



peace & justice news

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The Case for a Values Revolution and a Peace Economy

By Anna Guyton, Manager of Mission & Programs

■ What is the Economy?

The economy may seem like an elusive monster that is proving to be out of control – an entity all on its own that's wreaking havoc upon our vulnerable society. However, we need not fear: the economy is in fact nothing of the sort. It is not an entity. It is a system. This system can be easily broken down into a set of choices based on certain values. The economy is created and

sustained every day, by all of us, in order to help us meet our basic needs for survival and prosperity. Rather than live like hermits, most of us choose to work in a more interconnected society that forces us to be reliant on each other. Specializing allows us to devote more time to needs and wants beyond pure survival.

What is it Based On? It would seem like an inherently cooperative system that allows us all to care for one another. Instead, it has become an increasingly competitive system where oppression and exploitation are commonplace. This has happened because greed and fear have managed to replace

collective values that we all share. It is through greed and fear that the mega-corporations have gained and sustained their power.

Our political races are too often rooted in greed and dominated by fear tactics.

Mass media encourages our greed by showing us all the things we should want for our lives, and uses fear to discourage our will to change our system. Both the military and prison industrial complexes are based on greed and are intended to create fear. Many would argue that the US's international imperialism is much more about greed and fear than it is about spreading democracy. It's important to acknowledge that greed and fear dominate and dictate the system that we live in if we are to ever change it. Ultimately, greed and fear are choices made by each of us individually.

–Vandana Shiva

Why Isn't It Working? The economic structure we're in advocates free market capitalism. Of all the theoretical benefits of such a structure, one major failure is the blindness toward

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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.



From the Center

Message from the Board

With the departure of our executive director Nancy Lynch at the end of January, the PJC has entered a period of exploration to find the best way of carrying our mission into the future. The key members of our staff and our board members have stepped up to carry on the programs, the store, and our operations. Meanwhile, the board has begun a process of reaching out to our members and supporters to solicit their ideas—and their support—for the way forward.

In her nearly two years in the position of executive director, Nancy led the Center in many important accomplishments. The Center and retail store were moved to a location that provided greater accessibility and attention to our staff's needs for a good working environment. The programmatic work in economic justice, racial justice and peace and human rights was integrated into one unified approach. With Nancy's help, the board adopted a Policy Governance model for its actions. The store completed the transition to Fair Trade, local, and Green America Certified products. Nancy developed a short- and long-term strategic plan for the Center while increasing membership and working hard to increase membership donations. The organization has also increased its role in supporting Allied Members and collaborating with other local and statewide advocacy organizations.

We are excited for Nancy as she begins work with Zatz and Renfrew Consulting of Montpelier, a position that suits her strong background in advocacy and lobbying. The board of directors wishes to thank her for the dedication and energy she brought to her work with the PJC.

The board received many applications for the position of interim executive director and conducted interviews with a number of interested candidates. However, in the short time available to us we did not find a candidate who met our needs. As a way to conserve our resources and to move ahead promptly with planning for the future, the board has decided to manage the Center directly for the foreseeable future. Board members have taken on the various roles needed to maintain the programs and the store. In addition, founding member Wendy Coe has graciously agreed to join us on a part time basis to assist with some of our administrative operations.

Our store manager, Gabriela Ochoa Brennehan, has overseen a gradual increase in sales and profit in the store since her arrival in October and continues to work with fair trade and local vendors to provide fresh and inviting products. She has also done some outreach with local schools and colleges in connection with the Center's commitment to Fair Trade and Green America Certified products. Anna Guyton, Manager of Mission and Programs, is continuing her work to build awareness around the state on the need for Paid Sick Days legislation, to update the *Vermont Job Gap Study*, and to work in coalition with peace activists across the state towards a peace economy. She has three interns working with her to assist in various aspects of her work.

Meanwhile the Center is planning to conduct its annual phonathon in mid-February, while starting the process of engaging the membership in a discussion about the direction they want the Center to take. Our plan is to take the time between now and August to determine how to move the organization into a tighter and more sustainable version to carry on the mission, and how to partner more closely with other activist organizations. We hope that you will support the PJC financially while we make our way through this transitional period, but, even more importantly, the Center needs the membership's ideas and energy to help put plans into action. Please email pjcmembership@gmail.com if you would like us to be in touch as we design a process for this transition.

Thank you for supporting the Peace & Justice Center! We look forward to working with you in the future. ☺

Phonathon 2011

We'd love to talk with you.....but, we know that finding a convenient time to talk about PJC membership can be difficult for many folks. The PJC's Annual Phon-a-thon will take place on February 13, 15-17. If you have not renewed your membership and would like to skip our call, please call 863-2345 ext. 1 or clip the membership form on page 12 and send in your renewal today. You can also go to www.pjcv.org for a secure on-line donation. *We especially invite you to join our growing numbers of monthly donors!*

PJC's 2011 Program

By Anna Guyton

ondering what the PJC has planned for 2011? Here is a basic outline of our program for the upcoming year:

■ Peace Economy

Working with VT Action for Peace, we are reaching out across the state to encourage activists draw connections between their goals/work and build awareness that we are all working for a person-centered, justice-based, environmentally-sound, non-militaristic economy that promotes peace. We are hoping to open doors for a more broad-based collaboration against corporate greed and militarization of the state.

■ Vermont Job Gap Study

We plan to release both Part 2 and Part 3 of Phase 10 in 2011. Part 2 is an update *Phase 6: The Leaky Bucket*, an analysis of Vermont's dependence on imports; and Part 3 will present opportunities for creating a "new economy" that supports working Vermonters, small businesses, and uses Vermont's limited resources to ensure that all Vermonters can meet their basic needs.

■ Paid Sick Days

Current focus for this campaign is building awareness and grassroots education around the need for PSD legislation, and encouraging employers to implement them with or without passed legislation. This outreach will also include trainings with the Livable Jobs Toolkit (developed with Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility).

■ Educational programs & workshops

Many college professors, teachers, organizations and groups make special requests for PJC presentations/workshops on work we are involved in. We will continue to speak on economic and social justice issues.

■ Peace Jam

This is an organization which seeks to create young leaders committed to positive change in themselves, their communities and the world through the inspiration of Nobel Peace Laureates. The PJC aspires to become the Vermont State Chapter for Peace Jam in 2011 and plans

to hold fundraising events and outreach to build awareness of the project in the meantime. (see ad below)

■ Other Work

We are the proud sponsor and host of other events throughout the year, and we continue to support our Allied Members in their work. Be sure to check our calendar (www.pjcv.org) for meetings and events! ☺



 **PeaceJam**
CHANGE STARTS HERE

"FASCINATING!"
—Elvis Mitchell, NY TIMES

"★★★★★ MUST-SEE!"
—Jan Stuart, NEWSDAY

Lost Boys of Sudan
A FILM BY
MEGAN MYLAN AND JON SHENK
SHADOW DISTRIBUTION

FREE SCREENING
(Suggested donation \$10)
&
BAKE SALE

Help student leaders attend the annual PeaceJam conference and to launch their Global Call to Action service project!

Friday, February 11th, 6pm
Main St. Landing's Film House
Lake & College - Burlington

Proceeds benefit: Harwood Union's Student Peace Alliance,
The Association of Africans Living in Vermont (AALV),
and the Peace & Justice Center

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power acquisition. Inevitably, powerful entities will distort market freedoms in order to further benefit or at least perpetuate the power structure that allows them to be at the top.

One example of this can be easily seen in our foreign policy recommendations (the Washington Consensus) to encourage developing nations to open their borders to free trade (meaning no tariffs, quotas, or other impeding government regulations) – while the US retains market-distorting subsidies.

Ignoring power acquisition has led to the rise of large corporations, which (most US citizens would probably acknowledge) now have the most power in our country. Large corporations absorb labor, meaning they provide the most jobs and wield power over their labor conditions and standards. When large corporations acquire enough market power, they can drive out competition, pay low wages, and provide more jobs to perpetuate this system. Obviously, this takes money that should go to the working class under truly “free” market conditions, in order to fund large CEO paychecks.

Entrepreneurship is increasingly discouraged through higher costs of credit and the inability to compete with the large corporations that dominate the market. In addition to these examples of how working capital is affected, one must also consider the human capital impact of people that are trapped in a system that forces them to subsist on wages provided by these low-paying jobs – the mental and emotional consequences of being economically oppressed in a society that preaches the opposite.

This system has many other negative consequences: centralized jobs lead to increased migration to major cities, resulting in uncomfortable, expensive, and crime-ridden metropolises; only research that supports the goals and aims of large corporations receives necessary funding; political leaders are pressured to bend to the will of corporations to maintain sufficient campaign funding; globalization is eroding the bonds of community and creating vast gaps in wealth between the richest and the

poorest; our public education systems groom students to seek out the security of corporate jobs, inspiring them to aspire to the upper ranks of this corrupt system.

Consider the paradox of an exploitative health care system in which pharmaceutical companies determine who can afford to be healthy. Ask yourself: how ethical are Monsanto’s intellectual property claims, which make it illegal for farmers to save and exchange seeds for future planting? Meanwhile, the large-scale monocrop agriculture Monsanto promotes is leading to increased environmental degradation, food that is less nutritious and that is genetically modified with no safety regulation or research.

Why is consumer debt out of control in our country, despite our prideful cling to the rumor that we are the most prosperous of nations? Think critically about the level of importance placed on earning a hefty salary in our culture, in order to buy your kids innumerable plastic toys made in Chinese sweatshops to let them know you care, despite the fact that you spend all your time at work. Even if you have not suffered through this recent economic downturn, do you feel like you can ethically continue to support this type of system?

Those in positions of power don't want to change the system that keeps them in power.

■ What Could the Alternative Be Like?

Imagine a system based on common values such as physical and mental wellness, good stewardship of the environment, social justice (including an end to classism and racism), quality education, strong communities, and having a political voice – a system where people could be content with this kind of sustainable wealth rather than hoards of money. When economies have cooperative and just value-chains, communities are stable and thus more peaceful. The Fair Trade movement is a great example of the many positive outcomes associated

with a values-based supply chain. Crime drops when people have their needs met, have access to good education and jobs, and are treated fairly. It is possible to re-imagine a system based on collective values.

Already, other measures of welfare such as the Human Development Index (HDI), Index of Sustainable Economic Welfare (ISEW), Genuine Progress Indicators (GPI), Gross National Happiness (GNH), Living Well Indicators, Index of Well-Being, and Sustainable National Income (SNI) are used to assess the state of citizens’ well-being, rather than using Gross Domestic Product, which measures only economic inputs and outputs. Worker-owned cooperatives are becoming more popular, which promote democracy and equality, and keep resources in the local economy. Many communities are abandoning traditional money for new means of exchange. It is preached that with capitalism, intelligent entrepreneurs who provide what society demands will be rewarded with profit; but Wall Street speculation (and other big money makers like professional sports) have demonstrated that profit is not a reliable measure of social contribution. Instead, imagine if firms existed primarily to serve the community rather than to profit off of it. In the world we want, everyone would have productive work and be respected for his or her contribution to the well-being of the community.

■ What Must Be Done?

What we need is a values revolution. For this to happen, unity is necessary among all the advocates and activists working for collective values. **Come together** peace activists, green revolutionaries, conservationists, sustainable food lovers, workers’ rights supporters, war protesters, racial justice proponents, women’s rights advocates, poverty alleviators, localvores, health providers, economic justice visionaries, corrections reformers, and solutionaries in general!

Some may say that we’re working for different solutions – but ultimately many of our goals can only be achieved in a system that functions much differently than the one we currently find ourselves in. We must band together to work toward this system – defined by human

values rather than vices. We can achieve much more cooperatively than we ever could in a system based on greed, fear, and incessant competition.

Just as ecosystems fare better with increased biodiversity, so too can our cause flourish when our diverse goals and interests come together to work toward a new system. Indeed, in the world we want, the economy and the greater system it operates within should mimic a healthy ecosystem. Our biggest obstacle is the cult of powerlessness. The system perpetuates itself using fear. We must recognize that our movements are composed of innumerable supporters who are intelligent, passionate, ambitious, and compassionate – all forces more powerful than the greed and fear that dominates our system.

Building awareness is critical. People support and strengthen the current system with their dollars and actions every day without realizing it. Think about what it would mean (on a global and local scale) to continue the system we are in for the long term... If we consider the trends, (the ultra-rich getting exponentially wealthier, the poor getting poorer, environmental degradation, vices over values), we should be frightened as to where we're headed. But in every exploitative system there comes a breaking point where it is no longer viable or sustainable – the point of revolution.

■ What Can a Concerned Vermonter Do?

Vermonters are reasonably concerned about the future prosperity of the state, especially during these trying economic times. The affordability of housing, health care, transportation, and household expenses are critical issues for many Vermonters. In order to properly address each of these concerns, we must consider the root cause of all of them if we are to transform our economy into one which spurs the creation and growth of enterprises that produce sustainable jobs that support collective values. Inviting defense contractors and large corporations that provide low-wage and/or unethical jobs that only perpetuate our vice-ridden, power-dominated system is certainly not the answer.

Get behind these movements: repeal the Citizens United Supreme Court ruling, Stop the F-35s, support the Paid Sick Days bill being introduced this session, get involved with the VT Peace Economy project, challenge Burlington's Mayor on signing a deal with Lockheed Martin, participate in your political system, or join an organization that can help you do all these things. **You also have the power to vote with your dollars – support Fair Trade, the local economy, and socially-responsible employers with your purchases and consume consciously.** The Peace & Justice Center is a great resource that has taken steps to merge the peace, green, Fair Trade and local movements with our social justice and racial justice work. Watch our calendar of events for activities and groups you can get involved with. Anyone who wants Vermont to be an even better place to live needs to take an active role in transforming the system.

We don't have the luxury to wait for new alternatives. We must create them. This new and better system is not inevitable. **Those in positions of power don't want to change the system that keeps them in power.** The current economic downturn offers an opportunity to rebuild a new system that provides ways to earn a living that don't require polluting the earth or exploiting human labor. The lack of quality jobs we are currently facing is a symptom of a much larger issue of a system based on greed and fear. The signs are becoming more and more apparent - unhealthy and unsustainable food systems, pollution, corrupt power systems... As the list gets longer, the apathy grows. We are rapidly approaching a time of change. Now more than ever we need transformers – not reformers – to take on the challenge of rebuilding a values-based system that promotes health, security, and love for humanity and the natural world we are a part of.

“So many of us wait for that perfect moment for a system change, at a system level. Yes, systems are wrong, but systems change doesn't happen at a system level; it happens by enough people making change that they want to see.” –Vandana Shiva 

N O L O C K H E E D

Did you know that Burlington Mayor Bob Kiss recently signed a Letter of Intent with Lockheed Martin, the nation's largest War Profiteer? We didn't know either, and that's a problem...

■ What You Can Do

about Burlington's controversial partnership with Lockheed

1. Get the word out: plug into door to door organizing of our neighbors. We'll provide you a route and a fistful of fliers. Contact Jonathan at jonathan.c.leavitt@gmail.com
2. Call and email Mayor Kiss expressing your concerns about Burlington partnering with the world's largest war profiteer: 802-865-7272 (office), mayor@ci.burlington.vt.us
3. Set up a meeting with your City Councilor to discuss your concerns over this secretive deal. Ask City Councilors to pass a resolution asking for transparency and partnering the City with our award winning local climate change non-profits and companies instead of Lockheed. Contact info for all 14 Councilors can be found here: <http://www.ci.burlington.vt.us/citycouncil/councilors/>
4. The more media activism the better: letters to the editor, op-eds, radio call-in shows, social media, etc. <http://www.7dvt.com/feedback> <http://www.burlingtonfreepress.com/section/OPINION02/My-Turn>
5. Join the Facebook group: Search “No Lockheed”
6. Come to our coalition meetings at the Peace & Justice Center. Check the PJC Calendar at www.pjcv.org for our next meeting date.
7. Learn more by reading the article on pages 6-8.

Greenwashing War: Burlington, Vermont Mayor Signs Deal With Lockheed Martin

By Jonathan Leavitt, originally published in *Toward Freedom*, 12/2010, and reprinted with permission

■ Lockheed's Trident Missile

When it leaked in *Seven Days* that Burlington Mayor Bob Kiss had inked a deal with the world's largest war profiteer all hell broke loose inside the Burlington left. Charges of "corporate greenwashing" and hypocrisy lit up Facebook pages and coffeshop conversations. These charges land fresh like the daily newspaper at the doorstep of most mayors of American cities.

Mayor Bob Kiss however, is a former conscientious objector, and a member of Vermont's Progressive Party, the most successful third party in the US, which touts a platform totally at odds with war profiteers like Lockheed. It's the party that claims Bernie Sanders, the US' lone socialist senator, recent Filibuster leader and viral web sensation amongst its founders. Mayor Kiss, whose party has for 28 of the last 30 years controlled City Hall, was learning what many social movements that assume governmental control learn: wielding power without alienating the community organizers and social movements that put leaders into office can prove to be quite the difficult equation to balance.

That few details were available when the contractual "letter of intent," adorned with Lockheed Martin's corporate logo, was signed by Mayor Kiss and Lockheed's Senior Vice President certainly didn't assuage the rising indignation of community organizers. Interestingly, it was Mayor Kiss who approached Lockheed about the deal at the inaugural "Carbon War Room," which took place simultaneously with the Vancouver Olympics. The Carbon War Room is a pet project of the 212th richest person in the world, billionaire Sir Richard Branson, CEO of Virgin Group. Branson's record and cola empire also counts amongst its corporate family global warming contributors like Virgin Airlines and the quixotic, carbon emissions nightmare of Virgin Galactic, space tourism for \$200,000 a ticket.

Branson's Carbon War Room partners cities with corporations like Lockheed and private financiers to create market based solutions to climate change. The single-sided, single page letter of cooperation details vague projects for Lockheed to partner with Burlington on including "Urban Triage," "Vertical Wind Turbines," "Solar Photovoltaic Systems," "Telemetrics" and "Three dimensional LIDAR City models." Branson's War Room describes itself as a "30-month challenge to help cities around the world use innovative mechanisms to bring capital, energy technologies and jobs to their citizens in a sustainable and wealth creating way."

Wealth creating in this sense means privatizing existing not-for profit climate change fighting measures like the PACE program (PACE lets US home owners bundle home renewable energy financing into their mortgage, spreading out the payments over 25-30 years instead of the usual home improvement loan term of lease of five years). According to the Climate War Room's literature the United States' PACE market, "is valued at \$500 billion." This sort of privatization, which spins governmental non-profit programs into new markets, and thereby so much gold for "gold-level" corporate sponsors of the "War Room" like Lockheed, and billionaires like Branson, is but one of the objectionable pieces of the deal to its detractors. Perhaps even more immediate and inflammatory is the planned interaction between Burlington's school children and Lockheed Martin engineers.

■ Are We For Bomb Makers?

One of the controversial aspects of the deal would allow Lockheed engineers to work inside Burlington schools with schoolchildren. In the past five years Burlington parents' and students' outrage boiled over when war profiteer General Dynamics' program of giving away pencils, bookmarks and books stamped

with their corporate logo came to light. When a nine year-old student at Burlington's Champlain Elementary was faced with going to an assembly during the school day to listen to General Dynamics employees, her mom Laurie Essig says her daughter Willa asked, "Are we for bomb-makers? Do we think it's right to kill people? Her basic question was, 'Why are we treating these people like heroes?'" Due to a perception on Willa's teacher's part, that nine year-old Willa might offend the weapons manufacturers' employees, the teacher, "brought all the other students down to get their free books and left my daughter sitting alone in the classroom." Essig says. Longtime Vermont peace activist, Joseph Gainza said, during an interview, "I would hope that the City of Burlington and the Burlington School District wouldn't let a corporate member of the military industrial complex take credit for solving the climate change problems it helps everyday to perpetuate."

Meg Brooke, Chair of Chittenden County Progressives says of Lockheed's slated involvement with school kids: I've been trained by the National Inter-religious Service Board for Conscientious Objectors (NISBCO) and given many hours to council students how to avoid war. I've fought to remove military recruiters from our schools. I regularly taught classes in non-violent conflict resolution in Vermont high schools. I am deeply concerned by the way we normalize violence and war and desensitize our young to the horror our military perpetrates, especially on the young, women, and the elderly. Welcoming one of the leaders of this military industrial complex into our schools goes against all I, and many others, believe. I do not want young Vermonters to see the Lockheed logo on TV and have a positive thought about what that business might have done in their school.

■ Who is Lockheed Martin?

“We Never Forget Who We Work For” is Lockheed Martin’s motto. That mindfulness of who they work for takes a different meaning when one considers that 84 percent of Lockheed’s revenue comes from the US government, with the majority of that being Pentagon contracts. Lockheed contracted 98 different lobbyists, was mentioned in 142 Congressional bills and spent nearly \$10 million in lobbying *just in 2010*.

This is the multi-national war profiteer which to quote Bernie Sanders, “according to the nonpartisan Project on Government Oversight, the three largest government contractors — Lockheed Martin, Boeing and Northrop Grumman — have engaged in 109 combined instances of misconduct just since 1995, and have paid fees and settlements for this misconduct totaling \$2.9 billion.”

Further, something is seriously amiss when George W. Bush’s Department of Justice, not exactly known for setting precedents in corporate crime prosecution, files a 2007 fraud lawsuit against a corporation raking in a net \$3.033 billion in FY ’07 (It’s worth noting that 1% of Lockheed Martin’s annual profits alone roughly equals the City of Burlington’s approximately \$30 million budget).

Defense contractors are notorious for their fraudulent overcharging of tax payers for weapons systems that things must have risen to truly historic levels of fraud for Bush’s DoJ to take action. Indeed Lockheed is number one in the Federal Contractor Misconduct Database, at 54 instances of contractor misconduct, totaling \$577.4 million in settlements, nearly twice as many as the next closest war profiteer.

Lockheed Martin has had separate racial, age and gender discrimination lawsuits filed against it *in the past two years alone*. Does Mayor Kiss really want Burlington’s hard won image attached to the world’s largest war profiteer whose supervisors in the last 24 months allowed “death threats” and threats to “lynch” an African American employee “to continue unabated – even though the company was aware of the unlawful conduct”? One might think all of the above flies in the face of the subsec-

tions of Mayor Kiss’ Progressive Party platform which state the Progressive Party will, “Insist Vermont will contract only with responsible employers, including local small businesses and local entrepreneurs, hiring local employees” and “Promote cooperative, worker-owned, and publicly-owned enterprises as democratic alternatives to huge profit-driven multi-national corporations.” Indeed, many inside Kiss’ Progressive Party have expressed concerns with these provocatively strange bed fellows.

Progressive City Councilor Emma Mulvaney-Stanak, who represents Burlington’s Ward 3, said in a statement, “When any municipality considers partnering with a corporation, there needs to be some sort of conversation around a set of standards and principals that reflect the community. With Burlington those standard would need to include language to reflect issues long enshrined in the fabric of the City’s life: human rights issues, equality issues, peace and war issues. Any agreement or discussion needs to be guided by these community standards, be it on a project level or a policy level. Sometimes the money involved in a potential deal or partnership is not enough to compromise these principals. This deal, frankly, considering Lockheed’s long track record would violate any reasonable community standards for the City of Burlington.”

■ Lockheed and Grassroots Organizers

What isn’t immediately clear is what is left for Lockheed engineers to do around Climate Change in Burlington that isn’t currently being done by Burlington’s many NGO’s, non-profits and local companies without war profiteer logos on their arms. From award-winning Efficiency Vermont to AgRefresh, from the University of Vermont’s Gund Institute to Burlington Walk/Bike Council, from Carshare Vermont to 350.org, from Permaculture Burlington to the Localvore movement, and on and on.

Even the City’s Department of Public Works is involved, installing rainwater gardens into the very street itself on Decatur St in Burlington’s Old North End. There are also local organic farmers playing funk and disco as they make the

rounds in their solar powered veggie delivery van.

“Corporations like Lockheed Martin are simultaneously funding the denial of global warming and trying to profit from it,” says Brian Tokar, Director of Plainfield, Vermont’s Institute of Social Ecology and author of the recent book *Toward Climate Justice*. “It’s hard to imagine what they could possibly contribute to Burlington’s already leading-edge efforts to become greener and more self-reliant.” Progressive Party Chittenden County Chair Meg Brooke states in plainsong, “Lockheed is going to show and take credit for twenty years of grassroots organizers blood and sweat, paid for out of their own pockets.”

Then there are the unspoken ironies of Lockheed working on climate change: the US military, with all its Lockheed technologies has a 363,000 barrel per day oil habit, making it the single largest purchaser of oil in the world. If the US military were a country it would be amongst the top 20 countries in annual oil consumption well in front of Australia. Activist Joseph Gainza points to this saying, “Private corporations that helped create climate change are not going to be part of the solution.” What’s more, as Chittenden County Progressive Chair Meg Brooke said, “The military is the number one enemy of sustainability and Lockheed isn’t going to do much to change that as their money comes from manufacturing machines that are completely unsustainable. Their F35’s, which threaten our environment, use 2,000-4,000 gallons of fuel and hour.”

The F-35 is Lockheed’s new next generation fighter plane which is controversially slated to be stationed at Burlington Airport. James Leas, one of the main organizers of the Stop the F-35 Coalition in Burlington writes in a widely circulated open letter to Mayor Kiss “Lockheed Martin is one of the world’s largest war profiteers. Its products are designed to destroy the environment and living things. Please help me understand how Lockheed Martin, a company that is one of the chief purveyors of death and destruction, is going to be telling Burlington about sustainability?”

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In 2007, Lockheed sheepishly admitted it had overcharged, and would repay, the Federal government \$265 million plus interest for over-billing American taxpayers on the same F-35. Lockheed called the \$265 million dollar over-billing “inadvertent.” Author Brian Tokar says, “Lockheed’s F35’s and other military hardware are among the most petroleum-gorging products in the world. Burlington doesn’t need their noisy fighter jets, nor should Vermont tolerate Lockheed’s feeble attempts to greenwash their image.”

That said, if this pact between Burlington and Lockheed was purely results based, “most sustainability bang for the buck” venture, and not about corporate greenwashing, could Lockheed silently fund the many engineers and community organizers who have been doing climate change and sustainability work inside Burlington for decades, often with little resources? If Lockheed wanted to get the most climate change prevention for their investment, without causing ripples, could they silently dovetail with Burlington’s award winning Climate Action Plan and the 200 project ideas it generated? Unlike the Lockheed deal, the Climate Action Plan had many opportunities for public input.

Or perhaps this funding could quietly award under-capitalized companies like Efficiency Vermont, whose low income home weatherization has a two year waiting list. Additionally there is an unfunded Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization study on how physical barriers to separate bike lanes from car traffic would positively or negatively impact downtown business. In many cities where the study has been done, including cities as large as New York City, physical barriers to demarcate bike lanes from car traffic have been shown to create safer, friendlier communities, which increases bike use while simultaneously helping businesses thrive. Absent the capital for the study though, the false “it’s bad for business” argument will prevent these bike lane improvements. One climate change consultant estimated the cost of which to be about \$10,000 or about the cost of

1/5th of one second in Iraq war spending. But if it were an anonymous benefactor Lockheed couldn’t ride Burlington’s credibility to the bank, and credibility is the only thing war profiteers like Lockheed Martin can’t buy.

The Need For Action in Burlington

In an exclusive meeting with Mayor Kiss he said that the Lockheed/Carbon War Room was not the only way to finance the projects he envisions the City of Burlington taking on, merely the more “serendipitous.” I asked Mayor Kiss at the end of the meeting to what degree the outraged grassroots of Burlington can shape the outcome, considering both the media and the community members have discussed possible civil disobedience to stop this contract with the world’s largest war profiteer. Mayor Kiss, after demurring several times said, “Well there’s nothing date certain in it. This is just a letter of intent, it doesn’t have specific benchmarks for specific projects.”

What the Mayor is saying is that the community organizers can shape the outcome by calling and emailing him, by organizing your friends and neighbors, and continually raising the stakes to oppose this. Certainly holding a single public hearing where community members could voice concerns would be a natural place for the Mayor to show his responsiveness to the electorate that put him in power. Community organizers and concerned Burlingtonians could ask for City Council resolutions the critiquing the deal using the community standards and principals Councilor Mulvaney-Stanak calls for.

Mayor Kiss and the Burlington City Council have proven themselves responsive policy makers for Burlingtonians when citizens organize and make demands of them in City Council meetings packed with advocates. Indeed that is exactly how in the past year Burlington passed a resolution to boycott the State of Arizona over its controversial immigration law SB 1070, and how legislation pushed by Burlington Police Chief Michael Schirling and downtown business organization The Church Street Marketplace Association to make it a crime to be poor on public sidewalks was stopped cold. If the community continues to organize against Lockheed and if the Mayor is responsive

to the grassroots that built his party, then the single page “letter of intent,” with no benchmarks, could be slipped deep into the City’s archives. That is to say, as usual, everything depends on community organizers building a countervailing pressure to the moneyed interests of corporations and the military which is so strong the elected officials have no choice but to do the moral, just and right thing.

Here are the details for contacting the Mayor’s office:

Call: 802-865-7272 (Mayor’s Office)

Email: mayor@ci.burlington.vt.us

Jonathan Leavitt is a community organizer and writer based in Burlington, VT. ☪

Partial List of Environmental Lawsuits and Settlements Against Lockheed Martin

Source: Federal Contractor Misconduct Database

- Groundwater Treatment (Burbank, CA)
- Groundwater Cleanup Violation (at the Burbank area of the San Fernando Valley Superfund Site)
- Wastewater Discharge
- Tallavast, FL Groundwater Toxic Contamination
- Pantano Wash Hazardous Waste Disposal Settlement
- Emissions Violations at the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory
- Nuclear Safety Violations (Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory)
- Nuclear Safety Violations (Oak Ridge, TN)
- Nuclear Waste Storage Violation (Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory)
- Radiation Exposure (Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory)
- Reactor Safety Violations (Oak Ridge National Laboratory)
- Toxic Substances Control Act Violation (PCBs - 2005)
- Toxic Substances Control Act Violation (PCBs - 1998)
- Violations of Louisiana Environmental Quality Act
- Falsification of Testing Records (Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory)
- Radioactive Work Control Deficiencies (Sandia National Laboratories)
- Radiological Control Deficiencies (Sandia National Laboratories)
- Violations of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (Sandia National Labor)



Robin's Nest

Are Corporations Persons?

By Robin Lloyd

As most of you know, over a year ago, the Supreme Court ruled in the case *Citizens United vs. the FEC* that corporations have the same First Amendment rights as natural people, and that restrictions prohibiting corporations and unions from contributing money to candidates violated the First Amendment. In other words, corporations are entitled by the Constitution to buy elections and even run the government.

The decision was met with an outcry which has grown, since the fall elections, into passionate outrage. An ABC News poll recently found that 76% of Americans oppose the *Citizens United* decision. Opponents of the decision point out the obvious: only human beings are people, while corporations are merely legal fictions.

Here in Vermont, Burlington WILPF invited lawyer and activist David Cobb to Burlington to explain how our country got itself into this peculiar bind called “corporate personhood” that is perverting our elections and democracy, and to propose a way out.

As a member of the Move to Amend Coalition, Cobb advocates amending the US Constitution to establish that corporations are not legally recognized as people. Cobb spoke in Burlington, Waitsfield and Montpelier, and met with a half dozen state senators who have agreed to support a Vermont resolution calling on Congress to initiate the amendment process.

The resolution, submitted by Senator Virginia Lyons (with 11 co-signers) states that “The profits and institutional survival of large corporations are often in direct conflict with the essential needs and rights of human beings. [They] have used their so-called rights to successfully seek the judicial reversal of democratically enacted laws [and governments have become] ineffective in protecting their citizens against corporate harm to the environment, health, workers, independent business, and local and

regional economies.”

The resolution also points out that large corporations own most of America’s mass media and use them to project a corporate political agenda and to “convince Americans that the primary role of human beings is that of consumer rather than sovereign citizens with democratic rights and responsibilities.”

With such things in mind, the resolution concludes that the “only way” toward a solution is amendment of the Constitution “to define persons as human beings.”

“The profits and institutional survival of large corporations are often in direct conflict with the essential needs and rights of human beings.”

A movement to amend the Constitution would be educational, but could be a long haul, especially in this political climate. There are other possibilities. Jason Lorber (D-Chittenden) introduced a transparency resolution, H. 299, in 2009. Among several campaign finance provisions in his proposal are modifications to Vermont’s public financing system and a provision to regulate reporting and disclosure of independent expenditures.

One of the most promising pieces of legislation has come from Maryland: Senate Bill 570. The proposal would prohibit a corporation from publishing or distributing campaign material in the State unless the material is true, the board of directors has decided that spending money is in the best interests of the corporation, and both the content of the campaign material and the expenditure have been approved by the stockholders in a vote.

The campaign to challenge corporate power isn’t new. According to Allen D. Kanner, writing on the Move to Amend

website, since 1998 more than 125 cities and towns have passed ordinances that put citizens’ rights ahead of corporate interests. They’ve banned corporations from dumping toxic sludge, building factory farms, mining, and extracting water for bottling. Many have even refused to recognize corporate personhood.

Over a dozen towns in Pennsylvania, Maine, and New Hampshire have recognized the right of nature to exist and flourish (Ecuador has done the same in its new constitution). Four municipalities, including Halifax in Virginia, and Mahonoy, Shrewsbury, and Packer in Pennsylvania, have passed laws imposing penalties on corporations for chemical trespass – in the form of involuntary introduction of toxic chemicals into the human body.

Communities are also beginning to band together. When Pennsylvania’s attorney general proclaimed, “There is no inalienable right to local self-government,” and then threatened to sue Packer Township for banning sewage sludge, people were outraged. Six other towns adopted similar ordinances and 23 others passed resolutions in support of their neighbors.

Bigger cities are joining the fray. In Pittsburgh, council member Doug Shields is trying to ban corporations in the city from drilling for natural gas, a damaging practice known as “fracking.” As Shields put it, “Many people think that this is only about gas drilling. It’s not. It’s about our authority as a municipal community to say ‘no’ to corporations that will cause damage to our community. It’s about our right to community, to local self-government.”

David Cobb believes the struggle can move on several fronts. “It’s not either/or: it’s both /and,” he remarked. He considers our effort to pass a resolution calling for the amending of the Constitution an historic document. He told Alternet, “This is the first state to introduce at the legislative level a statement of principles that corporations are not persons and do not have constitutional rights. This is how a movement gets started. It’s the beginning of a revolutionary action completely and totally within the legal framework.”

CALENDAR

February 2011

[11] Friday

• 6-9pm Peace Jam Film Screening of "Lost Boys of the Sudan." Main St Landing Filmhouse, 60 Lake St, Burlington. The Peace & Justice Center is pleased to host this fundraiser for a Vermont high school group to help them attend the regional Peace Jam and work on a project regarding refugees in Vermont. Come see this magnificent film, enjoy some baked goods (student bake sale), and support Peace Jam and the PJC! Suggested donation \$10.

[13, 15-17] Sunday, Tuesday-Thursday

• 6-9pm PJC Phonathon. Volunteers welcome – email anna@pjcvt.org.

[14] Monday

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

[22] Tuesday

• 7-8:30pm No Lockheed Organizing meeting at PJC. Join us in organizing against the partnership between the City of Burlington and the world's largest war profiteer, Lockheed-Martin!

March 2011

[5] Saturday

• 5pm Oxfam America's International Women's Day Event: a Hunger Banquet at Main St Landing, Burlington VT. See ad at right.

[6] Sunday

• 12-1 Vets for Peace live call-in show on Channel 15.
• 2pm Vets for Peace meet at 28 Laurel Hill Dr., South Burlington.

[6, 13, 27] Sundays

2pm Across the African Continent series. See ad at right.

[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. Info: 372-6117. WILPF works on a variety of issues including nuclear weapons, nuclear power/VT Yankee, the Congo, and Hiroshima and Nagasaki remembrance days in August.

[19] Saturday

• Veteran Led Demonstration and Civil Resistance, Lafayette Park, Washington D.C. <http://answercoalition.org/national/index.html>. Vermont contact David Ross, Veterans for Peace at deross2@yahoo.com



Oxfam America's
International Women's Day Event
Ending Hunger Starts with Women
Join us!

Saturday, March 5th, 5pm
Main Street Landing, Burlington, Vermont

Oxfam America is hosting a Hunger Banquet, in partnership with local and national organizations and prominent community leaders from Vermont, to highlight the importance of investing in women in agriculture, in both developing communities and Vermont.

The Peace & Justice Center is a partnering organization



Across the African Continent:
Peace Corps Volunteers recount their experiences 

Peace Corps Volunteers provide direct technical assistance in education, youth and community development, health, business and information and communications technology, agriculture, and the environment while living in the communities where they work. Come hear stories of their adventures and view photos of their work spanning different sectors.

Dates and Times:
Sunday March 6, 2pm (education)
Sunday March 13, 2pm (health)
Sunday March 27, 2pm (environment)

All sessions will be held at the Peace and Justice Center, 60 Lake Street 1C, Burlington

For information call 656.8269 or email peace.corps@uvm.edu

Vermont Veterans' DC Demonstration Greeted by Nationwide News Blackout

An Interview with David Ross, Green Mountain Veterans for Peace, by Anna Guyton

On December 16, 2010, 133 honorably discharged American Armed Forces veterans and a handful of supporters were arrested at the White House gates while an additional 500 to 700 hundred vets and supporters stood outside the restricted zone. Two things were unusual about this “civil resistance.” First, it was the largest action of its type in many years. Second, it was *totally blacked out* by the mainstream corporate media as was the recent demonstration at the Fort Benning School of the Americas (School of the Assassins) where thousands gathered and those “crossing the line” were given up to six months in prison, which is the prospect we veterans and our friends face for our action in December. The message of “Operation Peace on Earth” was direct: “President Obama *Stop these Endless Wars.*”

■ What inspired the civil disobedience in Washington, DC, on December 16th?

Veterans for Peace feels that we can no longer depend on either Obama or Congress to stop these endless wars. The Vietnam war never really ended in the sense that it simply shifted to different environments and the color of the corpses changed. Overtly, covertly, our military/CIA hired mercenaries. We have become a permanent war economy. Only the American people can stop these wars. Vets for Peace is entering a period of increased militancy with others to break this cycle and end *corporate ownership* of *our* government.

■ What did Veterans for Peace want to accomplish?

This is a wake up call. When government won't even listen to its own veterans and active duty soldiers, it's time for a regime change. The government-ordered national news media blackout of this event shows how desperately the corporations don't want the people's voices heard. We will be heard, we will escalate until the voices of angry Americans can no longer be ignored.

■ Do you feel that you succeeded?

This was only a beginning and, as such, in and of itself, not of all that much consequence. The “Nazi/Stalinist Russia-like” nationwide media blackout shows the lengths corporate government will go to suppress articulate dissent. So yes, we did succeed in getting started. We would urge veterans and active duty service-people who believe in the Constitution and quaint notions like Duty, Honor, and Country to check out Veterans for Peace. We aren't anti-American – we are America.

■ What advice would you give to people who oppose the war and want to do something about it?

If you love your country, you had better be ready to fight for it. Look up the *Bill of Rights* and compare what it says to what you see happening all around you. The *Bill of Rights* has been raped to death and with it the *US Constitution*. It is no longer “We the People.” It is “We the Corporations – with the power to buy whatever influence we want.” In the final analysis there is the old quote “people get the kind of government they deserve.” America has arrived at a historical crossroad; the time for talk is over, it is time for action or it is time for the death and burial of a once great ideal called America. Join a group and do something. It's that simple and that difficult.

My final comment concerns the *Bill of Rights*. Look it up. Read it. Understand this – it's gone. The new counter-terrorism regulations bypass its guaranteed individual and collective protections and effectively relegate it to the ash heap of history. Freedom of the press? When the press capitulates absolutely to the dictates of the government and corporations, which it has in fact done, when honorably discharged veterans, many of whom served in combat, are denied any other venue to have their voices heard by their elected leaders and must, in patriotic desperation, chain themselves to the White House gates and risk serious prison terms because no other option is left, well then friends, we are all in trouble. ☹

Vermont Peace Vigils

- Barton: 12-12:30pm Fridays on the Common
- Brattleboro: Saturday, 11-12, Post Office
- Bristol: 5-6pm Fridays, corner of Main & North Sts.
- Burlington: 5-5:30pm Monday-Friday: Top of Church St.
- Chester: Saturdays, 11-11:30am, Town Green
- Enosburg Falls: 5-5:30pm Saturdays, Main St. side of Lincoln Park
- Hardwick: 5-6pm Fridays, Peace Park
- Marshfield: Fridays; 4-5pm Rte 2
- Middlebury: 10:30-11am Saturdays, corner of Main & Merchant's Way
- Montpelier: 12-1pm Fridays, Federal Building
- Newport: 4-4:30pm Wednesdays in front of State Office Building
- Richmond: 5:30pm Thursdays, Congregational Church, Bridge St
- Rutland: 12-1pm, Fridays, Main St. Park, corner of West and Main
- St Johnsbury: Fri. 4-5pm, in front of the Main St. post office
- South Royalton: Thursdays, 4:30-5:30pm, on the bridge into town
- Vergennes: Saturdays, 10-11am, Vergennes City Green
- Williston: 5:15-5:45pm 1st Wednesdays, steps of Williston Federated Church

For more calendar events, go to the PJC website www.pjcv.org and join our bi-weekly enews.



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- \$500
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