

## Honduras: So Far and Yet So Near

The November 1<sup>st</sup> Amy Goodman coverage, on *Democracy Now!*, of "shocking revelations" about "the assassination of renowned Honduran indigenous environmental leader Berta Cáceres," provided evidence of what was suspected all along, that the assassination was linked "to the highest levels of the company whose hydroelectric dam project she and her indigenous Lenca community were protesting."

The March 2, 2016, assassination of Cáceres highlights several components of globalization's workings. First, there's the workings of the corporations themselves, acting to remove obstacles to their corporate agenda – quoting the report of the investigating lawyers, "The existing proof is conclusive regarding the participation of numerous state agents, high-ranking executives and employees of Desa in the planning, execution and cover-up of the assassination."

Second, is the collusion of the Honduran government. The New York Times reporter Goodman was interviewing, Elisabeth Malkin, points this out:

*"Honduras is a country where a very small number of people control large parts of the economy, and they have strong links to the government. They're often in the government. And the question is -- and these economic actors basically have been able to do what they want to do. And Berta's-- the COPINH's [National Council of Popular and Indigenous Organizations of Honduras] resistance really was a sign that, 'No, you can't do exactly what you want to do. We will try to stop you.' And so, this investigation is really a test case for whether this impunity should -- if there's a way to counteract this impunity."*

A bit of pussy-footing here around the "state agents" the investigative lawyers had mentioned. There is mention that, "The investigation also revealed DESA exercised control over security forces in  
(continued on page 2)

## What's the Point?



"What's the point of Tuesdays with Toomey (TwT)? He's not there! He just got reelected and has six secure years, he can act as he pleases." For us TwT regulars for over 45 weeks now, it's our way of exercising our rights and responsibilities as a citizen. Now that Toomey is our senator, it's our civic duty, and his as well, to ensure that he represents ALL of his constituents. Because of differences in opinion and since he

hasn't yet held a real town hall, we need to regularly remind him that he cannot ignore us.

What's a typical TwT-day like? Driving down Cedar Crest Boulevard, you may first spot a colorful banner saying, "Tuesdays with Toomey, Join us." Standing nearby is "Donald Trump" in prison garb, waving at you, but also warning you, "Don't get conned." Along the railing is a deployment of peaceful protesters with signs for various causes, interspersed with some American flags adding patriotism to the mix. "Healthcare is a human right," "Save DACA," "War is costly but peace is priceless," "There is no Planet B," "Science not silence," etc. By now you would also hear some cars enthusiastically honking. The activists respond ebulliently. A voice rises from a bullhorn, a group is assembled around the speaker, cheering. If you were to stop and linger, you'd see somebody collecting letters for Toomey, and then one or two people would walk into his office to deliver them. His staff

(continued on page 2)

## Holiday Open House

Saturday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1-4 pm

&

Sunday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1-4 pm

at

**LEPOCO Peace Center**

313 West Fourth Street, south Bethlehem

Fair trade crafts & food  
from around the world through  
**SERRV;**

Buttons, Stickers, Cards;  
Holiday Cards & 2018 Calendars

(Also during normal office hours through December.)

# Honduras: So Far and Yet So Near

(continued from page 1)

the area, issuing directives and paying for police units' room, board and equipment." But what else could be said about the "repressive apparatus" Cáceres talked about in the 2013 interview quoted by Goodman, the "policy of the state to instill terror and political persecution"?

Third, as Malkin points out, there are international connections. The Honduran energy company behind the dam project, DESA (Desarrollos Energéticos), "did have foreign funding from European development banks [and] from a Central American development bank."

Fourth, not pointed out in the Goodman coverage, those international connections come right to us. As the Americas Solidarity Group pointed out in our June 1, 2017, letter to Representative Charlie Dent,

"From Paragraph 19 of H.R. 1299, 'The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016, allocated approximately \$18,000,000 to the Honduran police and military in addition to the National Defense Authorization Act allotment for fiscal year 2016 authorizing additional funding. The Administration's funding request for fiscal year 2017 also calls for an increase in security funding for Honduras.'"

It looks like our tax dollars, coming out of our pockets here, are helping to pay for instilling terror and political persecution there.

H.R. 1299, the Berta Cáceres Human Rights in Honduras Act, would withhold U.S. allocations to the Honduran police and military "until such time as human rights violations by Honduran security forces cease and their perpetrators are brought to justice."

We again thank Representative Matt Cartwright for co-signing H.R. 1299. Please contact your Representatives and ask them to co-sign as well, joining the other 60+ co-signers.

Honduras is so far and yet so near.

- Martin Boksenbaum

**Editor's Note:** Please see the enclosed brochure for ideas about contacting Congress in support of the Berta Cáceres Human Rights in Honduras Act. Then you can share it with a friend and urge them to do the same thing.

# What's the Point?

(continued from page 1)

would wearily greet the weekly visitors with a civil conversation in "agree-to-disagree" mode. From inside the office, you could clearly see our fellow protesters and hear the supportive honks from the traffic. Sure, we also get some thumbs down, but we hope that these persons, when hearing so many honks, will rethink their position.

So, here's the point. Like clockwork, TwT is an expectation. Every Tuesday, we meet to feel connected and get educated, the traffic expects to see us there, and Toomey's office hears the honks and receives our let-

ters. We've even done daily protests when it mattered most, like for healthcare. This is better than taking it lying down. We resist. We persist in feeding Toomey our opinions, for him to remember when he votes and legislates. We don't want to leave anything to chance and later regret not having done enough. If you share our belief, come join us and swell our ranks.

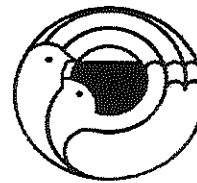
Tuesdays with Toomey, Noon to 1 pm - 1150 South Cedar Crest Blvd., Allentown (18103).

- My Lien Nguyen

# Tax Cuts & the Rest of Us

On Halloween, LEPOCO's Terry Briscoe brought concern about excessive military spending to a rally against the tax plan rushing through Congress. The small rally on a cool, sunny day was outside the office of Rep. Charlie Dent, in Allentown and was organized by the indefatigable Phila Back. Often the ever growing pot of our tax dollars that is thrown at military contractors is omitted from the discussion of the egregious problems with the federal budget and the current tax proposals. Thank you to Terry and Phila for including this information.

The problems with the tax plan are described in dire terms: an unprecedented money grab, with 80% of the benefits going to the richest 1% of taxpayers. This at a time when a new report from the Institute for Policy Studies, "Billionaire Bonanza," finds that the three wealthiest people in the U.S. own more wealth than the entire bottom half of the U.S. population combined. (The study can be read at [ips-dc.org/billionaire-bonanza](http://ips-dc.org/billionaire-bonanza).)



Newsletter of LEPOCO

Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern

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The LEPOCO Newsletter is published eight times a year by the Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern, a nonviolent, non-profit organization dedicated to peace in all forms.

### Annual dues are:

Regular Member .....	\$35
Limited Income Member .....	\$10
Household Membership .....	\$45
Supporting Member .....	\$75

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, Martin Boksenbaum, Amanda Zaniesienko.

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

**LEPOCO Steering Committee:** Olivia Arena-Miller, Carol Baylor, Mick Baylor, Terry Briscoe, Julius Iwantsch (co-treasurer), Nancy Johnston, Christine Loch, Dan Miller, Janet Ney, Jim Orben, Scott Slingerland, Tom Stinnett (co-treasurer), Nancy Tate (ex-officio), and Amanda Zaniesienko (ex-officio).

# Potluck & Politics

Sunday, January 7<sup>th</sup>, 4:00 pm

## "Reds"

A Potluck & Politics program featuring a film projected on the big screen  
at the LEPOCO Peace Center, 313 W. 4<sup>th</sup> St., (south) Bethlehem.

"Reds," is the 1981 epic drama film about the life and career of John Reed. Reed was a journalist and writer who chronicled the Russian Revolution in his book "Ten Days That Shook the World." Because the film is so long it would not fit into our usual First Friday evening film format, so we are holding a New Year's (shorter days) event on a Sunday with a potluck dinner mid-film. Warren Beatty co-wrote, produced, directed and starred in the film that also featured Diane Keaton, Louise Bryant and Jack Nicholson. "Reds" is considered a classic U.S. film and has remained popular.

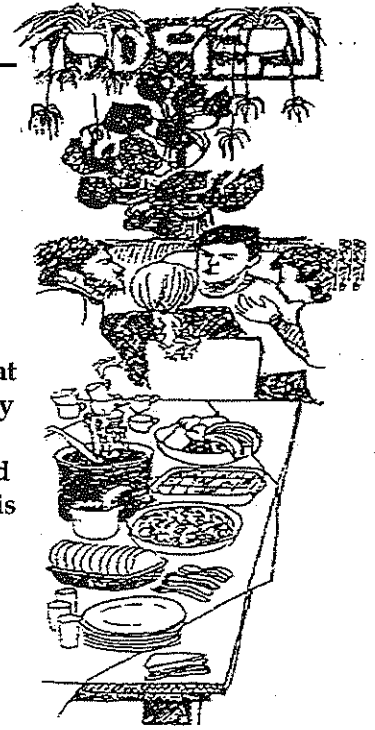
Join us for this special program.

Written & directed by Warren Beatty.

195 minutes (with break for potluck dinner mid-film). 1981.

Please bring food to share for the Potluck Dinner.

*We should eat at around 6 pm.*



## A Peace Camp Party

There will be a winter Peace Camp Party in early February. Watch for a final announcement. Parents/guardians will be invited to join their young people for music, stories, crafts, activities like dance and games - and refreshments. This is another effort to help young people see themselves as peacemakers in our world. You can register or ask your questions by phone, email or real mail, at the usual LEPOCO addresses.

## Calling Activists to the Steering Committee

The Steering Committee for LEPOCO is seeking members to join in their strategizing, agitating, and maintaining the work of the organization. The group needs to build the participation back up to the thirteen member level. Terms are for two years, starting in March after the Annual Dinner. If you would like to join this serious, welcoming body (or want to suggest someone else as a possible member) please contact the LEPOCO Peace Center by phone, email or letter.

## LEPOCO Annual Dinner Set

Kathy Kelly of Voices for Creative Nonviolence, based in Chicago, will be the featured speaker at LEPOCO's Annual Dinner on Saturday, March 17, 2018. Kathy Kelly has been a leader in the work for peace and against the many wars of the last several decades - Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen.

In late October, Kathy Kelly wrote in the "Rise Up Times," about the hunger, famine, and migration moving across East Africa into Yemen. She concluded, "In relation to conflict-driven famines, it becomes even more imperative to resist the U.S. government's allocation of 700 billion dollars to the Department of De-

fense... Growing inequality, protected by menacing arsenals, paves a path to the graveyard: It is not a "way of life." We still could acquire a great hunger: a transforming hunger to share justice with our planetary neighbors. We could shed familiar privileges and search for communal tools to preserve us from indifferent wealth and voracious imperial power. We could embrace the theme of the Irish sisters at their Feile Bride gathering (where Kelly spoke): "Allow the Voice of the Suffering to Speak" and then choose action-based initiatives to share our abundance and lay aside, forever, the futility of war."

We look forward to Kathy Kelly's visit in March.

## Resist & Persist

"These are trying times. We encourage you to take a stand against the unraveling of our progressive beliefs and achievements. Displaying your resistance on your person, home, car, room, etc., is a message to everyone you encounter. Some will be inspired to do something. Others will be glad to see they are not alone. Those who are challenged by the message may remember it on their own journey. Every graphic and written impression for peace, justice, awareness and human progress is one more grain of sand among the millions of acts of courage and kindness that Pete Seeger spoke of which add to eventually turning people, problems and things around, as long as we *persist*, as well as *resist*."

- These words are from Clay Colt and Kate Donnelly of Donnelly/Colt Progressive Resources. They have been distributors of union-made buttons, stickers, etc., for several decades. You will find many examples of their work in LEPOCO's collection.

## Help Tell the Truth About the U.S. Role in the War on Yemen

Long-time Bucks County peace activist, Andy Mills, recently wrote an appeal to all of us to, "Please call your Senators and Congresspeople and tell them that U.S. officials must demand that Saudi Arabia immediately stop its blockage of humanitarian shipments of food to Yemen. And insist that the U.S. must stop participating in Saudi Arabia's war on the Houthis."

His appeal is urgent. We see the pictures of children - starving, victims of cholera, left without family after a bombing raid. A "60 Minutes" program on November 19, apparently presented this reality powerfully, condemning the actions of Saudi Arabia, but all too typically, failed to point out the crucial role of the U.S. in supporting Saudi Arabia's war - refueling Saudi jets in mid-air, providing intelligence, selecting targets, enforcing a naval blockade. On November 17, OXFAM predicted an "extraordinary level of devastation" in Yemen in coming weeks. Even before the recent tightening of the blockade of Yemen 17 million people did not know where their next meal would come from and 928,000 people are believed to have contracted cholera (source: November 17, "Politics of Poverty" blog at [oxfamamerica.org](http://oxfamamerica.org)). Also on November 17, Amnesty International USA said that the U.S., U.K. and France risk complicity in the collective punishment of civilians in Yemen. They say these countries are continuing to supply the Saudi Arabia-led coalition with arms and thereby allowing Saudi Arabia and its allies to flagrantly

flout international law. Our country is risking being complicit in war crimes. As of November 15, the Saudi blockade of Yemen's Hodeidah port has prevented nearly 500,000 metric tons of food and fuel from reaching Yemen.

So we all need to heed the request of Andy Mills and call our Senators and Congresspeople at 202-224-3121, and insist that the U.S. stop supporting Saudi Arabia's war on Yemen and call for an immediate end to the blockage of humanitarian shipments of food and fuel to Yemen.

- Nancy Tate

## New/Old Responses to Gun Violence

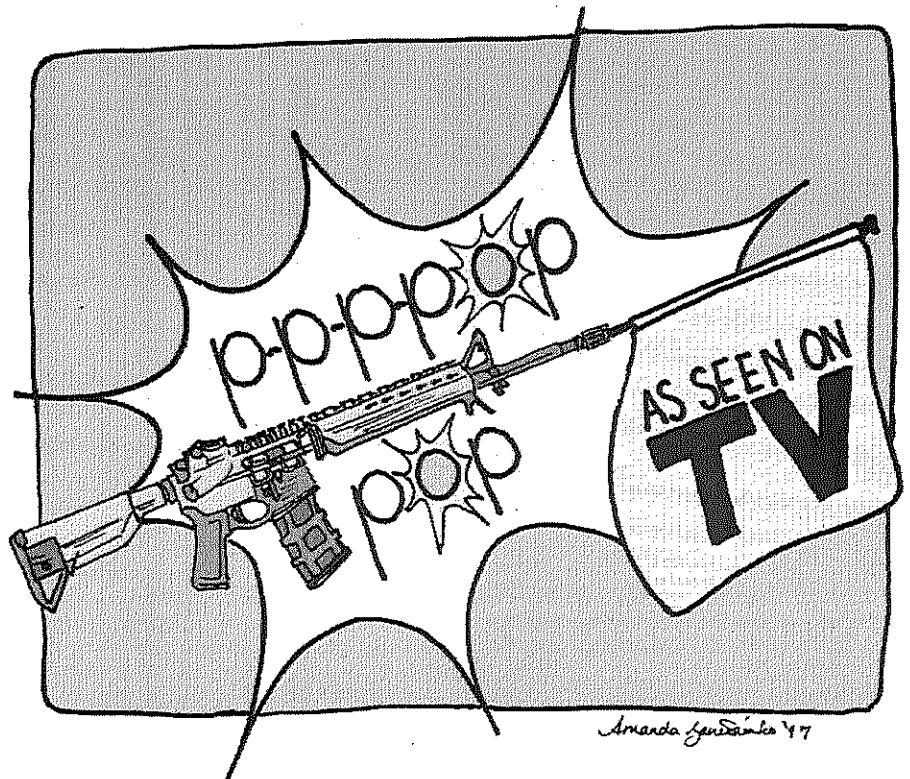
In response to the shootings in Las Vegas, Amy Goodman revisited the story of Australia during her October 4<sup>th</sup> program on "Democracy Now!" She reported that after the 1996 Port Arthur massacre in Tasmania, Australia, where 35 people were killed and 23 were wounded, the government reached a bipartisan deal to enact gun control measures - in a country of gun lovers. There has not been a mass shooting in Australia since (see [www.democracynow.org](http://www.democracynow.org), 10/4/17).

In Bethlehem, a newly concerned person stepped forward and organized a peaceful march against gun violence on October 12<sup>th</sup>.

And on Common Dreams, Robert Koebler wrote about, "The Violence Comes Home Again: I'm not against gun control measures, but they're not enough." He spells out links between domestic gun violence and our \$700 billion military budget (see [www.commondreams.org](http://www.commondreams.org), 10/5/17).

Maybe it's the movies, maybe it's the books  
Maybe it's the bullets, maybe it's the crooks  
Maybe it's the drugs, maybe it's parents...  
Maybe it's the Bible, maybe it's the lack  
Maybe it's the music, maybe it's the crack  
Maybe it's the hairdos, maybe it's the TV...  
Maybe it's the army, maybe it's the liquor  
Maybe it's the papers, maybe the militia  
Maybe it's the athletes, maybe it's the ads...  
Maybe it's the KKK and the skinheads  
Maybe it's the communists,  
    maybe it's the Catholics  
Maybe it's the hippies,  
    maybe it's the addicts...  
Maybe it's the homeless, maybe...the banks  
Maybe it's the clearcut,  
    maybe it's the ozone  
Maybe it's the chemical,  
    maybe it's the car phones  
Maybe it's the fertilizer,  
    maybe it's the nose rings  
Maybe it's the end, but I know one thing.  
If it were up to me, I'd take away the guns.

- from "If It Were Up to Me," by Holly Near  
on the "Edge" album, released in 2000



# Literacy & the Prison Industrial Complex

*"The Prison Industrial Complex, PIC, is a partnership that was nicknamed the "iron triangle" in the 1996 Report of the National Criminal Justice Commission. It is a complicated and sometimes conspiratorial relationship between government, private industries, lobbyists, and politicians that has been operating since the 1970's."*  
- *The Prison Industrial Complex for Beginners*

On October 12<sup>th</sup> approximately 45 people gathered at Lehigh Valley Quaker Meeting to hear author James Peterson\*\* share thoughts about his text, *The Prison Industrial Complex for Beginners*. The purpose of the gathering was to take hold of some basic literacy about this justice issue - i.e., information, both current and historical, and the strategic skills needed to address it. Literacy.

Dr. Peterson's book paints with a broad brush and vivid colors, even in black and white. The chapters are short and to the point. Illustrations throughout, by John Jennings and Stacey Robinson, give emotional impact to the fact-based text. In just 144 pages the book defines "complexes," covers U.S. racial history beginning in West Africa, addresses the role of Law & Order Ideology, the War on Drugs, Prison Privatization, the effects on Youth, Immigration, Solitary Confinement, Recidivism and Reform Efforts. There are plenty of citations and an appendix for further reading.

Strategic questions were raised during our discussion and there were many ideas for steps/actions. Here are a few.

Follow the Money. Divest from the prison Industrial complex (*The Prison Industrial Complex for Beginners* has a full listing of engaged businesses.) Support/expand bail bond funds. Support shareholder advocacy efforts like the Friends Fiduciary Investments as they raise concerns about telecommunications price gouging in prisons. Object to policies that lead to prisoner indebtedness.

Accompaniment/walking alongside. Visit or tour local prisons (connection=transformation). For more information see [lsavenelli@northamptoncounty.org](mailto:lsavenelli@northamptoncounty.org), or [prisonervisitation.org](http://prisonervisitation.org). Encourage job hires for returning citizens and support Northampton County Prison's workforce development efforts.

Be proactive about addressing white privilege. Read books like *The Prison Industrial Complex for Beginners* and *White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide*, by Carol Anderson. Join local groups like SURJ (Standing Up for Racial Justice) and POWER-NE.

Political Action. Lobby for federal and state incarceration reforms like no mandatory minimums and clean slate legislation. Write letters to the editor so that prisons are not invisible. Support the Black Lives Matter movement. Friends Committee on National Legislation is one resource ([fcnl.org](http://fcnl.org)).

The room was full. Full of bodies, ideas, talent, good will, and concern. Relationships were begun, relationships were deepened. It is good to gather, face to face, in these times.

\*\*Dr. James Peterson is the Director of Africana Studies and Associate Professor of English at Lehigh University. He is the author of several books, *The Hip Hop Underground & African American Culture*, *Prison Industrial Complex for Beginners* and *Hip Hop Headphones: A Scholar's Critical Playlist*. He hosts "The Remix," on WHYH public radio.

- Mary Lou Hatcher

## Prisons Violate Human Rights

After attending the program described above, I also attended the program: "Unpacking Mass Incarceration: A Conversation on Trauma, Healing and Reform," at Resurrected Life Community Church in Allentown, on Sunday, October 22. Rev. Dr. Gregory James Edwards, Pastor of the Resurrected Life Community Church, challenges the Theology of Empire with Liberation Theology, and hosted the panel discussion on prison and sentencing reform before an audience of about 150.

Panelists included members of Decarcerate PA, Aiden Martin and Mark Walters of the Coalition to Abolish Death by Incarceration (CADBI), and Hasshan Betts, Director of Promise Neighborhood, Allentown.

Attorney Reggie Shuford of ACLU-PA and their Campaign for Smart Justice to Cut the U.S. Jail and Prison Population by 50%, gave scores of statistics related to the many restrictions on re-entry faced by ex-prisoners.

Brittany White of Faith in Texas, addressed the inferiority of white supremacy, the need for bail reform, and the growing incarceration of women.

Mass incarceration is the human rights issue of our time. We need the courage, patience, and kindness to engage with people who have been incarcerated, bring their stories into public conversations, push for fair hiring and housing at city councils, work to reform criminal justice sentencing and prisons, and abolish the death penalty in all states.

- Monica McAgnon

### Support LEPOCO!

\_\_\_ Enclosed are my yearly LEPOCO dues of \$\_\_\_\_\_  
(\$35 individual; \$45 household; \$75 supporter; \$10 limited income)  
\_\_\_ 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 \_\_\_\_\_  
Mail to: LEPOCO Peace Center, 313 W. 4<sup>th</sup> St., Bethlehem, PA 18015 /  
Donate through PayPal: go to "membership" page at [www.lepoco.org](http://www.lepoco.org).

## An International Peacemaker Visits Allentown

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Samuel Javaid Akhtar became stranded in the United States after a conference he attended at the end of August 2001. Unable to fly home due to the flight restrictions to his native Pakistan after September 11, he was offered an opportunity to continue his education and his ministry in the U.S..

A doctor by training and a pastor's son by birth, Samuel became a pastor after he was married and had started a family. During a recent visit to the Lehigh Valley he shared with his audiences in the Lehigh Presbytery a beautiful picture of his home church decorated for Christmas; it is a large, grand church. "Is that your church in Pakistan?" surprised audiences asked.

Presbyterians have been active in the region now known as Pakistan since 1854. The current country of Pakistan is divided into four regions. Samuel's home is in the Punjab region. Although he is a U.S. citizen and his wife and children all live in the U.S. and are citizens, Samuel still thinks of himself as a Pakistani. "I didn't come here as a refugee or even an immigrant wanting to start a new life," he said in response to a question from an audience. "I am here doing what good I can do with God's help." He currently leads a congregation of about 70 members in the Chicago area made up of immigrants -- mostly from Pakistan, but some from the Philippines and Puerto Rico. His services are in English and Urdu, which are "official" and "national" languages; both are foreign to most Pakistanis, who learn first to speak the language of their region.

Samuel's father trained him to be a peacemaker. He was the only one of his siblings to attend public school, and, as it worked out, he was also the only Christian in his school. Christians are only about 2% of the population, but are the most numerous religion after Islam. It is a crime in Pakistan to proselytize, so Christians have to be very careful if they talk about religion. In school, Samuel was picked on, as minority children are everywhere in the world, he reflected, but soon the teachers saw he was a fast learner and worked overtime to help him learn additional material to what was being taught. This was Samuel's entry into understanding that religion is not what keeps people apart. He became a mediator of sorts in Christian-Muslim interactions.

When asked what his most important message to his audiences was, Samuel replied, "I want Americans to know that being a Christian in Pakistan is no different than being a minority anywhere and that one can have a good life." An urgent request followed: "When America does something that makes Pakistani Muslims angry, they respond by attacking the American proxy -- Christians. In the name of peacemaking, implore the government and media to be careful with threats and insults. Americans won't be hurt, but my family will."

During his visit here Dr. Akhtar was interviewed by John Pearce on WDIY. You can listen to that interview at [wdiy.org](http://wdiy.org) under the Lehigh Valley Discourse section. Dr. Akhtar's visit was part of the observance of the International Day of Peace in September.

- Sheila Clever

## Remembering a Good Friend

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My good friend, Susanna Wolf, died at the age of 90 on October 6<sup>th</sup>. She was a LEPOCO supporter who played the piano for the Peace Singers for a short time before she became ill. She was a poet and a musician who read widely and loved exploring spiritual issues. After a somewhat miraculous recovery from metastatic ovarian cancer in the 1990s, Sue was confined to a wheelchair and spent the last 20 years of her life living with grace and integrity in the nursing home section of Westminster Village.

Confinement in an institution did not affect Sue's great enthusiasm for life. She taught poetry writing and played the piano for many events at Westminster. She bartered for German lessons in exchange for teaching the recorder. In my visits with her in the last year of her life, she was overjoyed by listening to the poetry of Mary Oliver and to classical music. I will miss those happy visits.

I honor Sue's memory with the opening lines from a Mary Oliver poem, "Sleeping in the Forest":

"I thought the earth remembered me, she took me back so tenderly, arranging her dark skirts,  
"Her pockets full of lichens and seeds."

- Mimi Lang

## Remembering a Local Environmental Activist

Jean Pearson, friend and supporter of LEPOCO, German professor, poet, and lover of and advocate for animals, especially her beloved dogs, died on November 16, at age 72. Living most of her life in Bethlehem, she was a member of an early Bethlehem collective on Linden St., where a half-dozen people lived out their commitment to peace and community in the 1970s. At one point her environmental activism led her to run for Bethlehem City Council. In later years she was devoted to the care of her mother until her mother died, to the work of her Center for Animal Welfare and to her home near Monocacy Park.

## Remembering an Activist Elder

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Three LEPOCO members were lucky enough to visit the Imperial War Museum in London this year for their special exhibit, "People Power: Fighting for Peace," that traced the peace movement in England from WWI to the present. A main section of that exhibit was a display about Greenham Common where women camped for 19 years (1981-2000), encircling the six-mile perimeter of the RAF base where the U.S. stored cruise missiles. Helen John was the first full-time

(continued on page 8)

# The Importance of Saying "No"

Since the initial airing of the Ken Burns and Lynn Novick PBS series, "The Vietnam War," in September, there have been many opportunities to revisit the issues raised in or omitted from the film. In October the Vietnam Peace Commemoration Committee (VPCC) held a day-long conference in Washington, DC. Similar to the group's 2015 conference, "Vietnam: The Power of Protest," this gathering, "From Protest to Resistance," raised up the importance of the anti-war effort. One speaker said the anti-war movement has not been studied as much as other movements from the 1960s. Another said six million people acted in opposition to the war. There were 300 anti-war GI newspapers and the highest rate of desertion and AWOLs ever in 1971, according to a third speaker.

In opening the conference, Terry Provance, a lead organizer for the event, used three numbers to present a challenging summary of the importance of the VPCC gathering and of the events 50 years ago, when many of those present had joined the march on the Pentagon.

His first number was 1967.

"After years of incredible resistance by the Vietnamese, the growing strength of the anti-war movement and changing public opinion, by the end of 1967 Johnson, McNamara and Westmoreland all knew that the war in Vietnam could not be won. And, yet it continued and was maintained for another eight years by Nixon, Laird and Abrams, all of whom also knew it could not be won.

"Consider what would have happened had the war ended in 1967, had Johnson followed the advice of the peace movement, had he been respectful of public opinion. My Lai would not have happened. The Democrats would have won the 1968 election. Nixon would not have been president. Cambodia would not have been invaded. Kent State would not have happened. Ellsberg would not have faced 105 years in jail... And thousands of U.S. lives would have been spared in addition to millions of Vietnamese, Laotians and Cambodians. By the end of 1967, 14,000 U.S. troops had died. With another useless and reckless eight years of war, that number would go to over 58,000..."

His second number was 50.

"It's been 50 years since the March on the Pentagon. And with the recent PBS documentary on the war and its fake effort to reconcile all stories, there is an effort to put this war behind us. But we are here to remember it, not to forget it. The Vietnam War is not over. The U.S. government and military still have responsibilities for actions in Indochina. Still have responsibilities for Agent Orange and future deformed generations. Still have responsibilities for unexploded military devices. For defoliation. And even for war reparations. And we are here to call upon our government and military to accept these responsibilities and act accordingly..."

His final number was 11.

"You have seen the 10-episode documentary by Ken Burns and Lynn Novick on the war. Even though it presented important and useful information, it was so focused on exposing the lies of all Presidents involved as well as those of the Pentagon and even the media, that it forgot its own lies. It was not a civil war as Burns/Novick claimed. The atrocities and military strategies of the U.S. were far more inhuman and destructive and were not comparable to those of the Vietnamese. The peace movement did not spit on returning veterans and in fact embraced them as part of the anti-war movement.

"But it was the last episode that outraged me the most. Everyone was asked what they thought now that the war was over. U.S. Presidents, politicians, Congressional representatives, the Pentagon, soldiers and even the media and historians were asked. The Vietnamese were asked, their military, their government officials, their media were all asked. Bill Zimmerman, the lone anti-war activist in the film, who did a masterful job, was not asked. The peace movement was not asked. What do you think now that the war is over?

"We are here to answer that question. Our reply would have been that we are so glad the killing has finally stopped and that lives are saved. We would have said that though the fighting has stopped, the U.S. still has responsibilities and accountability to the Vietnamese. And, most emphatically, we would have said. The government lied to you. The presidents lied to you. Congress lied to you. The Pentagon lied to you. The media lied to you. We did not lie to you. We told you the truth about the war..."

"So please join me in helping us create the final episode 11 for The Vietnam War ..."

The Burns/Novick series will continue to be available in various formats on PBS. It is worth viewing. There are other related resources. We watched the documentary, "Two Days in October," at the October P&P film. People found this more personal look at the impact of the war to be useful. It is available as a DVD from Netflix. The podcast series featuring interviews with local people (Vietnam veterans, anti-war protesters, Vietnamese refugees and subject-matter experts) about their experience during the U.S. war in Indochina remains available at [wlvt.org/thewar](http://wlvt.org/thewar). Many resources from the conference including a video message from Daniel Ellsberg are available at [www.vietnampeace.org](http://www.vietnampeace.org).

- compiled by Nancy Tate

Check out the LEPOCO website: [www.lepoco.org](http://www.lepoco.org) for a Calendar of Events, Newsletter Archive, & More.

Sign up for LEPOCO e-mail weekly updates by calling 610-691-8730, or by writing to [lepoco@fast.net](mailto:lepoco@fast.net).

Follow LEPOCO on Facebook and Twitter.

Please "like" and "share," often.

# Bits & Pieces

☮ Watch for news from Oslo on **December 10**, as ICAN (the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons) receives the **Nobel Peace Prize**. Hiroshima survivor and ICAN campaigner, Setsuko Thurlow, will accept the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize, along with ICAN's executive director, Beatrice Fihn.

This is truly an accomplishment to be savored in our present world where POTUS is regularly scaring a lot of people with his cavalier attitude about nuclear weapons, his lack of knowledge, and his reckless issuing of threats. (See the excellent piece by David Corn, in *Mother Jones*, October 11, 2017, "Why You Really Should Be Terrified About Trump and Nuclear Weapons. The revelation that he wanted ten times the number of nukes is just the start.")

☮ Win Without War has let us know that Rep. Adam Smith (WA-09) has introduced a one-sentence bill, **"It is the policy of the United States to not use nuclear weapons first."** You can add your name as a citizen co-sponsor at [www.winwithoutwar.org](http://www.winwithoutwar.org) under their "Take Action" section.

☮ "Gerrymandering & How to Create Fair Districts in Pennsylvania," is the issue that has people talking all over the state. Carol Kuniholm of the organization, Fair Districts Pennsylvania, will present an overview of the issue and proposed legislation that could work in our state for a program on Friday, January 12, at 7 pm, at First Presbyterian Church, Cedar Crest Blvd. & Tilghman St., Allentown. For more information on the issue see [www.fairdistricts-pa.org](http://www.fairdistricts-pa.org).

☮ We still have some of the yard signs with the original design by Amanda Zaniesienko, **"Cut Military Spending; Our Lives Depend on**

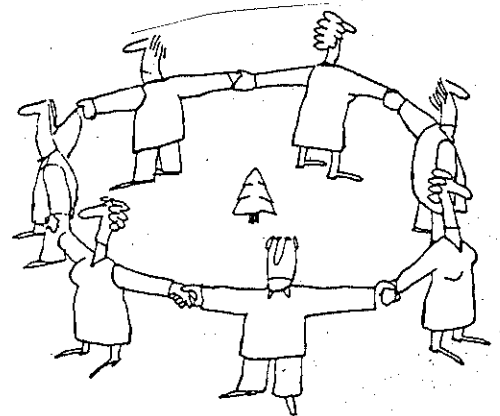
**It."** It is a very attractive sign with purple lettering and graphics on a white background. A generous benefactor (who wants to see the signs out and about) will cover \$10 of the cost for the sign for anyone promising to put the sign in their yard or other publicly visible location. Your cost will be only \$5. Please call LEPOCO (610-691-8730) to reserve your sign or stop by to pick one up (313 W. 4th St., south Bethlehem).

☮ In mid-October *The Intelligencer*, of Doylestown, carried the story of three agronomists working to replenish and replant the devastated land in Puerto Rico. The three became friends as graduate students at the University of California, Davis. One of the three, Sarah Dohle an assistant professor of plant science at Delaware Valley University, is collecting seeds for this project. Clean, commercial seeds of arugula, Asian greens, beans, beets, bell peppers, bok choy, cabbage, chili peppers, cilantro, cucumber, cover crops, eggplant, kale, lettuce, okra, pumpkins, parsley, passion fruit, radish, squash, sweet corn, tomato, turnips, watermelon and zucchini are all needed, and can be sent to Dr. Sarah Dohle, **Puerto Rico Seed Relief Project**, Delaware Valley University, 700 East Butler Ave., Doylestown, PA 18901. One of the three agronomists is Vivian Medina of Biodiversity International. She is working in Puerto Rico.

☮ **Robert Jay Lifton**, the imminent psychiatrist and author of more than 20 books about the effects of nuclear war, terrorism and genocide, spoke with Amy Goodman on "Democracy Now!" on October 13th. They talked about the "apocalyptic twins: nuclear and climate threats." Inevitably the discussion also included the current POTUS. Lifton opened, "I also belong to a group called the Duty to Warn, which is a group of psychiatrists and psychologists who feel we have the right and the obligation to speak out about Trump's psyche when it endangers the country and the world. And what we're seeing - you mentioned the potential unravel-

ing of the pact with Iran. There's also the potential unraveling of Donald Trump, which seems to be occurring. It's hard to read him, because his behavior, as I understand it, is completely **solipsistic**. He sees the world through his own sense of self, what he needs and what he feels. And he couldn't be more erratic or scattered or dangerous...

"He can't have empathy for others. He can't really think into the future... because he's totally preoccupied with the immediate event and how he can deal with it or manipulate it as emerging through the perception on the part of his sense of self. That's very extreme. People who are psychotic behave that way. And yet, for the most part, Trump is not psychotic. That combination makes him really dangerous. (For the complete interview see 10/13/17, [www.democracynow.org](http://www.democracynow.org).)



## Remembering an Activist Elder

(continued from page 6)

cruise missiles. Helen John was the first full-time peace camper at Greenham Common and was one of the four women who first chained themselves to the fences surrounding the base. On one day 30,000 women encircled the base.

Helen John died on November 5, at age 80. The creative, persistent and courageous protest at Greenham inspired people around the world. Look for the Greenham Common poster the next time you visit LEPOCO. It, too, was part of the "Power of the People" exhibit.

- Nancy Tate



# Bits & Pieces

☯ **Witness Against Torture** invites people to join them in Washington, D.C., for the 2018 **Fast for Justice**, January 7-14. They will offer public witness calling for the closing of Guantánamo, seeking an end to indefinite detentions and asking that the torturers be held accountable. They write, "For 13 years Witness Against Torture has championed the cause of the Muslim men unjustly imprisoned by our government at Guantánamo, using the prison to shine a light on the U.S. institutions of racist, Islamophobic state violence. But now, as our outrageous Narcissist-in-Chief distracts the world, those very institutions are quietly cementing into place and strengthening the security state that deprives entire groups of people of due process and protection under the law. We must resist: come to D.C. in January to witness in community and to build bridges with our allies as we engage the future!" For more information see [www.witnessagainsttorture.com](http://www.witnessagainsttorture.com).

☯ Watch for announcements about a January performance of Howard Zinn's, "**Marx in Soho**," in the Lehigh Valley. The Alliance for Sustainable Communities is working to bring former Lehigh Valley resident, **Bob Weick**, here for one of his impressive presentations of this play.

☯ Over 15,000 scientists from 180 countries issued a "second notice" to humanity on November 13<sup>th</sup>. The warning said, "**Time is running out**" to stop business as usual, as threats from rising greenhouse gases to biodiversity loss are pushing the biosphere to the brink. The warning was published in "BioScience." The original plea, "World Scientists' Warning to Humanity," was issued by nearly 1,700 scientists in 1992.

The "Second Notice" finds good news in the drop in ozone depleters

and advancements in reducing hunger since 1992, but sees the environmental threats that demanded urgent attention in 1992 are even worse now. Since the first warning there has been a 26.1 % loss in fresh water available per capita; a 75.3 % increase in the number of "dead zones," a 62.1 % increase in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per year, and a 35.5 % rise in the human population.

They call for promoting plant-based diets, reducing wealth inequality, stopping conversion of forests and grasslands; government interventions to rein in biodiversity loss via poaching and illicit trade, and "massively adopting renewable energy sources" while phasing out fossil fuel subsidies. (Source: [www.commondreams.org](http://www.commondreams.org), 11/13/17.)

☯ Jon Hurdle of "State Impact Pennsylvania" reported in November that a new National Resources Defense Council study has found that the U.S. pipeline industry is building far more **natural gas pipelines** than it needs. The report says the capacity of lines approved by federal regulators over the last two decades was More than twice the amount of gas

actually consumed daily in 2016. The report said the overcapacity is being driven by the profits that can be earned by pipeline builders. (Source: [stateimpact.npr.org/Pennsylvania](http://stateimpact.npr.org/Pennsylvania) under the Energy section.)

☯ In October a piece by **Ariel Dorfman**, "**Trump's War on Knowledge**," gives us some new ways of understanding our current situation. He speaks from the experience of witnessing the 1973 coup in Chile. He spells out better than many, the abuses of POTUS, but he closes, "We must trust that the intelligence that has allowed humanity to stave off death, make medical and engineering breakthroughs, reach the stars, build wondrous temples, and write complex tales will save us again. We must nurse the conviction that we can use the gentle graces of science and reason to prove that the truth cannot be vanquished so easily. To those who would repudiate intelligence, we must say: you will not conquer and we will find a way to convince." ([www.nybooks.com](http://www.nybooks.com), 10/12/17)

## MEETINGS...MEETINGS...MEETINGS...MEETINGS... ETC.

**Tuesday, November 28, 10 am:** **Stop the Wars Committee** meeting at Tierra el Fuego restaurant, 612 Northampton St., Easton.

**Sunday, December 3, 7 pm:** **LEPOCO Peace Singers Rehearsal** at home of Barbara & Al Wurth, Bethlehem.

**Tuesday, December 5, 6 pm:** **LEPOCO Book Group** meets at home of Bob & Carmen Riggs, 1113 Prospect Ave., Bethlehem, to set their reading list for 2018. No meeting in January.

**Thursdays, December 7 & January 4, 12:30 pm:** **Americas Solidarity Group** meetings at the LEPOCO Peace Center, Bethlehem.

**Mondays, December 11 & January 8, 7 pm:** **LEPOCO Monthly Action Meetings** at the LEPOCO Peace Center. All members & friends are welcome at this business meeting where the organization's activities are discussed.

**Tuesday, December 12, 11 am:** **LEPOCO Annual Dinner Planning Committee Meeting** at the Peace Center.

**Tuesday, December 12, 3:30 pm:** **L.V. Committee Against State Killing (LV-CASK) Meeting** at the LEPOCO Peace Center.

**Wednesday, January 17, 2018, 3:30 pm:** **LEPOCO Peace-A-Thon Planning Committee** meeting at the Peace Center.

*Please join in the meetings and work of these groups as you are able. If you want more information about the Peace Camp Planning Committee, any other committees, or about any of the meetings listed above, please call LEPOCO at 610-691-8730.*

*For a regularly updated calendar of events and meetings, see [www.lepoco.org](http://www.lepoco.org).*



# LEPOCO

Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern

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## See Inside:

### Page 1

Honduras  
Tuesdays w/ Toomey  
Holiday Open House

### Page 2

Continues &  
Lousy Tax Plan

### Page 3

P & Ps  
Peace Camp Party  
Steering Committee  
Annual Dinner

### Page 4

War & Guns

### Pages 5

Prisons

### Page 6

Report about Pakistan  
Remembering...

### Page 7

More on Vietnam

### Page 8 & 9

Bits & Pieces

## Monthly Peace Vigil

(Second Thursdays)

December 14 & January 11  
4:00-5:00 pm

*Our wars & bombings continue.  
Help witness for peace.*

3<sup>rd</sup> & Wyandotte Sts., Bethlehem

Call LEPOCO 610-691-8730 for more information.

## Saturday, December 9

58<sup>th</sup> Annual Nazareth-to-Bethlehem  
Christmas Peace Pilgrimage

Featured Speaker: **Roberta Meek**

"We Who Believe in Freedom Cannot Rest:  
Racism in the Current Era"

For more information see enclosed brochure.

## Stand Up & Speak Out!

Saturday

December 30

12 Noon - 2 pm

**Protest:**

**Horsham Drone Command Center**  
(Rt. 611, Horsham)

Call 610-691-8730 for information  
about car pooling and other details.

## Holiday Open House

LEPOCO Peace Center

Saturday & Sunday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>

1-4 pm, each day

see page 1 for more information.

Save the Date!

Saturday, March 17, 2018

LEPOCO Annual Dinner

Featured Speaker: **Kathy Kelly**

(see page 3 for more information)