



peace & justice news

A P U B L I C A T I O N O F T H E P E A C E & J U S T I C E C E N T E R

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Speech at Trayvon Martin Rally, Burlington VT, April 2, 2012 by Dante Seguino.

The Distance Between Iran and Vermont

By *Tavish MacLeod, PJC Intern*

Now relegated to the media back burner, the escalating conflict between the United States and Iran continues to boil. While President Obama spoke in Burlington on March 29, his administration enacted tougher sanctions towards the Iranian central bank, which is the main conduit for purchasing Iranian oil.(1) Iran's quest for nuclear power (the stated goal of their nuclear program) resonates deeply with Vermonters as protests around VT's own nuclear power plant, Vermont Yankee, increases and globally the safety of nuclear power is called into question.(2)

However, there is a more direct connection between the Green Mountain state and the current war of words with Iran. One of Vermont's former governors is included in a wider group of political figures, some of which are receiving significant financial compensation for their efforts, who are vocally supporting a US designated terrorist organization.(3) Howard Dean, along with former New York City mayor, Rudy Giuliani, and former Pennsylvania governor, Ed Rendell, are among those advocating for Mujahedeen-e-Khalq (M.E.K.), an Iranian dissident group who claim to represent the democratic Iran.(4) Critics of the organization categorize it as a cult organized around its leaders Maryam and Massoud Rajavi who confiscate members' passports to prevent them from leaving the group.(5)

Former Governor Rendell received a subpoena from the Treasury Department

to determine whether the fees paid for speaking on behalf of the M.E.K. violate US law, given that the M.E.K. has been designated as a terrorist organization since the inception of the United States' Foreign Terrorist Organization list in 1997.(6) The M.E.K., according to a 2009 RAND Corporation study, engaged in several terrorist attacks during the 1970s that resulted in the deaths of several Americans service members.(7) The M.E.K. publicly renounced violence in 2001, yet in the years leading up to the announcement, they had claimed responsibility for 350 attacks. In 2009, the M.E.K. was removed from the United Kingdom and the European Union's terrorist watch list on procedural grounds.(8)

Howard Dean has been a vocal supporter of the M.E.K. including writing an op-ed in the Huffington Post that details the living conditions of the M.E.K. who reside in camps in Iraq.(9) The Iraqi government took control of these camps after the United States withdrew from the majority of its forces from the country and the Iraqi military has already killed scores of residents of the camp.(10) Additionally, former Governor Dean stated the M.E.K. should be recognized as a government in exile from Iran.(11)

Despite Mr. Dean's assurances that the M.E.K. embraced peace, the organization recently came under scrutiny in an NBC News report(12) by Richard Engel and Robert Windrem which stated,

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PJC MISSION

Our mission is to create a just and peaceful world. To this end, we work on the interconnected issues of economic and racial justice, peace, and human rights through education, advocacy, training and non-violent activism, and community organizing, since 1979.



Dear Friends,

Applause and concern...

I want to first recognize the successful efforts of all town leaders, organizers and Peace and Justice staff, interns and volunteers for their terrific work in organizing 64 towns to include language regarding the Corporations are Not People Campaign on their ballots for Town meeting day in March. This is grassroots democracy in action. ¡Si, se puede! The connections we have made through our program director Gaby Ochoa Brenneman with town leaders and organizers have built trust and communications that promise to be great action tools in the future to continue our work. Most importantly I want to celebrate the fact that all of the work, time and resources our staff and interns invested in this campaign resulted in those 64 cities and towns declaring that corporations do not deserve the same rights as people, and corporate contributions undermine our political process and weaken democracy.

Vermont has spoken, and Vermont has historically been a great leader for social and political change in this country. Thank you Gaby and the Center for your hard work in getting this done. The struggle isn't over yet. We are still working for greater transparency and accountability in political campaigns, and to ensure that all people have equal access to political speech. I urge us all to maintain our focus on this issue as we move toward the election in November.

Concern: We cannot ignore the rumors of war with Iran. We have seen these patterns of rhetoric before, and we have seen where they lead. A group of 32 Senators have already resolved to support Obama if he chooses to strike at Iran's presumed nuclear weapons program (February 29, 2012). These actions are part of a strategy that brings us closer to war with Iran, despite reports that "The United States, European allies and even Israel generally agree on three things about Iran's nuclear program: Tehran does not have a bomb, has not decided to build one, and is probably years away from having a deliverable nuclear warhead." - Tabassum Zakaria and Mark Hosenball for Reuters (March 23, 2012).

Please join us on Friday, April 20th at 7:00 for the Rumors of War: Iran Panel discussion in Contois Auditorium to learn more about Iran, the US and what options we have.

Last, as we report our earnings (if any) to Uncle Sam, and calculate our federal taxes, consider with us how we might prefer to spend our federal budget. Let's invest in peace.

Yours,

Nathan Suter

Board of Directors
April 10, 2012



Celebrating the towns (before we knew it was 65!) that voted for Corporations are NOT People on Town Meeting Day, March 6, 2012. Jake, Gaby, Colleen, and Robin.

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according to anonymous US officials, the Israeli intelligence organization Mossad partnered with the M.E.K. in assassinating several Iranian nuclear scientists.(13) Casting further doubt upon Mr. Dean's claim of a nonviolent M.E.K., Seymour Hersh of the New Yorker recently uncovered evidence that the United States Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) conducted military training with the M.E.K. as recently as 2005 (around the same time when former Governor Dean claimed that the M.E.K. renounced violence).(14) The training consisted of communications, small unit tactics and weaponry. The 2009 RAND study also describes how the M.E.K. repeatedly requested the return of their weapons that were confiscated during the American invasion of Iraq.(15)

Mr. Dean's efforts on behalf of the M.E.K. are a piece of a larger strategy that the group hopes will lead to a bolstering of their political legitimacy. However, questions remain about how influential the group is within Iran (Iranian democracy activists claims they are hated in Iran due to the M.E.K. siding with Iraq in the 1980s Iran-Iraq War) and the human rights violations of the group itself including their treatment of women.(16) For now the group remains on the Foreign Terrorist Organization list and the Treasury Department's inquiry should reveal whether accepting monetary compensation from the group violates American law. According to Salon blogger and constitutional lawyer Glenn Greenwald, the paid speeches supporting the M.E.K. could fall within the 2010 Supreme Court's decision on Holder vs. Humanitarian Law that upheld the illegality of providing material support (including political advocacy) to a designated terrorist organization.(17)

■ Endnotes

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Rumors of War

RAN

The 4th event in the Peace & Justice Center's Cost of War Speaker & Film Series

A PANEL DISCUSSION WITH:

- **Barrie Dunsmore**, veteran foreign correspondent for ABC News and VPR commentator;
- **Sarwar Kashmiri**, senior fellow with the Atlantic Council's International Security Program, Fellow with the Foreign Policy Association and VPR commentator;
- **Misagh Parsa**, Sociology professor, Dartmouth College; and
- **Gregory Gause**, UVM Political Science Professor & Dept. chair.

FRIDAY, APRIL 20, 7:00PM

Burlington City Hall. \$5-15 donation. Co-sponsored by Veterans for Peace. 863-2345 x8.

In Solidarity with Women

By Gabriela Ochoa Brenneman

The Peace & Justice Store continues to partner with organizations that are working to improve the lives of the most vulnerable in societies around the world. We continue to work bridging the gap between producers in developing countries and consumers in the North American market through our educational programs.

Every time we write about the impact of the Fair Trade movement or the work that our partner organizations are doing worldwide, we come to the same conclusion: women and children are the most vulnerable in our societies.

When we partner with fair trade organizations we are not only looking at the financial benefit the artisans and farmers will receive from having another market. We look at what are the economic and social structures that keep people in poverty and oppression. We partner with organizations addressing the structural problems and providing sustainable and viable opportunities for the most vulnerable.

In this issue we are featuring three groups working with women and children – organizations providing an opportunity and tools for women and children to break the cycle of poverty and addressing situations where women and children get trapped in oppression, abuse, and hopelessness.

Come and take an active role in supporting their efforts by purchasing the products that support their programs. Help us share their stories.

■ Malia Designs: fighting human trafficking

Human trafficking is a multi-billion dollar, illegal trade affecting millions of people every year around the world, but especially in Asia. In Cambodia, sex trafficking continues to devastate the lives of hundreds of women and children in the region. Poverty and lack of work in their villages forces women to migrate to neighboring villages or countries in search of work – making them easy targets for traffickers.

Organizations like Malia Designs recognize the need for secure, sustainable, and safe sources of income for women. The goal of the organization is to foster economic development for women as a way to counteract human trafficking. Even with all of the international attention and recognition – sex trafficking is still a big problem in the region.

Malia Designs provides women with an opportunity to generate a sustainable income and learn the skills to become self-sufficient. When women are able to provide for themselves and their families, they become less vulnerable to prostitution and human trafficking. Besides providing a source of income and training for the women, the organization also wants to raise awareness about the sex trafficking industry and its impact on women and children.

“We aim to empower socially-conscious customers with information they can use to help combat this crime against humanity around the world”.

Malia Design’s products address sustainability by reusing rice bags and making them into beautiful and practical market bags, totes, wallets, computer cases, hampers, and bracelets.



■ Ghar Sita Mutu: House with a Heart

Ghar Sita Mutu is a home for abandoned children, a training center for impover-



ished women, and an outreach program for families in need in Kathmandu, Nepal. Kathmandu has countless children living on the streets in a society struggling with poverty and political instability. Many women are abused and abandoned by their husbands with no skills or tools to support themselves and their children. In a culture where gender inequalities are well established, women find themselves in desperate situations, living on the streets with their children or facing the decision of abandoning them.

The main source of income for people in Kathmandu is low-paying jobs in carpet factories. Women are employed for long hours with very little time to take care of their children. Older children are often responsible for taking care of their siblings or are forced into indentured servitude or working as laborers.

Ghar Sita Mutu opened its doors in 2001 to provide housing and care for abandoned children and serve as a training center for women. They provide housing, food, education, and health care for children and women in a warm, loving place. The Educational Center is open for children that come from families that can not afford to send their children to school. Women also attend literacy and math classes. The program trains women in making felted crafts and provides them with an income and an opportunity to become independent.

The women are making hand and finger puppets, wall hangings and purses out of felt. Every item is unique and

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OCCUPY SOLIDARITY NEWS

International Workers' Day Tuesday, May 1

Occupancy groups across the country are calling for a day of labor solidarity and a public holiday on May 1st.

May Day is an international celebration of the labor movement. It began in 1891 as a commemoration of the struggle for an eight hour day which came to a head in 1886 with the Haymarket Massacre, when Chicago police fired on demonstrators during a general strike. Now it is observed in many nations around the world.

May Day is also a traditional day of the celebration of fertility.



■ May Day in Burlington

Occupy Burlington is encouraging everyone to take the day off and exercise their freedom to enjoy springtime with their friends and neighbors, eat good food, take part in workshops culminating in a concert and dance party in the evening.

From 10 am onward, Burlington City Hall Park.

■ May Day in Montpelier

Meanwhile in Montpelier, the Vermont Worker's Center and many others are planning a March and Rally: One Movement for People & the Planet.

12 noon, starting at Montpelier City Hall.

Occupy Across Vermont

By *Stephen Marshall, point person for the Occupy Vermont Communications Working Group. Please see <occupyyouropinion.blogspot.com> to get an explanation of how the group is organized, and how to join. We need people from across the state as key point-persons.*

Laura Simon of the Upper Valley reports that Occupy the Upper Valley is planning a May Day celebration in Lebanon at the town green. They will have a postal worker speakout, a union rally, music, a traditional maypole, and free food. Their GA is held on Sundays at 4:30 at St Paul's Church in Wilder.

Nick Cohen of Occupy the Upper Valley (otuv-discuss@listserv.dresden.us) informed me that "We are considering the suggestion of OVT to have the third statewide GA in our area.

Carol Langstaff has tentatively agreed to have the event at her place in Sharon, VT. We have a dance/drama event planned for the last two weekends in July with the Flock troupe, of which Carol is the director and producer. I am a member of the troupe. We would have accommodations for a potluck lunch during the meeting, with the show later – probably 6:30 PM, which is the usual time."

From Putney, Vermont, Emily Peyton wrote: "On Earth Day, We will occupy the press with appropriate policy on

industrial hemp. Our Hemp Public Legal Notice has been crafted to dispel idiotic issues around the agriculture of industrial hemp, and to encourage common sense action sooner rather than later. Please help spread the word that we are creating a better contract with our government, as we the people are a contractual party, and thus have the absolute right to engage in creating new contracts. When in print, our words have a power that creates the better paradigm. Please contact me for copies of the Hemp Legal notice, and please help post them. We also need outreach by way of letters to the editor to major news outlets in the US.

88peyton@gmail.com or www.emilypeyton.org. If anyone in the occupy group is considering entering the

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Occupy continued from page 5

political arena, I will support them with my experience, and the fact that I am doing it once more since public banking is gaining ground.”

From occupycentralvt.com, Marie Countryman reports they attended the “99% spring” non-violence training on Saturday, April 14th at the Dept of Labor Building. Central Vermont is otherwise very busy with planning for the May Day rally in Montpelier, and is taking the lead in organizing our next Occupy Vermont general assembly.

Marie continues: “May Day is a rally starting at City Hall and ending at the State House. One focus is the closing of the Post Offices in VT. There will be an action in White River Junction on the day that it actually closes or is due to close...”

Occupy Central Vermont is also spearheading the Village Gathering in Brookfield June 22 - 24, at Twin Pond retreat. This promises to be a great weekend of play for Occupiers and Transition-Town people (a convergence indeed!!). I can't help with more details now, but look up OCVT <<http://www.occupycentralvt.org/>> to get the low-down.

Occupy Rutland's Kathleen Krevetski said that their core group of 10 occupied a street corner all winter, and have now decided to put their energy into more creative ways of making their point. Their big project right now is a video production of a song, written by a local performer, called “Mute the Loot” which encourages people to mute the audio on their TVs when expensive Super-Pac advertising airs. As part of the video, they hope to attend the May Day rally in Montpelier and get the crowd to sing and sway “LaLaLa” while holding their hands over their ears. This will provide the chorus.

In addition to letter writing “to put people first”, they plan to do street theater during their upcoming farmers' markets.

In Pownal at Green Mountain College, Scott Chernoff reports their group is facilitating the “99% Spring” training in nonviolent direct action training. They apparently are very interested in the move-your-money campaign, and plan to

take their message to the Bank of America shareholders meeting. One tactic they are considering is to write up a list of demands and to solicit signatures around the state to take with them to Atlanta, where the bank is based.

Chuck Gregory <[rrtl\(at\)sover.net](mailto:rrtl(at)sover.net)> reports that in Springfield the Vermont Worker's Center is hosting a Community Meeting on Saturday, April 21st to get residents engaged in the struggle for universal, affordable health care, the focus on a people-centered state budget and the right to meet their obligations to themselves, their family and their community.

- Carol Langstaff of WIRED and the Occupy the Upper Valley GA is asking everybody in her social network between now and May 1st to move their money out of the Big and Criminal Banks into locally owned banks, credit unions and S&L's. If anybody has a question as to whether the bank they used is locally owned, they can ask her (or me).

- Springfield residents will be attending the Saturday 4/14 99% activism training on interactive TV at the Howard Dean Center.

- Over 5,000 people have enrolled to vote for delegates to the Continental Congress to be held in Philadelphia on July 4th. Two candidates have already enrolled for Vermont— Mary Murphy and Tim Price. To vote for them, visit the 99% Declaration site. If you agree with the points stated, by all means, sign on and vote!

- So far, nobody has expressed interest in helping to get one statewide race in 2014 operating under a radically different form of campaign finance regulation. If anybody would like to work on it, have them contact me at <[rrtl\(at\)sover.net](mailto:rrtl(at)sover.net)>

I didn't hear from the 99% Group in Newport, nor Occupy North East Kingdom in Hardwick, and I don't have contacts in other parts of the state. I'd like to hear from Brattleboro, Bennington, St. J, and otherwise, so if you have contact info, please write to me at <cluely@gmail.com> I didn't write a report for Burlington because this paper originates in Burlington and we are well enough represented.



**Occupy Burlington
General Assembly**
meets every Sunday at 2pm
at City Hall Park, Burlington

Miroccupation 2012

By Brad Hartley

It was not without some internal debate that about 20 occupiers met in and around city hall on Monday evening. Miro Weinberger was about to get his wish for a “fresh start” and be sworn in as mayor of Vermont's largest city. Not usually a bunch to be introspective, the discussions about tone and objectives were simultaneously contentious and beautiful. There was zero chance however that we wouldn't be observing and participating in the festivities.

We know that we are new and necessary, a permanent presence that must operate at many levels to maximize our effectiveness. There are as many tactical realities as there are minds to conceive them.

Burlington is unique in the landscape. I think anyone who has spent time here understands that. There exists a constituency that demands as much attention to the needs of people as to the needs of profit. Bill Oetjen, as he handed Miro the occupy welcome basket (not to ignore the choccu-pie) perfectly expressed this fact: that economic and social justice had polled more strongly than Weinberger himself. 78% of voters had supported the justice resolution. 57% had supported Miro. Constructive engagement is probably the best short term outcome that can be expected from a “Miroccupy” effort. Get ready people it's going to be an exciting summer. ☺

Obama's Drive-By Occupy

By Brad Hartley

Proving that irony is never dead, President Obama headlined a 1%ers luncheon and high dollar photo op followed by a 99%ers motivational chat complete with a rocker-rousing Grace Potter set. Given the inside crowd's reception, surely they are hoping that an Obama win next fall will bring a new 'flexibility' – as he recently expressed to the Russian president – which will translate into middle class relief at home.

I looked around at the wonderful people gathered outside on a UVM lawn in the chilly wind. I couldn't help thinking that the community organizer turned President was about to encounter some Vermonters for whom "a change we can believe in" has become "a cause we won't back down from". From the caged look on his face as he passed, framed by his armored window, I know he won't soon forget.

Some 125 of us with our signs and banners talked politics, waved at passers by, and created new bonds as we demonstrated to the powers that be that cash soaked corporate indoctrination hasn't made all of us docile and compliant.

What I always find inspiring at mass protests like this is the convergence of everyone's different paths delivering us to a place where peace, justice, and equality reassert themselves; the truly highest forms of the human condition. We all walk with our own mantras, but so assembled, I always sense commonality of certainly spiritual significance.

Oh yeah, the free gourmet food was delicious. Someone who looked frighteningly like the Prez (he was in a mask) did a great job providing for us all the while trying to sell or rent what little democracy remains in DC.

Our assembly of integrity did what so few dare to do: to meet the cult of greed and celebrity, the militarized police, and the complacency that surrounds. To just say "no" to the status quo.

As Howard Zinn said so well, "dissent is the highest form of patriotism". ☸

M'AIDEZ! M'AIDEZ!

By Marc Estrin

May Day is many things to many people. It is the same sounding word as the international call for help which is a corruption of the French imperative "M'aidez" meaning "Help me!" And "help me" was what political May Day has traditionally been about – a day of international workers' solidarity. This notion was eventually too much for capitalist, fortress American, which don't need no help from nobody, and in 1961 (yes, under JFK), Congress passed a bill creating May 1st as "Law Day". That's right, as you watch all those nice blue flowers come up, you can let your mind drift to the men in blue who protect and serve, if you are white and upper class.

A quick web search of "Law Day" sites shows an interesting evolution of the custom. Many are now maintained by lawyers' and law school organizations, and are dedicated to the notion that lawyers are essential to "freedom under the law". This may be, if you are rich enough to retain the right one. But enough people remember the political origins of May Day – commemorating the struggle for an eight hour day – and are using the calendrical energy to combat the oppression of corporate globalization and US imperialism.

You know what? On a beautiful, sunny afternoon in early spring, it often occurs to me that there was once – and still is – more to May Day than just politics. Or maybe not. Our Puritan forefathers spent much vituperation on May Day – and Christmas – (see Hawthorne's great story "The Maypole of Merrymount") – which they felt to be superstitious and idolatrous. Here is Philip Stubbes in 1583 railing against a "stinking idol" of a Maypole:

Against Maie Day, Whitsunday, or some other time of the year, every parish, town, or village assemble themselves, both men, women and children; and either all together, or dividing themselves into companies, they goe some to the woods and groves, some to the hills and mountaines, some to one place, some to another, where they spend all the night in

pleasant pastimes, and in the morning they return, bringing with them birche boughes and branches of trees to deck their assembles withal. But their chieftest jewel they bring from thence is the Maie-pole, which they bring home with great veneration, as thus – they have twentie or fourtie yoake of oxen, every ox having a sweet nosegaie of flowers tied to the tip of his horns, and these oxen draw home the May-poale, their stinking idol rather, which they cover all over with flowers and herbes, bound round with strings from the top to the bottome, and sometimes it was painted with variable colours, having two or three hundred men, women, and children following it with great devotion. And thus equipped it was reared with handkerchiefs and flagges streaming on the top. They strawe the ground round about it, they bind green boughs about it, they set up summer halles, bowers and arbours hard by it and then fall they to banquetting and feasting, to leaping and dancing about it, as the heathen people did at the dedication of their idols.

O, well. There is always incorruptible nature:

Im wunderschönen Monat Mai
In the wondrously lovely month of
May

Als alle Knospen sprangen,
when all the buds sprang forth
Da ist in meinem Herzen
there, in my heart

Die Liebe aufgegangen.
Love also broke out.

Im wunderschönen Monat Mai
In the wondrously lovely month of
May

Als alle Vögel sangen,
when all the birds were singing
Da hab' ich ihr gestanden
then I confessed to her
Mein Sehnen und Verlangen.
my longing and desire.
(Heinrich Heine/Robert Schumann)

These are also Laws. ☸

Thousands Descend on Entergy Headquarters

By Dylan Kelley

A beautiful sunny day (3/22/12) in Vermont has become the blue-skied witness to over a thousand Vermonters rising up in indignation and anger.



Effigy of Entergy, CEO J. Wayne Leonard, is handcuffed by protesters.

One day after the 40 year contract for the VT Yankee Nuclear Power Plant expired, Vermonters from every corner of the state, of every political stripe, and of every income bracket descended upon the local headquarters of Entergy and in a

united voice demanded that Entergy “shut it down.”

Beginning with a massive single file march from downtown Brattleboro and proceeding up route 7, an estimated 1,300 people gathered together for street theater by groups such as the Bread and Puppet theater group and Raging Grannies, as well as the citizens’s arrest (in effigy) of Entergy CEO J. Wayne Leonard. The “False Solutions Circus” highlighted the deep corruption, mis-information, and hypocrisy found at the heart of many US environmental policy boondoggles.

The gathering was not however just a gathering to critique mainstream environmental policy. There was business to attend to and it lay just up the road at the Entergy headquarters.

Clasping hands and linking arms, a detachment of protesters marched towards the office buildings to confront Entergy. The police were waiting for them. After a deep breath and the squeezing of a few hands, they crossed the police line and were arrested for unlawful trespass as a chorus of *We Shall Not Be Moved* was sung by thousands who assembled in support.

It went on and on throughout the day. One by one and hour after hour an estimated 130 protesters



Four jailbirds: Robin Lloyd, Jeannine Bair of Hancock, VT, Charlotte Brody of Burlington, and Lynn Crough of Wendell, MA. We were four of 133 individuals who committed non-violent civil disobedience at the company headquarters: the largest number of protesters arrested at a nuclear plant in the 21st century!

and 27 affinity groups crossed the line and walked into the black handcuffs that were waiting for them.

Though their political origins were varied, though their economic backgrounds were mixed, and though their ages ranged from 18 to 80, the Vermonters walking into their black handcuffs were united in indignation and outrage at Judge Murtha’s ruling, at the superiority of the NRC, and at the ongoing usurpation of the will of people. ☺

Contact Information

occupyburlingtonvt@gmail.com An address to write to.
http://occupyburlington.org Links and basics of getting connected.
http://occupyvermont.wordpress.com Occasional news and lots of links.
http://occupyyouropinion.blogspot.com List of folks from around the state, plus some discussions.
http://www.nycga.net Get linked in to national events.
https://www.wepay.com/donations/330681 Where donations can be made electronically.



After a non-violence training in late winter with Eric Bachman and Dorie Wilsnacki, members of the Burlington Friends Meeting formed an Affinity group, the Earthquakes.

Vermonters for a Just Peace in Palestine/Israel

2012 Annual Contribution Drive

By Mark Hage

For more than ten years, Vermonters for a Just Peace in Palestine/Israel (VTJP) has been working to end Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories and to promote a just peace based on international law. If you have visited our popular website (www.VTJP.org), which receives 70,000 hits per month, you know how timely and comprehensive it is. Many of you have attended our political and cultural events. You know the quality of our efforts and our dedication to nonviolence.

Recently, VTJP kicked off a **2012 annual contribution drive**, the first of its kind for us. We have an ambitious schedule of activities on our plate, and with good reason – the occupation will be 45 years old this June, with no end in sight, and more than 500,000 Jewish settlers are now living illegally in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. 1.5 million Gazans are still under a crippling, inhuman siege. No viable peace process is possible as long as Israeli colonization and military repression continue. Our work has never been more important.

VTJP is the only activist organization in Vermont dedicated exclusively to the question of Israel/Palestine and ending the Israeli occupation. And we need to raise **\$2,500** to fund grassroots organizing and education in Vermont over the next twelve months. We need your help and generosity to do this.

Your contributions, in addition to helping us meet basic operating expenses, will provide critical support for the following projects:

- Production and distribution of our public access TV program – “Salaam/Shalom: Report on Palestine/Israel” – produced twice a month and distributed to stations across Vermont, and posted on VIMEO and our website;

- Expanding access to our website, one of the finest in the world on Israel/Palestine;

- Coordinated outreach to our Congressional delegation;
- Organizing Palestinian-themed art exhibitions & film showings;
- Organizing statewide speaking tours on the occupation and the history of Israel/Palestine
- Sidewalk tabling and distribution of pertinent materials;
- Protest vigils;
- A major divestment initiative spearheaded by Students for Justice in Palestine at the University of Vermont. UVM is investing in American companies with deep ties to the Israeli military or Jewish settlements;
- Boycott, Divestment & Sanctions (BDS) advocacy in Vermont. We sponsored the first debate on the subject in Vermont featuring Omar Barghouti, and we will be launching a Vermont-specific BDS campaign this spring.

■ How to contribute:

Your tax-deductible contribution can be made by check or online with a credit card. Checks should be made out to: **Peace & Justice Center**, and on the **memo line** please write, *For VTJP*. The P&J Center is at 60 Lake Street, Burlington, Vermont 05401.

To contribute by credit card, go to our website at www.VTJP.org, click on the “Main Menu” tab on the **left-hand side**, near the top, then scroll down and click on “Donate.”

Thank you for whatever contribution you can make now. If you have questions about the organization or our fundraising, or would like to sponsor our television program on your local public access channel, please contact Mark Hage, at mhage56@yahoo.com. ☺

Fair Trade continued from page 4

supports a program that recognizes that by opening opportunities for women you are opening opportunities for the whole community.

■ CHETI Widows Project: Empowering Women in Tanzania

The CHETI Widows Project in Tanzania works to empower HIV+ and impoverished widows to improve their lives and the lives of their children. The program seeks ways to end the poverty cycle and gender discrimination for women. The CHETI program provides women with the training, tools, and initial funds to start their own business. Women working with the CHETI widows project receive an education in business management with the goal of becoming self sufficient. Women also have access to AIDS seminars and general education courses.

The beadwork of the women supports a sustainable program that provides women with the tools to improve their future. \$6 buys a child's school books for one year; \$10 feeds a large family nutritious meals for a week; \$3 gets a woman HIV checkups, testing, and care.

The women of the CHETI widows program are making beautiful and colorful jewelry including original Maasai necklaces and earrings and unique beaded leather sandals. Come and get unique accessories for the summer or a beautiful gift that gives women in Tanzania a chance to improve their future. ☺



CALENDAR

April 2012

[20] Friday

- 7pm Rumors of War: IRAN. PJC's panel. City Hall, Burlington. See page 3.

[25] Wednesday

- 7:30pm PJC showing the film: *The Invisible War*: about rape in the military. 301 Williams Hall, UVM. Donations welcome.

• The Occupy Global Teach-In, based in Britain and Sweden, and will be simulcast across the globe, starting at 12 noon EST. The local screening will be at 108 Lafayette, UVM. The theme is *Solutions to the Economic, Ecological and Energy Crises*. The teach-in will continue at 6-9pm at Main Street Landing, with a performance by Bread & Puppet Theater at 6pm. Then we will break into 3 discussion groups. Jon Erikson of the Gund Institute will convene the teach-in and lead the final report-backs and discussion.

[29] Sunday

- 12-3pm Stand Against Racism. PJC participates in the national YWCA campaign.

May 2012

[1] Tuesday

- 10am -? Occupy Burlington May Day event in Burlington's City Hall Park.
- 12 noon VT Workers' Center March & Rally in Montpelier.

[5] Saturday

- 9pm-2am. Mildred Moody's Full Moon Masquerade: a Peace & Justice Center fundraiser at Nectar's, 188 Main St, Burlington. Bands: Lynguisitic Civilians and Second Agenda. \$5.

[6] Sunday

- 12-1 Vets for Peace live call-in show on Channel 15.

[7] Monday

- 6:15pm Burlington-Bethlehem-Arad Sister City Committee meeting at Burlington College.

[9] Wednesday

- 5-6:30pm Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) meeting at the Peace & Justice Center. 862-4929.

[12] Saturday

- 10am-2pm Peace & Justice Center's World Fair Trade Day Celebration. Burlington, City Hall Park. More info: www.pjcv.org

[13] Sunday

- 7pm Helen Benedict, author of *The Lonely Soldier: The Private War of Women Serving in Iraq* (which inspired the making of documentary: *The*

Invisible War) will be speaking as the 6th event in the PJC's Cost of War Series. Place: TBA, Burlington.

[14] Monday

- 6-8pm Vermonters for a Just Peace in Palestine/Israel meeting at PJC.

June 2012

[3] Sunday

- 12-1 Vets for Peace live call-in show on Channel 15.

[4] Monday

- 6:15pm Burlington-Bethlehem-Arad Sister City Committee meeting at Burlington College.

[9] Saturday

- 6:30am-4:30pm Champ Ride 2012 by Vermont CARES. Oakledge Park, Burlington. \$75 registration fee without fund raising. 1-800-649-2437, peter@vtcares.org.

[11] Monday

- 6-8pm Vermonters for a Just Peace in Palestine/Israel meeting at PJC.

[13] Wednesday

- 5-6:30pm Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) meeting at the Peace & Justice Center. 862-4929.

May Day!

International Workers' Day (May Day) is an international celebration of the labor movement. It began in 1891 as a commemoration of the 1886 Haymarket Massacre, in which Chicago police fired on demonstrators during a general strike calling for the eight hour work day.

The Vermont Workers' Center has been celebrating International Workers' Day since 2009 with an annual rally and demonstration on the lawn of the Vermont Statehouse. Each year, the rally has brought many people to Montpelier to demonstrate in solidarity and unity with working people. In 2011, the Vermont Workers' Center used the May Day rally to launch its Put People First campaign, joining the ongoing Healthcare Is a Human Right campaign with the People's Budget campaign. In 2012, individuals and organizations focusing on the entire spectrum of social issues will unite with the VT Workers' Center in their call for Vermont's legislature to Put People First by declaring One Movement for People and the Planet. Meet at 12 noon at Montpelier City Hall.

For more info: www.workerscenter.org/may1 

Speech at Trayvon Martin Rally, Burlington VT, April 2, 2012

By *Dante Seguíno*

Geraldo Rivera seems to think that Trayvon Martin was murdered for wearing a hoodie. And as outrageous as that claim is, what's more outrageous is that he was murdered for what he wore under that hoodie, his racially charged identity as a young black man. What Trayvon and all black youth wear out of the house everyday is a set of judgments cast upon us by the world we live in. A set of judgments which, warranted or not affect the way in which the world reacts to us and the way in which we react to the world.

Actor and Musician Donald Glover says, "White kids get to wear whatever hat they want, when it comes to black kids one size fits all." When I walk down the street with headphones on I know people aren't going to assume I'm listening to folk music. Race amplifies the significance of the smallest decisions. When I wear these boots because it's cold outside, I do so knowing it impacts the view people have of me. A hooded sweatshirt, the length and style of my hair, the manner in which I speak, and the way I walk are all punctuated by my blackness and bear added significance because of it.

For white people these things carry no racial charge. They can wear whatever hat they want and no one will question their whiteness. Black kids by contrast must fit into the narrow framework that white America has constructed for us. Failure to comply is punishable by racial dissociation or criticism for "acting white". So the choice becomes whether to live in denial of your race or to live defined by its public perception. I liken it to the DirecTV commercial where a man, angry at being on hold with his cable company goes to blow off steam playing racquetball but gets hit in the eye. The narrator says, "When you blow off steam accidents happen, when accidents happen you get an eye patch, when you get an eye patch people think you're tough, when people think you're tough, people wanna see how tough, and when people wanna see how tough you wake up in a roadside ditch." This situation is fictional and dramatized for comedy, but the significance is that something that, in this case he was made to wear, led people to presume certain things and act on their incorrect presumptions.

But in reality blackness is that permanent eye patch that

doesn't just read "tough" it reads threat and all of that word's associated baggage. Threat means can't date my daughter, can't teach my kid, can't work in my store, must be up to no good. But threat is also associated with the coolness of blackness, the renegade, the strength of the oppressed people. So wearing "threat" will get you different reactions from different people like fight or flight. I walk down the street and people won't look me in the eye. I have neighbors who still won't wave or say "Hi" to me, let alone know my name. We had our electricity go out one night during the winter and I had to weigh how "suspicious" I might look walking around my own house with a flashlight against our need to have heat, electricity, and warm water.

That's a freedom denied. I can't be on my property without feeling like a criminal. I can't walk down the street without feeling like a predator. I can't answer a question in class without feeling like a sellout. My music, my clothes, my hair, my voice only ever exists in relation to blackness. Everything I do is categorized as black or non-black in a performance where the end-game is to categorize me. I am black as I am Trayvon Martin. We wear the same black skin, the skin I share with millions of black people across the country and across the world. What we wear is a beautiful kind of danger. The kind of danger worn by those willing to live outside the framework we've been incarcerated in through the ignorance of the masses. The kind of danger worn by those who live the hyper-examined life but defy the hypothesis and experiment in new realms of the science of blackness.

Under Trayvon's hoodie he wore blackness. Blackness had as much to do with Trayvon's murder as George Zimmerman. I've worn blackness my whole life, but under that I'm just as unique as a white person, I have my own style, voice, passions, and opinions. So I'll walk down your street after dark, and I'll wave and say "hello" to you and your kids, and I'll wear a hoodie if I choose to. Police and store clerks will still follow me, I'll still miss out on jobs I'm qualified for, I'll still get denied a seat by the window in a restaurant. But as much as the world wants to corner me and put a gun to my head for the fact that I wear blackness, I refuse to end up in a roadside ditch. So as long as they keep trying to put us into boxes, we'll keep proving that we don't fit.

Stand Against Racism at the PJC April 28

The Peace & Justice Center is planning an event for this year's YWCA Stand Against Racism. We would love for you to be involved! Join us 12-3pm. We are inviting several organizations to bring their literature, information, and expertise on racism in Vermont. We will be setting up tables outside of the Peace & Justice Center and giving organizations an opportunity to talk about what resources or services they offer to the community, and what they feel are Vermont's biggest challenges.

We are also collecting testimonies in advance, and day-of, responding to the prompt: Describe a time when you experienced or witnessed racism in Vermont. These testimonies will be posted anonymously on a large board outside of the PJC for people to read and write their own. After the event, participants will be invited into the Center for a conversation about racism in Vermont, what our organizations can do to help, and how we can collaborate to be more effective in our work.



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