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

Remembering Dr. King's Vision of a Non-Nuclear World

The profound moral courage and humanitarian justice of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. included his opposition to war and nuclear weapons.

In 1963, the U.S. and Russia agreed to a Limited Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. Meanwhile, Dr. King who had become one of the most well known leaders for the civil rights struggle, continued to speak of a broader view of social justice and world peace:

"What will be the ultimate value of having established social justice in a context where all people...are merely free to face destruction by Strontium-90 or atomic war?"

"It is a wonderful thing to work to integrate lunch counters, public accommodations, and schools. But it would be rather absurd to work to get schools and lunch counters integrated and not be concerned with the survival of a world in which to integrate. I feel that people who are working for civil rights are working for peace; I feel that the people working for peace are working for civil rights and justice."

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the UN Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the only binding agreement among five nations with nuclear weapons: China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, and United States. Other states that developed nuclear weapons – India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea, have not signed the treaty.

Now is the time to raise public awareness about the humanitarian and environmental dangers of nuclear weapons, before the UN review of the NPT, tentatively set for August 2022.

The US will spend \$634 billion over the next decade to modernize the US nuclear weapons arsenal. Why? Having more nuclear bombs and missiles does not deter or make us safer. We must pivot to protect the rights of people and the planet, because nuclear war combined with climate change will deliver disasters of epic proportions.

In his speech at NYC's Riverside Church in 1967, King said, "A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death."

The non-nuclear nations at the UN organized and in January 2021, ratified the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), declaring all nuclear weapons illegal. The US and other nuclear states did not sign. Why? The US claimed the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons was enough, and now the two treaties must be aligned.

Dr. King's values still apply to civil rights and we must apply them to abolish nuclear weapons.

This piece is made up of excerpts from an op-ed written by Monica McAgon (edited here by Janet Ney) that appeared in The Morning Call on Monday, January 24, 2022 (two days after the one-year anniversary of the TPNW going into effect). You can read Monica's complete article at www.lepoco.org under "Recent Posts." The article gives historical context to Dr. King speaking out against nuclear weapons.

Priorities...Priorities...Priorities

In late December Lindsay Koshgarian of the National Priorities Project at the Institute for Policy Studies, wrote, "What if you wanted less child poverty, better health care, more help with child care and elder care, and at least a gesture toward a solution to the climate crisis? And what if instead you got a \$778 billion check for war profiteering?"

"That's the bait and switch we just got, as Congress passed a \$778 billion war and military budget, about half of which will go to corporate contractors, and failed to pass the Build Back Better plan that costs less than a quarter of that annually..."

She closes with some of "the facts about what Congress is choosing when it funds a \$778 billion Pentagon budget over Build Back Better (BBBA).

- More for Pentagon contracts to a single company (Lockheed Martin, \$75 billion in FY 2021) than child care and preschool (\$40 billion/year under BBBA).
- More for equipment and programs the Pentagon didn't even ask for (\$25 billion) than child and earned income tax credits (\$20 billion/year under BBBA).
- More on guarding the world's oil supply (\$81 billion/year) than for climate and clean energy initiatives to protect the planet (\$55 billion/year under BBBA).
- More for the Space Force (\$17.5 billion) than for healthcare for Americans (\$13 billion/year under BBBA).
- More than twice as much for military bases in Germany (\$7.5 billion) than for Medicare hearing benefits (\$3.5 billion/year under BBBA).
- More for the wasteful F-35 (\$12 billion) than on a better immigration system (\$10 billion/year under BBBA).

Koshgarian concludes, "These are the wrong priorities. And it's up to movements and grassroots pressure to turn this around."

You can read the complete article, "A \$778 Billion Pentagon Budget Is Our Lump of Coal," at www.commondreams.org, 12/23/21, under the "Opinion" section. You can learn more at www.nationalpriorities.org.



Young Peacemakers



LOOKOUT! A new superhero - for real

"ZAP!", "POW!", "KABOOM!" - words from superheroes like Batman, Wonder Woman, Spiderman and Black Panther. And now "BLAH!, BLAH!, BLAH!" from our newest and greatest superperson. Yes, it's Greta Thunberg - Who disguised as a braid-wearing, little blond teenage girl from Sweden, sails oceans, instigates school strikes, scolds world leaders and speaks before the United Nations. She is the real-life superhero, an environmental activist, committed to protecting the climate and saving the world for future generations. Your generation and those to follow.

Greta started her quest when she was 15. She began at home, with her own family - turning off lights, recycling, going vegan, and sailing a boat instead of taking a plane to world meetings. To get her message out, Greta started holding school protest strikes on Fridays. These strikes are now held every Friday in schools around the world (#FridayforFuture). Her message to world leaders is that they must take immediate action to halt climate change, or we are all doomed. She was the youngest TIME magazine "Person of the Year" in 2019 (time.com/person-of-the-year-2019-greta-thunberg/), and has been nominated three times for the Nobel Peace Prize (maybe this year) and many, many more awards and accolades.

Greta is forceful, unwavering and even brash when she speaks before world organizations. At the 2019 United Nations Climate Action Summit she spoke up to leaders: "How dare you! You have stolen my dreams and my childhood with your empty words ...You are failing us." Again, in September 2021, at the United Nations Climate Change pre-conference she

blasted the delegates with, "Blah, blah, blah...So-called leaders pretend they are listening to us, but they are not listening...there is no planet B." How can she be so daring and brave?

What is her secret weapon? It is not a radioactive spider bite. It's her Asperger's syndrome. It's part of autism. She was born with it, and now wears it proudly! Asperger's allows her to focus on what she has to say, and not to get side-tracked by what others may say or by stage fright.

Greta's message to kids is to get involved. Start small. Change your lifestyle. But do it! Action! No more excuses. No more "BLAH, BLAH, BLAH!"

There is much, much more to read about and learn about Greta Thunberg. Library, Google, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and more. Look for climate book selections on the Peace Camp page:

www.LEPOCO.org/peace-camp. Learn more. And by the way, Greta has also written a book - *No One Is Too Small to Make a Difference*. It's on the list.

Be a climate superhero!

- Maggie Brown



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Newsletter of LEPOCO

Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern

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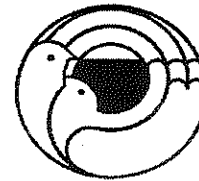
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Articles/news should be submitted to one of the addresses above for consideration for the next issue of the newsletter.

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

LEPOCO Steering Committee: Diane Dilendik, Sharlee DiMenichi, Margot Hillman, Julius Iwantsch (co-treasurer), Nancy Johnston, Mary Lang, Monica McAghon, Janet Ney, Tom Pietrzak, Susie Ravitz, Tom Stinnett (co-treasurer), Nancy Tate (ex-officio), Jeff Vitelli, and Amanda Zaniesienko (ex-officio).

Stop the War in Yemen

One year ago, on January 25, 2021, the world, or a good portion of it, came together to protest the war in Yemen. This strife, an internal struggle between the Yemeni government and Houthis rebels, threatened the life and well-being of the entire Yemeni population. At that time, the deaths of one million people from COVID and other diseases were reported. Half the population, 14.3 million people, were reported to be on the brink of famine. Nearly half of Yemeni children were said to be suffering from malnutrition and showing evidence of stunted growth. A blockade of Yemen's ports of entry conducted by Saudi Arabia severely limited the Yemenis' access to food, fuel, and medicine. The United States was actively involved in selling arms to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates; protesters sounded an urgent call to end the arms sales.

What has happened since the January protest?

In December 2021, the Senate approved a \$650 billion arms sale to the Saudi government. A bipartisan effort to block the sale, led by Rand Paul (R-Ky), Mike Lee (R-Utah) and Bernie Sanders (I-Vt) failed by a vote of 30-67. The Biden administration announced, in proposing the sale, that the missiles and missile launchers made by Raytheon Technologies are *defensive weapons*.

As a candidate for the presidency, and in contrast to his predecessor in the office, Biden vowed that he would make Saudi Arabia "pay the price and make them in fact the pariah that they are." As President, on February 4, 2021, he made an announcement that seemed to peace advocates as a step forward when he pledged to end United States' support for "offensive operations." In reality, this announcement did little to assure the suffering Yemeni population. As he pledged support for Saudi Arabia's defense of its sovereignty, what did he mean by "offensive operations?" The distinction between offensive and defensive weapons is not clear; what is clear is that the Saudis have continued to attack with air-to-air missiles.

Ravina Shamdasani, spokesperson for the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, said, "As has been shown time and time again, there is no military solution to the conflict in Yemen."

Journalists and relief agencies reported on January 21, 2022, that Saudi-led air strikes killed scores of people in Yemen. Ahmed Mahat, the head of mission in Yemen for Doctors Without Borders said, "It is impossible to know how many people have been killed. It seems to have been a horrific act of violence." A prison detaining migrants was targeted; Mahat reported, "From what I hear from my colleague in Sa'ada there are many bodies still at the scene of the air strike, many missing people."

Gillian Moyes, the country director in Yemen for Save the Children said, "Children are bearing the brunt of this crisis. They are being killed and maimed, watching as their schools and hospitals are being

destroyed, and denied access to basic lifesaving services."

(continued on page 6)

U.S.-Russian Confrontation Over Ukraine

Since late last year those committed to peace have witnessed an apparition straight out of the Cold War. The planet's two most heavily armed nuclear states, Russia and the United States – with roughly 90% of the world's nuclear weaponry between them – again confront one another. At issue now, at first sight, is not their respective spheres of influence in Europe but the fate of a single nation, Ukraine. The United States points to a major Russian military buildup on Ukraine's eastern frontier; it threatens to impose the most severe sanctions should Russia invade Ukraine. Russia points to a long-term, U.S.-led eastward expansion of the NATO alliance, which it regards as a key security threat; it seeks a guarantee that Ukraine will not become part of NATO and, if possible, some general security settlement in eastern Europe.

Media in this country have consistently portrayed these developments as an unprovoked act of Russian adventurism. Putin is seeking to enlarge a Russian empire, we are told, and runs a corrupt and bankrupt system that has as key allies only fellow kleptocratic authoritarians like Lukashenko in Belarus and Tokayev in Kazakhstan.

Behind the current bellicose posturing is a historical issue few in the media wish to examine: what was agreed upon in 1990, when Germany was reunified? Russia insists that, as a condition for accepting German unity – Germany had, after all, twice invaded Russia in the twentieth century – the Western powers agreed informally that a NATO which included Germany would not expand eastward.

Was such an agreement reached in 1990? Clearly, no formal treaty to this effect was ever signed. Nevertheless, at a February 9 meeting between U.S. Secretary of State James Baker and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, Baker pledged that NATO would expand "not one inch eastward." This pledge was supported by similar assurances from British, French, and German leaders. Nonetheless, following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Democratic administration of President Clinton began the process of eastward NATO expansion. To date, twelve central and eastern European nations have joined NATO: Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic (1999), Bulgaria, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia (2002-2004), and most recently Montenegro (2017) and North Macedonia (2020). The basic principle of NATO remains, an attack on one is an attack on all. To what have we committed ourselves? Before we jump to condemn Putin's aggressiveness, we need to examine our own role in the making of the crisis.

- Mick Baylor

Peace Pledge Union Statement on Ukraine & Russia

Friday, January 21, 2022

The Peace Pledge Union (PPU) has issued the following statement with regards to the prospect of war over Ukraine. The PPU is Britain's leading pacifist organisation and the British section of War Resisters' International.

The Peace Pledge Union shares the concern felt around the world about the possibility of war between Russia and Ukraine. Sending more troops and more weapons to the area is only making the situation worse.

We oppose the actions of politicians and military leaders on both the Russian side and the NATO/Ukrainian side who are stirring up military tension and using each other's aggression to justify their own. We stand with people in all countries who are resisting the drive to war.

We utterly reject any suggestion that to oppose NATO's militarism means supporting Vladimir Putin and Russian forces. We oppose militarism on all sides.

We condemn the action of the Russian government in building up troops on the Ukrainian border. We do not accept their claim that this is not aggressive because the troops are in Russian territory. We similarly condemn the aggressive actions of NATO members including the US and UK governments, in building up troops on Russia's other borders. This follows NATO's expansion eastwards since the 1990s, which has broken promises made at the end of the Cold War.

Each side uses the other's aggression to justify their own. Each side claims that their actions are purely defensive. This situation has occurred countless times before in many parts of the world. It illustrates the futility of seeking to solve conflict through violence. Militarism anywhere fuels militarism everywhere.

As the British section of War Resisters' International, the Peace Pledge Union stands in solidarity with pacifists and other anti-militarists around the world. We are confident that the people of Ukraine, Russia, the US, the UK and all the other countries involved have more in common with each other than with the militaristic politicians, generals and arms companies who would wage war in their name.

As an organisation based in the UK, we note that UK Foreign Secretary Liz Truss repeatedly states that UK troops and their NATO allies are promoting "freedom." Yet the lack of democracy and civil liberties in Russia is mirrored in countries that the UK government counts among its military allies. NATO members include the

authoritarian regime of Turkey. While Truss claims that UK troops in Estonia are defending freedom, other UK troops are training the Saudi forces bombing civilians in Yemen. The Ukrainian government has recently imprisoned members of our sibling organisation, the Ukrainian Pacifist Movement, for campaigning against militarism; these actions mirror the Putin regime's repression of peaceful activists in Russia.

There is no military solution to the crisis over Ukraine. We urge both sides to withdraw troops from each other's borders and to stop pouring further troops and weapons into an already highly volatile situation. We encourage them to focus on tackling the real dangers that threaten us all, including Covid, poverty and the climate emergency. We support people in all countries who challenge militaristic polices and we welcome the actions of individuals in the armed forces in any country who refuse to obey orders to fight or to prepare for war.

Learn more about the Peace Pledge Union at www.ppu.org.uk.

Where's the Annual Dinner?

Have you been thinking about LEPOCO's yummy annual dinner? We have. Unfortunately, we have decided that a dinner, yummy or not, is out of the question in today's COVID-wrought world. We are planning the first "Annual Gathering of the LEPOCO Community." We'll have a great speaker, the election of Steering Committee members, and the art raffle, on a Saturday in March, somewhere in the church where LEPOCO's offices are located (or, if necessary, via Zoom), at a time to be determined. Much of our planning has to be tentative at this time. We'll keep you posted.

- Janet Ney
for LEPOCO Annual Gathering
Planning Committee

Wisdom from the Late Howard Zinn (1922-2010)

The history of the social change movement is rich with the creativity and energy of the millions of people who have been part of it.

It is not surprising that our movement for peace and justice has only achieved partial and temporary successes, considering the overwhelming power of those who benefit from violence and inequality.

What is surprising is how often we have brought about change against enormous odds. Whenever there is even a small victory we see the importance of protest and learn how to keep alive the spirit of resistance.

From the Preface of the 2005 War Resisters League Calendar, "Let Us Go Forward Together."

☀ ☀ LEPOCO's Year In Review for 2021 ☀ ☀

2021. A full year impacted by COVID: virtual gatherings, COVID vaccines, the joy and trepidation of in-person gatherings, COVID variants, COVID boosters, and more virtual gatherings. Through it all, LEPOCO continued to be a voice for peace and social justice. Here are some of the highlights.

January was a busy month for the Stop the Wars Committee:

- Four large yard signs with the message "Nuclear Weapons Banned, January 22, 2021" were displayed throughout the valley, celebrating the day that the *Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons* went into effect.
- Mimi Lang's OpEd "On January 22 Take a Stand against Nuclear Weapons" was published in *The Express-Times* and *The Morning Call*, calling attention to the *Treaty* going into effect.
- Vigils with the theme "Stop the War, Stop the Famine, U.S. Out of Yemen" were held in Allentown and Easton for the *Global Day of Action for Yemen* on January 25.
- Janet Ney wrote an OpEd "Why Yemen Is the World's Worst Humanitarian Crisis" that was published in *The Morning Call* and *The Express-Times*.
- The committee hosted an online reading of Martin Luther King, Jr's "A Time to Break Silence" speech.

Singer and storyteller Roberta Meek headlined a virtual fundraiser, "From Sojourner Truth to Stacey Abrams: The Unfinished Battle for Voting Rights" in place of our usual annual dinner gathering in March. Roberta mixed singing and storytelling to tell us about her own activism and those who inspire her to continue singing, educating, and leading for peace and justice.

The Steering Committee discussed the need to be more active in racial justice issues.

- In April a poster portrait of George Floyd with "PLEASE! I CAN'T BREATHE" in large letters and a book for our Peace Camp library were presented to LEPOCO by Artist Johnny Wilk and Dean Young, director of the Boys and Girls Club of Easton.
- A LEPOCO delegation attended the "Say Their Names" event sponsored by Lehigh Valley Stands Up in May. The event memorialized the lives of Christian Hall, Joey Santos, and Stephen Hughes, three local men killed by law enforcement in times of personal crisis.

Peace Camp planners provided a new "Young Peacemakers" feature for each issue of the newsletter: a space with thoughts and activities geared to young people. We also created and mailed an engaging packet of *Peace Camp at Home* activities to all recent Peace Campers. Conversations with families informed us that they were tired of online events; we posted several new videos of activities and links to the recordings of last year's daily live stream in place of producing a new live stream.

Over the summer, LEPOCO members ventured out to farmers' markets and festivals, staffing information tables and collecting signatures on postcards calling for cuts in the military budget. It felt good to be spreading our message in person.

The September newsletter included a reprint of the statement issued by LEPOCO members in response to the attacks on September 11, 2001.

The Bike/Walk-a-Thon was held in a new month, October, and with new routes starting from our new office at Rosemont Lutheran Church. The weather was perfect and the new routes were enjoyed by former and new participants.

The Holiday Open House returned in December, with vaccination and mask requirements, giving some attendees their first chance to see our new space. A freshly painted back door and art panel by Amanda Zaniesienko welcomed our visitors.

Presente! We learned of the deaths of long-time members and friends, Clarke Chapman and Joris Rosse.

Throughout the year, we were inspired by events in the Weekly Update, by information on a wide range of topics in the LEPOCO Newsletter, by the dedication of those at our monthly vigil - "Bring Back Armistice Day" was the theme in November, by the discussions of the Book Club, by participation in actions held by other groups working for peace and social justice, and by working together to make our world better.

For a complete review of LEPOCO events and information on the wide range of issues that concern our members, look at the 2021 newsletter issues posted at www.lepoco.org.

- Margot Hillman

Being a Pilgrim of Peace

Each year on the second Saturday of December peace pilgrims walk from Nazareth along Pennsylvania Route 191 to Bethlehem. The distance is about ten miles and it is a day well spent. In recent years as many as 125 pilgrims have begun the journey at the Moravian Church on Center Square in Nazareth. Last year, 2020, the pilgrimage was made by many in their own neighborhoods because the pandemic made gathering in large numbers unsafe. This year, with proof of vaccination and wearing masks, we boarded the bus on Broad Street in Bethlehem and rode along the route of the pilgrimage to our starting point in Nazareth. We had a short stop in the church basement where we ate our brown bag lunches before beginning.

We started off just after noon. There were 35 of us. The day was overcast but warm. We were led by the traditional Star proclaiming the 63rd Nazareth to Bethlehem Peace Pilgrimage. Many pilgrims carried signs of peace and love. As we walked the day warmed, both in temperature and in fellowship. Our first break came in Hecktown at the Trinity Lutheran Church where we had apples, water, and the chance to sit down for a short rest. As we walked on toward Bethlehem we were greeted by honks and waves acknowledging our effort and joining us, if only for a few seconds.

Our next stop was the First Baptist Church where we had a sit-down break of hot chocolate and bagged snacks. Here we welcomed first time pilgrims and applauded those who have made the pilgrimage in past years. As we arrived at our next stop at College Hill Moravian Church on Laurel Street it was getting dark and we picked up lighted lanterns that we carried with us to light the path of Peace. When we reached Central Moravian Church on Church Street we gathered and sang carols to celebrate the season. From there we walked on Church Street to Center Street to Christ UCC where a short closing ceremony ended the day. We left the gathering charged to carry the Peace of the day with us into the days ahead.

- Jim Orben

The 2022 Martin Luther King Holiday

It seems that every year we get a little closer to understanding how comprehensive, how wide-ranging, how radical, how nonviolent, how important were the words of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. He delivered over 2500 speeches in his relatively short lifetime (1929-1968). But, of course, it is not the number of speeches, but their beauty, their poetry, their power, their love, their call to action, their passion for humanity to go "to the mountaintop" with him in building a more just and peaceful world.

This year, the Stop the Wars Committee of LEPOCO chose to put our energy into observing the

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King holiday with the Bethlehem NAACP and by bringing to the fore Dr. King's opposition to nuclear weapons. The latter effort was accomplished with the research and resulting op-ed written by Monica McAghon (see page 1 of this newsletter). We also prepared a flyer with a small collection of King quotes on a range of peace and justice issues. (It is available from the LEPOCO office.)

There was a lot of discussion this year about the breadth of Dr. King's message. A local example being The Morning Call article of 1/16/22, "MLK Day, What Do King's Words Really Mean?" It quoted local activists and professors including Chuck Dickerson of the Easton NAACP who said, "A lot of people tend to focus just on the King who spoke about his dream at the March on Washington in '63. They don't know or don't like to focus on the King who was speaking out against American imperialism and U.S. involvement in Vietnam by the time he was assassinated in '68."

Many King Holiday activities tied Dr. King's message to the current urgent need for voting rights legislation. This included a January 16th full-page ad in The Morning Call placed by The Martin Luther King & Coretta Scott King Memorial Project, Inc., calling on the U.S. Senate to pass the Freedom to Vote Act and the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act.

Due to snow the Bethlehem NAACP parade on January 17th, was simplified, but their program at The Ice House, "Homelessness, Where Do We Go From Here?" involved numerous local elected leaders and those doing the crucial work to address the needs of those who are without housing.

- Nancy Tate

Stop the War in Yemen

(continued from page 3)

Action Corps is calling again for a protest of the war here in the U.S. They are calling for protests at the district offices of members of the U.S. House of Representatives in early March, urging our representatives to take the following actions.

→ Call on Saudi Arabia and the UAE to lift the blockade of Yemen, opening seaports and airports. Speak to President Biden insisting that he use his leverage with Saudi Arabia to press for the unconditional and immediate lifting of the devastating blockade.

→ Pass a resolution that ends the blockade of Yemen and ends war support for Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

→ End weapons sales to Saudi Arabia and the UAE.

→ Support the people of Yemen by calling for the restoration and expansion of humanitarian aid to Yemen.

- Janet Ney

LEPOCO's First Tuesday Book Group 2022 Reading List

- February 1: **The Bridge at the Edge of the World: Capitalism, the Environment, & Crossing from Crisis to Sustainability**
6 pm
by James Gustave Speth (Gwen Pease)
- March 1: **How to Hide an Empire: A History of the Greater United States**
6 pm
by Daniel Immerwahr (Alwyn Eades)
- April 5: **Until I Am Free: Fanny Lou Hamer's Enduring Message to America**
6 pm
by Keisha N. Blain (Nancy Tate)
- May 3: **Kill Switch: The Rise of the Modern Senate & the Crippling of American Democracy**
6 pm
by Adam Jentleson (Diane Dilendik)
- June 7: **On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century**
6 pm
by Timothy Snyder (Richard Schaffer)
- July 5: **Patriotic Dissent: America in the Age of Endless War**
6 pm
by Danny A. Sjursen (Tom Pietrzak)
- September 6: **Harlem Shuffle: A Novel**
6 pm
by Colson Whitehead (Martricia McLaughlin)
- October 4: **The Sun Does Shine: How I Found Life & Freedom on Death Row**
6 pm
by Anthony Ray Hinton with Lara Love Hardin & Bryan Stevenson (George Tessaro)
- November 1: **Begin Again: James Baldwin's America & Its Urgent Lessons for Our Own**
6 pm
by Eddie S. Glaude Jr. (Addison Bross)
- December 6: **The Counter-Revolution of 1776: Slave Resistance & the Origins of the United States of America**
6 pm
by Gerald Horne (Bill Thomas)

You are invited to read one, some, all of these books & join this lively discussion group.

Members of the group facilitate the discussion.

The group does not meet in January and August.

In the pandemic years we have met on zoom, on porches in homes, and at the LEPOCO Peace Center.

For more information & to learn the group meeting location or link, contact:

LEPOCO Peace Center, 1705 W. Broad St., Bethlehem, PA 18018

610-691-8730 / lepoco@fast.net / www.lepoco.org

Bits & Pieces

⊕ On December 12th there were two stories in The Morning Call about families that lived through one of the shameful periods in U.S. history – the internment of U.S. citizens (entire families) of Japanese descent in prison camps during World War II. The front page story was about Roland Yoshida of Bethlehem, a Lehigh University professor emeritus and former dean and provost, whose parents had been in these internment camps. The article contains Roland Yoshida's plea that we learn from this history.

The other story of note on that date was a lovely obituary about George K. Ikeda, 99, who had lived in Emmaus. Among the interesting and impressive details of his life

was a note that in 1942, he and his family had been "incarcerated in the Poston Internment Camp in Poston, AZ, along with other Americans of Japanese ancestry."

How close and how present are the ongoing tragedies of wars – our wars.

⊕ Daniel Hale remains in prison for revealing U.S. military secrets about the inhumanity of U.S. airstrikes. One journalist, Sam Caliner, called for more recognition of the good that what Daniel Hale has done when we praise recent stories in The New York Times about civilian casualties caused by U.S. airstrikes in the Middle East. He calls for President Biden to pardon Daniel Hale. You can learn more about Daniel in recent issues of the LEPOCO Newsletter or at www.standwithdanielhale.org.

⊕ In June of 2021 grandparents and elders marched from President

Biden's birthplace in Scranton, PA, to his current home in Wilmington, DE, as part of the **Walk for Our Grandchildren**. (The group camped at Nancy Johnston's home in Easton as they passed through the Lehigh Valley.) In Wilmington the elders blockaded the doors of a Chase Bank office, demanding that Chase (the number one investor in fossil fuels in the U.S.) divest from fossil fuels. In September 2021, the elders from the Walk and youth activists joined forces to demand that Biden Declare a Climate Emergency. Returning to Wilmington, they marched from Chase Bank to Biden's home, and asking for change as they attempted to deliver photos of grandchildren and letters from children to the president. Not giving up, they returned again for Occupy Biden, December 25th to January 1st for a Climate Justice Occupation. They ended with a march and a rally where one speaker said "We will be back again and again because we cannot go down this way, with this absurdity, this literal madness, that we are the only species that has ever destroyed their own environment."

⊕ Brittany Ramos DeBarros is campaigning to represent Staten Island and South Brooklyn in the U.S. Congress. She is a veteran of the war in Afghanistan. She also has some very serious questions about U.S. policies. She was inspired by Colin Kaepernick, the San Francisco 49ers quarterback who started taking a knee during the playing of the national anthem at football games. In talking about the impact of the attacks on Kaepernick she said, "...if we don't address this empty nationalism, this plastic patriotism, we are never going to get the economic justice that we say that we want."

She is also quoted as saying, "A military is designed to maximize violence. You can't take an institution that is designed for violence at its DNA and just do some trainings and shift it around and have it be a force that is contributing to healthy, safe, happy communities."

Source: *The Nation* magazine, 12/13/21.

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

Tuesdays, February 1, & March 1, 2022, 6 pm: First Tuesday LEPOCO Book Group Meetings. See page 7 for information about the books to be discussed at these meetings. The group will meet on zoom, at LEPOCO, or in a home, depending on the status of the pandemic. Contact LEPOCO 610-691-8730 for the plans for any given meeting. The group welcomes new members.

Wednesday, February 2, 3 pm: Meeting of the Stop the Wars Committee. Call 610-691-8730 for information about whether the committee is meeting on zoom or in person.

Thursday, February 3, 1 pm: Meeting of the LEPOCO Annual Gathering Planning Committee. Call 610-691-8730 for information about whether the committee is meeting on zoom or in person.

Monday, February 7, 7 pm: Meeting of the Peace Camp Planning Committee on zoom. Call 610-691-8730 for more information.

Thursdays, February 10 & March 10, 2022, 4-5 pm: Monthly Peace Vigils, on the corners at Third & Wyandotte Sts., south Bethlehem (see page 10).

Mondays, February 14, & March 14, 2022, 7 pm: LEPOCO Monthly Action Meetings. Recent meetings have moved between zoom and in-person at the LEPOCO office. Call 610-691-8730 for more information and learn meeting location plans. All members & friends are welcome at this monthly business meeting where the organization's activities are discussed & planned. These meetings are on the second Monday of the month.

Please join in the meetings and work of these groups as you are able. If you want more information about these meetings or the meetings of the Newsletter Planning Group, or any other committees, please call LEPOCO at 610-691-8730. For a regularly updated calendar of events, see www.lepoco.org. Please note: for all meetings at the LEPOCO office, masks are worn and participants are vaccinated, until the pandemic subsides.

The Struggle Shared

"...the only thing left for me to say to the workers: I am not going to resign! Placed in a historic transition, I will pay for the loyalty to the people with my life. And I say to them that I am certain that the seed which we have planted in the good conscience of thousands and thousands of Chileans will not be shriveled forever..."

- From Salvador Allende's final speech, 9/11/73.

Source: "Jacobin."

SOCIAL DEMOCRACY WINS IN CHILE - In November of 1970

Salvador Allende was elected President of Chile, becoming the first democratically elected socialist leader of a Latin American nation. On September 11, 1973 (the other 9/11), his government was overthrown by a brutal CIA-backed coup that placed Augusto Pinochet in power. Between 1973 and 1990 when he was ousted, thousands of Chileans were disappeared, tortured, or murdered by the military dictatorship.

Fast forward to December 19, 2021, Gabriel Boric was elected as president of Chile. As a left-wing legislator he rose to prominence during anti-government protests as a student organizer. Boric won 56% of the vote. On the campaign trail, he promised to bury the neo-liberal economic model left by Pinochet, raise taxes on the super-rich, expand social services, fight inequality, and boost protection of the environment. His opponent, Jose Antonio Kast, a conservative with a history of defending Pinochet's military dictatorship, had finished ahead of Boric in a preliminary round of voting in November, 2021, but failed to secure a majority of votes, setting up the head-to-head runoff with Boric in December. Boric was able to reverse the difference by expanding his base with voters who were attracted to his progressive policies.

The families of the disappeared were an active part of Boric's victory. In a move by Chile's National Electoral Service, implemented in 2019, the electoral roll now acknowledges people who were disappeared after the coup. While the dead cannot vote, the voter's list

included the names with the note, "person absent due to forced disappearance."

While the election was polarizing, it was remarkable that Kast, in a model of civility, conceded graciously, calling Boric to congratulate him on his "grand triumph." Similarly, outgoing President Sebastian Pinera, a conservative billionaire, offered his administration's full support in the transition to Boric's succession as president in March 2022. Boric faces enormous challenges in getting his progressive policies past a divided parliament but promises, "I am going to be president of all Chileans. I am going to do my best to get on top of this tremendous challenge."

MONEY FOR AFGHANISTAN - In August during the withdrawal of US Troops from Afghanistan, the Biden Administration froze over \$9 billion in Afghan government assets in US bank accounts when the Taliban took control of the country. That, in addition to the sanctions regime that has been kept in place, is suffocating the Afghan economy, hurting Afghan citizens, not the Taliban, by hindering the flow of aid. Millions of Afghans are on the brink of starvation, and at risk of freezing to death in the debris of more than 20 years of war. Biden's policy has generated wide criticism from the international community and progressives in the U.S. One critic said, "By freezing Afghan government assets President Joe Biden is committing a crime against humanity."

The United Nations recently launched what it described as its "largest single country aid appeal ever," requesting just over \$5 billion for Afghanistan. The UN's Emer-

gency Relief Coordinator described the request as an "essential stopgap measure..." It is a stopgap. The urgent need is to release Afghan assets. Tell your representatives to keep pressure on the Biden Administration to release the frozen assets, negotiate in good faith with the new Afghan government, and ensure humanitarian aid to the starving Afghan people.

Close to home, in Allentown, The Episcopal Church of the Mediator's Refugee Community Center is welcoming Afghan refugees, offering free English and citizenship classes, as well as events to introduce refugees to the larger community. You can learn more at www.episcopalmediator.org.

DESMOND TUTU PRESENTE - On December 26th the world lost one of the fiercest fighters for peace and liberation. Archbishop Desmond Tutu died at the age of 90 in Cape Town. He rose to international prominence as the Bishop of Johannesburg and Archbishop of Cape Town during South Africa's struggle against apartheid in the 1980s. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984 for his work, and post-apartheid remained a powerful voice speaking out for AIDS victims, gay rights, against nuclear weapons, and Israel's occupation of Palestine, which he equated with apartheid.

In his book, God Has a Dream, Tutu wrote, "God says to you, 'I have a dream. Please help me to realize it. It is a dream of a world whose ugliness and squalor and poverty, its war and hostility, its greed and harsh competitiveness, its alienation and disharmony are changed into their glorious counterparts. When there will be more laughter, joy, and peace. Where there will be justice and goodness and compassion and love and caring and sharing. I have a dream that my children will know that they are members of one family, the human family, God's family, my family.'"

- Jeff Vitelli



LEPOCO

Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern

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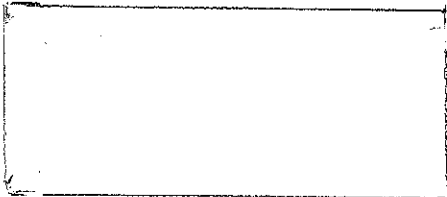
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Monthly Peace Vigil

(Second Thursdays)

February 10, 2022 &

March 10, 2022

4-5 pm

End the preparations for war.

Help witness for peace.

3rd & Wyandotte Sts.,

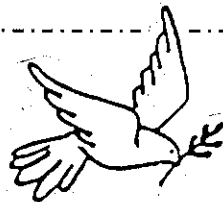
(south) Bethlehem

Call LEPOCO, 610-691-8730, for more info.



No War In Ukraine

(see pages 3 & 4)



Stop Bombing Yemen!

(see pages 3 & 6)

Provide Assistance to Afghanistan!

(see page 9)