

Early Fall
2015

Vol. 50 No. 6



Newsletter of **LEPOCO**
Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern

Diplomacy Rocks! *

Understanding the Iran Deal with Zia Mian

On September 3rd, Zia Mian, a physicist and peace activist at Princeton University's Program on Science and Global Security, addressed the impact and implications of the U.S. nuclear deal with Iran -- days before the final approval of the deal was achieved. Mian, whose research has focused on nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation, offered a detailed analysis of the deal, Iranian nuclear history, and the state of Nuclear Nonproliferation worldwide. He stressed the importance of the deal, but also its drawbacks and imperfections.

The basic existence of the deal is possibly its most important element. The relations between the U.S. and Iranian governments have been so fraught and contentious, that simply getting the governments back to the table was a very significant step. The Iranian nuclear program would, of course, not exist without the extensive help that came from the United States. Iranian nuclear scientists were trained at MIT and the U.S. government supplied the Shah with fissionable materials and equipment. The U.S. was unwilling to maintain support for an Iranian nuclear program after the 1979 Revolution deposed the Shah. When Iran was ready to come to the table, after the world discovered in 2003 that Iran had undertaken a secret nuclear enrichment program, the Bush Administration refused to engage in talks -- despite European powers wanting to do so. After Obama's election, the U.S. government wanted to reopen negotiations, but Iranian President, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad refused to participate. Finally, with the election of Iranian President, Hassan Rouhani, in 2013, talks were commenced for the first time in decades.

Given this history, Mian states, a deal is crucial. As the sides pushed each other further apart over the last 15 years, and dealings became more adversarial, the likelihood of nuclear weapon development grew. Diplomacy and the deal in place can prevent that outcome, while also putting nuclear nonproliferation back on the table. The Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) is in crisis, as countries with nuclear weapon stockpiles have not upheld their end of the agreement. While, for the most part, the treaty has prevented further nuclear pro-

** "Diplomacy Rocks" was a sign created by Mimi Lang for a Second Thursday Peace Vigil in Bethlehem.

liferation, there has been very little action taken on disarmament, leading to a growing disagreement among the signatories. Hopefully, with the Iran deal bringing nuclear weapons negotiations back to the forefront, further progress can be made on disarmament negotiations.

The deal does have a "dark side," though, Mian warned. In Iran, the nuclear leadership has built a
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What We Did to Build Local Understanding of the Iran Nuclear Deal

On Tuesday, August 11, thirteen people gathered at LEPOCO to plan local activities in support of final U.S. approval of the Iran Nuclear Deal. We knew that Congress needed to give their approval by mid-September. This gave a sense of urgency to our discussion. The gathering planned a range of activities, all aimed at urging our Senators and Representatives to support the Deal. Many of these plans were spelled out in the Emergency Call to Action email and newsletter messages sent out shortly after the August 11 meeting.

We used many opportunities to get phone calls to our Senators -- approaching people with "flashy outreach" at Musikfest, seeking calls to support the deal on a calling thermometer at VegFest and Pride in the Park, and holding calling nights to reach out to LEPOCO lists. We held "Diplomacy Rocks" and other signs at two monthly second-Thursday Bethlehem Peace Vigils. On September 10th our efforts were joined with a Move-On national day of action. On that day we held our signs in a heavy warm rain. We drafted and circulated
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"We Embrace the Lives Ruined By War:
Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Yemen,
Libya, Israel-Palestine"

Sunday, November 1, Noon-1 pm

Main St., Emmaus

(near the Sunday Emmaus Farmer's Market)

Please wear black, if possible.

Organized by the Stop the Wars Committee of LEPOCO.

Slowing Down for Quality of Life

I write this article while visiting the home of Leigh Ann Stratakos in Delaware Water Gap. Leigh Ann is waging a campaign to get drivers to "slow down in our town."

Leigh Ann began this project last year after several residents' pets were struck and killed on Main Street in Delaware Water Gap. The speed limit on Main Street is 25 mph and many drivers have unofficially been clocked at over 50 mph. Leigh Ann stands on the sidewalk holding a sign stating the speed limit -- bearing human witness and making eye contact -- the focus that otherwise gets lost in the hurry of high speed living. This work goes deep into the fabric of social consciousness. We have opportunities to recognize human connectedness between neighbors and travelers. When we do so, we may realize that wherever our feet or tires take us -- are always near someone's home, and we can respect and love that person and community in different ways. We can recognize in ourselves that we find greater ease on a sidewalk when traffic is calm, and motors purr by without racing or screaming. And why not wish ease for people and animals we pass along the way?

As I write this, the 24-7 drone of Interstate-80 traffic is steady in the distance, a reminder of humanity's desire for high speed living, and the cost: 30,800 deaths annually in U.S. automobile crashes (2012 data). I think to myself, I don't want to be part of this problem, I wish peace for people who are driving and for people on this street.

I wish people living a consumptive, competitive life to see humanity's effects on environment and social stratification. When "us" and "them" can become "we" the people, and "we" the planet; when "there" and "then" can become "here" and "now"; when NIMBY can see past "my yard"; then we can share resources and make clearer choices, in the best interest of life and to respect one another on a human level. Air & water pollution, littering, political and social power grappling, racism and war will no longer be conscionable strategies. We will be able to focus on cleaner living, equity and giving back to balance things we take from earth and community.

Awareness is upon us the very moment we slow down and see ourselves in the faces, the animals and the trees we didn't recognize, when we passed by so many times in a hurry.

- Scott Slingerland

Editor's Note: Scott Slingerland wrote a letter to the editor about similar issues on September 30, calling for safety actions by PennDOT to protect pedestrians on Daley Ave. near the Sands Casino Resort in Bethlehem. A car struck and killed a pedestrian in that area on September 4.

First Tuesday Book Group

The First Tuesday LEPOCO Book Club will meet next on November 3rd, when they will discuss "*Americanah*," by Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. The 2013 novel is "a richly told story" set on three continents in today's globalized world. The book won many awards and much praise like another writer's description of *Americanah* as "sublime, powerful...the most political of Chimamanda's novels."

On December 1st, the Book Group will discuss "*Between the World & Me*," by Ta Nehisi Coates.

The group is reading inspiring and challenging books. Others are invited to join them once in awhile or often. They meet at the Bethlehem Wegmans (off Rt. 512, north of Rt. 22). The meeting starts at 6 pm. You can get some food and/or drink and join the group in the upstairs dining area. For more information contact Mimi Lang at 610-866-2407.

Check out the LEPOCO website at www.lepoco.org for a Calendar of Events, Newsletter Archive, Videos, & More.

Sign up for LEPOCO e-mail weekly updates by calling 610-691-8730, or by writing to lepoco@fast.net. You can also sign up to receive the newsletter by email.



Newsletter of LEPOCO
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Articles/news should be submitted to one of the addresses above for consideration for the next issue of the newsletter.

Newsletter Staff: Tom Stinnett, Nancy Tate, Jeff Vitelli, Amanda Zaniesienko.

Thanks to all the people who collate and prepare the newsletter for mailing each month.

LEPOCO Steering Committee: Terry Briscoe, Bridger Buller, Martha Christine, Julius Iwantsch (co-treasurer), Dan Miller, Janet Ney, Mary Kay O'Donnell, Jim Orben, Susie Ravitz, Scott Slingerland, Tom Stinnett (co-treasurer), Nancy Tate (ex-officio), and Amanda Zaniesienko (ex-officio).

Potluck/Popcorn & Politics

Friday, November 6th, 7:00 pm

LEPOCO History Films

A Popcorn & Politics Film event projected on the big screen at the LEPOCO Peace Center, 313 W. 4th St., (south) Bethlehem.

As we observe LEPOCO's 50th year this will be an opportunity to see three short films about our work and local peace activism. One film produced by Jim Schneider tells the story of local antiwar activism leading up to and during the war in Iraq. Another film was produced by Guy Gray and Mike Lawton for LEPOCO's 40th year and looks at the organization's history through interviews and photographs. The third film, "LEPOCO: A Persistent Presence," was produced by John Pettegrew, Nicholson Baker, and Sieglind Gatewood, as part of a film production workshop at the Southside Film Festival in 2009.

Please bring a snack or beverage to share.

Sunday, November 8th, 6:00 pm

"Signs of Hope in Cuba-U.S. Relations"

A Panel Discussion with

Ricardo Viera, David Sommers, & Faramarz Farbod

A Potluck & Politics event at Lehigh Valley Friends Meetinghouse
4116 Bath Pike (Rt. 512), Bethlehem (18020), 1/2 mile north of Rt. 22

Ricardo Viera, is Cuban-American. Born in Cuba, he arrived in the U.S. in 1962. He is a Vietnam-era veteran, but his life's work is in art. He is Professor of Art at Lehigh University and Director/Chief Curator of the Lehigh University Art Gallery (LUAG). The University has an extensive collection of Latino, Latin American, and Caribbean Art, with a strong component of Cuban works. He has traveled to Cuba several times collecting Cuban art.

David Sommers has visited Cuba twice (2014 and 2015) as an adult leader with a delegation of Moravian Church young people. They visited with Cuban young people who are active in the Moravian Church on the island.

David Sommers is a resident artist at the Banana Factory, Bethlehem, and teaches Spanish, Art History, and Comparative World Religions at Moravian Academy.

Faramarz Farbod is a professor of political science at Moravian College. He has a special interest in U.S. foreign policy and the issue of development related to the global south and globalization.

*Please bring some food to share for the potluck dinner at 6:00 pm.
The presentation and discussion should begin shortly after 6:30 pm.*



Peace Pole Planting Delayed

The new Peace Pole has arrived. It will be planted in Bethlehem's Rose Garden Park to replace the somewhat aging present Peace Pole. But, due to logistical issues it will not be planted until early spring. We hope to hold a dedication ceremony shortly after it is planted. In the meantime, Dan Miller gave assistance to the current Peace Pole so that it stands appropriately straight.

Close The SOA Protest: Nov. 20-22

People will return to Fort Benning, Georgia, to take a stand for justice and accountability, November 20-22, as they have for 25 years. Torture survivors, union workers, faith communities, artists, students, migrants, veterans and others from across the Americas will speak out against violence and militarization in a series of events and actions that weekend. The gathering will commemorate the martyrs, march to Stewart Immigrant De-

tion Center, teach and learn from each other, and celebrate resistance at the gates of Ft. Benning. If you plan to participate please let LEPOCO know, especially if you can write a report for this newsletter. This may be the last year when this protest will happen in Georgia as SOA Watch organizers are planning to move the 2016 protest to the militarized U.S./Mexico border.

Holiday Open House

Saturday & Sunday, December 5th & 6th

1-4 pm each day

Fair trade crafts & food from around the world,
Buttons, Stickers, Cards, Holiday Cards & 2016 Calendars.

LEPOCO Peace Center

Diplomacy Rocks! _____

Understanding the Iran Deal with Zia Mian

(continued from page 1)

reliance on nuclear power and transitioning away from nuclear energy will be quite difficult and complicated. Because action was not taken earlier to curb nuclear development in Iran, there is little chance of a truly nuclear-free Iran taking shape. On the U.S. side, we find other great pitfalls. In order to sell the Iran deal in the rest of the Middle East, the U.S. government has negotiated new military aid pacts with Saudi Arabia, Israel, and others, leading to further military build-up in the Middle East region. Billions more in U.S. military aid will be going to these countries that already receive many billions each year.

Primarily, this deal buys us time, and now we have an opening, an opportunity to work meaningfully on nuclear nonproliferation in the Middle East. A crucial step in that process is getting Israel to get rid of, or at least reduce, their nuclear weapons program. It may seem like a tall order, but inaction is no longer an option. Someone has to start the conversation about turning the Middle East into a nuclear-free zone. Indeed, the NPT review conference (meeting every five years) has long called for an international conference on a nuclear weapons free zone in the Middle East.

Our work as citizens is not done. We made our voices heard, and the Senate listened, but we need to continue to advocate for continued work on building peace in the Middle East instead of the U.S. endlessly feeding our military industrial complex and the war machines of others.

- Tim Morgan

What We Did to Build Local Understanding

(continued from page 1)

petitions, and collected signed postcards to mail to our Senators. We urged participation in local meetings held by other groups about the agreement and some wrote letters to the editor. We cheered when Senator Casey (PA) and Senator Booker (NJ) announced their support. It was a triumph of diplomacy and dialogue over conflict and violence. As this newsletter was being prepared we held a Potluck & Politics discussion at LEPOCO that featured a presentation by Faramarz Farbod on, "What Are Some of the Implications of this Historic Agreement." It was attended by 25 people.

We are still urging thank you messages to Sen. Casey, Sen. Booker and Rep. Cartwright for their support of the Iran Nuclear Deal.

Thank you to Alex Fischer, Sakura Bolte, Skip Moyer, Terry Briscoe, Mimi Lang, Amanda Zanieniesko, George Grubb, Faramarz Farbod, Omeed Farbod, Amirbehnam Farbod, Tom Stinnett, Martha Christine and Nancy Tate for getting the process started for peace

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activism on August 11. This is one time when we worked on a peace effort with a defined timeline and witnessed a good result.

Where To Now; There Is More To Be Done

ISIS - On many occasions Phyllis Bennis, of the Institute for Policy Studies, has helped us understand the issues of war and peace in the Middle East. Besides her articles, interviews, and speeches, she writes short books that present analysis and suggestions for solutions with peace activists in mind. We have copies of her books, "Ending the U.S. War in Afghanistan: A Primer," written with David Wildman (\$10); and an updated version of "Understanding the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict: A Primer" (\$15). We now also have her latest book, "Understanding ISIS & the New Global War on Terror: A Primer" (\$15). You can call, write, or visit the LEPOCO Peace Center to get a copy.

Syria - Peace Action's Kevin Martin wrote an email message on October 16, urging that we "keep up the pressure on Congress and the Obama Administration to start talks with all parties in the region and not stop talking until the war ends." To that end in late September 53 members of Congress sent a letter to President Obama supporting international negotiations to end the civil war in Syria. Rep. Jim Hines from Connecticut led the effort. Only one Pennsylvania representative (Chaka Fattah) and two from New Jersey (Bill Pascrell and Bonnie Watson Coleman) were among the letter's signers. (No Lehigh Valley-area representatives signed.)

These articles may help us understand the "quagmire within a quagmire" (Bernie Sanders' words) war:

- #1. "Who's Bombing Whom in Syria," by Jack Moore, from September 30, in *Newsweek*. He lists the activities of 13 countries that have bombed Syria in 2015.
- #2. Robert Fisk's article, "Syria's 'Moderates' Have Disappeared...and There Are No Good Guys," from *The Independent*, was carried on CommonDreams.org on October 5, and includes this quote, "...there are no good guys and bad guys in the Syrian war. The Russians don't care about the innocents they kill any more than do the Syrian army or NATO.
- #3. Ray McGovern, former CIA analyst and now with Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity, wrote in *Consortium News*, "The Hope Behind Putin's Syria Help," on October 5 (also carried at CommonDreams.org), "...if Washington finally decides to face the real world --

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Monthly Peace Vigil

4:00 - 5:00 pm; Second Thursdays

November 12th & December 10th

Our wars continue and expand. Please help witness for peace.

3rd & Wyandotte Sts., (south) Bethlehem

Contact: Vince Stravino 610-216-8103 / LEPOCO 610-691-8730

Diplomacy Rocks! _____

Where To Now; There Is More To Be Done

Syria - (continued from page 4)

not remain in the land of make-believe that stretches from the White House and State Department through the neocon-dominated think tanks to the editorial pages of the mainstream media -- it will confront a classic 'devil-you-know' dilemma."

Doctors Without Borders Hospitals - The October 3rd U.S. bombing of the Doctors Without Borders (Médecins Sans Frontières/MSF) hospital in Kunduz, Afghanistan, killed 12 MSF staff and 10 patients (three of them children). So far the U.S. and Afghanistan have refused to seek the much-needed independent investigation of this tragedy (MSF believes it is probably a war crime) by the International Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission (IHFCC.org) as requested by MSF.

Some members of Congress (Keith Ellison, Jim McGovern, Barbara Lee and Raul Grijalva) are circulating a letter calling for that independent investigation. We can urge our own representatives to support this letter.

Peace activists in the U.S. stood outside hospitals in Philadelphia and Chicago days after the bombing with signs that read, "Dropping Bombs Here Would Be a War Crime; the Same Is True in Afghanistan."

Staying in Afghanistan - As the U.S. started the 15th year of war in Afghanistan in October the "Morning Call" ran a collection of letters to the editor (Oct. 8) asking what options the U.S. has in that war. None of the six writers wanted a continued U.S. military presence.

Nonetheless, on October 15, President Obama announced that he was halting the withdrawal of U.S. military forces from Afghanistan and that thousands of U.S. troops will remain there through the end of his term. On October 21, the "Morning Call" ran an op-ed by Andrew Bacevich, political scientist and military historian, "Yes, the U.S. Can Withdraw from Afghanistan."

Several U.S. peace activist signed a letter on October 16, stating, "...Afghanistan will be a disaster when the U.S. occupation ends, but it will be a larger disaster the longer it takes to do so;" and, "Afghanistan need not be 'abandoned.' The U.S. owes Afghanistan reparations in the form of significant actual aid, the cost of which would...be less than that of continuing the war." The statement is available at www.worldbeyondwar.org.

Israel-Palestine - As news of violence and repression in Israel and Palestine has increased in October it may be helpful to be in contact with some of the national groups creatively and persistently addressing this decades-long crisis: the Palestine Project of Christian Peacemaker Teams, www.cpt.org; JewishVoiceForPeace.org; International Solidarity Movement (ISM),

www.palsolidarity.org; U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation, www.endtheoccupation.org.

Yemen - On September 28, at least 131 civilians, including at least 80 women, were killed at a wedding reception in Yemen in an airstrike by the Saudi-led military coalition. The U.S. is providing the coalition with intelligence, surveillance, and logistics information.

Thirteen members of Congress sent a letter to President Obama on October 14 urging the U.S. to do more to protect civilians from U.S.-assisted airstrikes in Yemen. (No Pennsylvania representatives signed this letter.)

According to Amnesty International more than 2100 civilians have been killed in the conflict (at least 400 of them children). Most casualties are attributed to attacks by the Saudi-led coalition. More than 1.4 million people have been displaced and 12.9 million are food insecure. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon says there is no military solution and has called for an "end to bombings."

On September 29, Richard Falk wrote about "The Yemen Catastrophe: Beset by Contradictions of Will and Intellect," published at CommonDreams.org.

Refugees - In July, Save the Children and others reported that before Syria's war nearly all children went to school in that country. Now "they are carrying guns, selling fuel, harvesting potatoes, baking bread and repairing shoes ("Morning Call," 7/5/15). Also, in July the UNHCR (UN High Commissioner for Refugees) chief, Antonio Guterres said the Syrian refugees are the biggest refugee population from a single conflict in 25 years -- 4 million refugees outside the country; 7.6 million displaced within Syria. Amnesty International says the world now has the highest number of refugees and internally displaced people since the end of WW II ("The Intelligencer," 7/20/15).

On September 9, Mennonite Central Committee reported that the UN has received less than half of the funding requested for the Syrian humanitarian crisis.

On September 10, Phyllis Bennis of the Institute for Policy Studies, called for several humanitarian efforts including U.S. refugee assistance for Syria equal to the cost of U.S. military action against ISIS -- about \$9 million a day.

Special Peace Vigil to "Embrace Lives Ruined by War" - For all the reasons described above the Stop the Wars Committee of LEPOCO is planning a silent peace vigil on Sunday, November 1, Noon to 1 pm, "We Embrace the Lives Ruined By War: Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Libya, Israel-Palestine." Because there is a Sunday Farmer's Market there, we plan to stand on Main St., Emmaus, near that event. People are encouraged to wear black. This date was chosen as we approach the one-month anniversary of the bombing of the Kunduz hospital in Afghanistan (Nov. 3) and yet no international independent investigation has started. Please join us if you are able.

- Nancy Tate

Naomi Klein: Indigenous Rights & Climate Action

Indigenous rights? What do indigenous rights have to do with climate, environmental degradation, and fossil fuel industries? Naomi Klein's excellent book, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. The Climate*, provides her well thought out, well documented answer to that and a host of other questions, not just in some abstract, general theoretical sense, but in practice, on the ground, in real life.

In this partial review of Klein's book, I summarize a strategy in which she connects climate activism with support of indigenous peoples and their rights. For non-Natives that strategy hinges on enlightened self-interest. In addition to the support we should be providing on moral grounds, we all should support indigenous efforts in order to save our own you-know-whats.

What goes into Klein's strategy?

Element 1: Blockadia

Indigenous peoples have been among the most active in Blockadia, those conflict zones around the world in which local people act to block extractive projects, -- mines, fracking, pipelines, trains, or trucking routes. The local people use a variety of blocking actions, sometimes even putting their bodies between the earth-movers and the earth. Indigenous peoples' use of direct actions, their building of community solidarity, the formation of alliances that include non-Natives, and their grassroots readiness to lead the way, model what can be done. A few examples:

Indigenous tribes united with anti-tar sands activists from Alberta, Canada, and ranchers in 2010 and fought to stop the big rigs needed by the coal industry from traveling Highway 12 in Montana and Idaho and,

in 2013, members of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation carried out "activist lockdowns and blockades" in opposing an alternative truck route through their lands in Oregon.

In October 2013, the Elsipogtog First Nation led a blockade against a fracking operation in New Brunswick, Canada, which non-Native Canadians joined.

Element 2: Indigenous Rights

The legal framework Indigenous peoples have been using rests, in large part, on treaties, made over the course of centuries, that confer rights to hunting, fishing, trapping, and ancestral sacred grounds within lands granted to them in perpetuity. These treaties -- in some cases, lack of treaties -- can be powerful tools for preventing ecological crises if used in fending off the fossil fuel industry. There have been some important court victories. Again, examples:

The Supreme Court of Canada, in *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia* in 1997, ruled that Aboriginal title over large parts of British Columbia had never been ceded to Canada and,

in the *Marshall* decision of 1999, affirmed that First Nations largely based in New Brunswick and

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Nova Scotia had not ceded their lands, but had instead agreed to share them with settlers on the condition that First Nations could continue to use those lands for traditional activities.

In 2014, Alaskan Native tribes, together with several environmental groups, won a major court victory against Shell's Arctic drilling activities.

Element 3: Honor the Treaties

Klein points to evidence that Indigenous rights are starting to gain clout in Canada, referencing some business articles and news reports about sagging mining jurisdictions and investor concern about "First Nations issues." She calls attention to a Neil Young fundraising, consciousness-raising "Honor the Treaties" 2014 cross-Canada tour. She argues that for indigenous court challenges to be successful on a broad scale, they need to be carried out in concert with the direct actions of Blockadia, "coalitions of rights-rich-but-cash-poor people teaming up with (relatively) cash-rich-but rights-poor people", and mass movements of united peoples demanding that the treaties be respected.

Element 4: Don't Just Divest, Reinvest

Indigenous people often live in impoverished circumstances. Given their desperation, mining companies gain ready audiences when they say they will provide jobs and money to fund new social programs. What is needed to turn indigenous people away from the trap they find themselves in and into solar warriors are viable alternatives, funded by outside sources. Their systemic economic and social disenfranchisement needs to be addressed. "Part of the job of the climate movement, then, is to make the moral case that the communities who have suffered the most from unjust resource relationships should be *first* to be supported in their efforts to build the next, life-based economy now...in which those communities have full control over resource projects, so that they become opportunities for skills training, jobs, and steady revenues..."

Lessons for the L.V.'s Sustainability Community

If we were to subscribe to Klein's strategy, here are some steps we in the Greater Lehigh Valley might take:

Build connections between the progressive community and indigenous peoples in the Valley. The Leni Lenape have been active in Valley anti-food irradiation and anti-pipeline efforts. What can progressive organizations do to further connectedness?

Welcome and dialogue with indigenous students from elsewhere who come here to attend college.

Keep up to date on what indigenous communities are doing to protect their lands -- perhaps via a publicly accessible listing maintained by the progressive community and/or area college programs.

Be responsive to calls for support and involvement and offer support and involvement.

Do these steps resonate? What other ideas about implementing Klein's strategy might you suggest? Contact LEPOCO with your thoughts.

- Martin Boksenbaum

LEPOCO 50th Anniversary Log

The Dance Party

The year of celebrating LEPOCO's 50th anniversary kicked off with a joyful Dance Party in Allentown on September 11. LEPOCO people ate and drank and danced and shared their ideas of why LEPOCO is important to them.

Besides remembering why we love our Peace Center and celebrating its 50-year existence, we raised over \$1200 for the care of refugees in Syria and Yemen. Those donations were sent to Doctors Without Borders (www.doctorswithoutborder.org) and the International Rescue Committee (www.rescue.org). Thank you to all who attended for their participation and for their donations.

A special thank you to Evan Hoffman for his perfect DJ-ing and to Kathryn Hoffman for sharing her grand home for the evening. Thank you to everyone who brought delicious snacks, especially Donna Hartmann for her rich and beautiful peace sign-decorated carrot cake. And finally, a thank you to everyone for your continuing in-terest in supporting our 50-year-old peace group. After all, You Are LEPOCO.

- Mimi Lang

NCC Peace Conference

On October 15th a panel of six long-time LEPOCO activists talked about the peace work of the group for the 6th Annual Peace Conference at Northampton Community College. Two founding members, Fran Dreisbach and Susie Ravitz, joined four others: Jeff Vitelli, Nancy Tate, Mimi Lang, and Evan Hoffman. The group covered a lot of issue territory in their hour-long presentation -- Vietnam draft resistance, nuclear disarmament, Central America solidarity, drones and recent wars, civilian war victims and the importance of peace activism. Thank you to Vasiliki Anastasakos and James Von Shilling for planning the program.

A report about the panel by Myra Saturen was published at NCC's website and reads in part:

"War never proves who's right...only who's left," "Taxes for peace, not for war," "Another world is possible," read posters at Northampton Community College's Lipkin Theatre on October 15. The College celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of LEPOCO (Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern) as part of the 6th Annual Peace & Justice Conference...

About the organization that got started in protest against the Vietnam War, Professor of English, James Von Schilling said, "To stay with it for years and years as issues changed is amazing. There is bad news and good news. The bad news is that LEPOCO is still needed. The good news is that its members still have energy and commitment." (That is in part a quote from Martha Christine in the last LEPOCO Newsletter.)

... Ranging in age from young adult to ninety-one, they came to the organization via different but similar

paths. Jeff Vitelli, a conscientious objector during the Vietnam War, was drawn by LEPOCO's "passion for and commitment to convert mental attitudes from war to peace." Mimi Lang joined later in her life, in the 1980's, attracted by a "loving, spiritual community working for peace."

Evan Hoffman traces his involvement since the age of eight, when his parents brought him to meetings. He attended LEPOCO's annual peace camp, marched against the War in Iraq, engaged with Occupy Wall Street, and participated in many other peace and social justice causes. Nancy Tate became aware of societal injustice while growing up during the civil rights era in racially segregated Virginia. She took part in social justice causes before joining LEPOCO.

Susie Ravitz spoke about her concern over "perpetual war," conflicts the United States has initiated or engaged in since 2001. She decried George W. Bush's administration in its false claims of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, which led our country into war.

Fran Dreisbach, age 91, expressed concern about the United States' defense budget, which she said is far greater than that of other countries, and intentional civilian casualties, which date to the First World War.

All of the panelists told of being arrested for their actions... They have advocated for nuclear non-proliferation and strategic arms limitations. Several have traveled around the world to help bring about human equality through "citizen-to-citizen exchanges."

Hoffman said about his dedication (borrowing some words from Howard Zinn), "You can't be neutral on a moving train. True peace is not just the absence of war, but the presence of justice."

Two LEPOCO panelists recited poetry and encouraged the audience to join them in peace vigils and other actions for peace and justice, including the annual Christmas Peace Pilgrimages from Nazareth to Bethlehem.

The Poster Contest:

"Picture a World Without Violence"

As this newsletter is being prepared posters from young people entering the LEPOCO 50th Anniversary Poster Contest are arriving at the Peace Center. We expect over 100 entries from about a dozen schools.

LEPOCO's 50th Anniversary Poster Contest Award Ceremony

"Picture A World Without Violence"

Saturday, November 14, 2 pm

Fowler Family Center, Northampton County College
511 East 3rd St., (south) Bethlehem

Help celebrate with the young artists!

Bits & Pieces

☺ Several environmental groups are joining together to tell Governor Wolf's Pipeline Task Force that "we don't want their fracked gas and we don't want them greasing the wheels for more pipelines that will pass from Pennsylvania into our neighboring states." They are calling all the forces against pipelines, compressors, LNG and the fracked gas that spurs them into being to come to **Harrisburg on Wed., Oct. 28.**

There will be a press conference and rally at noon and the Task Force meeting will be at 1 pm. It has become clear that the Pipeline Task Force was created to "build public acceptance" of increased drilling, fracking and pipelines. That means more pipelines, compressors, and LNG facilities for everyone on the East Coast. You can learn more at www.delawareriverkeeper.org. People will meet at PA DEP, 909 Elmerston Ave., Harrisburg, for the press conference and rally at 11:30 am.

☺ *The Intercept* published the "Drone Papers" on October 15, based on leaked government documents. It is the most in-depth look at the U.S. drone assassination program to date, according to www.DemocracyNow.org. The documents were leaked to *The Intercept* by an unnamed U.S. intelligence source who says he wanted to alert U.S. citizens to wrongdoing. Amnesty International said the leaks should spark an independent congressional inquiry over "whether the USA has systematically violated international law, including by classifying unidentified people as 'combatants' to justify their killings." The "Drone Papers" can be read at theintercept.com/drone-papers/.

You may want to read the "Drone Papers" and then join the **protest of drones** at the Horsham Air Guard

Station on Sat., Oct. 31 for the monthly public peace witness, noon to 2 pm. Call LEPOCO for more details. Car pools leave Hellertown at 10:45 am.

☺ Lehigh University Choral Arts will present "A Child's Requiem," Fri. and Sat., **Nov. 6 and 7**, at 8 pm. This prize-winning oratorio was written by Choral Arts director Steven Sametz. The oratorio was composed in memory of those slain at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, in 2012. The words are those written by elementary school children in response to the tragedy. Tickets are \$18.

☺ On Sun., **Nov. 1**, at 7 pm, there will be a **Rise Again Release Concert** with Peter Blood & Annie Patterson, Tom Chapin, John Flynn, Kim & Reggie Harris, Charlie King, and Two of a Kind, at the Race Street Quaker Meetinghouse, 1515 Cherry St., Philadelphia. The concert will benefit Quaker programs addressing racism. The tour celebrates the release of *Rise Again*, the sequel to *Rise Up Singing*, a wonderful collection of folk music and topical songs for peace and justice that makes it possible for everyone to sing along. For tickets and more info. see www.riseupandsing.org/tour.

☺ Negotiations on the **Trans-Pacific Partnership, "NAFTA on Steroids"** were completed on Oct. 5. The text remains secret, but non-

corporate observers say that from what they know it will be catastrophic. Four leading candidates for president in 2016 have come out against it. Public Citizen (www.citizen.org/TPP) says it will kill jobs and consumer protection. The Sierra Club (www.sierraclub.org/trade/trans-pacific-partnership) calls it an environmental disaster. TPP is now set to be fast-tracked through Congress. It is important to call your members of Congress and urge them to "Reject the TPP." Rep. Dent 202-225-6411; Rep. Cartwright 202-225-5546; Rep. Fitzpatrick 202-224-4276; Sen. Casey 202-224-6324; Sen. Toomey 202-224-4254.

☺ In 1958, a four-person crew of Quaker activists set sail from California aboard the **Golden Rule** in an attempt to halt atmospheric nuclear weapon tests in the western Pacific. It was the first of the environmental action and peace vessels to put to sea. Veterans For Peace activists have launched the Golden Rule again after a restoration project. This summer the Golden Rule set sail in Eureka, California, and traveled to the Veterans For Peace national convention in San Diego. It is now on a 10-year journey for education and activism against nuclear weapons as a "weapon of mass education." You can learn more at www.vfpgoldenruleproject.org.



Support LEPOCO!

- Enclosed are my yearly LEPOCO dues of \$ _____
(\$35 individual; \$45 hh; \$75 supporter; \$5 lim. income)
- I am also enclosing an extra donation of \$ _____
- I would like to support LEPOCO's work with
a ___ monthly / ___ quarterly pledge of \$ _____
- I'm interested in the following issues: _____

Name _____ Phone # _____ e-mail _____
Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Return to: LEPOCO Peace Center, 313 W. 4TH St., Bethlehem, PA 18015, or
Donate through PayPal by going to the "membership" page at www.lepoco.org.

Bits & Pieces

☪ "Stand Up to Bullies!" is the theme of a day of presentations and workshops planned by the Lehigh Conference of Churches (LCC) Justice & Advocacy Committee for Sat., Nov. 7, 8:30 am to 1 pm, at First Presbyterian Church, 3231 Tilghman St., Allentown. Speakers will be: Christi Dominguez from The Valley Against Sex Trafficking; Rev. Gregory J. Edwards from Resurrected Life Community Church; LeShan St. Clair-Spencer from Turning Point of the Lehigh Valley; and Fritz Walker from Cease Fire PA and Everytown for Gun Safety. Topics to be covered include: domestic violence, gun violence, human trafficking, and systemic racism in schools and the school to prison pipeline. The only cost is for a light brunch where a \$5 donation is suggested. Please pre-register by calling the LCC Office at 610-433-6421 or by writing to Bob Walden at justice@ppir.org.

☪ The lecture by **Robert Dunham**, Ex. Dir. of the Death Penalty Information Center, has been rescheduled for **Monday, Nov. 9**, at 4:10 pm, at Lehigh University. The exact location on campus had not yet to be set as this newsletter is being prepared. (Please check the University website, call the Dialogue Center, 610-758-3877, or contact LEPOCO for the exact location.)

Robert Dunham was formerly the director of the Pennsylvania Capital Resource Center and is on the Board of the Pennsylvania Innocence Project. He was unable to speak at the originally scheduled time, September 29th lecture due to the number of people under imminent threat of the death penalty at that time.

☪ Though not definite, it is quite likely that the Lehigh Valley Chapter of **Veterans For Peace** will hold their annual **Veteran's Day Vigil** on

Wed., Nov. 11, in Bethlehem's Rose Garden Park, at the corner of 8th Ave. & Union Blvd. The presence will last from 8:30 am to 3 pm. Representations of tombstones bearing the names and information of Pennsylvania veterans killed in the Afghan and Iraq conflicts will be displayed. The veterans say they especially enjoy the opportunity to talk with students arriving at and leaving Nitschmann Middle School (across the street from the park). You are invited to join them for any part or all of the vigil. Contact Vince Stravino at 610-216-8103 or Phil Reiss at 610-282-8077 for more info.

☪ The good folks working to "Raise the Wage" in Pennsylvania believe the legislation to accomplish this goal is being held hostage by the chairs of the Labor & Industry Committees in the Pennsylvania House and Senate. **Raise the Wage PA** is urging people to contact Sen. Lisa Baker (717-787-7428) and Rep. Maureen Gingrich (717-783-1815) and ask them to report out a minimum wage bill of at least \$10.10 per hour now, including for tipped workers. (Pennsylvania's minimum wage remains at \$7.25 per hour.)



☪ As we face ongoing war in Afghanistan and U.S. bombing raids in several countries it may a good time to remember some words from **Jacob George**, a three-tour veteran of the Afghanistan War who committed suicide on September 17, 2014. What a loss for the world. He had become a dedicated and creative peace activist, a poet, a musician. His fellow peace activists in Iraq Veterans Against War and Veterans For Peace remember "his joy and fierce tenderness. His suicide came shortly after President Obama announced renewed bombing in Iraq and Syria last year. Here are some of the lines from his poem "Support the Troops."

... see,
war ain't no good
for the human condition
I lost a piece of who I was
on every single mission
and I'm tellin you,
don't thank me for what I've done

give me a big hug
and let me know

we're not gonna let this happen
again

because we support the troops
and we're gonna bring these wars to
an end.

MEETINGS...MEETINGS...MEETINGS...MEETINGS...ETC.

Tuesday, October 27, 5 pm: LEPOCO 50th Anniversary Planning Committee Meeting at L.V. Friends Meetinghouse, Rt. 512, north of Bethlehem.

Wednesday, November 4, 3:30 pm: L.V. Committee Against State Killing (LV-CASK) Meeting at the LEPOCO Peace Center.

Friday, November 6, 11 am: Americas Solidarity Group meeting at LEPOCO Peace Center, Bethlehem. (The group will also meet on December 4, at 11 am.)

Mondays, November 9 & December 14, 7 pm: LEPOCO Monthly Action Meeting at the LEPOCO Peace Center. All members & friends are welcome at his business meeting where the organization's activities are reviewed and set.

Thursdays, November 12 & December 10, 6 pm: L.V. Veterans For Peace Meeting at Perkins Restaurant, 3rd & Brodhead, south Bethlehem. Call Phil Reiss 610-282-8077 for more info.

Please join in the meetings and work of these groups as you are able. If you want more information about the meetings of the Stop the Wars Committee, Annual Dinner Planning Committee, Peace Camp Planning Committee, LEPOCO Peace Singers, Newsletter Planning Group, Peace-A-Thon Planning Committee, or more information about any of the meetings listed above, please call LEPOCO at 610-691-8730.

For a regularly updated calendar of events and meetings, please see www.lepoco.org.



Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern

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Insert:

Christmas Peace
Pilgrimage

Stand Up & Speak Out!
Saturdays
October 31 & November 28
12 Noon

Protest Horsham Drone Command Center
(Outside Horsham Air National Guard Station,
Easton & County Line Roads, Horsham, PA)

10:45 am: Carpool from Lehigh Valley
(From Hellertown Park & Ride, Silvex Rd.
near intersection of Rt. 412 & I-78)
Call 610-691-8730.

Monthly Peace Vigil
4:30 - 5:30 pm; Second Thursdays
November 12th &
December 10th

Our wars continue and expand.
Please help witness for peace.
3rd & Wyandotte Sts., Bethlehem
Contact: Vince Stravino 610-216-8103

We Embrace the Lives Ruined By War:
Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Libya, Israel-Palestine
Sunday, November 1, Noon-1 pm
Main St., Emmaus
(near the Sunday Emmaus Farmer's Market)
Please wear black, if possible.
See pages 1 & 5.

LEPOCO Potluck & Politics:
"Signs of Hope in Cuba-U.S. Relations"
Sunday, November 8, 6 pm
Ricardo Viera, David Sommers, Faramarz Farbod
L.V. Friends Meetinghouse
See page 3.

LEPOCO's 50th Anniversary Poster Contest
Award Ceremony
"Picture A World Without Violence"
Saturday, November 14, 2 pm
Fowler Family Center, Northampton County College
See page 7.