

June-July  
2022  
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Newsletter of **LEPOCO**  
Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern

## War Crimes & the Crime of War

Since Russian President Vladimir Putin launched his brutal war against Ukraine on February 24<sup>th</sup>, the U.S. media have been filled with accusations of - and plenty of evidence for - war crimes and crimes against humanity. The Ukrainian president has even raised the accusation of genocide. Reports fill the internet and television of the Russian army deliberately targeting civilian facilities, executing captives, deporting civilians to Russia, and even more sinister, the raping, torturing and murdering of Ukrainian citizens. It is distressing to take in the reports of these crimes. But amid the calls for Russian accountability at an international tribunal, there has been little mention of the crime from which all the other crimes flowed: the crime of waging a war of aggression.

The International Military Tribunal (IMT) at Nuremberg in 1945-46 charged 21 Nazi leaders with four crimes, including war crimes and crimes against humanity. The focus, however, was on two others: the crimes of plotting and then waging "aggressive war," which the verdict described as "the supreme international crime" because "it contains within itself the accumulated evil of the whole."

The IMT was the precedent that established an international criminal law, which held individuals rather than states responsible for violations of law. It is perhaps ironic that it was a Soviet jurist, Aron Tranin, who developed the overarching concept of "crimes against peace," which encompassed the crimes of planning and then waging aggressive war - a war of conquest without the justification of self-defense. The IMT did not consider the crime of genocide, which the jurist Raphael Lemkin defined only in 1944; genocide has since been incorporated into international criminal law.

The UN international criminal court at the Hague is the direct outgrowth of the IMT. This tribunal, established by a charter agreed to in 1998 and entering into force in 2002, would be a difficult venue in which to try President Putin or other Russian leaders. The United States (like the Russian Federation) refuses to recognize the authority of this court for its citizens. The reason is simple: the U.S. does not wish to make its own civilian and military leaders subject to the jurisdiction of the court. Since the end of the Cold War, and especially since 9/11, the U.S. has felt free to embark on military actions against any state it feels it is in its interests to do so. More than 80% of all U.S. military interventions since 1946 have come after 1989. The invasion and

occupation of Iraq in 2003 was clearly a war of choice and a crime against peace.

Talk of a post-Cold War "peace dividend" - i.e., reduced military spending - quickly evaporated. The military budget for this year is \$780 billion, and the administration has just requested another \$20 billion in military aid for Ukraine. As Steven Miles, put it at our recent gathering, what we budget for the State Department to engage in negotiations is a "rounding error" in the Pentagon's budget. War profiteers have battered themselves on the public purse to an almost unimaginable extent. Washington's beltway is crammed with the offices of military contractors, weapons systems lobbyists, defense consultants, international security analysts, geopolitical think tanks, and the like. It is perhaps no wonder, then, that there is much talk in the media about making war more "humane" by using drones, so-called "smart" bombs and missiles, and economic sanctions, and by condemning (the other guys') atrocities. But there is little talk of peace. As Samuel Moyn recently put it, "We fight war crimes but have forgotten the crime of war."

- Mick Baylor



## In-person Peace Camp Needs Your Help!

Do you have nieces, nephews, or grandchildren in the Lehigh Valley? Are there children in your neighborhood? And, of course, do you have children in your home?

The LEPOCO Peace Camp planners could use your help to recruit campers for Peace Camp, July 25-29, 9 am-noon each day. Peace Camp is for children ages 5-13 who have completed Kindergarten through 7<sup>th</sup> grade. Fees are on a sliding scale, \$10-\$40; camperships are available.

To register, or spread the word, use the Peace Camp flyer in this newsletter, or request more copies from LEPOCO. Potential campers can also go to [www.lepoco.org](http://www.lepoco.org) to download a registration form or call 610-691-8730.

Peace Camp has been held for more than 30 years (virtually in 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic). We think that registration this year is lagging behind other years because we weren't in person the last two years. Get creative! You can post flyers in child-centered businesses, drop them off at a school bus stop or follow the neighborhood Ice Cream truck. Thanks so much.

- Marcie Lightwood

## Anna Hunt's Rolodex

The history of LEPOCO is a compendium of campaigns, actions, stories, and people's lives. In the early 1960s, a group of people concerned about the Vietnam War and world peace came together as The Lehigh Valley Peace Council. Over fifty-five years later, a group of people concerned about all wars and working for peace continues the mission of that early effort.

The original members, along with other people, became the Ad Hoc Committee of Concern for Vietnam during a meeting at Kirkridge in 1965. Later, the name was changed to Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern (LEPOCO). Susie and Artie Ravitz and Fran Dreisbach were among those founders.

This bit of history is the introduction to what we hope will be a continuing feature of this newsletter. It is the newsletter committee's intention to share LEPOCO's colorful history, both the "official" versions as well as the stories of our members. Longtime members are encouraged to share their stories with the newsletter staff.

We're calling this feature "Anna Hunt's Rolodex." Anna Hunt was LEPOCO's first staff person, hired in 1970. A good organizer and activist. Anna developed a resource tool, a list of contact information that she saved on a rolodex. That oh-so-valuable rolodex is still in use today. It was the realization that a bit of history is sitting on the desk in the LEPOCO office that prompted the creation of this new feature.

- Janet Ney

## It Was/Is a Good Peace Deal

"We ask you to give urgent priority to restoring The Joint Comprehensive Plan on Action with Iran (JCPOA). The JCPOA, which was negotiated by the Obama-Biden administration, is a good agreement. It significantly reduced the risk of Iran developing or using nuclear weapons." Thus began a late-May letter from the Stop the Wars Committee of LEPOCO to President Biden, with copies also sent to Senators Casey and Toomey, and Rep. Susan Wild.

We also wrote about our concern that again the U.S. State Department does not have the funding or staff to deal adequately with this most important issue. We pointed out that a survey in February 2022 "found that U.S. voters support reentering the agreement by more than a 2-to-1 margin." The letter concluded, "The time to act is now!" Unfortunately, our advice has not been heeded so far.

In late-March, Trita Parsi, Executive Vice President of the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft and expert on U.S.-Iranian relations, wrote, "What appears clear...is that neither Iran nor the United States can increase pressure on the other if the JCPOA collapses without risking dangerous escalation, including military conflict."

Early in June Trita Parsi wrote about the President's planned visit to Saudi Arabia in July questioning why the President has failed to confront the Saudi's support "for Jihadi terrorism, the spread of Wahhabism, and other reckless...actions, like the murder of Washington Post journalist Jamaal Khashoggi." Parsi believes we should be "working to build a healthier relationship with Saudi Arabia," but wonders how this can be done in the July meeting without securing an end to the "destabilizing behavior."

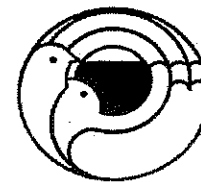
He also notes in the article that, "If oil prices are really the driving force behind this, then Biden should have just gone back into the Iran nuclear deal through an executive order... The combination of Iranian oil coming back onto the market as well as the immediate influx of more than 50 million barrels of oil that Tehran has in storage...would cause both a better short-term and long-term reduction of oil prices."

It is troubling that our President has abandoned his earlier promises regarding Saudi Arabia and Iran and moving ever closer to military solutions. Please contact him now if you are concerned about this.

Check out the LEPOCO website at [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.



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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, Amanda Zaniesienko, Carol Baylor, Janet Ney, Rick Dow, Jeff Vitelli.

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

LEPOCO Steering Committee: Pam Brubaker, Sharlee DiMenichi, Margot Hillman, Julius Iwantsch (co-treasurer), 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).

# LEPOCO Gathers in April

## First LEPOCO Gathering In-Person Since 2019

The LEPOCO community gathered for the first time in two years on April 23, 2022. As with all LEPOCO events, the community celebrated the organization's work for peace.

The evening began with a Sunflower Meditation, a poem written by and read by Mimi Lang. The LEPOCO Peace Singers, reunited after a long separation, offered two selections. The singers returned later in the program with additional songs.

Sharlee DeMenichi followed with a report on the Steering Committee election. She thanked Nancy Johnston, Diane Dilendik, and Dan Miller for their service. Returning to the Steering Committee for new two-year terms are Sharlee DeMenichi, Janet Ney, and Jeff Vitelli. Tom Stinnett was elected to a new two-year term as Co-Treasurer.

Nancy Johnston and Tom Pietrzak introduced a new LEPOCO brochure. Margot Hillman conducted the Art Raffle Drawing; for results, see the related article on this page.

In an intense moment of concern for Ukraine and a desire for peace, Margot and Tom read the Statement of the Ukrainian Pacifist Movement Against Perpetuation of War.

Stephen Miles shared his thoughts on "War & Peace: Biden Era & Beyond" (see article below for more details on his talk). The gathering closed with the community joining together in song, a moving rendition of "Dona Nobis Pacem."

- Janet Ney

## Stephen Miles on War & Peace Biden & Beyond

"No one wants war, famine, and death. But we can't win if we don't show up. Let's do the work and let's win."

Addressing the LEPOCO gathering, Stephen Miles called the peace community to the task of showing up in opposition to war and in favor of peace. Noting that his organization, Win Without War, is one of the largest peace affiliations in the country, he said that it has a budget that is under two million dollars, a drop in the bucket when compared to any other national group working for change on other issues.

At the same time, more than half the federal budget goes to the Pentagon. This country is investing in the weapons of war; we need to invest in people.

The peace community needs to have power to counteract the might of the arms industry, whose lobbyists are on the hill in Washington every day. That power comes from citizens joining together to let Congress and the Administration know that the country is opposed to war.

Mr. Miles urged the audience to look in the mirror. Organizations and activists for peace and justice across the United States have had successes but they are still farther away than they should be. The peace movement needs to be more diverse, to be more representative of the nation's population. Partnerships with other movements will enhance the power of the peace-loving community.

In response to a question from the audience, Mr. Miles told the story of the F-35, a 25-ton stealth warplane that costs \$100 million per plane. The aircraft is a failure. Intended as a replacement for a previous aircraft, the F-16, the F-35 has been shown to be unreliable and, in fact, cannot be flown when there is lightning in the air. Yet, millions of dollars have been paid to Lockheed Martin for this faulty plane.

Finally, Mr. Miles reiterated that the majority of people in this country want peace - but they have to be louder and more people need to speak up. When it comes to lobbying Congress, even one phone call can sometimes make a difference. Lawmakers who are personally inclined to vote a certain way are hard pressed to do so if they feel that their constituents do not support that vote. And too often, members of Congress can complain that "nobody calls me about" that issue. And he repeated, "Let's do the work and let's win."

- Janet Ney

## Art Raffle Drawing

The LEPOCO raffle never fails to be an exciting and beloved segment of the Annual Gathering. The drawing for the prizes, donated by very talented and generous members of our community, is eagerly anticipated by everyone. This year was no different, although, the excitement was turned up for a moment, when one person's name was drawn for TWO prizes! The planning committee had decided several years ago, that if this were to happen, we would ask the winner which prize they prefer, and we would draw again for the remaining item. (Unfortunately, the people conducting the Art Raffle drawing did not remember this detail from art raffle guidelines, so no announcement of this was made that evening.) The person whose name was drawn twice was not in attendance, so that process occurred after the Gathering.

The winners of the items are as follows: *\$25 Tulum Gift Certificate* - Renate Brosky; *Hand Crocheted Afghan*, by *Michell Sheehan* - Katrina Kraft; *Hand Turned Wooden Salad Bowl*, by *Lee Buck* - Joseph Marth; *Lap Quilt* by *Romaine Laury*, donated by *Ellen Buck* - Holly Rivera; *Sommerville Pottery Mixing Bowl*, *Matching Syrup Pitcher*, with a *whisk*, *pancake mix* and *syru*p - by *Monica Sommerville* - Patricia Iwantsch.

Congratulations to all who won an item in the raffle and thank you to the creators of the beautiful prizes and to all who bought tickets.

- Amanda Zaniesienko

## A compelling voice for peace – Anatol Lieven

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One of the voices calling for a ceasefire and an end to the terrible suffering of the war in Ukraine is Anatol Lieven, a senior research fellow on Russia and Europe at the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft. The international community is very anxious to have this Russian war in Ukraine end through negotiations. Food prices have skyrocketed in Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Libya, Sudan, and Yemen, countries where 90% of food comes from abroad. UNICEF reports that malnutrition, anemia, and wasting away of children in these countries will likely increase.

Lieven urges the U.S. to publicly support a diplomatic solution and call for a ceasefire. Further, Lieven wants the U.S. to assure Russia that the U.S. is only supporting Ukraine, and not seeking a regime change in Moscow. Lieven believes the old U.S. Cold War paradigm of giving enormous amounts of money to the military-industrial complex is unutterably wasteful, corrupt, and misdirected. With Sweden and Finland poised to join NATO, increased militarism threatens to dim focus on other domestic needs: climate change, investment in alternative energy, gun control, mitigation of racial and immigration strife, education, and health care reform, and more.

Calls for a ceasefire and negotiations, concludes Lieven, also will lessen the risk of a nuclear conflict. Lieven believes the sanctions and the widespread opposition to the war can be vital influences on Putin to eventually negotiate with Ukrainian President Zelensky. Lieven concludes that everyone should support efforts to bring about an early, just, and lasting peace – and not seek to prolong this conflict in the name of a mythical struggle for global democracy.

- Monica McAghon

More of Lieven's views can be seen at [DemocracyNow.org](http://DemocracyNow.org), [responsiblestatecraft.org/author/alieven/](http://responsiblestatecraft.org/author/alieven/), and [CommonDreams.org](http://CommonDreams.org).

## More Creative Voices for Peace

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On May 14, LEPOCO members distributed a leaflet at the Easton Farmers' Market that said in part, "We do not want this war to grow into a protracted war that goes on for years... We need to find ways to save lives, homes, and the land..."

World Beyond War closed a recent petition, "A ceasefire need not wait for a resolution of all issues, only for a credible commitment to negotiate by all sides."

One of the points in a statement by The Elders (including Mary Robinson, Bon Ki-moon, Graca Machel, and others) on May 25<sup>th</sup>, was, "Russia's aggression is in part enabled by the long-term erosion of the rules-based order underpinning global peace and security. Successive violations of international law and state sovereignty by

great powers have been carried out with impunity, leading to a dangerously polarized world."

Katrina vanden Heuvel wrote in *The Washington Post* in late May (and published in *The Express Times* locally), "What is barely reflected on our screens, or in Congress, are alternate views – voices of restraint, who disagree with the tendency to see compromise in negotiations as appeasement, who seek persistent and tough diplomacy to attain an effective cease-fire and a negotiated resolution, one designed to ensure that Ukraine emerges as a sovereign, independent, reconstructed and prosperous country."

On June 4<sup>th</sup> a global initiative to share the work of Ukrainian writers came to Moravian College with a program that featured theater, film, and dance. The film and theater works presented by local artists were written about the present war. The Ukrainian Folk Ensemble dancers were from the Ukrainian Homestead in Lehighton.

On June 6<sup>th</sup>, the U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM) adopted a resolution that read in part, "Russia's unprovoked illegal war on Ukraine, which could eventually draw the militaries of the United States, its NATO allies and Russia into direct conflict, and Russia's repeated threats to use nuclear weapons, have raised the specter of nuclear war to the highest level since the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis," the USCM "calls on the U.S. "to exercise restraint in U.S. military engagement in Ukraine while maximizing diplomatic efforts to end the war...by working with Ukraine and Russia to reach an immediate ceasefire and negotiate...in conformity with the United Nations Charter, knowing that the risks of wider war grow the longer the war continues."

Also on June 6<sup>th</sup>, Joseph Gerson of the Campaign for Peace, Disarmament and Common Security, wrote, "Those of us coming from great power and allied nations have the urgent responsibility to build pressure for a Ukraine ceasefire and just negotiated settlement and to bring our governments back from the brink of confrontation. Cooperation for disarmament, climate stability, health, and economic development are existential necessities."

On June 7<sup>th</sup> the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation issued a call for "a civil society tribunal with the authority to pronounce upon the nuclear dimensions of the Ukraine War and global crisis on the basis of law, morality, and spiritual core of human identity."

On June 9<sup>th</sup> Jason Pramas of *DigBoston*, lamented how the May 21<sup>st</sup> adoption of \$40 billion for weapons, intelligence assistance, and humanitarian aid for the government of Ukraine was adopted with an almost total lack of public discussion and debate by the very members of Congress who are usually quite critical of the outrageously huge U.S. military budget.

Norman Solomon of *RootsAction.org* wrote on June 9<sup>th</sup> that, "The president has a responsibility to engage with journalists and the public about nuclear weapons and the threat that they pose to human survival on the planet."

## Afghanistan Repression Leaves Peace, Justice Workers at Risk

Remember Kathy Kelly, the Annual Dinner speaker for dinners in 2007 and 2018. She's still working for Afghan families who became her community when she led the Voices for Creative Nonviolence (VCNV) Afghan Peace Projects in Kabul, over many years. Like so many whose values and work are antithetical to today's rulers in Afghanistan, she cannot be in-country now, but she is still managing, with the assistance of volunteers to help in some way.

Haven't we all felt some rage and sorrow over Afghanistan – our billions of tax dollars that funded the 20-year debacle there, the lost lives, the destruction, and the danger now?

Ukraine's war misery and struggle is getting so much attention and resources; understandably, yet Afghanistan is still in a dire state, hungry, with many in hiding because of their past hopes and work. (As you have heard, the UN's World Food Program is reporting wide-spread hunger and joblessness. They are asking for an increase in help for Afghan civilians. Others are urging President Biden to release Afghan bank funds held by the U.S.).

In April, I emailed Kathy Kelly to see what she knew about the situation in Afghanistan, and if there was any direct way to help those she worked with before, who remain in the country. She responded quickly, and told me about a couple, Zahra and Abid, whose lives were in danger in Kabul, and were trying to get travel and visa money together to get to Iran, where the family has a relative. (I know, Iran? But I guess it's safer there than where they are in Afghanistan.) I sent a small contribution, and others Kathy contacted did too. It wasn't a grand sum, less than \$1100 in donations, altogether. The upshot? Zahra and Abid now have traveling funds, and visas for their kids and his mother, and Zahra, but not yet for Abid, the dad. They are going to leave as soon as they can get his visa.

Kathy has a "Buddy Program" going, which provides connection and friendship support via zoom and email for dozens of Afghans who are in-country still, and, also for some who have escaped, to other places. (Zahra and Abid have a buddy in the D.C. area, who speaks fluent Dari, an Afghan language; however, you don't need to speak an Afghan language to be a Buddy.)

Kathy told me the buddy group is now 37 people strong, and from multiple countries, including European ones, Britain, Australia, Canada, and the U.S. They engage via zoom and email, providing support and advice, and suggesting resources. Two dozen of the Afghans she works with are now in Pakistan, having fled after the Taliban takeover. Eight of them are now working for a "very dynamic permaculture project" in Portugal. Four others are now students in Germany, and five are waiting in Pakistan (Quetta) to travel to Canada, with four already settled there.

Kathy wrote me about a new project she has planned, called the "Afghan Women's Safe Space." It will initially help four Afghan women who have been directly threatened by the Taliban. They'll be able to get to Quetta. All of these women were volunteers in Kathy's earlier Afghan Peace Project, which helped many dozens of families there to meet basic needs, acquire literacy and math skills, and become practitioners of nonviolence. Kathy said, "It's a gift to help these young women, who face a bleak and dangerous environment in Kabul."

If you are interested in being a 'Buddy' to an Afghan citizen/family, either in or outside their country, contact Kathy at her email: [kathy@vcnv.org](mailto:kathy@vcnv.org)

The Chicago Chapter of the Fellowship of Reconciliation is donating their services as the fiscal sponsor for these projects. If you would like to make a contribution, of what-ever amount, it can be sent to: Fellowship of Reconciliation, Chicago Chapter, 705 11<sup>th</sup> St., #205, Wilmette, IL 60091. In the check memo line, write: "Afghan Generations – Women's Safe Space."

- Kathryn Hoffman

## Yemen: Hope & Sadness

For seven years, the U.S. has been providing logistical and military support to the Saudi-led coalition that has bombed Yemeni civilians and blockaded the country, impeding access to food, medicine, and fuel. Over 400,000 civilians have been killed due to the war.

A recent truce has been extended to August and most importantly, a bipartisan group in Congress has introduced a War Powers Resolution that will force a vote to end all U.S. support to the Saudi war. The U.S. House group, led by representatives Peter DeFazio, Pramila Jayapal, Nancy Mace, and Adam Schiff, has been joined by over 70 other House members including the Lehigh Valley's Rep. Susan Wild.

H.J.Res.87 is "Directing the removal of U.S. Armed Forces from hostilities in the Republic of Yemen that have not been authorized by Congress." LEPOCO has sent an organizational letter of support to Rep. Wild. Individuals are encouraged to thank her for supporting this resolution with messages by phone, email, or letter. Other area representatives need to hear from their constituents urging their support for H.J.Res.87.

While President Biden had promised to make Saudi Arabia a "pariah" during his campaign he is backing away from that commitment. He is now planning a July trip to Saudi Arabia for a meeting with King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. We can still urge the President to abandon plans for this disgraceful trip.

In Washington, D.C., on June 15<sup>th</sup>, the street outside the Saudi Embassy was officially renamed Jamal Khashoggi Way to honor *The Washington Post* columnist killed and dismembered inside the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul four years ago.

# Bits & Pieces

⊕ In *The Nation* (6/27 to 7/4/22 issue) Leslie Cagan coordinator of the June 12, 1982, nuclear disarmament mobilization, wrote of that day: "Forty years, and the memory is as vivid as ever... The United Nations Second Special Session on Disarmament was about to get underway, and we were determined to be heard. The arms race had to stop, we said; nuclear weapons had to be abolished - and instead of endlessly pouring extravagant amounts of money into military budgets, it was time to put our national treasury to use meeting the needs of our communities." She writes well about that day and the dangers of nuclear war that we face now. If you cannot read the article online, you can ask for a copy from LEPOCO. Leslie Cagan was among the inspiring speakers that joined zoom rallies on June 12, 2022, mak-

ing many of the same points about June 12, 1982, that Cagan makes in *The Nation* article, as well as urging action as we face the very real dangers of nuclear war right now. You can watch a recording of one of those rallies, "The Defuse Nuclear War" livestream on YouTube.

⊕ On June 9, LEPOCO supported a **January 6 Select Committee Hearings: Watch Event** organized by Phila Back with help from Public Citizen. The New Pennsylvania Project also supported the event at the United Steelworkers Hall in Bethlehem, attended by about 40 people. Some commented that the violence of January 6<sup>th</sup> made the Hearing difficult to watch and being with others lessened the difficulty. Several national groups are tracking the hearings including People for the American Way. They have set up special resurces at [www.rightwinginsurrection.org](http://www.rightwinginsurrection.org).

⊕ LEPOCO continues discussing how to get programing going again that is like or similar to our **Potluck & Politics** and **Popcorn & Politics**

series. The P&Ps had run for many years, but we need help planning for what we should do now that the worst of Covid is over. Contact LEPOCO (610-691-8730) with your ideas or your interest in being one of the planners.

⊕ Since LEPOCO's computers were converted to the Microsoft 365 Office Suite we have had a multitude of operating problems. If there is anyone reading this who has suggestions for dealing with these problems, we would like to hear from you. Call 610-691-8730.

⊕ Speaking at the **Mass Poor People's and Low-Wage Workers' Assembly and Moral March** on Washington on June 18<sup>th</sup>, with his usual passion and deep meaning, Bishop William Barber said, "This is a movement - until children are protected; until sick folk are healed; until low-wage workers are paid; until immigrants are treated fairly; until affordable housing is provided; until the atmosphere, the land and the water are protected; until saving the world, and diplomacy, and living in peace is more important than blowing up the world, we won't be silent anymore."

⊕ In May, 50 progressive organizations urged the Biden administration to use its regulatory power to **slash the massive amounts of greenhouse gas pollution** associated with electricity-intensive digital currencies that are created through "proof-of-work" mining, such as Bitcoin. In 2020 alone, the electricity used to mine Bitcoin resulted in nearly 60 million tons of carbon dioxide emissions, according to one estimate. If current trends continue for the next five years, the groups say, "Bitcoin could use as much electricity as Japan and India combined."

⊕ "I want to tell you what the forests were like, I will have to speak a forgotten language." - from a poem by W.S. Merwin, as quoted by James Gustave Speth in "The Bridge at the Edge of the World," read by the LEPOCO Book Group this year.

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

**Tuesdays, July 5 & September 6, 6 pm: First Tuesday LEPOCO Book Group Meetings**, LEPOCO Peace Center, 1705 W. Broad S., Bethlehem. Contact LEPOCO (610-691-8730) for a list of the books being discussed this year. In July the group will discuss "Patriotic Dissent: America in the Age of Endless War," by Danny Sjrusen, and in September, "Harlem Shuffle: A Novel," by Colson Whitehead. The group does not meet in August.

**Thursday, July 7, 2 pm: Stop the Wars Committee Meeting**, LEPOCO Peace Center, 1705 W. Broad St., Bethlehem (18018). Plans for Hiroshima-Nagasaki will be discussed. Call 610-691-8730 for more information.

**Mondays, July 11 & August 8, 7 pm: LEPOCO Monthly Action Meetings**, LEPOCO Peace Center, 1705 W. Broad St., Bethlehem (18018). 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. Call 610-691-8730 for more information.

**Thursdays, July 14 & August 11, 4:30-5:30 pm: Monthly Peace Vigils**, on the corners at Third & Wyandotte Sts., south Bethlehem.

*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, the Peace Camp Planning Committee, the Annual Gathering Planning Committee or any other committees, please call LEPOCO at 610-691-8730. For a regularly updated calendar of events, see [www.lepoco.org](http://www.lepoco.org) or read the Weekly Email Update. Please note: for all meetings at the LEPOCO office, masks are worn and participants are vaccinated, until the pandemic subsides.*

# The Struggle Shared

*"Truth is on the side of the oppressed."*

- Malcolm X

*"The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice."*

- Martin Luther King, Jr.

## FIGHTING CRIMINALIZATION OF HOMELESSNESS

- In 1963, the City of Los Angeles passed Municipal Code 41.18, which prohibited sitting, lying, or sleeping in public. The law was challenged by the ACLU in federal court, *Jones vs. Los Angeles*, in 2007. Under the settlement, the city could not enforce the law except under limited circumstances. While the decision recognized that LA had a serious problem with homelessness, it did not require, or even suggest, that the city take any steps to alleviate the crisis. The numbers of the homeless in LA have increased, and the city just doesn't have enough beds.

In 2019, LA City Council's homeless and poverty committee recommended repealing 41.18 and replacing it with a new more narrowly tailored ordinance, in compliance with recent federal court decisions. City Council made the requisite adjustments. This past April the LAPD began sweeps through homeless encampments on public property, confiscating belongings, and arresting the unhoused. These sweeps fracture communities, displace people, damage physical and mental health, and result in loss of shelter and life-sustaining medications. Citations and convictions create additional barriers to housing. The city still does not have a plan to provide adequate housing for displaced residents.

Homelessness must not be treated as a social deficit, but as a result of a dysfunctional society.

Change Weavers: A Global Platform for Community Organizing has partnered with a team of organizers in Los Angeles to combat the criminalization of the homeless. Through their efforts, human rights groups and homeless residents have joined hands to defend these vulnerable communities, and have managed to

create a sense of belonging, and deep bonds where people support one another, and begin to find solutions to the problems of homelessness.

## INCARCERATED WITHOUT TRIAL

- In the wee morning hours of May 2014, Marvin Louis Guy was in his home in Killeen, Texas, when police conducted a no-knock raid looking for drugs. Marvin had no idea that it was police at his door and used a weapon to defend himself from an assailant. He faces the death penalty after being indicted on four capital felony charges, for shooting a detective who eventually died. Although trial dates have been set on at least three occasions over the years, a succession of defense attorneys and numerous motions have set the case back. In the meantime, Marvin has been held in Bell County Jail since his arrest eight years ago. His bonds total \$4 million. He is pleading self-defense. The police never found any drugs in the raid.

This year, on the eighth anniversary of Marvin's arrest, his friends and family, and criminal justice reform advocates throughout Central Texas came together for a candlelight vigil in hopes that this year Marvin will finally have his day in court.

Marvin is just one of hundreds of thousands who are waiting, sometimes, as in Marvin's case, for years, for their day in court. Although they are guaranteed a speedy trial under the constitution, all across the country, our jails are filled with people who cannot pay their bail. Being held in jail before trial simply because of inability to pay bail not only robs people of their liberty, but costs them their jobs, breaks up families, causes emotional distress, and strips people of their dignity. It also exposes individuals to physical danger in the consistently inhumane conditions in jails. The evidence says bail

reform improves the lives of low-income people, while posing no additional risk to communities. It is time to insist that lawmakers end the cash bail system.

## MORNING CALL GUILD WALK-OUT

- For years, as the newspaper industry has succumbed to displacement by the internet, social media platforms, and far darker sources of disinformation, workers at The Morning Call, in Allentown, have experienced severe cutbacks. The Morning Call closed its physical doors after 100 years of publishing from its 6<sup>th</sup> St. location in 2020.

Reporters now are forced to work from home, with no reimbursement for the most basic work expenses. Their pay is deplorably low, and discriminatory. Women are paid less than men, and there are no female senior journalists. In a city that is 51% Hispanic, there is only one person of color on staff. Journalists represented by the Morning Call Guild, an affiliate of the Communication Workers of America, had been negotiating to address these unfair labor practices with Tribune Publishing, which owned the paper, but in 2021 Tribune was bought out by Alden Global Capital. Alden Global Capital, a notorious hedge fund, changed production requirements and did not bargain with employees in order to boost profits.

Reporters, photographers and editors of the Morning Call Guild, on May 13<sup>th</sup>, held a one-day walkout to highlight the unfair labor practices. They rallied at Allentown's Arts Park and livestreamed it on Facebook. A spokesperson said "We band together on issues of job security, pay, benefits and working conditions, but most importantly, we band together because our communities deserve to have continued watchdog coverage even as the stability of our industry gets thrown into question."

Support your local newspaper. Read it in print. Visit the Morning Call Guild's Facebook page to see video of their walkout rally.

- Jeff Vitelli



# LEPOCO

Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern

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## Monthly Peace Vigil

(Second Thursdays)

July 14, 2022 &  
August 11, 2022  
4:30 – 5:30 pm

*End the wars.  
Help witness for peace.*

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

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



## End the War In Ukraine!

(see page 4)

## Stop Bombing Yemen!

(see page 5)

## Provide Aid to Afghanistan!

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## Peace Camp: July 25-29, 2022

(See page 1 & enclosed flyer)