very tenets of Veterans For Peace (VFP) locally and nationally. We’ve been split apart to some extent by our stand against sending weaponry to Ukraine. We are an anti-war group after all, and although there are a cadre of Democratic Party loyalists among us who have stepped away from VFP because of our stance, we remain committed to calls for a ceasefire in both Ukraine and Gaza.

I am very fortunate to have the support of a talented group of fellow travelers. This newsletter itself marks a strong shift towards an activist direction that our new editor Craig Wood has emphasized, and we remain grateful for the expertise and dedication of former editor Frank Fuller and co-coordinator Steve McKeown. We probably wouldn’t have had a newsletter if it wasn’t for them. If you wish to join us in this struggle, just go to our website (www.vfpchapter27.org) and for information how to join, go to veteransforpeace.org. You can also join as a non-veteran associate member.

“I am not in control of my muse, my muse does all the work.” — Ray Bradbury

Apart from some angst-filled moments this year, there were some nice times. A lot of us were able to greet the Golden Rule, VFP’s anti-nuke sailboat, in Milwaukee at the completion of the “Great Loop” down the Mississippi, to the Gulf, to Cuba, up the coast and back down to Milwaukee. Our chapter played a big role in getting the boat here and were acknowledged by the Golden Rule organizers as such. I am very proud of all our team that contributed to making this an historic voyage.

We hosted, along with Women Against Military Madness (WAMM,) a visit by Code Pink co-founder and author/activist Medea Benjamin which was well-received for the most part, despite our newsletter editor ending up in the ER after he was attacked from behind. We also set up a table and distributed information at the Pink Floyd concert and Jimmy Dore seminar, participated in all the “Open Streets” community events in Minneapolis, took the VFP “Peace Bus” up to Camp Ripley for an antiwar action and down to Mankato for our annual Indigenous People’s Day ceremony. And, we stood in solidarity with totem-bearing tribes on their journey to Washington, D.C. to ask for the pardon of Leonard Peltier.

I am humbled to be the point guard on this group who have leveraged our veteran status that belies our numbers. And a shout out to our partners in the peace and justice community; WAMM and the uber-organizers at the Anti-War Committee.

Thank You for your Service?

Most veterans have gotten this well-intentioned expression of gratitude. It can be an uncomfortable experience for veterans who are still conflicted about their supposed “service.” During the American war in Vietnam, I was part of the gun mount crew on a destroyer when we dumped a lot of ordinance on a country that never attacked us. Serving a war machine did not feel like service to me. Everybody who served is a hero? Granted there were heroic actions in combat, but there are heroes in our everyday life.

Instead of thanking veterans for our service, thank nurses, doctors, teachers, firefighters and work-a-day folks everywhere for their lifetime of service. These are my heroes!

“I have no country: my country is the earth and I am a citizen of the world.” —Eugene Debs

The world is in a precarious time in human history. Alone we can do little, but together we can make a difference. What choice do we have, but to fight for justice and raise our voices against oppression. Free Leonard Peltier, Free Julian Assange, Free Alexandra Skochilenko and FREE GAZA!

“We’ve come a long way, we’re changing day by day, but tell me, where do the children play?”
—Yusef Islam/Cat Stevens

Watching the epic human disaster play out in Gaza is hard to bear, especially since our own government is complicit in this genocide. How can the U.S. sanction Cuba and Iran as state sponsors of terrorism while it continues to send military aid to Israel that has rightfully been labeled an apartheid state by Amnesty International and numerous other human rights groups? The U.S. once said that South Africa was an apartheid state — they should say the same thing now about Israel.

Tanks, But No Thanks

by Roger Cuthbertson and Jo Schubert

This is the story about how Roger Cuthbertson and Jo Schubert made a flower-shooting U.S.-style Abrams tank replica and used it during a peace vigil at Camp Ripley near Little Falls, Minnesota last fall. The action happened September 17, when this National Guard base was having its semiannual open house to greet the public and show off its military gear.

The idea for the tank came out of an End Military Madness Against the Earth (ENMAE) committee meeting in early March 2023. A year earlier, the conflict took a new turn after Russia's military forces invaded Ukraine. There had already been eight years of fighting in eastern Ukraine between Ukrainian government forces and Russia-backed separatists as a precursor to the invasion.

Now, President Biden has promised to provide Ukraine with 31 M1 Abrams tanks and EMMAE saw this as a dangerous move by the U.S. to escalate a conflict that at an earlier stage was amenable to negotiations. The peace and justice community at this time was also focused on the U.S. government's commitment to send billions of more dollars in military aid to Ukraine, thus escalating the Ukraine-Russia conflict and causing the deaths of thousands of citizens and soldiers while shattering the lives of thousands more.

This prompted EMMAE to think about an action for Earth Day on April 22, that would show the military's irresponsibility with environmental degradation and came up with an idea for making a tank. We started gathering details about building it and learned that the actual dimensions of an Abrams tank were 8' high, 12' across and 29' long and found a blueprint online. Others thought it would be too difficult so we put the question to our artist friend and VFP member Bruce Barry.

His first thoughts, along with a sketch, were very helpful so we started talking about the practicality of his design while debating what type of material the tank could be made from. We rejected plastic sheets because we are an environmental group and considered having smaller tanks made from cardboard. We also spent so much time thinking about the tank design, we didn't have one ready for Earth Day although we did make several signs with the help of designer Bob Miller that pictured a tank along with an anti-war message. We decided to use the model from a video Bruce sent us of a VFP Gaza Freedom Flotilla replica that showed older-type peace activists walking inside a boat structure made from fabric in the shape of a boat. They were holding up the sides of the boat and singing "Down By the Riverside."

Soon, Jo was sewing together bed sheets we got at a thrift store for tank treads and Roger was opening up cans of house paint stored in the basement. Bruce was helpful



Jo Schubert of Veterans For Peace and Women Against Military Madness seen holding the left side of the tank. Photo by Roger Cuthbertson

again with his tips on shading and perspective. After completing the painting of the front of the tank, castors were added for movement along with hand-holders to help carry it along with 8' poles to give the tank more support. The tank barrel was constructed out of two 3'x4" mailing tubes, duct tape and a coffee can lid was used to reinforce the barrel opening. Ropes, tent stakes and clips were later attached to stabilize it after trial runs near the Como Lake Pavilion and at the weekly WAMM Line 3 Blues Vigils in front of the Governor's Mansion in St. Paul.

On the day of the vigil, we packed our homemade 8'x12'x29' tank into our Toyota Prius, and drove 110 miles to Camp Ripley. A couple dozen other members of VFP and WAMM from the Twin Cities made the trip too. We were met by the main vigil organizer Doug Olson of the Brainerd Area Coalition for Peace along with other sponsors including members of the Brainerd Lakes Area Democratic Socialists of America, Northfield People for Peace and Goodwill, Minnesota BDS Community, and the Democratic Socialist Caucus.

Outside the main gate, we planned to chant, **"Tanks No Thanks! No to drone warfare and Camp Ripley's million dollar drone pilot training program, no to police militarization, no to military madness and yes to a ceasefire and negotiated peace for the Ukraine war."** And we did.

For the first two hours our tank stayed stationary and blew out some flowers while activists reached out to connect with visitors. About 12:45, we attempted to drive through the main gate and into the base with our tank that was powered by twenty-one walking activists holding up the fabric tank sides and shooting flowers out of the barrel with the help of a battery-operated leaf blower.

We were stopped by authorities just inside the base who insisted that we turn our tank around. We argued though that since this was an open house day where the public was welcome, we should be welcomed too. They

Tanks, cont'd on page 4

Health Care for Veterans Is Being Threatened

by Arlys Herem and Jeff Roy

92% of veterans who use the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) for health care want to keep receiving it there, but the VHA cannot provide the high-quality, veteran-centric health care it currently does if it is not properly staffed.

Understaffing has long been a problem at the VHA and now it is getting worse because of two programs: The Human Resource Modernization Program (HRM) is a Trump-initiated program that centralizes human resource functions at the regional level. Local leadership no longer hires staff and this is triggering alarms that question the effects of this program. Also, 92% of the Chiefs of Staff Advisory Council have reported that they are losing staff to competitors because offers to candidates take so long to be made.

The proposed “Integrated Critical Staffing Program” (ICSP) further undermines VHA staffing. Recently, the VHA announced plans to spend 23 billion dollars over 10 years to hire contract workers for numerous clinical and non-clinical positions. Temporary staff are not trained in veteran issues, lack institutional loyalty, are not subject to VHA personnel and disciplinary procedures and are often paid much more than VHA staff, which is demoralizing to those who don’t make as much.

Save Our VA (SOVA) activists raised these issues with 30 members of Congress in Washington, DC in October, but remain concerned that changes will not be made. Understaffing results in decreased services and more referrals to the private sector. This is one of the ways Congress is moving veterans to private sector health care and will

eventually turn the VHA into an insurance company that funnels tax dollars to corporate medicine.

Advocates of healthcare for all are also battling the funneling of tax dollars to private sector profits through Medicare Advantage plans. Currently the VHA is the only holistic, integrated healthcare system in the US. It serves as a model for what health care could be if universal healthcare were enacted.

The VHA provides veteran-centric care to meet the special needs of veterans. Beyond that, it trains large numbers of health staff, does research that benefits all Americans and provides backup to the private sector in times of crisis such as the COVID pandemic. SOVA needs your help to keep this resource available to veterans and to all Americans. To learn more and to sign up for regular updates that offer you the chance to send a pre-written letter to your members of Congress, go to our website at [Save Our VA | Veterans](http://SaveOurVA.org).

Arlys Herem was in the Army Nurse Corps 1970-1975, including a tour in Vietnam. She founded a local NGO in Cambodia doing home care in villages for 20 years before retiring to Minneapolis in 2018. She has been a SOVA Steering Committee member since 2020.

Jeff Roy is a retired teacher, social worker and longtime community organizer living in Minneapolis. He entered Vietnam as a Marine radio operator in Oct 1968 and served in the 3rd Marine Division in Quang Tri Province and later on the border of Laos until Oct 1969. While in Vietnam, he turned against the American War in Vietnam and organized other Marines to oppose this war once he was stateside — and for that, he was kicked out of the service.

Tanks, from page 3

wouldn’t have it and told us that we were blocking traffic and would have to leave. This seemed kind of silly since we were moving along pretty well before they blocked us so we told them that we weren’t blocking traffic.

Then we tried to point out ways that our tank was superior to their M1 Abrams tanks and offered to show them what a superior tank was like. We pointed out that our flower-shooting tank does not hurt people, whereas their tanks shoot uranium-cored munitions which not only kills people, but poisons the landscape almost forever. Plus, our tank was better than theirs because it shoots flowers that do not hurt anyone, does not require vast amounts of fossil fuel and does not destroy lives, homes, buildings or the environment. In effect, our tank promotes peace and gentleness — not hatred and harm.

We also talked out how much money could be saved by running tanks like ours by further pointing out that

their tanks cost about \$9 million each and get .6 mpg, yet ours do fine with foot power and food for the crew. We wanted to talk to them about other advantages such as the fact that their tanks weigh 64 tons each and have a crushing effect on the environment, whereas our tank only weighs about 75 pounds, but they insisted we leave. So, we shot flowers at them a couple more times from the card-board cannon and retreated. We did raise some awareness though with the military personnel and visiting civilians.

For now, our Abrams tank is stored in the garage and plastic bags full of dried flowers donated by many supportive, peace-loving friends are in the spare room. We hope the flower-shooting, life-size-tank will return in spring.

Roger and Jo are retired teachers, longtime antiwar activists and identify as Chickpea and Garbonzo in the local music group The String Beans. Both are members of Veterans For Peace chapter 27.

Rearview Mirror, from page 1

expulsion of nearly 750,000 Palestinians in a catastrophic attack that's now referred to as the Nakba. After this ethnic cleansing operation, Israel had taken control of 78% of Palestine's land.

The U.S. being the predominant power emerging from WWII soon saw the importance of having an ally like Israel in the Middle East to control the flow of oil, the Suez Canal and other countries in the region. Their relationship grew so close over the years, that the U.S. government still ignores the Palestinian land and resources Israelis illegally usurp during their military actions. It is worth noting that the U.S. was the first country to acknowledge Israel and planted a big secret military base there long ago.

Since 1948, Israel has been involved in sixteen wars. The Six-Day War in 1967 may be the most important and well-researched due to the ongoing illegal and growing military occupation in the West Bank by Jewish settlers from around the world. Current estimates on the number of settlers vary between 500,000 and 700,000. Indigenous Palestinians remaining on this land continue to be terrorized by settlers throughout occupied Palestine and often live next to prison-like walls that protect Jewish settlements. These Palestinians are still required to go through humiliating checkpoints and forced to drive on segregated roads. According to Adalah, the Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, there are at least 65 laws in Israel and the Occupied Territories that discriminate against Palestinian citizens. In 2006, former President Jimmy Carter wrote the book, *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*, claiming Israel is an apartheid state.

And this brings us to Gaza where living conditions are insufferable in this war-torn hellscape. According to the United Nation (UN) over 90% of Gaza's 2.2 million people are now displaced and/or under attack by Israeli security forces who keep saying they're taking precautions not to kill civilians, but the numbers tell a different story. The civilian death toll in Gaza since Oct 7 easily dwarfs all of the numerous other attacks on Gaza by Israelis. In the first 45 days of unrestricted bombing, over 13,300 Palestinians were killed including at least 5600 children and 3500 women. At least 30,000 Palestinians have already been injured and around 6000 Gazans are missing and feared dead or trapped under rubble. At least 1500 of those are children. As of this writing, around 18,000 Palestinians have been killed so far — over two-thirds are women and children.

Much of Gaza's infrastructure has been pulverized including over 300 schools, 26 hospitals, 167 mosques, as well as government buildings, water desalination plants, sewage treatment facilities, etc. Because of U.S. 2,000 pound bombs, roughly half of Gazans are now homeless and highly communicable diseases like cholera are spread-

ing. On November 15 this year, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported 44,900 cases of diarrhea since mid-October 2023 along with skyrocketing spikes in scabies, skin rashes and chicken pox cases in children under five. There have been 54,866 respiratory infections diagnosed so far and starvation and dysentery remain serious concerns.

One might think that numbers like these would have shocked the sensibilities of most everyone by now, but they haven't. The recent Israel-Hamas War on kids, grandparents, sleeping civilians and babies in incubators remains legal grist for squabbling academics while mainstream corporate media and politicians in the occidental world debate about what constitutes ethnic cleansing. At least the Global South seems to understand genocidal operations when they see them, even though much of the West still can't locate the red line on a moral compass.

One also might think that with so much verifiable information about Israelis blocking medical necessities, internet service, clean water, food and fuel, there would be more global leaders stepping up to referee the madness in more humane ways. So far, that hasn't happened. Moreover, what is never reported, is the fact that making Gaza unlivable and forcing Gazans to live elsewhere is part of an Israeli-stated objective of creating a "Greater Israel" — the final chapter of ethnic cleansing.

Currently there is a ceasefire with most Americans resigned to listening to Jewish billionaires and multi-millionaires make threats about cutting college funding while political action groups try to ban organizations in solidarity with Palestinians and limit free speech. What's more, there is always time to interview politicians on the network channels who believe that a controversial chant such as "from the river to the sea" on campus is worse than actually committing genocide in Gaza. In addition, media blacklisting of pro-Palestinian voices along with reports about Hamas criminality based largely on unproven accusations, proves once and for all, that pro-Israel biases are alive and well in mainstream corporate media.

Meanwhile, hundreds of captive Palestinians are held in administrative detention without the right to a trial and hundreds of thousands more find shelter where they can, go hungry, dig graves and pray for an end to the carnage as they flee war zones on motorbikes, in buses or alongside carts pulled by donkeys.

Editor's Note: For links to additional reports on this tragedy and other news not found in mainstream corporate media, please checkout the newsletter article on page 13: WHAT MEDIA? (Alternatives to mainstream corporate media and where to find them).

David Cooley is a local artist, Vietnam Vet and a member of Veterans For Peace.

Killing the Planet With War

by Barry Riesch

Hey folks, sorry to be a broken record, but the climate crisis has not taken time off from our war-mongering madness. In fact, our endless wars are making environmental problems worse by the day. All the obscene amounts of money and resources that have been dumped into the war industry could have been better used to convert our electrical grid and improve more eco-friendly systems to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels. We humans are one destructive race.

If you happen to hear that the Pentagon and military are trying to cut fuel usage and help with the climate crisis, don't buy it. Their mission is to promote ill-conceived wars that will ultimately destroy the planet no matter how the government tries to sugarcoat it. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and arms industry frequently talk about "greening" the military, but those joint efforts have failed to reduce emissions in all of their operations. It should be apparent then, that any increase in military spending will raise greenhouse (GHG) emissions.

That said, should the world's richest countries be spending money on wars or make more of an effort to keep the planet alive? A new report by the global social justice organization Tipping Point North South (TPNS) found that NATO's goal of spending only 2% more of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on the military could cause enough climate change to destroy the planet.

The principal beneficiaries of NATO's spending target would be the arms industry that has seen its revenue, profits and share prices surge. And make no mistake, those corporations are lobbying hard to make sure their profits become permanent by demanding long-term commitments from weapons producers while doing what they can to limit legitimate environmental concerns. It's worth mentioning that lobbying has paid off as seen in the 2023 EU Act in Support of Ammunition Production (ASAP) and NATO's Defense Production Action Plan (2023) along with the Biden administration's support for increased arms production. Schemes such as these are certain to boost arms sales to countries outside of NATO as weapons manufacturers look for fresh outlets after the **Russo-Ukrainian War** (that began in 2014) is over.

Analysis of arms exports from NATO members show that those weapons are currently being sent to 39 of the 40 most climate-vulnerable countries in the world, 17 of which are already in armed conflict, 22 have authoritarian regimes, 26 have low human development indicators and 9 are subject to UN or EU arms embargoes. And of course, the U.S. continues to fund and arm the ongoing oppressive and genocidal operations in Gaza where these military supplies not only fuel the conflict, they exacerbate the already horrific human tragedies throughout Gaza.

The comparison between NATO's target with those of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

Killing the Planet, cont'd on page 7



At the home of Governor Walz. Photo by Barry Riesch



Photo by Barry Riesch

Killing the Planet, from page 6

(IPCC), which has proposed that all nations cut GHG emissions 43% by 2030, could not be starker. The IPCC goals are based on the best available climate science information, but are largely ignored. So far, not one NATO nation has committed to a 43% cut by 2030. Indeed, by adopting NATO's 2% target, they are making the IPCC target even harder to achieve while increasing GHG emissions even more.

Climate mitigation and re-adaptation efforts are chronically underfunded by billions of dollars and climate finance remains one of the most contentious issues at annual UN climate summits. That's because the richest countries that bear the most responsibility for climate change, have failed to keep their meager financial promises to those countries facing the harshest environmental consequences. To make matters worse, the richest and most carbon-polluting nations are also increasing their military expenditures. Global military spending has reached a record high of \$2.24 trillion and more than half of this money was spent by NATO's 31 member states whose budgets are projected to increase massively over the next few years.

Record-setting temperatures in the United States, China, Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East have had lethal consequences for nation populations unable to escape the heat. June through August marked the world's hottest three-month period in recorded history. The average global temperature in July was more than 2°F hotter

than last century's average according to the United States' National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Scientists say this extreme heat, combined with other weather phenomena has contributed to last summer's epic ocean storms, wildfires, flooding and droughts. In North America and Europe, such heat would have been "virtually impossible" had humans not warmed the planet with fossil fuel emissions, according to World Weather Attribution. "The dog days of summer are not just barking, they are biting," said UN Secretary-General António Guterres.

We need to prioritize preserving and growing forest cover, learn more about restoring the ocean's role in atmospheric modulation, and explore other options for climate restoration and cooling. And at the same time, we must reject the lie that societies that consume the most do not need to power down equitably. The rich need to do their fair share too. We all need to be mindful about wasting energy and our rallying call should focus on stopping oil production, ending U.S. Imperialism, and start repairing the damage to our planet now.

We are in a new era and the prospects are terrifying. Our movement needs to look directly at that truth and act accordingly. This means being in resistance to those who deny that climate change is real and to keep standing up for peace, justice and freedom. Please join us in our work at Veterans For Peace with our 'End War To Save The Earth' mission.

Barry Riesch is a Vietnam Vet and a longtime member of Veterans For Peace in the Twin Cities

I Hear You Knockin' But You Can't Come In (Senator Klobuchar's staff refuses to acknowledge her constituents)

by Mike McDonald

Nearly two dozen activists including members of Veterans For Peace (VFP), Women Against Military Madness (WAMM) and the Antiwar Committee gathered outside an office building in Minneapolis Nov 22 to raise awareness about the ongoing tragedies in Gaza and deliver a letter to U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar's office.

The letter condemns the ruthless violence of Hamas and Israeli security forces and calls for an immediate ceasefire along with a reassessment of U.S. military priorities that would end the killing and crippling along with the horrific destruction of Gaza infrastructure. The action included chants, songs and numerous speakers expressing displeasure with Klobuchar's stance on the genocidal operations in Gaza while pointing out war crimes and the dangers of ignoring global pleas for a ceasefire.

Two activists scaled the building and hung a pair of signs. WAMM/VFP member Sue Ann Martinson was knocked to the ground when a security guard charged out of the front door. After protestors were denied entry, the letter was handed over to a building employee who said he



Scaling the building where Senator Klobuchar has an office in Minneapolis. Photo by Barry Riesch

would deliver it to Klobuchar's office. There were no arrests.

The event was originated by Barry Riesch, sponsored by VFP chapter 27 and endorsed by the Antiwar Committee in Minneapolis.

Veteran Mike McDonald is a retired educator, longtime anti-war activist and former president of VFP chapter 27.



Outside Senator Klobuchar's office building. Photo by Barry Riesch

A Stand-Up College President Defines Academic Freedom

by *Gil Maguire*

Leon Botstein is an accomplished guy: President of New York's Bard College and a renowned conductor and music director of the American Symphony Orchestra. He's also a Jew, and a child of Holocaust survivors and, in his words, "I am more sensitive than most" to anti-semitism. He recently demonstrated the highest virtue and moral courage when he defended the principle of academic freedom and rejected bogus claims of antisemitism in the face of strong objections from the Israeli embassy, a major Bard donor and member of Bard's Board of Trustees, the Ulster County Jewish Federation, and even the national director of the the pro-Israel Anti-Defamation League (ADL).

Their common goal was to get Bard to force the cancellation of a course titled Apartheid in Israel-Palestine taught by visiting scholar Nathan Thrall, a Jewish-American writer and researcher who lives in Jerusalem. The purpose of the course was to examine mounting evidence that Israel was violating international laws prohibiting apartheid as evidenced by studies conducted by Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, B'Tselem (Israel's leading human rights organization) and Yesh Din, a prominent legal organization.

They all concluded Israel's conduct toward Palestinian Arabs under its occupation and even against its own Arab-Israeli citizens amounted to apartheid, a crime against humanity under international law. Those objecting demanded the course be cancelled because it allegedly violated the controversial International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of anti-semitism which precludes all statements claiming the existence of Israel is a racist endeavor. In their view, investigating whether Israel is committing apartheid against Palestinian Arabs living in the occupied Palestinian territories of the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem is a form of anti-semitism.

President Botstein patiently fielded angry phone calls from the Israeli consulate, from a major donor and college trustee and from other pro-Israel Jewish organizations including the national president of the ADL, Jonathan Greenblatt. Botstein patiently explained the purpose of the course and how it was intended as a non-ideological study and examination of the law of apartheid and the evidence cited in the various published investigations and reports alleging Israel was committing apartheid. He invited each to visit the course and see for themselves, but each refused. Botstein describes his conversation with ADL's Greenblatt as particularly tense:

"He was not open to a free discussion. He was not

civil. And he did not accept our invitation to visit the course and see for himself. He called already intent on trying to pressure us to cancel the course." Botstein's conversation with his major donor and trustee was also unavailing. The donor/trustee resigned from the Bard board. Botstein said he was uncertain whether the donor's pledge of \$2.5 million to the college would still be honored. Botstein has no regrets about his refusal to bend to outside pressure. "We stood up for academic freedom. The course was excellent, high level, and not at all ideological preaching."

Botstein also said, "There is nothing antisemitic about the course in question. It explores questions that have been the subject of debate in Israel for years. Why should the Jewish community in America be afraid of the same debates and arguments taking place in Israel?" Why indeed.

President Leon Botstein's courage in the face of massive pressure from Israel's embassy, its U.S.-Israel lobby, and various pro-Israel Jewish-American organizations, should be applauded by U.S. Jews as exemplifying honorable conduct and loyalty to American values shared by a growing number of America's Jewish citizens. His strong defense of academic freedom and refusal to bend to false claims of anti-semitism should provide moral guidance to a host of current college and university leaders who seem unable to defend academic freedom in the face of criticism and claims of anti-semitism by unyielding supporters of Israel's conduct toward the Palestinians. Higher education deprived of academic freedom will become little more than expensive indoctrination.

Gil Maguire is a member of VFP chapter 27, U.S. Air Force Vietnam-era veteran, a retired civil rights lawyer, former school teacher, and small business owner. He and his wife Robin moved to Saint Paul from Southern California in 2019 to be near their grandchildren. In 2019, Gil published a historical novel, The Exodus Betrayal: A President Confronts Israel which tells the story of our first female president and how she attempts but fails to stop Israel from attacking Iran and then must deal with a major war in the Middle East. She is faced with the most wrenching decision of her short presidency: Come to the aid of Israel and commit the U.S. to another Middle East quagmire, or remain neutral and work to bring an end to the conflict which will likely cause her to lose the next election.

Area Peace and Justice Groups Join Global Movement to Stop the Sale of Weapons

by Jo Schubert

Fifteen of us from Women Against Military Madness (WAMM) and VFP (Veterans For Peace) gathered in the St. Paul parking lot of ForwardEdge ASIC, (a subsidiary of weapons manufacturing giant Lockheed Martin) on the morning of Nov 8 to deliver a letter to their Director of Microelectronics Analog and Digital Design, Brian Sutterfield.

We knew that ForwardEdge ASIC (application-specific integrated circuit) made parts for Lockheed Martin, but didn't know if those parts would be used in war machines, although it's very likely considering what chief financial officer of Lockheed Jay Malava said in a recent statement: "Forward Edge ASIC is an investment in the defense industrial base right here in St. Paul."

Our letter stated that their company could be found to be complicit in war crimes because of their association with Lockheed Martin. The letter went on to explain that the Merchants of Death War Crimes Tribunal had already subpoenaed Lockheed Martin to submit documents concerning their weapons production that enriches them despite overwhelming evidence that those weapons cause massive human suffering and painful deaths.

The letter pointed out three concerns: (1) We are concerned about your company's contribution to nuclear weapons production despite common knowledge that the use of nuclear weapons could lead to the extinction of the human race. St. Paul, the city where your company resides, has endorsed the international Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. (2) We are concerned about crimes against humanity being committed by Israel, backed by U.S. arms and funds in Gaza. If Lockheed Martin is supplying any portion these arms, they are com-

plicit with those war crimes. (3) We are concerned about our \$1,300,000 Minnesota tax dollars that have been loaned to ForwardEdge ASIC, but need not be repaid if your company fulfills certain conditions. We do not want our tax dollars to go to profits for defense contractors or for weapons production.

We all signed the letter as Concerned Minnesota Citizens and looked for a way to enter the building to deliver it. The front and side doors were locked and we didn't have a card necessary to enter. We were about to give up when we spotted an employee entering a door at the very back of the building. We explained that we had an appointment with Brian Sutterfield and followed her in. Once inside we tried to make our way to the front of the building to find Brian Sutterfield's office.

Soon we were stopped by a fellow with a ForwardEdge lanyard with the name Dan on it. He told us we were trespassing and that we couldn't have a protest there and would have to leave. We told him that this wasn't a protest and we had a letter to deliver to Sutterfield. He took the letter and said he would deliver it, but that we had to leave.

At this point he also told us to stop video taping when we were trying to ask him questions about ForwardEdge ASIC, but we told him we had a right to be there because our tax dollars were contributing to company's profit margin. He would have none of it and said he was calling the police. We slowly exited, as only a group of seasoned protestors could do while asking questions and making comments to employees on the way out, who seemed friendly and understanding.

Once outside, we moved to the front of the building, positioned ourselves below the ForwardEdge ASIC sign

Stop the Sale, cont'd on page 11



Outside ForwardEdge ASIC in St. Paul. Photo by Barry Riesch



Twin Cities action on the ongoing genocide in Gaza. Photo by Barry Riesch

Stop the Sale, from page 10

on the building and sang “Masters of War” by Bob Dylan. As we were leaving two St. Paul Police squad cars showed up in the parking lot.

The Merchants of Death War Crimes Tribunal meetings provide evidence against weapons makers and generate ideas about what can be done in local communities to take action to confront these companies. A recording of the Nov. 13 Merchants of Death opening event will be posted on RiseUpTimes.org. You can also access the Merchants of Death War Time Tribunal website at <https://actionnetwork.org/events/merchants-of-death-war-crimes-tribunal-session?source=email&>.

Jo Schubert is a retired teacher, longtime antiwar activist and member of Women Against Military Madness (WAMM) and Veterans For Peace chapter 27.

EVENTS CALENDAR

ONGOING EVENTS

5-6 pm Mondays. Stop Line Three Vigil. In front of Governor’s Mansion on Summit Ave., St. Paul.

5-6 pm Mondays. White Bear Lake Peace Vigil, Hwy. 61. and 4th Ave.

4-5 pm Wed. Lake Street/Marshall Ave. Peace Bridge Vigil.

4:45 pm Wed., 50th and Halifax, Mpls., Grandmothers for Peace Vigil. (FFI call 612-827-5364)

Monthly VFP chapter meeting, 2nd Sun., 6 pm. 4200 Cedar Ave. S. They are now hybrid meetings (subject to change because of future pandemic situations). Contact VFP at 612-821-9141 for information on how to connect.

Speakers Available!

We have a stable of capable speakers on a variety of topics relating to a veteran's perspective.

Email dlvfp27@gmail.com

HOPE IN THE DARK: Untold Histories, Wild Possibilities

by Rebecca Solnit - reviewed by Paula Staff

American author Rebecca Solnit writes about feminism, the environment, politics and art. Her book *Hope in the Dark*, released in 2018 by Haymarket Books challenges our anxiety and despair about climate change — something we can no longer pretend does not exist.

Hope in the Dark started out as an online publication that went viral and eventually became a book. As to hope, Solnit wrote “It’s important to say what hope is not: it is not the belief that everything was, is, or will be fine. The evidence is all around us of tremendous suffering and tremendous destruction. The hope I’m interested in is about broad perspectives with specific possibilities, ones that invite or demand that we act. It’s also not a sunny everything-is-getting-better narrative, though it may be a counter to the everything-is-getting-worse narrative. You could call it an account of complexities and uncertainties, with openings.”

The book is rich with wisdom and suggestions and her definitions of hope are plentiful and full of prose such as “. . . and it recalls that power comes from the shadows and the margins, that our hope is in the dark around the edges, not the limelight of center stage. Our hope and often our power.” Adding, “Together we are very powerful and we have a seldom-told, seldom-remembered history of victories and transformations that can give us a confidence that yes, we can change the world because we have many times before. You row forward looking back, and telling this history is part of helping people navigate toward the future. We need a litany, rosary, a sulta, a mantra, a war chant of our victories. The past is set in daylight, and it can become a torch we carry into the night that is the future.”

The temptation is to quote the entire book because it is so well written and researched. For example, “To hope is to gamble. It’s to bet on the future, on your desires, on the possibility that an open heart and uncertainty is better than gloom and safety. To hope is dangerous, and yet is the opposite of fear, for to live is to risk.”

After reading the book, you very well may feel enlightened and more motivated to improve our environment. I’ll conclude with one last quote... “The question, then is not so much how to create the world as how to keep alive that moment of creation, how to realize that Coyote world in which creation never ends and people participate in the power of being creators, a whole world whose hopefulness lies in its unfinishedness, its openness to improvisation and participation. The revolutionary days I have been outlining are days in which hope is no

longer fixed on the future: it becomes an electrifying force in the present.”

In other words, it’s really up to us to nurture and share our hopes to increase awareness and actions that will ultimately benefit our mutual future.

Paula Staff is a retired clinical psychologist, lifetime member of Veterans For Peace (VFP), Women’s League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) member and frequent contributor to this newsletter.

Jeffery’s Heart

by Chante Wolf

his journey in boot camp taught him to bounce a
quarter off tight sheets
become invisible
to raid houses for liberation
he shot prisoners
on their knees
their bloody dog tags
chained to his soul
you rock him weeping
loosen his body
off the garden hose
see his letters of anguish including the one
you walked past to the basement
that begged you not to

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WHAT MEDIA? (Alternatives to mainstream corporate media and where to find them)

by David Mulinix and Sue Ann Martinson

The first thing to know is that we have to be skeptical of the U.S. corporate-controlled mainstream media (MSM) because their so-called reporting on Ukraine and now the Gaza bombings is all too often pro-war propaganda just like it was during the Iraq War. Unfortunately but predictably, the MSM is again using this propaganda to support easily avoidable and unwinnable wars in hopes of expanding the U.S. empire. So, if we can't trust the MSM, where can we find the truth about the American empire's proxy war against Russia in Ukraine and support of Israel in what is in part a proxy war in Israel/Palestine for control in the Middle East? The legendary investigative reporters who spoke out against the Iraq War are still around but are no longer welcome on MSM as they were during the Iraq War. That is why most of them have set up camp online to share their stories. We will provide links to many award-winning journalists who now report only from the internet. To begin, here is the link to Katie Halper's video discussion of "John Pilger's Guide To Propaganda," <https://bit.ly/3QAiwP0>. John Pilger is an Australian investigative journalist, author and documentary filmmaker: His awards include the Sydney Peace Prize (2009) and Grierson Trust Award, UK (2011).

Where to find better information and discussion

Algorithms: If you didn't know, social media algorithms sort through data based on relevancy instead of

time before sending information to your feed. This means networks determine what users will see in their feed based on what they have seen before. That may seem innocuous, but this sifting process is really a marketing technique that censors out numerous other important articles that may be of interest. The algorithms also shape searches for numerous other subjects including individuals, groups and organization websites.

With the advent of censorship by algorithms (among other forms of censorship) investigative journalists, writers, and commentators have had to turn to alternative sources, including those that have paid and/or free subscription options. Some also use additional sources such as YouTube and podcasts. To search for guest speakers at universities and conferences and webinars type in specific speaker names or article titles in YouTube or other news websites.

Alternative Media Websites: You will find lists of journalists, writers, and commentators and other important alternative news in posted on RiseUpTimes.org along with a copy of this article. These lists are by no means definitive and know that new sources are always emerging. You can also follow your favorites on social media platforms, including X, formerly known as Twitter. Although websites of peace and justice organizations are extremely important, they are not included unless they also have significant media outreach.

The Lists: Lists on Rise Up Times include a list of alternative news/media websites and a list of alternative journalists/writers/commentators and where to find them. Rather than print the lists with the .url's here, which would take a lot of space, the lists have been posted with live links on Rise Up Times so you can explore them for yourself. For access to the media lists go to Rise Up Times website, <http://riseuptimes.org>, and look under Media or search with the title: WHAT MEDIA? Alternative to mainstream corporate media and where to find them.

Dave Mulinix is a political activist who has been involved in grassroots organizing for nearly 60 years. Inspired by Martin Luther King Jr., he walked for Civil Rights as a teenager, protested the Vietnam War and has been actively involved in just about every peace and justice movement ever since.

Sue Ann Martinson is an antiwar/peace activist and publisher and editor of Rise Up Times, Media for Justice and Peace. She is also a member of Veterans For Peace (VFP) and Women Against Military Madness (WAMM) and is currently working with WAMM's Military Madness Against the Earth action group.

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Craig Murray — “The Power of Personal Courage In the Era of Mass Censorship”

by Craig Wood

Between amusing anecdotes, outspoken human rights advocate, author/journalist/blogger and former diplomat Craig Murray talked for nearly an hour and half at the Hook and Ladder Theater & Lounge in Minneapolis on September 11. He seemed at home with himself, sipping from a plastic glass of whiskey while chatting with an audience of about one hundred.

Murray was a teenage hellion, read voraciously and was influenced by liberal philosophers John Stuart Mill and Thomas Hobbes. He was elected to the National Council of the the Liberal Party when he was sixteen and served as President of Dundee University Students' Association from 1982–1984. After civil service exams, he worked his way up through diplomatic service and accepted numerous overseas posts before becoming the British ambassador to Uzbekistan from 2002 to 2004.

It was there he discovered that Uzbek information given to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and Secret Intelligence Service (M16) was obtained by torture. When he complained to the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) he was surprised to learn that this practice wasn't illegal — if those receiving the information weren't involved in the torturing. He recalled that his FCDO colleagues among others, grew irritated with his candid descriptions of torture techniques, which included boiling people, as well as his public discussions questioning the reliability of torture-induced information.

He was eventually suspended and let go from his government position, but not before anguishing for months over a *Financial Times* tabloid smear campaign against him. At the end of his four-month suspension, he was cleared of all eighteen charges except misusing the embassy's Land Rover and being drunk at work. He told *The Guardian* shortly before his dismissal in October 2004 “There is no point in having a cocktail-party relationship with a fascist regime.”

Subsequently, he became a human rights campaigner who advocated for global transparency in politics and independence for Scotland. He later gained notoriety for opposing censorship in the press and exposing legal mischief used against whistleblowers such as Julian Assange.

He went on at length about how unfairly Wikileaks founder Assange was treated after he exposed illegal schemes the U.S. and UK devised to instigate wars around the world. Those governments retaliated by making an unsubstantiated claim that Assange was involved in a sexual assault in Sweden and argued that his released



Craig Murray and whistleblower/activist Coleen Rowley at the Hook and Ladder. Rowley along with Women Against Military Madness (WAMM), Twin Cities Assange Defense and Tackling Torture at the Top organized the event. Photo by Craig Wood

Wikileaks information endangered others even though no alleged victims were ever found.

He went on to point out that a UK court withheld 600 pages of evidence from the late whistleblower Daniel Ellsberg until the evening before Assange's extradition trial where Ellsberg was expected testify on his behalf. He added that the U.S. at one point considered assassinating Assange and that Assange was under constant surveillance at the Ecuadorian Embassy in London where he was given asylum.

Not shy about taking on other political powerhouses, Murray also exposed undisclosed meetings between former UK Ambassador with Israel Mathew Gould and then British defense minister Liam Fox in 2011. What's more, he investigated Hillary Clinton, the Democratic

Craig Murray, cont'd on page 15

Craig Murray, from page 14

National Committee (DNC) and Russian multi-billionaire Alisher Usmanov with various levels of success.

No stranger to controversy or testing the limits of free speech, he was found to be in contempt of court in 2021 for revealing information a judge believed might reveal the identities of two complainants during a sexual harassment and attempted rape trial. He served four months in prison. Alba Party MP Kenny MacAskill would later call the sentence a “vindictive and a sad day for Scottish justice.”

He wrapped up the evening with this: “We need to rescue from persecution the leading proponent against war. This is the fight for truth, for justice, for the very principle of freedom of speech, against war, for the fundamental virtues in society that good people should be pursuing. I know that everyone here will be doing that with me.”

About a month after his talk in Minneapolis, Murray was detained in Scotland under counterterrorism laws for supporting the Palestinian resistance movement. He was grilled on his finances and his laptop and cell phone were seized. He remained in custody for almost 24 hours.

He is the author of two books and was once elected Rector of the University of Dundee. Journalist and friend Peter Osborne called him “one of the greatest truth-tellers of our time” and “Apart from Julian Assange, no one has done more to expose coalition crimes during the War on Terror.”

Craig Wood joined the National Guard to avoid Vietnam and so did the other 59 guys in his platoon. He is the newsletter editor.

**"When we Glorify War,
we are not honoring the dead, we are
enticing the living to join them."**

**Smedley Butler
Four-Star USMC General**

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Photo courtesy of Lucia Wilkes Smith

...

“Why should we hear about body bags and death? I mean, it’s not relevant. So why should I waste my beautiful mind on something like that?”

— *Former First Lady Barbara Bush.*

...

Word for the day:

Israeled — When someone claims something that belongs to you as theirs. (See example)

Heather: Someone asked to share my table at the coffee shop and then asked me to leave because they have a meeting.

Catalina: Looks like you’ve been israeled.

...



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over one million injured veterans.

An estimated 22 veterans die from suicide each day,
amounting to over 24,090 over the past three years.



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