

Peace in Our Times



A Veterans For Peace publication exposing the root causes and enormous costs of war



Spirits Were Seen Fleeing the Swamp

By Doug Rawlings

For the past three years, members of Veterans For Peace have descended upon Washington, D.C., on Memorial Day to deliver letters written to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (The Wall). To date, we have delivered 371 letters, 32 postcards, and six photographs that speak to the great tragedy of that war. Our grief and our remorse extend far beyond the 58,315 American names on The Wall to include the millions of Southeast Asians who lost their lives at our hand. The letters are enclosed in envelopes that encourage passers-by to “please read me.” And many do.

In addition, all letters are collected for placement in the national archives by the National Park Service.

Each year we have joined North Carolinian Quaker Roger Ehrlich and his amazing “bell tower” installation situated diagonally across from the Lincoln Memorial and within shouting distance of The Wall. Roger has graciously provided his encampment as a gathering point for our activities. With his many signs exhorting visitors to embrace peace and reject war, travelers are seduced into the presence of the bell tower, a structure festooned with plaques written by these very visitors.

This year we extended our presence in DC threefold.

Not only did we perform our letter ceremony at The Wall, but we also held a spiritually resonant ceremony at the Martin Luther King, Jr. memorial that same afternoon. Then, the day after Memorial Day, we held a rally on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, followed by a march to the White House, carrying our 10 demands to right our ship of state.

At noon on Memorial Day, 16 of us were joined by Washington’s Reverend Graylan Hagler to read passages from Martin Luther King, Jr.’s prophetic, seminal 1967 Riverside Church Address. We held this reading on the

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Top: Veterans on the March bring their demands to the White House; lower left: Ed Sanders of The Fugs performs an exorcism to rid the White House of evil demons; lower right: a visitor to the Vietnam Memorial Wall reads one of the letters delivered by Veterans For Peace on Memorial Day. Photos: Ellen Davidson

Letters

A Sad Irony

Six and a half years ago, Rep. Gabby Gifford was shot in the head while addressing constituents at a Safeway supermarket near Tucson, Ariz. On June 10 of this year, the *USS Gabrielle Gifford* (LCS 10) officially entered service as it was commissioned at Pier 21, Port of Galveston. I find it sadly ironic that the name of this courageous victim of a small arms-wielding paranoid schizophrenic murderer should now be associated with a highly sophisticated death machine, commissioned by the government that Martin Luther King Jr. 50 years ago called “the greatest purveyor of violence in the world.” In contrast to the small arms used by Jared Lee Loughner, the *USS Gifford* will have the capacity to carry a large, modular cache of weapons packages which will implement, in the words of the ship’s own website, “the concept of Distributed Lethality.” A strange tribute to a victim of violence.

Kenneth E. Mayers,
Major, USMC (Ret’d.)
Veterans For Peace, Santa Fe, N.M.

Morally Unsustainable

Historians like Mark Moyer (“Was Vietnam Winnable?”) like to write long books suggesting the Vietnam War might have been different. They base everything on the assumption the South Vietnamese government was legitimate and not a flagrant U.S. puppet construct. But it won’t wash. Sure, we could have slaughtered more Vietnamese than we did in some kind of technological “final solution.” But the war was always morally unsustainable. All the real history is there. A unifying election that the United States agreed to that was to happen in 1956 never happened because everyone in Washington knew Ho Chi Minh would win it in a landslide. In

1967, I was a 19-year-old radio direction finder on a mountaintop along the Cambodian border west of Pleiku trying to locate North Vietnamese radio operators. The goal: Drop all sorts of hi-tech weaponry on the coordinates I helped provide in order to kill my counterparts, equally young Vietnamese soldiers fighting for their country’s liberation from people like me. No massive work of history can change that basic narrative. At the time, I was clueless; I learned later that the Vietnamese had never done anything to harm the United States and its citizens. Ho Chi Minh and his soldiers were, of course, our ally against the Japanese during World War Two and had hoped our government would support their wish for independence from the colonial French. It was not to be; FDR was gone and Truman fell prey to Cold War thinking. So from 1945 to 1975, we tried to destroy the Vietnamese liberation effort. In the end, we failed. There’s no purpose in alternative history; we should leave that to people like Philip K. Dick and books like *The Man in the High Castle*. As Ward Just put it: “The Vietnamese would have fought us for a thousand years.”

John Grant
Veterans For Peace, Philadelphia

Thanks But No Thanks

I for one, don’t need your monuments, don’t want your “thank you for your service” greetings, I have no desire for recognition and especially not for killing Vietnamese who where only defending their homeland.

Don’t want your glory, because there is no glory in bombing villages out of existence; dropping napalm burning the flesh off men, women, and children; nor spraying rice paddies, jungles, and waterways with poisons that continues to produce birth defects and take the lives of both

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THE DEPT. OF DEFENSE DECLARES WAR ON CLIMATE CHANGE.

A Note from the Editors



Vietnam Veterans Against the War members Scott Camil (front left) and the Gainesville Eight in 1972: It is warriors like these that we should honor.

Support the Troops? Honor the Warrior Not the War?

Just finished reading John Marciano’s book *The American War in Vietnam*, a historical study that should be required reading in every school, college, and university from the seventh grade up. We’ve reprinted, with Marciano’s permission almost the entire first chapter—“The Noble Cause Principle and the Actual History” (see page 9).

The premise of the chapter is set out in the first paragraph. “A powerful and fundamental belief has marked U.S. history: it is the “exceptional” nation chosen to lead the world. This belief is the essential foundation of the Noble Cause principle that justifies U.S. foreign policy. ... The actual history of this nation, however, reveals it as a total lie.”

I remember my own time during the U.S. warmaking in Vietnam. I had spent three-and-a-half rebellious years in the U.S. Army, most of that time as a paratrooper with the over-glorified 101st Airborne division. I was in an infantry company and was trained in reconnaissance. I was a machine gunner. I was discharged in 1962, just before the 101st started sending “volunteers” to be “advisers” in Vietnam. I was lucky.

At any rate, I had spent over three years with the troops that all U.S. Americans were supposed to support and honor during these wars. I knew these

“warriors” well.

It wasn’t long after getting out that I became “radicalized”—another word for having one’s eyes wide open to reality no matter how uncomfortable. Soon I knew of the war in Vietnam well beyond the hype. It was and became even more horrible as the years of war continued, the most brutal and cruel assault on the people of Vietnam that sadistic minds could manifest.

I knew what my over-glorified division was doing to villagers, old men, women and children in Vietnam. I also knew what kind of men I had served with. Many of them were just barely out of adolescence. Some, a few, the exceptions, were really good people, people with integrity, I knew they would not be comfortable with the terror they were imposing on the Vietnamese. But many were kids with little or no real philosophy or social awareness. The racism and paternalistic and macho bullshit that the military and our society indoctrinated them with sank right into their bones. They were trained killers, looking for a fight to prove themselves, most of whom had any empathy or respect for life drilled right out of them. They were also trained to follow orders.

Marciano cites the example of Kenneth Hodge, one of the soldiers who participated in the My Lai massacre

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Peace in Our Times

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Susan Schnall delivers her letter to The Wall. Photo: Ellen Davidson

A Letter to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall

By Susan Schnall

Editor's Note: For three years we have collected letters to deliver to The Wall (the Vietnam Veterans Memorial) in Washington, D.C., on Memorial Day. Our request has been a simple one—if you were somehow directly affected by the American War in Viet Nam, write a letter to The Wall. Writers were encouraged to write from the heart. They were not writing to an inanimate black monolith. The Wall pulsates with the souls of 58,315 American young men and women who died five decades ago in a war that many of us now know was unnecessary and, quite frankly, immoral. The letter writers have come at this task from varied backgrounds—from grunts and medics and the assorted enlisted and drafted who fought in Viet Nam to conscientious objectors and war resisters. Some are the children and grandchildren of those who died in that war. The vast majority, no matter their background, circle around a common theme—"I wish I could have done more, I wish I could have been there, to stop the war and save your lives."

Each of the 371 letters has a life of its own, but one written this year really resonates with the editors of this paper, so we feature it in its entirety below. Although the letter stands on its own merit and needs no commentary, we would be remiss not to provide a profile of its author. Susan Schnall was a commissioned officer in the Navy serving as a nurse during the war. While in uniform, she participated in a number of antiwar actions and was court-martialed for her antiwar activities. Since then she has worked tirelessly against war and, specifically, for those, both Vietnamese and American, ravaged by Agent Orange. As a founder of Veterans For Peace, I have to say, unequivocally, that we were formed, and indeed thrive, for the very purpose of working alongside the likes of Susan Schnall.—Doug Rawlings

It is so very many years ago since spring of 1969 and, although I almost remember your name these days—maybe John Heiden—I distinctly can set our discussion about the war to be the middle of the day, walking around the grounds of the old Oak Knoll Hospital complex. We had worked together when I first arrived and you were a very young, very smart and dedicated hospital corpsman. I was assigned to the surgical and orthopedic wards—those barracks crowded with 35-40 patients, all young men who had been wounded in this country called Viet Nam. They were very young—17, 18, 19 years old. Some were missing limbs, some were so shot up they had tubes coming out from various parts of their body, draining excess fluids. One 18-year-old, blond, clean-cut guy on his way to surgery for a foot amputation was terribly frightened and crying. I grabbed hold of his stretcher as he was being wheeled to the operating room and asked him to talk to me. He said he was scared of dying and, as we started to talk, the doctors pulled away the guernsey and said they didn't understand why he would be scared to have his foot amputated—after all, it was only his foot. They had seen so much worse on other soldiers. He was chilled and shaking as they moved his bed out and down the ramps to the OR and his death. And I couldn't protect him—from the war, from his fear, from his death.

How I could not know his name? I know the scene, I clearly remember where it took place—the old orthopedic ward, the doctors were standing around, upset about being called in to operate on this kid—his foot was losing all circulation and gangrene started to spread upwards. I was only a few years older, but felt responsible for him, for his fear, for his pain. He and the other young men were the reasons why I became a nurse

in the Navy. Somehow, I could heal them, make them whole again, ease their passage back into society and family. Until I couldn't and realized that this war had to stop.

It was 1969 and we all thought that John had somehow escaped being given orders to Viet Nam. Now he was married and had a baby. He was promoted to psychiatric technician. We believed he'd been forgotten—until he received his orders overseas. It was after my court-martial and I had raised money to pay attorneys for the guys who refused their orders to Southeast Asia. I spoke with John about his not going, told him we'd cover legal fees, told him we had been successful before. But he was quiet and calm and resolute as he told me he had to go. I asked about his family and he smiled and shook his head—it was his duty, he couldn't give it to someone else. He had been lucky in not having to go earlier. I didn't have many arguments other than the personal. The political ones would have been meaningless to him at that time. So he went to Viet Nam and died when his helicopter was shot down during a rescue attempt of wounded Marines.

I've always wondered what else I could

have said that afternoon that might have made him change his mind. What could I have told him that would have preserved his life? I wonder how his wife and baby lived their lives without him. Most of all, I ask myself what else I could have said that spring afternoon.

There is another corpsman from that time whose name should be on The Wall. He died many years after we left Oak Knoll from prostate cancer caused by his exposure to Agent Orange when he was a corpsman in Viet Nam. Tim Shalk came back to Oak Knoll from the war and quickly became active with our antiwar work. He asked for copies of the *Underground Oak* to hand out, he came to our meetings, and participated in peace demonstrations. He was a handsome, dark-haired, smiling-yet-serious young man. He was one of my favorites: He was always dedicated and caring to our soldier patients and to peace. I left Oak Knoll in June of 1969 and maintained contact with very few people after I moved to New York City.

And then we reconnected in 2010. I met Tim and his wife Eileen in Oakland, Calif. He had matured and gotten older, with gray hair, a slight paunch, but that same ingratiating smile that I remembered. He showed me pictures of his son, who could have been Tim in 1969. We talked about life since the Navy, and he told me about his antiwar work—and he told me about his prostate cancer and exposure to Agent Orange. He was convinced that he had it under control.

Tim Shalk's name doesn't appear on The Wall; his death will never be recognized as related to his service in the theater in Southeast Asia. He passed away in 2015. His last email to me is dated December 2014: "I have had a tough summer and fall battling stage 4 metastatic prostate cancer. ... It is in the bone and I am in a chemo regimen right now ... scary stuff, and exhausting. Of course there is no give up in me, and I chug along trying get the most out of my life as I can."

Today, Memorial Day 2017, I think of those lives changed forever by war and conflict, and, along with millions of others, rededicate myself to healing the wounds of war, to working for peace and social justice, to bringing an end to armed conflict, to moving us from a war economy to a peace economy, to caring for those harmed and to stopping this insanity called war, to ending corporate power and destruction, to being life-giving instead of death-giving. For if we who have known war don't dedicate ourselves to ending it, who will?

What Makes America Great (True Stories of the Trump Era)

#14 by Dan Wilcox

After the Valentine's Day vigil to "spread love not hate" organized by Women Against War & Grannies for Peace I run errands at the Colonie Center mall have lunch at the bar of P.F. Chang's. A man & woman recognize me say they saw me there.

When I go to pay the bartender tells me that Mark & Amy paid my bill. I thank them tell them my name. We talk about what is happening now. I give them a copy of Peace In Our Times the newspaper from Veterans For Peace. We talk about how all of us are connected somehow to a veteran.



Spirits Seen

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grounds of the MLK monument not only to recognize the power of Dr. King's vision but also to further deepen the significance of Memorial Day. We acknowledged that Dr. King knew back then what many of us who went to Vietnam found out far too late—the war was unjust and immoral.

On the Tuesday following Memorial Day we changed the tone of our presence in DC from one of somber commemoration to one of righteous anger and political action. At 11:00 am we gathered together 13 speakers and musicians to rally us against the evil emanating from the nation's White House. With President Lincoln at our backs, VFP joined forces with Native American speakers, with noted DC activists and others to excoriate the current administration. We ended the rally appropriately with the famous New York City band The Fugs returning to DC after 50 years to once again work magic on the powers-that-be. In 1967, they exorcised the Pentagon; in 2017, they led us in chants to exorcise the demons currently residing in the White House. Spirits were seen fleeing the swamp.

Finally, we took our 10 demands directly to the President, weaving our way through Washington, chanting as we went (note: as veterans we “purposefully walk”; we ain't marching anymore). As we gathered together at the end of our day and at the end of our Memorial Day activities, many of us reflected on the meaning of what we had just done. We truly felt ourselves to be emissaries for our fellow veteran brothers and sisters who could not make the journey. We did not mince words: dismantle the Empire, bring all the troops home, stop this destructive madness of war, we said. Listen to the demands we have earned as our “bonus” for serving in your military: healthy lives for all of our citizens, quality education for our children, quality healthcare for our veterans and all citizens, and safe housing for everyone.

As these demands wafted their way across the White House lawn, we closed our actions by posing for a group photograph. Little did we know that we would join the Village Fugs in conjuring up the spirit of 1967, the Summer of Love, with our smiling faces. You cannot deny that we have indeed resurrected the

power of love and that we are gathering the troops to storm the palace walls. We are veterans who have seen the dark side of the empire, and we are coming into the light.

*Corporate America
be forewarned:
We* are your karma
We are your Orion
rising in the night sky
We are the scorpion
in your jackboot*

*Corporate America
be forewarned:
We will not buy
your bloody parades anymore
We refuse your worthless praise
We spit on
your war memorials*

*Corporate America
be forewarned:
We will not feed you
our bodies
our minds
our children
anymore*

*Corporate America
be forewarned:
If we have our way
(and we will)
the real war memorials
will rise
from your ashes*

*American Vietnam War veterans who refused to honor America's war in Southeast Asia

Doug Rawlings is a retired college administrator who lives in Maine. He is the author of two books of poetry and a co-founder of Veterans For Peace.



The author speaks at the Lincoln Memorial May 30. Photo: Ellen Davidson

The Big 'P' (PTSD)

Memorial Day, 2017
Mission Valley, San Diego, California

Cool, overcast morning

*A resident of the hotel,
person of means who would sometimes
be called
(disparagingly, or admiringly) a “Fat
Cat,”
had spent the night on a bed
for which he had, or more accurately,
his Corporation had popped three-fifty.
His room had a view of the hotel golf
course.
For the purpose of this narrative,
with your indulgence, I will refer to him
as “FC.”*

*FC sits down to lunch at the hotel
restaurant, with associates
sometimes called “cronies.” All of
similar means.
White tablecloth, numerous eating
utensils. And a view
of the golf course ... Go figure.
Many anonymous and semi-anonymous
persons flitting about,
known variously as busboys, waiters
and maitre d's,
and always, wine stewards,
all of whom prostrate themselves at the
service of FC,
and address him as “Sir”;
Good afternoon, “Sir”
Are you enjoying your day, “Sir”
Can I get you our wine list, “Sir”
Are you ready to order, “Sir”
Is everything alright, “Sir”
FC is faced with a monumentally
important decision;
Filet Mignon (how would you like that
prepared, “Sir”)
or lobster
or perhaps both today, “Turf and Surf.”*

*After lunch FC and the others relax in
the hotel lounge,
overlooking the golf course, and share
small talk
around Manhattans and Cuban cigars.
Briefly mentioned is the apprehension
they share,
that the stock price of a barrel of oil
might take a turn next week,
disfavoring their accumulation of
wealth.*

*Some thousands of miles away, and not
in the too distant past,
huddled in rubble which had not very
long ago been a school,
lay a soldier, a boy of some 20 years,
anonymous,
keeping his head down, His fear was
palpable,
disabling, overwhelming. He trembled
uncontrollably.
A few yards away lay the lifeless body
of someone, a moment ago, he had
called “Sir.”
The sniper was still out there,
somewhere in the sand,
waiting for this solder,*

*this target of the moment
to appear in his sights.
But fate chose
that this was not to be this young
combatant's last day.*

*Back in San Diego,
on this solemn occasion, Memorial Day,
on a lawn in the shadow of the stern
of the retired aircraft carrier, USS
Midway,
now relegated to museum status,
stand, as carefully arranged by local
war veterans,
row upon row of faux gravestones.
Hundreds.
With exceptions, each stone identifies
One of the Fallen,
Ostensibly in the “service” of their
country,
Arguably,
in the unwitting service of Corporations
in their country,
Men, young and not so young, who
breathed their last,
on violent battlegrounds far from home.
In places few can find on a map, nor
pronounce, nor spell.*

*Some of the gravestones are black, with
no information.
Each represents the suicide of a soldier
who had survived combat, but,
incomprehensibly—to many of
us—who had not “been there,” was
compelled to opt out.
(Currently about 20 suicides per day,
each and every day.)
He had succumbed to what has come to
be known as
Post Traumatic Stress Disorder,
PTSD,
The Big P.
Our young soldier, for reasons only he
had known,
had taken his own life,
leaving a distraught wife to mourn his
too-soon-in-life passing.
“They also serve, who stand and wait”
He was represented, symbolically,
on Memorial Day,
in San Diego,
a black headstone among the others
erected at Arlington West.
A brief, solemn ceremony respecting his
memory was conducted
by local war veterans, on this Memorial
Day.*

*At the hotel in The Valley,
FC flipped through the morning paper,
scarcely noticing or acknowledging The
Day.*

*His belly and his bank account are full.
His kids are home on vacation from their
private school.
His driver is parked outside, enjoying a
ham and cheese on rye.*

*FC stood.
He put down what was left of his drink
and his fine smoke.
“Well, guys, everybody ready?”*

“OK, let's go tee up.”

—Stan Levin

War Monuments Are Killing Us

Following are remarks made at the Veterans on the March rally at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., May 30.

By David Swanson

Washington, D.C., and much of the rest of the United States, is full of war monuments, with many more under construction and being planned. Most of them glorify wars. Many of them were erected during later wars and sought to improve the images of past wars for present purposes. Almost none of them teach any lessons from mistakes made. The very best of them mourn the loss of a tiny fraction—the U.S. fraction—of the wars' victims.

But if you search this and other U.S. cities, you'll have a harder time finding memorials for North American genocide or slavery or the people slaughtered in the Philippines or Laos or Cambodia or Vietnam or Iraq. You won't find a lot of monuments around here to the Bonus Army or the Poor People's Campaign. Where is the history of the struggles of sharecroppers or factory workers or suffragettes or environmentalists? Where are our writers and artists? Why is there not a statue of



David Swanson addresses veterans at the Lincoln Memorial May 30.
Photo: Ellen Davidson

Mark Twain right here laughing his ass off at us? Where is the Three Mile Island memorial warning us away from nuclear energy? Where are the monuments to each Soviet or U.S. person, such as Vasili Arkhipov, who held off nuclear apocalypse? Where is the great blowback memorial mourning the governments overthrown and the arming and training of fanatical killers?

While many nations erect memorials to what they do not wish to repeat as well as to what they wish to emulate, the United States focuses overwhelmingly on wars and overwhelmingly on glorifying them. And the very existence of Veterans For Peace jams that narrative and forces some people to think.

Well over 99.9 percent of our history is not memorialized in marble. And when we ask that it be, we're generally laughed at. Yet if you propose to remove a monument to a Confederate general in a southern U.S. city, do you know what the most common response is? They accuse you of being against history, of wishing to erase the past. This comes out of an understanding of the past as consisting entirely of wars.

In New Orleans, they've just taken down their Confederate war monuments, which had been erected to advance white supremacy. In my town of Charlottesville, Virginia, the city has voted to take down a Robert E. Lee statue. But we've run up against a Virginia law that forbids taking down any war monument. There is no law, as far as I know, anywhere on earth that forbids taking down any peace monument. Almost as hard as finding such a law would be finding any peace monuments around here to consider taking down. I don't count the building of our friends nearby here at the U.S. Institute of Peace, which if defunded this year will have lived out its entire existence without ever having opposed a U.S. war.

But why shouldn't we have peace monuments? If Russia and the United States were engaged in jointly memorializing the ending of the Cold War in Washington and Moscow, would that not help hold off

the new Cold War? If we were building a monument to the prevention, over the last several years, of a U.S. attack on Iran, would a future such attack be more likely or less likely? If there were a monument to the Kellogg-Briand Pact and the Outlawry movement on the Mall, wouldn't

victims, not a small fraction deemed worthy of our sorrow.

The Swords to Plowshares Memorial Bell Tower is an example of what we should be doing as a society. Veterans For Peace is an example of what we should be doing as a society. Admit our mistakes.



Veterans on the March rally May 30. Photo: Ellen Davidson

some tourists learn of its existence and what it outlawed? Would the Geneva Conventions be dismissed as quaint if the war planners saw the Geneva Conventions Monument out their window?

Beyond the lack of monuments for peace agreements and disarmament successes, where are the monuments to the rest of human life beyond war? In a sane society, the war memorials would be one small example of many types of public memorials, and where they existed, they would mourn, not glorify, and mourn all

Value all lives. Improve our practices. Honor courage when it is combined with morality. And recognize veterans by creating no more veterans going forward.

David Swanson is an author, activist, journalist, and radio host. He is director of WorldBeyondWar.org and campaign coordinator for RootsAction.org. Swanson's books include War Is A Lie. He blogs at DavidSwanson.org and WarIsACrime.org. He hosts Talk Nation Radio. He is a 2015 and 2016 Nobel Peace Prize Nominee.

Thank You For Your Service

Gregory, nicknamed Raj, from Bangor, Maine, a vet of Iraq, hooked up a vacuum cleaner hose to his car's exhaust.

These are today's dead veterans. There were others yesterday.

Living alone in a fifth-floor walkup on East 111th Street in New York, Antoine raised and flew pigeons from his rooftop chicken-wire and slatted-frame cage.

As he plunged into the backyard, he took out several clotheslines.

There was Irv, Helen, George, Harold Rennie and Harry. Harold was gay, was called Roxy among his friends, and he used a knife.

Frenchy never made it to the Post Office. That's where he told his wife he was going.

He drove head-on into the side of a concrete bridge abutment on Route 66 in Arizona, at 120 MPH. It was a clear, bright morning.

A Lieutenant Carbonaro took his '45 along on a hunting trip upstate in North Dakota.

The medic who used to shoot up prisoners with

morphine, Carlos, saved up enough for himself. He injected it while on leave, in Germany. Angel, a guard at our prison camp in the desert, was a huge, smiling man, very friendly. After discharge, he got a job as a warder in a State prison near Biloxi. He hung himself in his secondhand RV, parked in a shady cottonwood grove.

There was Rudy, James and Eduardo, living in ghetto flops in several different cities. They combined booze and pills.

Reuben's father was an Air Force officer, so Reuben was born into it. Everyone called him "Hey, Rube." When off duty from guiding armed Drones, he loved to go up with the Paratroops.

On a flight yesterday, he pushed his way past the jump master.

There was Bennie, Vera, Eli and Chris. Chris was trained to defuse mines. Last evening, on patrol, he jumped on one in plain sight. The taxi driver who took Vera to Chicago's railroad yards reported that she was drunk.

During the night, Juan, in Nevada, and Eugene, in Colorado, both walked out into their respective deserts, stripped, in spite of bitter cold, lay down, cut their wrists, and died, looking up at the full moon.

There'll be 22 more tomorrow.

—Jay Wenk

On the Side of BIW Workers

By Bruce K. Gagnon

I am pro-union and my first job after the Air Force and college was working as an organizer for the United Farm Workers Union in Florida organizing fruit pickers.

A couple of years ago I was invited by a union member to march with Bath Iron Works (BIW) workers protesting General Dynamics' management efforts to slowly but surely break the union at the shipyard by outsourcing work to non-union shops. I eagerly joined the protest. Over the years I've heard directly from scores of BIW workers about their grievances against the company.

Not only has GD come to the city of Bath with silver cup in hand asking for more tax breaks (while its CEO was pulling in multi-million-dollar bonuses), but over the years the corporation has repeatedly gone to the state demanding tax cuts, always threatening to leave Maine.

GD has done little to diversify from all-military production at BIW, whether into commercial shipbuilding or other major non-military production. So when the military contracts slow down, workers get what amount to permanent layoffs.

GD frequently brings in nonunion middle managers and poorly trained supervisors who don't know much about shipbuilding, causing delays and inefficiencies for which the unions get blamed.

[T]he workers and the unions have ideas about things that could be done at BIW to stabilize employment at the shipyard. They should be given a key role in envisioning what might be built more sustainably.

Major nonmilitary production capable of employing many hundreds, if not thousands, would be a big plus at the shipyard and I know that many workers support such a direction.

With Trump announcing he intends to pull the United States out of the Paris Climate Change Accords, our hopes for dealing with the harsh reality of global warming have taken another severe blow. The U.S. military has the largest carbon footprint on the entire planet. Official Washington insisted that the Pentagon be exempted from monitoring by the Kyoto climate change protocol and the recent Paris agreement made reporting of military impacts optional.

In Holland, all electric trains are now run on wind power. Off-shore wind turbines and commuter rail systems could be built at BIW, as could tidal and solar power systems. All that is needed is the political will. The abolitionist Frederick Douglass said, "Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will." We need to make these demands if future generations are to have any hope for survival.

At a 1994 Labor Day Rally at BIW, the speakers included then BIW President Buzz Fitzgerald, International Association of Machinists (IAM) Local S6 (Bath Iron Works) President Stoney Dionne, IAM National President George Kourpias, Rep. Tom Andrews, AFL-CIO Treasurer Tom Donahue, Sen. George Mitchell and President Bill Clinton. Watching the event on C-SPAN archives, I found it remarkable that all the speakers were calling for the conversion of the shipyard. Today we find that GD has no interest in such a positive direction. (It should be remembered that GD uses federal tax dollars to build destroyers. Why couldn't that same public tax money be used to build sustainable technologies?)

The workers and unions at BIW can't make this kind of conversion (or diversification) happen by themselves. They are fighting daily to enforce their contract with GD and are largely consumed with trying to prevent layoffs.



Members of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers Local 6, the largest union at Bath Iron Works, at a solidarity rally in Bath. Photo: Darcie Moore/The Times Record

Former Columbia University Professor of Industrial Engineering Seymour Melman called our present system "Pentagon-managed state capitalism." Melman reported that by around 1990 the United States had substantially lost its skills base in machine tool-related and other highly skilled industrial production, including in commercial shipbuilding—largely due to over concentration on military production.

The peace community does protest frequently at BIW, but we are not targeting the workers. We are trying to create a dialog in the community around the need for a just transition toward more sustainable, less boom-and-bust types of production at BIW. We understand that General Dynamics is the entity that holds the power to make these big decisions—along with our elected officials.

We know that the workers and the unions have ideas about things that could be done at BIW to stabilize employment at the shipyard. They should be given a key role in envisioning what might be built more sustainably. But none of this will happen unless the peace community, the environmental community, the religious community, labor unions, local political leaders, and the general public become advocates for a change of direction from endless war toward dealing with climate change by transitioning facilities like BIW.

The workers are hostages during this time of political negligence where nothing gets done. I for one stand with them and urge everyone in the community to help push things along so that the environment, the community, and the workers come out on top.

Bruce K. Gagnon is a member of Veterans For Peace and lives in Bath, Maine. He is the director of the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space. His website is space4peace.blogspot.com. He can be reached at globalnet@mindspring.com.



The author protesting nuclear submarine production in Bangor, Wash.

Editorial

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and who stated years later, "There was no crime committed. At no time did it ever cross my mind to disobey or refuse to carry out an order ... issued by my superiors ... that meant killing small kids, killing women ... I felt we carried out the orders in a moral fashion ... and I feel we did not violate any moral standards."

During that war, I was well aware and furious that atrocities like this were being carried out by "our troops" on a daily basis. I also know, as many of us do, that equally horrific crimes were carried out by U.S. troops during Iraq and Afghanistan. In Vietnam, things like torture, intentional killing and mutilation of civilians—including pregnant women, children, even babies—and throwing prisoners out of helicopters in mid-air were not uncommon.

Should we be inclined to support these troops? What about the concept of honor the warrior and not the war?

The noble concept of the warrior is someone who by tradition and training respects even his or her enemy, who has compassion, empathy, who protects the innocent, who stands courageously for truth and justice, who will sacrifice him- or herself before taking innocent lives. The U.S. military does not train its troops in this way.

During Vietnam, there was tremendous resistance to the war from active-duty troops, and we supported the troops who were resisting the war or who came home after the war to tell the truth and expose the lies, murder and betrayal—like Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW), whose 50th anniversary is this year.

Many of us also enthusiastically supported the Vietnamese people, who were resisting U.S. imperialism, a people struggling against overwhelming military might. We also supported and still support the troops who needed care after engaging in military service.

We could learn a lot from American Indian cultures that hold ceremonies to help bring the warrior's life into balance—to make it possible for the soldier to live with honor and to be physically, spiritually, emotionally, and mentally healthy.

Even in wars of aggression, wars that devastate countries, that kill and maim civilians, men, women and so many children, individual examples of courage, sacrifice, and honor in combat are always present.

But to place this honor collectively on the so-called "warrior" is, as William J. Astor says in *War Is the New Normal*, to obscure the disasters of these wars, "by endlessly overpraising our 'warriors' as so many universal heroes. This may salve our collective national conscience, but it's a form of cheap grace that saves no lives."

There is a reason the Pentagon and the power elite want to rewrite the history of the Vietnam War. It is because nothing else, before or since, has so exposed the lie of American exceptionalism and the abject poverty of the Noble Cause principle.

It's our job to tell the truth.

—Tarak Kauff

American Fascism, 1944 and Today

Vice President Henry Wallace predicted the rise of Trump 73 years ago

By Henry Scott Wallace

Seventy-three years ago, *The New York Times* asked the sitting vice president to write an article about whether there are fascists in America, and what they're up to.

It was an alarming question. And the vice president took it quite seriously. His article, "The Danger of American Fascism," described a breed of super-nationalist who pursues political power by deceiving Americans and playing to their fears, but is really interested only in protecting his own wealth and privilege.

That vice president was my grandfather, Henry A. Wallace. And in my view, he predicted President Trump.

To be clear, I don't think the precise term "fascism"—as in Mussolini and Hitler—is fairly applied to Mr. Trump. Mussolini was a proponent of "corporatism," defined by some as "a merger of state and corporate power." And through that lens, using that term, my grandfather's warning looks prescient.

My grandfather warned about hucksters spouting populist themes but manipulating people and institutions to achieve the opposite. They pretend to be on the side of ordinary working people—"paying lip service to democracy and the common welfare," he wrote. But at the same time, they "distrust democracy because it stands for equal opportunity."

They invariably put "money and power ahead of human beings," he continued. "They demand free enterprise, but are the spokesmen for monopoly and vested interest." They also "claim to be super-patriots, but they would destroy every liberty guaranteed by the Constitution."

They blaviate about putting America first, but it's just a cover. "They use isolationism as a slogan to conceal their own selfish imperialism."

They need scapegoats and harbor "an intensity of intolerance toward those of other races, parties, classes, religions, cultures, regions, or nations."

The 19th century saw the political rise of wealthy Prussian nobility, called Junkers, who were driven by "hatred



Henry A. Wallace

for other races" and "allegiance to a military clique," with a goal to place their "culture and race astride the world."

My grandfather acknowledged the great difference between American fascists and other countries' murderous authoritarians. The American breed doesn't need violence. Lying to the people is so much easier.

They "poison the channels of public information," he wrote. Their "problem is never how best to present the truth to the public but how best to use the news to deceive the public" into giving them more money or power.

In fact, they use lies strategically, to promote civic division, which then justifies authoritarian crackdowns. Through "deliberate perversion of truth and fact," he said, "their newspapers and propaganda carefully cultivate every fissure of disunity."

Thus might lying about unprecedented high crime rates legitimize a police state. Lying about immigrants being rapists and terrorists might justify a huge border wall, mass expulsions, and religion-based immigration bans. Lying about millions of illegal votes might excuse suppression of voting by disfavored groups.

Here's one of my favorites: Autocrats "give currency to snide suspicions without foundation in fact." That sounds like birtherism. There are other examples. "Largest" inaugural crowd ever. "I won the popular vote" and "Obama had my 'wires tapped.'" Climate change is

"nonexistent" and "mythical." "The Russia-Trump collusion story is a total hoax" and the FBI's investigation into it was a "taxpayer-funded charade."

And what is the ultimate goal? "Their final objective toward which all their deceit is directed is to capture political power so that, using the power of the state and the power of the market simultaneously, they may keep the common man in eternal subjection."

That sounds like Mussolini and his embrace of "corporatism"—the marriage of government and corporate power. And it also sounds like President Trump.

The antidote? For my grandfather, it lay in that phrase the "common man." In 1942, he famously rebutted conservatives calling for an "American Century" after the war—America, the greatest country on earth, dominating the world.

Nonsense, my grandfather said in that speech: We Americans "are no more a master race than the Nazis." He called for a "century of the common man"—ordinary people, standing up and fighting for their rights, with decent jobs, organized (into unions), demanding accountable government committed to the "general welfare" rather than the privilege of the few, and decent schools for their kids (teaching "truths of the real world"). Democracy, he said in his 1944 essay, must "put human beings first and dollars second."

If there's any comfort in his essay 73 years ago, it is that this struggle is not new. It wasn't even new then. The main question today is how our democracy and our brash new generation of citizen activists deals with it.

Henry Scott Wallace is a lawyer and a co-chairman of the Wallace Global Fund, a foundation started by his grandfather.



Pity the Nation

*Pity the nation whose people are sheep,
and whose shepherds mislead them.
Pity the nation whose leaders are liars, whose sages
are silenced,
and whose bigots haunt the airwaves.
Pity the nation that raises not its voice,
except to praise conquerors and acclaim the bully
as hero
and aims to rule the world with force and by torture.
Pity the nation that knows no other language but its
own
and no other culture but its own.
Pity the nation whose breath is money
and sleeps the sleep of the too well fed.
Pity the nation—oh, pity the people who allow their
rights to erode
and their freedoms to be washed away.
My country, tears of thee, sweet land of liberty.*

—Lawrence Ferlinghetti

The Supreme Court's 'Muslim Ban' Decision Is Terrifying

If the war on terror has taught us one thing, it's that harsh laws targeting noncitizens will eventually be extended to citizens, too

By Maha Hilal

I'm a U.S. citizen. I'm also Muslim. And the Supreme Court decision on the Trump administration's Muslim travel ban scares me.

In a June 26 ruling, the court decided to leave in place parts of the Muslim ban while the merits of the case are debated, effectively barring individuals from six Muslim-majority countries without a "bona fide" relationship in the United States—say, with family members, an employer, or an educational institution—into the country. This decision may also prevent entry for all refugees for 120 days.

The ruling has been hailed as a victory for the Trump Administration—not just on the legal end, but also in the degree to which it instills fear in Muslims. The fear is real, and not just for those who may be directly affected, but for the larger community, too. After all, what the travel ban is ultimately meant to do is to hold all Muslims collectively responsible for the actions of a (minuscule) few.

As a Muslim American of Egyptian descent, will I be legally affected by the decision? In theory, no. But will I think twice about leaving the country, knowing that I could return to the possibility of being harassed, interrogated, and/or



Rally outside the Supreme Court Jan. 30 against the Trump Administration's executive order banning travelers from seven majority Muslim countries. Photo: Saul Loeb/AFP

denied entry back into the United States? Absolutely. Because after almost 16 years of the war on terror, you come to learn—or become conditioned to fear—that one day you could be next.

The distinction between citizen and noncitizen becomes ever more perilous when you "look Muslim," have a Muslim-sounding name, or work on issues relating to Muslims. This doesn't mean I'll experience the same consequences as Muslim noncitizens, but neither does my citizenship reassure me that my fellow Muslim Americans and I will be protected, especially in light of this administration's history over the last few months alone.

And that's exactly the intent of policies like these—they target some while causing others to reel back in fear that they too will be affected. They generate enough fear to make anyone with any relationship with a targeted group censor

themselves and modify their behavior. The government wins not only because of whom it targets directly, but because of who else becomes an indirect target.

These are precarious times for Muslims. And while we're told to trust in our democracy and our judicial system, decisions like these—which come on the heels of a long history of discriminatory, racist, and Islamophobic policies under several administrations—magnify the legitimate fear that one will either be targeted by state violence or become a target of societal violence.

Worryingly, not a single judge dissented from the unsigned Supreme Court ruling—and in fact, three conservative judges, including the newly seated Neil Gorsuch, concurred that they would've gone even further and implemented the ban in full. So we know to expect that, yet again, the highest law of the land is in

favor of institutionalizing Islamophobia. Where then do Muslims turn for reprieve?

As a Muslim American, I'm tired of explaining my fear. I'm tired of pointing out how negatively the war on terror has affected my community, and I'm tired of being treated as a means to a security end.

I'm tired of explaining the legacy of the war on terror and the fact that under the Bush Administration, security policies that began by targeting noncitizens ended up, through a long and thoroughly calculated process, targeting citizens as well—something that also continued under Obama, who spied broadly on ordinary people's communications and even ordered lethal drone strikes on U.S. citizens.

I'm tired because I know this isn't the end, but the beginning of a new war on terror—one whose thinly veiled racist manifestations have become explicit.

The Muslim ban means that Muslims will be in the spotlight even more and viewed almost exclusively as national security pawns. Noncitizens, of course, stand to lose the most. But let's remember what the war on terror has always been designed to do: demonize all Muslims—citizens or not—to justify the most egregious, abusive, and racist laws and policies.

I don't know what's yet to come, and I'm afraid to find out.

Maha Hilal, PhD, is the Michael Ratner Middle East fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, D.C. She's also a steering committee member of DC Justice for Muslims Coalition, an organizer with Witness Against Torture and a board member of the DC chapter of the National Lawyers Guild.

Save the Date! SOA Watch Convergence at the Border

This November 10-12, join SOA Watch in ambos Nogales for our second binational convergence at the militarized U.S./Mexico border, to build the grassroots power necessary to challenge the racist status quo and push back against U.S. intervention in Latin America.

As we call attention to the militarization of the border and Latin America, we also call for an end to state-sponsored terrorism and violence against our communities inside the United States. Similarly, the mobilization at the border in Nogales is one more way to fight for the closure of the School of the Americas/WHINSEC and put an end to U.S. intervention in Latin America.

So join us! Organize your community to join human rights activists, torture survivors, union workers, veterans, community organizers, migrants, faith communities, students, and educators from across the Americas.

SOA Watch remembers the 37th anniversary of the March 24, 1980, assassina-

tion of Archbishop Óscar Romero in El Salvador. Mayor Roberto D'Aubuisson, a 1972 graduate of the School of the Americas, was identified as the person responsible for ordering his murder.

In the same way, 41 years after the civil and military coup in Argentina, we remember the demands for memory and truth. We add our voices to our Argentine sisters' and brothers' demands for justice. We do not forget that Emilio Massera, Jorge Rafael Videla, Roberto Viola, and Leopoldo Galtieri, among others responsible for the coup, were trained at the School of the Americas. We do not forget that the United States also bears responsibility for the more than 30,000 detained-disappeared during the military junta that governed Argentina between 1976 and 1983.

Honoring the memory of Monsignor Romero and the memory of the 30,000 detained and disappeared Argentineans goes hand in hand with a call for attention today: The same U.S. intervention, poli-



2016 Convergence at the Border in ambos Nogales.

cies, military training, and financing continue today. This is the same system that killed Berta Cáceres and more than 120 others in Honduras since 2010.

One way to honor the legacy of Romero and Cáceres is to demand the closure of the School of the Americas and the end of U.S. support for repressive regimes as in Honduras and Mexico. We invite you to support HR 1299, which would cut off military aid to the Honduran regime. We

also reject Trump's supplemental budget request for more taxpayer money to build the U.S.-Mexico border wall and step up the persecution, detention and deportation of migrants and refugees.

¡Óscar Romero, presente! ¡Berta Cáceres, presente! ¡Thirty thousand detained-disappeared in Argentina, presentes!

For details on activities in November and how you can help organize, visit the website at soawatch.org.

The Noble Cause Principle and the Actual History

Far from being a moral actor on the world stage, the United States has a history of expansionism and genocide

The following is excerpted from *The American War in Vietnam: Crime or Commemoration?*

By John Marciano

A powerful and fundamental belief has marked U.S. history: it is the Exceptional Nation chosen to lead the world. This belief is the essential foundation for the Noble Cause principle that justifies U.S. foreign policy, and the American War in Vietnam in particular. The fundamental lessons of the American War should be viewed within the context of this principle. The actual history of this nation, however, reveals it as a total lie. This principle has dominated political views about this country, however, as reflected below by the following proclamations of this faith, beginning with the great American writer Herman Melville.

In the mid-19th century, the Noble Cause principle was articulated by the narrator in Melville's novel, *White-Jacket*: "We Americans are the peculiar chosen people—the Israel of our time; we bear the arc of liberties of the world. ... God has predestined, mankind expects, great things from our race; and great things we feel in our souls. ... We are the pioneers of the world; the advance-guard, sent on through the wilderness of untried things, to break a new path in the New World that is ours."

In 1900, Sen. Albert Beveridge proclaimed the principle during the U.S. imperialist war against the Philippines: "We are the ruling race of the world. ... We will not renounce our part in the mission of our race, trustee, under God of the civilization of the world. ... He has marked us as his chosen people. ... He has made us adept in government that we may administer government among savage and senile peoples."

As he escalated the American War in Vietnam in the 1960s, President Lyndon Johnson defended it in Noble Cause terms: "We have no territory there, nor do we seek any. ... We want nothing for ourselves ... we fight for values and we fight for principles." The United States, "uniquely blessed with surpassing riches and an exceptional history, stands above the international system, not within it. Alone among nations, she stands ready to be the bearer of the law."

Henry Kissinger, National Security Adviser to Richard Nixon during the American War in Vietnam, stated that the United States acts for "the well-being of

all mankind. ... Americans have always seen their role in the world as the outward manifestation of an inward state of grace."

President Ronald Reagan was a true believer in the Noble Cause. Americans "have never been aggressors. We have always struggled to defend freedom and democracy. We have no territorial ambitions. We occupy no countries."

Reagan's Vice President George H.W. Bush stated: "A world once divided into two armed camps now recognizes one sole and preeminent superpower: the United States of America. And they regard this with no dread. For the world trusts us with power—and the world is right. They trust us to be on the side of decency. They trust us to do what's right."

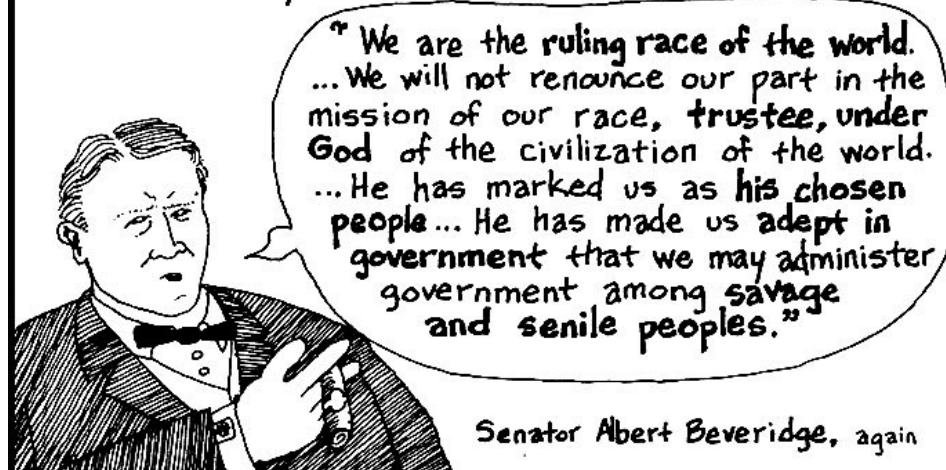
Bush's successor, Bill Clinton, continued the Noble Cause celebration: "America's ideals ... are more and more the aspirations of people everywhere in the world. It is the power of our ideas ... that makes America a uniquely trusted nation."

Madeleine Albright, Clinton's secretary of State, proclaimed: "The United States is good. We try to do our best everywhere."

After the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, President George W. Bush stated: "America was targeted for attack because we're the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world."

In 2011, President Barack Obama stated, "America remains the one indispensable nation, and the world needs a strong America. ... We're a nation that brings our enemies to justice while adhering to the rule of law, and respecting the rights of all citizens. We protect our own freedom and prosperity by extending it to others."

Elaborate racist theories were invented to justify colonialism and these theories were adopted enthusiastically in Washington.



In 2013, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton echoed her President: "We are the indispensable nation. We are the force for progress, prosperity, and peace."

What if someone with a documented history of violence against others thought of himself as exceptional, chosen by destiny or God? People would rightfully reject this self-proclaimed greatness and justice toward others, and reasonably conclude that the person making such claims was dangerous or unstable. Many citizens, however, seem incapable of applying this common sense to this nation's leaders.

The Actual History

Matthew Rothschild, editor of *The Progressive*, offers a reality check to the propaganda that the U.S. government is a benevolent and shining beacon for the world—with a focus on the recent past.

"Well, let's see: The United States led the world to the cliffs of nuclear annihilation during the Cold War. The United States invaded one Latin American country after another, and subverted other governments there covertly. The United States helped overthrow governments in Ghana and the Congo, and supported racist forces in southern Africa. The United

States plunged into the Korean War, and then supported one dictator after another in South Korea. ... And the United States supported Suharto in Indonesia, who killed nearly a million people, some at the behest of the CIA, after taking power in 1965. The United States also supported Suharto's invasion of East Timor 10 years later, which took another 200,000 lives. ... Obama can call that 'global security,' if he wants to, but it's dripping red. ... The United States has invaded or overthrown dozens of countries in the last six decades, and it doesn't need to occupy them if it can install a puppet regime instead."

Commenting on the commonsense view about Noble Cause claims, scholar and activist Robert Jensen questions the dominant story about the United States, "the model of, and the vehicle for, peace, freedom, and democracy in the world." This story can only be believed, however, "by people sufficiently insulated from the reality of U.S. actions abroad to maintain such illusions."

Vietnam veteran and historian Andrew Bacevich challenges the guiding premises of the Noble Cause principle in U.S. foreign policy, particularly the political leaders "who have demonstrated their intention [to] reshape the world in accordance with American interests and values."

The Noble Cause principle, promoted by presidents and other powerful government officials, the corporate mass media, influential intellectuals, and the educational system, is at the heart of the Commemoration of the American War in Vietnam [a \$65 million 13-year Pentagon campaign to rewrite the history of the Vietnam War]. But it is long on passionate beliefs and empty on evidence.

Its supporters, therefore, can only maintain their allegiance to American benevolence by omitting or rejecting the evidence, since the false story unravels from the start.

According to historian Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz:

"U.S. history cannot be understood without dealing with the genocide that the United States committed against Indigenous peoples. From the colonial period through the founding of the United States and continuing in the 21st century, this has entailed torture, terror, sexual abuse, massacres, systematic military occupations, removals of Indigenous peoples from their

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The Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania (c. 1900) was one of many boarding schools sponsored by government and religious groups to 'civilize' Indian children who had been taken from their families and communities.

Noble Cause Principle

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ancestral territories, and removals of Indigenous children to military-like boarding schools. The absence of even the slightest note of regret or tragedy in the annual celebration of the U.S. independence betrays a deep disconnect in the consciousness of U.S. Americans."

Essentially, she argues, the United States has been "fundamentally imperialist" from its origin, "rather than imperialism being a divergence from a well-intentioned path."

The European settlement in America from the colonial period, writes historian Richard Drinnon, is based on the philosophy of "Indian-hating," a form of "white hostility that for four centuries had exterminated 'savages' who stood in the path of Anglo-American expansion." The massacres that were committed "in Vietnam's 'Indian country' in the 1960s [at] My Lai and all the forgotten My Khes" followed logically from those committed against Native Americans here and against Filipinos in the early 20th century. What has been referred to as "Indian removal," therefore, is the foundation of ethnic cleansing upon which U.S. history is based. The atrocities that are part of this "defining and enabling experience" are not exceptions to an otherwise humane and Noble Cause history, they are essential to it.

At the time of the U.S. War of Independence in the late 1770s, for example, aggression into what is now the northeast United States was blocked by the nations of the Iroquois Confederacy. Scholars have pointed out that the confederacy's democratic governance structure "not only predated the United States Constitution but also influenced the evolution and development of the ideas that shaped the document, as well as other fundamental expressions of the American character." Evidence of this influence "is clearly present in the colonial, revolutionary, and early records of the United States and in the oral and written traditions of the Iroquois."

Despite this rich history and culture, Gen. George Washington, in May 1779, instructed Maj. Gen. John Sullivan to attack those nations of the confederacy that sided with the British during the U.S. War of Independence—the Seneca and Mohawk—and those that tried to remain neutral, the Cayuga, Tuscarora, and Onondaga. Only "the Christianized Oneidas" supported the colonial "separatist settlers."

Washington instructed Maj. Gen. Sullivan "to take [preemptive] action against" these nations. He told Sullivan "to lay waste to all the settlements around ... that the country may not be merely overrun but destroyed. ... You will not by any means, listen to any overtures of peace before the total ruin of their settlements. ... Our

future security will be in their inability to injure us ... and in the terror with which the severity of the chastisement they receive will inspire them."

"The immediate objects are the total destruction and devastation of their settlements, and the capture of as many prisoners of every age and sex as possible. It will be essential to ruin their crops now in the ground and prevent their planting more."

How many students, teachers, and citizens know about Washington's scorched-earth campaign against the Iroquois? Vietnam veteran S. Brian Willson writes that Washington's direct orders to Gen. Sullivan "established imperial U.S. military principles for centuries to come." They included "1) total war/genocide targeting all inhabitants for elimination; 2) preventing peace; 3) pre-emptive war; 4) terror; 5) crime of self-defense; 6) revenge." Willson points out that Sullivan's campaign has been called "'the most ruthless application of a scorched-earth policy' in U.S. history," on a par with Sherman's Civil War march to the sea, Gen. Curtis LeMay's fire-bombing of North Korea, and the American search-and-destroy missions in Vietnam.

According to historian David Stannard, the aggression against Native Americans who lived in North America (excluding Mexico) was a genocidal assault without parallel in human history. From the first European arrival in

North America to the Wounded Knee massacre in 1890, "between 97 and 99 percent of North America's native peoples were killed." Most political leaders supported this horrific assault, but "few did so with such evident glee" as President Andrew Jackson, who once ordered his troops "to slay all the Indian children they could find, once they had killed the women and men"; who once "supervised the mutilation of 800 or so Creek Indian corpses—the bodies of men, women, and children that he and his men had massacred." Jackson ordered his troops "specifically seek out and systematically kill Indian women and children who were in hiding in order to complete their extermination."

In what is known as the Trail of Tears, President Jackson ordered the forced removal of tens of thousands of Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muskogee, and Seminole from their homes in the Southeast to the Indian Territory—now Oklahoma. Although the U.S. government granted this land to the Five Nations forever after they had been brutally removed from their original homes, this was just another promise that was broken as thousands of white settlers rushed in and claimed Native American lands. The Trail of Tears ethnic cleansing opened up some 25 million acres of land for white settlement, slavery, land speculation, and cotton production. The overall death toll from this "presidentially ordered death march ... was almost as destructive as the Bataan Death March of 1942. ..." More than eight thousand Cherokee "died as a result of their expulsion from their homeland. The death rate for the Creeks, Seminoles, and Cherokee was equal to that of Jews in Germany, Hungary, and Romania between 1939 and 1945."

Jackson is the preeminent figure in the early U.S. history of genocide, "the archetype Indian killer, slave trader, speculator, merchant and then president, ... as whites took over much of present southern states." His murderous and genocidal brutality clearly contradicts the Noble Cause principle. He claimed that the Indian Removal Act of 1830 that led to the Trail of Tears would advance the Native Americans "from barbarism to the habits of enjoyments of civilized life," as if he were a deeply concerned and humane person: "Toward the aborigines of the country no one can indulge a more friendly feeling than myself, or would go further in attempts to reclaim them from their wandering habits and make them a happy, prosperous people." After a particularly brutal attack that killed Cherokee who had resisted removal, Jackson told Congress: "Severe as is the lesson to the Indians, it was rendered necessary by their unprovoked aggression."

This rationale would be repeated in later U.S. violence around the world, as resistance became "aggression" that

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Richard Nixon and his National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger, who stated that the United States acts for 'the well-being of all mankind. ... Americans have always seen their role in the world as the outward manifestation of an inward state of grace.'

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justified “honorable self-defense” by U.S. forces that would later define the victimizer-victim relationship in Vietnam: Those who resisted U.S. aggression were called “terrorists,” while the U.S. forces that invaded that country were defending themselves and the “Free World.”

Alongside the imperial destruction of Native American nations came economic, political, and military aggression against Latin America that began very early in U.S. history and has continued to the present with more than 50 years of economic embargo and terrorism against Cuba—condemned by virtually every state in the United Nations. Journalist-scholar Juan Gonzalez, former State Department official William Blum, and historian Greg Grandin document this violent, imperial history. Gonzalez points out that U.S. presidents such as Jefferson, Jackson, and Theodore Roosevelt, all firm believers in white supremacy, “regarded [U.S.] domination of the region as ordained by nature. The main proponents and beneficiaries of this empire building, however, were speculators, plantation owners, banks, and merchants, who bankrolled armed rebellions in those Spanish-speaking lands by white settlers.”

Historian Greg Grandin points out that by the mid-20th century alone, the United States had sent its warships into Latin America more than 6,000 times, invaded numerous countries; engaged in long guerrilla wars in the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, and Haiti; annexed Puerto Rico; and stolen part of Colombia “to create both the Panamanian nation and the Panama Canal.” Added to these, “American corporations and financial houses came to dominate the economies of Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central America, as well as large parts of South America,” commencing “their overseas expansion before they headed elsewhere, to Asia, Africa, and Europe.”

In his analyses of U.S. history, Andrew Bacevich has exposed a central premise of the Noble Cause principle: “The restless search for a buck and the ruthless elimination of anyone—or anything—standing in the way ... have been central to the American character.”

This “American character” applies to European settlers and their descendants, however, not Native Americans, since this “restless search” has not been central to their culture. “If the young United States had a mission,” writes Bacevich, “it was not to liberate but to expand.” From the beginning, the United States compulsively expanded and “the historical record leaves no room for debate” on how this was done: “... by any means necessary,” including “full-scale invasions [and] ethnic cleansing.” This record totally contradicts the mythical Noble Cause view we have been taught about post-independence expansion.

Moving ahead into the mid-20th century and the present, it is clear that the beliefs about Washington’s Noble Cause principle after the Second World War do not match the facts. William Blum has compiled the extensive and factual list of U.S. imperial violence during this period. It includes an extraordinary number of unprovoked invasions and covert actions against sovereign nations—what is now called “regime change.” Excluding his list of Latin American countries above, it includes Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, Congo, Greece, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Laos, Libya, the Soviet Union, Syria,

Vietnam, and Yugoslavia. As he states: “It would, moreover, be difficult to name a single brutal dictatorship of the second half of the 20th century that was not supported by the United States; not only supported, but often put into power and kept in power against the wishes of the population.”

There is overwhelming evidence to support the scholars’ assertions made above; however, historian and political activist Michael Parenti argues that the dominant class and its allies in the corporate media, political system, and universities refuse to admit that U.S. leaders “have been the greatest purveyors of terrorism throughout the world.” The facts are quite clear: the United States and its “surrogate mercenaries have unleashed terror bombing campaigns against unarmed civilian populations ... in scores of countries, causing death and destruction to millions of innocents.”

Since the Second World War, the greatest U.S. violence has been in Asia—concluding with Vietnam. This included crushing the Huk (Hukbalahap) rebellion in the Philippines, a peasant-led guerrilla movement that led resistance against the Japanese in the Second World War

the policy on ethical or political grounds.”

Similarities between Korea and Vietnam include the racist attitudes and actions against people there that helped fuel massacres by U.S. forces in both wars, e.g., at No Gun Ri in Korea and My Lai in Vietnam. ... Too few U.S. citizens know this documented record, having been disabled intellectually and politically—first in their schools, then by the corporate mass media and leading political officials.

During the Cold War, for example, U.S. violence across the world, always masked as a Noble Cause, strengthened the military-industrial complex that President Eisenhower warned of in his January 1961 Farewell Address. Five years earlier, however, the prominent sociologist C. Wright Mills analyzed this complex in his groundbreaking and powerful book, *The Power Elite*—a scathing critique of the institutions that later concerned the former President. The influence of this complex, which Mills identified as an “economic-military” link, encompassing the all-embracing connection between the Pentagon, industry, Congress, and the academy, has increased dramatically since Eisenhower’s address, devouring trillions of public funds to support the ever-increasing power of the National Security State.

Decades before Eisenhower’s Farewell Address, Medal of Honor recipient and former Marine Maj. Gen. Smedley Butler addressed the nature of the U.S. imperial violence and the military-industrial complex of his time, including his own role.

“I spent 33 years and four months in active military service as a member of ... the Marine Corps. ... And during that period I spent most of my time being a high-class muscle-man for Big Business, for Wall Street and for the Bankers. In short, I was a racketeer, a gangster for capitalism ...”

This actual history is, and remains, the essence of U.S. policy abroad—always hidden by the Noble Cause principle. According to the late writer and activist Mike Marqusee, public belief in this principle “obstructs knowledge and understanding of United States history and the pattern of its involvements abroad,” especially the fact that it acts “like any other imperial power, on the basis of self-interest.” U.S. interventions abroad are “presented as an altruistic response to a crisis. Since there is no American empire, no pattern, no habit, or system of extraterritorial domination, the motive for each intervention is assessed at face value,” thus denying the actual record. Marqusee laments the U.S. Noble Cause: “Culturally, emotionally, [belief in this principle] curtails human solidarity. More than ever, ‘America’ is a prison that the U.S. citizenry needs to break out of—in its own interest and in the interests of the victims of U.S. policy.”

The Noble Cause principle cannot stand up to the facts of endless violence that spans nearly 240 years of U.S. history, or more than 400 years if the count begins with colonial settler wars against Native Americans. This history is the context within which to understand the American War in Vietnam.

John Marciano, professor emeritus at SUNY Cortland, is an antiwar and social justice activist, author, scholar, teacher, and trade unionist. He is the author, with William L. Griffen, of *Teaching the Vietnam War*.



As he escalated the American War in Vietnam in the 1960s, President Lyndon Johnson defended it in Noble Cause terms: ‘We have no territory there, nor do we seek any. ... We want nothing for ourselves ... we fight for values and we fight for principles.’

and continued the struggle against a government elite that had collaborated with the Japanese during that conflict. Using Cold War propaganda that the Huk were communists, the U.S. military aided the campaign to destroy them by 1954. This period also witnessed the occupation of South Korea and support for the repressive anti-communist Syngman Rhee, whose policies were similar to the U.S.-installed Ngo Dinh Diem in South Vietnam and helped trigger the devastating Korean War that included bombing North Korea “back to the Stone Age.”

In 1965, the very same year the United States escalated the war in Vietnam, the United States through the CIA aided in the massacre of perhaps 500,000 Communists, alleged Communists, and other progressive activists during a military coup in Indonesia, one of the greatest mass murders in history. The late historian Gabriel Kolko writes that it was “certainly one of the most barbaric acts of inhumanity in a century that has seen a great deal of it; it surely ranks as a war crime of the same type as those the Nazis perpetrated.” Not one act by the U.S. after 1945 “was as bloodthirsty as its role in Indonesia, for it tried to initiate the massacre, and ... to see the physical liquidation of the PKI [Communist Party of Indonesia] was carried through to its culmination. Not a single one of its officials in Washington ... questioned

Veterans Are Building the Anti-Militarism M

By Will Griffin
Photos by Siri Margerin

I spent Memorial Day weekend at the famous Highlander Research and Education Center training in nonviolent direct action and methods of civil disobedience. It was called Veterans Action Camp and was organized by Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW), and the Ruckus Society.

The Highlander Center is a social justice leadership training school and cultural center located in northern Tennessee. Founded in 1932, it played a critical role in the civil rights movement. Prominent activists like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks trained there, as well as many members of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

In 1957, King attended a weekend event in honor of the 25th anniversary of Highlander Folk School. Also attending were representatives of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, looking for proof that King and Highlander were breaking the law.

Just as ending the Jim Crow system was paramount to changing the foundation of America back in the 20th century, so today we must resist U.S. militarism not only to save the soul of America but literally to save the world.

King said, “When machines and computers, profit motives, and property rights are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, extreme materialism and militarism are incapable of being conquered.”

The two existential threats

in the 21st century are climate change and nuclear war, both of which are intrinsically tied to militarism. Nuclear war is a larger threat in the 21st century than during the height of the Cold War, and the U.S. military is one of the largest contributors to climate change as the single biggest institutional consumer of fossil fuels as well as the largest producer of greenhouse gases and other toxic substances.

Earlier this year the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* pushed forward its famous Doomsday Clock to two-and-a-half minutes to midnight. In addition, the resources and funds needed to combat climate change are being spent on the military industrial complex. Just one look at discretionary spending will make anyone realize enough is enough!

This calls for massive change. Signing petitions just won’t cut it. We, as concerned and engaged people, need to take nonviolent direct action to address these critical all-life-threatening issues.

Daniel Hunter describes nonviolent direct action as “techniques outside of institutional-



ple to make a united change.”

This was the primary focus of the Veterans Action Camp at the Highlander Center. As veterans from illegal, immoral, and unjust wars, we decided to spend our entire Memorial Day weekend together learning new ways of strengthening unity in community to make foundational

of the 1960s, veterans have had a special voice in our society. Understanding the history of veterans in social movements is critical to using our voice to its fullest advantage to contribute to the social movements of the 21st century.

The Action Camp was five days long. We were surrounded

inside us all. Being part of this was incredibly healing for many of us who still suffer from emotional, mental, and physical health issues resulting from our military engagement.

Most of the training came from leaders of the Ruckus Society. This nonprofit organization sponsors skill-sharing and nonviolent direct action training, strategy sessions, and consultation for activists and organizers from frontline and affected communities working on social justice, human, rights, migrant rights, workers’ rights, environmental justice, and much more. The trainers we had were phenomenal in their knowledge and ability to convey it. The mix of IVAW and Ruckus members created a vibrant space that many of us will long remember.

We were trained on four tracks: strategy and action planning, artistic and creative action, blockades and holding space, and community defense.

I choose the blockades workshop because I’ve participated in blockades in South Korea, Okinawa, Palestine, and Standing Rock. I wanted to learn more in-depth tactics and the Ruckus Society certainly provided that. I feel confident for my next blockade!

The majority of the camp was focused on training for a mock action on the fifth day. The idea was that a weapons expo was coming into town and our goal was to disrupt the expo in order to highlight the connections between the arms industry, the violence it generates, and our political leaders tied to it.

IVAW has a campaign called Drop the MIC—Military In-

*The love and passion I witnessed
came from something very deep inside us all.*

ized behavior for social change that challenge an unjust power dynamic using methods of protest, noncooperation, and intervention without the use or threat of injurious force.” He goes on to say, “... direct action is about power—bringing together peo-

changes in our society. We realized it’s going to take serious training to do so.

One of the first presentations was about the history of veterans in social movements, which is quite deep. From the Bonus Army to the antiwar movement

by the amazing beauty of the Appalachian mountains, nourished by incredible, healthy food, and enriched by the presence of beautiful souls dedicated to changing this country. The love and passion I witnessed came from something very deep



Movement



dustrial Complex that exposes the fact that all these wars have been led by the business community, and, boy, has it been profitable! On IVAW's website it states, "Drop the MIC is focused on interrupting the relationships between profit, institutional violence, and politicians."

We created banners and art work for various visual displays, including wrapping the "weapons expo building" with caution tape labeling the expo a health hazard to our community. The people from the blockade track created physical barriers by linking arms in front of vehicles and conducting sit-downs in front of building entrances. We had people practice their community defense, doing threat assessments, internal capacity assessments, scenario planning, providing security, and so much more. And those in the strategy and action planning track covered the functions of the direct action, developing strategy and tactics and applying these techniques to achieve our goal of disrupting the expo and exposing the connections between business, violence, and political leaders.

One of the most important lessons I learned from the Action Camp was the importance of diversity among our group of veterans. In photos of veterans from past movements, it's generally white or black men, but mainly white. Our generation of veterans is more diverse, and that was proudly displayed at the Action Camp.

It was a mix of men and women, including transgender people. We had people of color from all backgrounds lead us in many different ways. Lesbians and gays and straight people worked together like peas and carrots. People from all over the country shared their experiences. It was beautiful to be a part of this diverse crowd.

According to Dr. Erica Chenoweth, a leading expert on non-



violent resistance, having a diverse crowd of people is one of four key factors of a successful movement.

Aside from the strategy and tactics, the most vital lesson I learned was the importance of building a community of veterans who are dedicated to actually serving our country, and therefore the world. Since I left the military in 2010, it has been difficult to find a community where I feel comfortable, where I "fit in." I recognize how important it is for myself, and all of us humans, to have community.

We are still the same people we were when we first joined the military, wanting to use our capacities to create a better world. Only this time we won't be wielding a weapon, dropping any bombs, or making military contractors rich while destroying the lives of entire countries. The real weapon we use is our community.

Will Griffin is a former U.S. paratrooper who served in Iraq and Afghanistan. He is a member of the board of directors of Veterans For Peace and of the Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space.



Clockwise from upper left: IVAW members begin their mock action with a march; Mejia enjoying a break at Action Camp; Chantelle Bateman leads the mock action march with a drum; Ruckus Society members and IVAW members conduct mock arrests; IVAW members plan for the mock action; Action Camp group photo at the famous Highlander Center in Tennessee; IVAW members learn about the history of veterans in U.S. social movements; LJ Amsterdam from Ruckus Society lifts participants' spirits.

Project RENEW: Ridding Vietnam of Unexploded Ordnance



Chuck Searcy of Project RENEW at the Vietnam Military History Museum in Hanoi. Photo: Peter Nguyen.

By Chuck Searcy

For most Americans, the Vietnam War ended in 1975. But for too many Vietnamese, the war didn't end then. They continued to suffer death, injury, and lifetime disabilities from munitions that remained on the surface or just under the soil. These weapons posed a constant danger to unsuspecting residents throughout the country—but especially along the former demilitarized zone.

In 2001, when Project RENEW was launched, Quang Tri Province had been experiencing 60 to 80 accidents involving unexploded ordnance (UXO) every year since the war ended. Vietnam's Ministry of Labor, Invalids, and Social Affairs reported that more than 100,000 Vietnamese had been killed or injured nationwide by bombs and mines.

Fifteen years later, Project RENEW's efforts—with the cooperation of other NGOs and provincial government agencies—have paid off. In 2016 there was only one accident in Quang Tri Province.

In 2000, a delegation from the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF) visited Vietnam. By the end of that trip, VVMF's leadership decided to help Vietnam recover from the consequences of the war. The government of Quang Tri Province urged VVMF to come up with a different and more effective approach to the UXO problem in the province. A decision was made to broaden and improve upon the conventional efforts already under way involving international mine action organizations and Vietnamese military units.

The government suggested that VVMF design a "comprehensive and integrated" plan to deal with bombs and mines. The focus would be on clearance and safe cleanup of ordnance, on teaching children and adults how to be safe and protect their families and their communities, and on helping amputees and people with other disabilities caused by bomb and mine accidents.

Early Challenges

I returned to Vietnam in January 1995 after serving in the U.S. Army as an intelligence analyst in Saigon in 1967-68. The Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation (VVAF) had received a grant of \$1 million from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to upgrade and equip a workshop at the Swedish Children's Hospital in Hanoi. President Bobby Muller offered me the job of program manager. The mission was to improve and expand production of orthopedic braces for children with polio, cerebral palsy, and other mobility problems.

We had to rebuild and renovate a large section of the rehab department at the Children's Hospital, install routers, band saws, ovens, and work benches, and arrange sufficient ventilation, while training Vietnamese in the fabrication of lightweight polypropylene braces designed and custom-made for disabled children.

When the workshop opened in 1996, the doctors and technicians quickly reached full capacity in treating patients, who came from far and wide to be examined and fitted with assistive devices. Soon the staff was treating 30 to 40 patients a month, providing them with high-quality orthotic devices that enabled many of them to walk without assistance for the first time.

During those early years, there was discussion among my Vietnamese doctor friends and medical staff about bombs and mines and the damage such explosives were continuing to cause throughout Vietnam. We read newspaper accounts every week of accidents and casualties throughout the country. The Vietnamese military, given the job of cleaning up ordnance from the war, was inadequately equipped and insufficiently funded. Besides, it was not a priority. Many Vietnamese, including some officials, seemed to accept that this was a problem that would never go away, because the challenge was overwhelming.

The war's destruction was immense. I knew that unexploded ordnance, even decades later, was a lethal threat to farmers, schoolchildren, and villagers going about their daily tasks. The reports were too frequent to ignore.

The Deadly Legacy of Agent Orange

I also came to understand that Agent Orange was an insidious legacy of the war. U.S. veterans were becoming painfully aware of the health consequences that seemed to be directly linked to Agent Orange exposure. But the U.S. government was in denial, and the Vietnamese gov-

U.S. cooperation with Vietnam in cleaning up UXO contamination. Gradually, the door opened to some funding from the United States to Vietnam's Ministry of Defense. Technical equipment was provided, and more funds became available for NGOs with expertise in demining and UXO mitigation.

A few NGOs in Hanoi with a shared interest in these problems formed the Landmine Working Group to explore ways to collaborate. The provincial government in Quang Tri was eager to have help in dealing with the problem.

PeaceTrees, a Seattle-based organization, had planted trees around the world in areas of former conflict, disaster, and environmental degradation. Founders Jerilyn Brusseau and Danaan Parry came to Vietnam to propose a similar project. I encouraged them to visit Quang Tri. The provincial government welcomed the idea, but noted that any tree-planting effort would first require a very careful clearance of bombs and mines in that area. That opened the door for the first U.S. involvement in the cleanup of bombs and mines: the safe clearance of six hectares of land by the Vietnamese military, funded by PeaceTrees, and followed by the planting of more than a thousand trees.

Soon afterward a German organization, SODI-Gerbera, got involved, followed by the large British demining organization, Mines Advisory Group (MAG), Clear Path International, and Golden West Humanitarian Foundation. The situation was now ripe for the introduction of the concept that became Project RENEW.



An unexploded MK82 is recovered by a Project RENEW crew in Quang Tri Province in 2014.

Photo courtesy of Project RENEW

ernment seemed reluctant to push either issue.

We asked why the U.S. was not accepting more responsibility for these legacies of war that threatened the lives of generations of Vietnamese born long after the war ended. Some members of Congress—and increasingly vocal veterans and organizations—pushed for greater U.S. involvement. One of the leading advocates was Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.). The War Victims Fund, which he helped set up and later was renamed the Leahy War Victims Fund, provided funding for humanitarian projects run by VVAF and other nonprofit organizations.

The Department of State's Office of Humanitarian Demining showed sharper interest in the possibility of

Taking a Stand

The decision to launch Project RENEW depended on raising \$500,000 to guarantee at least two years of adequate funds to make the project a reality. Jan Scruggs, VVMF's president, convinced Christos Cotsakos, a Vietnam veteran who had been wounded in Quang Tri, to come up with half the funding. Cotsakos had been very successful with E*Trade Online Financial Services. I approached the Freeman Foundation, which matched Cotsakos's donation with another \$250,000. Project RENEW was under way.

A bright young staff member, Hoang Nam, and I took
continued on page 22 ...

Have You Ever Seen So Many Elephants?

By George Burchett

In April 2015, I was invited by the Cercle des Francophones (Francophone Association) of Ha Noi to present the film *Loin du Vietnam (Far from Viet Nam)* at the Ha Noi Cinematheque. The film was made collectively in 1967 by some of the great names of new French cinema—Joris Ivens, William Klein, Claude Lelouch, Agnès Varda, Jean-Luc Godard, Chris



Wilfred Burchett in Viet Nam.

Marker, and Alain Resnais—in support of Viet Nam’s resistance to U.S. aggression.

I was familiar with the film, but decided to do some extra research for the occasion.

Quite by chance, I stumbled upon the website of a film festival at Casa de Cinema at the Villa Borghese in Rome, titled, *Il vietnam e il cinema francese—Viet Nam and French Cinema*. One of the presented films listed on the website was *Wilfred Burchett in Viet Nam* (France/Viet Nam, 1963, 44 min.).

Wilfred Burchett is my father, the Australian journalist, the first to visit the liberated zones of South Viet Nam (Viet Cong controlled) in late 1963 and early 1965.

I knew a film had been made of his visit, but had never seen it and had never been able to track it down. And there it was, on the program of a film festival in Rome.

I emailed the organizers at Casa de Cinema, who put me in touch with the Archivio Audiovisivo del Movimento Operaio e Democratico (AAMOD) film archive in Rome. I contacted them, and they kindly made the film available to me.

So I finally watched it for the first time in my life at home in Ha Noi. It was a highly emotional experience to watch the almost half-century-old black-and-white footage, first downloaded on my laptop, then on my TV screen.

Eight minutes into the film, a VC postman delivers my father his mail. The

commentary says:

“From Europe, your son sends drawings of the jungle and wild animals. He is a little afraid for you, but he doesn’t yet know that here the most dangerous animals are American imperialists.”

Well, that son is me, artist George Burchett. Yes, these were my drawings “of the jungle and wild animals,” inspired by the letters my father sent my brother, sister, and me—then living in Moscow—in which he explained why he was away for so long. To make it more interesting for us, he told stories of tigers, elephants, monkeys, and other exotic creatures from the jungles of South Viet Nam.

Motorized Cavalry

Sixteen minutes into the film, my father crosses a river on horseback—very heroic-looking, like Indiana Jones—and suddenly this extraordinary panorama fills the screen. The narration says:

“After an arduous journey you are now in the Central Highlands.

“Have you ever seen so many elephants?”

“Did you know they are the heavy motorized cavalry of the local guerrillas?”

Extraordinary. Like some lost world suddenly rediscovered. When this scene was filmed, thousands of elephants, tigers, panthers, and other wild animals roamed the jungles of South Viet Nam. Elephants played a special role.

From my father’s letters from the jungles of South Viet Nam:

“There are lots of tigers and elephants; lots of deer and wild pigs around where I am. I found out lots of interesting things about elephants, and the more I hear about these animals, the more I like them. They are very, very intelligent and very sensitive. They worry about things just like human beings. I heard of one the other day who loved his master very much. They had worked together in the forest for many years together, the elephant pulling the trees away from the land being cleared for cultivation and afterwards, carrying the grain and master together back to the vil-

lage. The master got quite old and died, and the elephant wept and was very unhappy. For a whole week he would not eat, and then he died.

“The elephant becomes very affectionate towards everyone in the family with whom he works. If there are some big rows, between Mummy and Daddy for instance, or between Annichka and George, the elephant simply cannot stand it. He stalks off, deep into the forest and someone must go after him, blowing a certain



‘It took a long time for this image to reach me, and it reached me in a strange, roundabout way. So I invite you, who read this, to look at it very carefully. I’ve counted about 60 elephants, each with a man riding it.’—George Burchett. Photo: Wilfred Burchett

note on a buffalo horn, and then talk to him nicely and explain that there will be no more quarrelling. Then he agrees to come back.”

My father’s words merged with the scene of elephants in the shimmering water. It took a long time for this image to reach me, and it reached me in a strange, roundabout way. So I invite you, who read this, to look at it very carefully. I’ve counted about 60 elephants, each with a man riding it.

Verge of Extinction

There are about 60 wild elephants left in Viet Nam today. Not in one big group like in the image I am sharing with you, but scattered around the few remaining wilderness areas of Viet Nam. Another 100 or so lead a miserable existence carrying tourists, mostly in Dak Lak Province in the Central Highlands. These figures are provided by Vietnam’s Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.



Elephants were employed in the jungles of central and southern Viet Nam and Laos during the war of resistance against U.S. imperialism.

And they are dire. The number of wild elephants in Viet Nam is unsustainable and the elephants are on the verge of extinction. Yes, extinction.

What bombs and defoliants could not accomplish, modern man is on the verge of achieving: the total elimination of elephants in Viet Nam. The main causes are deforestation and loss of habitat, man-elephant conflict, and poaching. Elephants do not reproduce in captivity. Those who die from exhaustion, malnutrition, or disease cannot be replaced. So domestic elephants are also doomed.

Elephants have played an important role

in Viet Nam’s long history of resisting invaders. Elephants carried the Trung Sisters into battle against the Chinese invaders. The virgin lady warrior Ba Trieu also rode an elephant into battle, as did many other great Vietnamese heroes. And elephants were the “heavy motorized cavalry” at the Battle of Dien Bien Phu during the war of resistance against French colonialism and in the jungles of Central and South Viet Nam during the war of resistance against U.S. imperialism. They should be treated like national heroes, with the respect due to war veterans.

Saving the elephants of Viet Nam should be a national duty and a matter of national pride. Elephants, tigers, rhinos, and many other species are being hunted and exterminated to satisfy man’s vanity.

Yes, there are economic and social realities that mean that wilderness areas are shrinking to make way for crops and other forms of land exploitation. Everybody understands that. But everybody should also understand that unless we embrace models of sustainable development, not only will the elephants of Viet Nam be doomed, our whole planet will be doomed.

The jungle and its animals were Viet Nam’s allies in the wars against invaders, colonizers and imperialists. They are now crying for help. But are we listening?

This article was first published by Viet Nam News.

George Burchett is an artist who lives in Ha Noi with his wife Ilza and son George. George’s father, the famous Australian journalist Wilfred Burchett, was one of the few—perhaps the only—foreign correspondents to report the American war from the side of the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong. For his independence and his determination to tell the untold story of the war to Americans and other foreigners, Wilfred Burchett was denied a passport by the government of Australia for nearly two decades.

Moral Injury: The Wounded Soul

By Alison Banville

Members of Veterans For Peace UK recently spoke at the Hexham Debates, a series of speakers on the theme of justice, peace, and democracy.

John Bourton's topic was "how to turn your child into a killer," and he discussed "the psychological processes that go on to turn you from a child into a killer, which, essentially is what basic training is there to do."

But it is Daniel Lenham's talk on moral injury I want to focus on, simply because it is largely unheard of, yet impacts the lives of those affected severely and has implications for the war machine itself when examined too closely for comfort.

Lenham explains that it's important to make a distinction between post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and moral injury:

"Pretty much every psychological injury that veterans are having is being categorized as post-traumatic stress disorder. I think, in order to deal with both PTSD and moral injury, we need to identify and address the distinction between the two."

PTSD, according to Dave Wood in his book, *What Have We Done: The Moral Injuries of Our Longest Wars*, "springs from fear," whereas moral injury is described as "a bruised soul," a definition favorable to Lenham, because it is, he says, "very accurate." I have heard other veterans express their satisfaction with the description also, which indicates to me that here is where stark, clinical language fails, and only metaphysical or spiritual expression can convey the depth of the experience. A "bruised psyche" will not do for moral injury—it is more profound than that.

The "official" definition of moral injury, Lenham informs us, is "a lasting psychological, biological, spiritual, behavioral and social impact of perpetuating, or failing to prevent, or bearing witness to, acts that transgress deeply held moral beliefs and expectations." Another definition favored by Lenham is coined by author



Royal Air Force (RAF) veteran Daniel Lenham returns his medals at 10 Downing Street.
'If you look close enough,' he says, 'you can see the reflections of dead Iraqis; you can see the embers of Libya; and you can see the faces of the men and women of the British Armed Forces who didn't return, and also of those who did so with lost limbs and shattered souls.'

Jonathan Shay: "a betrayal of what's right by someone who holds legitimate authority in a high-stakes situation." "The key word there is 'betrayal,'" says Lenham, explaining, "I can relate to that ... anyone who's served in any war, but certainly the recent ones—from a personal level, Iraq and Afghanistan, and Libya—I think there's been a huge sense of betrayal, and that's something that resonates with me."

Lenham recommends Shay's book, *Achilles in Vietnam*, which compares the combat trauma of the Trojan War of Homer's *Iliad* to that of the Vietnam War. In it, the author expounds that moral injury is a violation of "themis," an Ancient Greek term denoting fairness, rightness, and natural law. To the Ancient Greeks themselves, the female Titan, Themis, was "the personification of divine order," and so it is that the "betrayal" of this fundamental justness lies, as Lenham testifies, at the heart of moral injury.

Shay, a U.S. Veterans' Affairs (VA) psychiatrist, maintains that the essential symptoms of moral injury—"sorrow, grief, regret, shame and alienation"—are deep wounds that might be overcome, but for that sense of betrayal. "This makes moral injury an issue of knowledge, not just an emotional experience for which the psyche was unprepared," he states, which is a crucial observation, considering the "danger" an awakened veteran presents to the sociopaths running the military complex.

Indeed, military training, as Lenham points out, requires recruits "to obey orders with 'unquestioning acceptance' (British Army, 2000), for which they relinquish sovereignty over their choices." How else is a rapacious war machine to be run? "Any hesitation to follow an order was brutally punished," says VFP UK's founder Ben Griffin in his compelling talk "The Making of a Modern British Soldier."

Lenham expands: "We hand over any autonomy of decision-making, any kind of responsibility to the system, which we view as noble, as righteous, as benevolent. And I think that more often than not that's where this conflict comes from: this inner turmoil is created, from a betrayal of what we believe is right, by this instrument, this institution. The degree of trust that comes within the military—we're often viewed as the good guys—and that shapes our understanding, our moral and social horizons, and it's only when an event or experience occurs, and post-event, when we attempt to reintegrate or transition back into civilian society that our moral belief sys-

tems and horizons then expand. When we look at some of the actions and behaviors that we committed within that military system is when a lot of the (moral) injuries can come to light. It's not necessarily a sudden thing; it could be weeks, it could be months, it could be years."

He continues, "In my opinion, the reason the war system doesn't want to talk about moral injury is because it takes away the responsibility for its acts around the world. If you frame everything as PTSD it's more about the individual. ... There's a lot of talk about how PTSD

'The key word there is "betrayal" ... [A]nyone who's served in any war, but certainly the recent ones—from a personal level, Iraq and Afghanistan, and Libya—I think there's been a huge sense of betrayal, and that's something that resonates with me.'

is related to prior behaviors, experiences and situations pre-military recruitment, but I think with moral injury you have to look at what you're doing as an institution, as a system. What can we do about moral injury? We have to identify its existence. All the literature that I've read is reactive in dealing with the trauma—there's no prevention of it." (Daniel sighs at this point). "In my opinion if you want to remove or completely eradicate moral injury then you have to look at stopping sending young men and young women to operations and wars around the world."

Daniel then ends on a quote by Vietnam veteran Camillo Mac Bica that he says resonates strongly with him in the context of moral injury:

"We are the victims of politicians' hypocrisy, the scapegoats for the inevitable affront to the national con-

continued on page 19 ...

The Girl in the Picture

for Phan Thi Kim Phuc

"Whatever you run from becomes your shadow."
—Traditional

*If you're a namvet, a survivor of sorts,
she'll come for you across the decades
casting a shadow in the dying light of your dreams,
naked and nine, terror in her eyes*

*Of course you will have to ignore her—
if you wish to survive over the years—
but then your daughters will turn nine
and then your granddaughters nine*

As the shadows lengthen.

*So, you will have no choice on that one night
screaming down the Ridge Road, lights off,
under a full moon, she standing in the middle
of the road,
still naked and nine, terror in her eyes*

*Now you must stop to pick her up, to carry her back
home to where she came from, to that gentle
village where the forgiving and the forgiven
gather at high noon. Where there are no shadows.*

Doug Rawlings

Terror in Britain: What Did the Prime Minister Know?

By John Pilger

The unsayable in Britain's general election campaign is this: The causes of the Manchester atrocity, in which 22 mostly young people were murdered by a jihadist, are being suppressed to protect the secrets of British foreign policy.

Critical questions—such as why the security service MI5 maintained terrorist “assets” in Manchester and why the government did not warn the public of the threat in their midst—remain unanswered, deflected by the promise of an internal “review.”

The alleged suicide bomber, Salman Abedi, was part of an extremist group, the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG), which thrived in Manchester and was cultivated and used by MI5 for more than 20 years.

The LIFG is proscribed by Britain as a terrorist organization that seeks a “hardline Islamic state” in Libya and “is part of the wider global Islamist extremist movement, as inspired by al-Qaida.”

The “smoking gun” is that when Theresa May was Home Secretary, LIFG jihadists were allowed to travel unhindered across Europe and encouraged to engage in “battle”: first to remove Mu'ammarr Gaddafi in Libya, then to join al-Qaida-affiliated groups in Syria.

Last year, the FBI reportedly placed Abedi on a “terrorist watch list” and warned MI5 that his group was looking for a “political target” in Britain. Why wasn't he apprehended and the network around him prevented from planning and executing the atrocity on May 22?

The Manchester atrocity lifts the rock of British foreign policy to reveal its Faustian alliance with extreme Islam.

These questions arise because of an FBI leak that demolished the “lone wolf” spin in the wake of the May 22 attack—thus, the panicky, uncharacteristic outrage directed at Washington from London, and Donald Trump's apology.

The Manchester atrocity lifts the rock of British foreign policy to reveal its Faustian alliance with extreme Islam, especially the sect known as Wahhabism or Salafism, whose principal custodian and banker is the oil kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Britain's biggest weapons customer.

This imperial marriage reaches back to the Second World War and the early days of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. The aim of British policy was to stop pan-Arabism: Arab states developing a modern secularism, asserting their independence from the imperial West and controlling their resources. The creation of a rapacious Israel was meant to expedite this. Pan-Arabism has since been crushed; the goal now is division and conquest.

In 2011, according to *Middle East Eye*, the LIFG in Manchester were known as the “Manchester boys.” Implacably opposed to Mu'ammarr Gaddafi, they were considered high risk, and a number were under Home Office control orders—house arrest—when anti-Gaddafi demonstrations broke out in Libya, a country forged from myriad tribal enmities.

Suddenly the control orders were lifted. “I was allowed to go, no questions asked,” said one LIFG member. MI5 returned their passports, and counter-terrorism police at Heathrow airport were told to let them board their flights.

The overthrow of Gaddafi, who controlled Africa's

largest oil reserves, had long been planned in Washington and London. According to French intelligence, the LIFG made several assassination attempts on Gaddafi in the 1990s—bankrolled by British intelligence. In March 2011, France, Britain, and the United States seized the opportunity of a “humanitarian intervention” and attacked Libya. They were joined by NATO under cover of a U.N. resolution to “protect civilians.”

Last September, a House of Commons Foreign Affairs Select Committee inquiry concluded that then-Prime Minister David Cameron had taken the country to war against Gaddafi on a series of “erroneous assumptions” and that the attack “had led to the rise of Islamic State in North Africa.” The Commons committee quoted what it called Barack Obama's “pithy” description of Cameron's role in Libya as a “shit show.”

In fact, Obama was a leading actor in the “shit show,” urged on by his warmongering secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, and a media accusing Gaddafi of planning “genocide” against his own people. “We knew ... that if we waited one more day,” said Obama, “Benghazi, a city the size of Charlotte, could suffer a massacre that would have reverberated across the region and stained the con-

those secretly supplied and trained by Britain's SAS and inspired by Islamic State, such as the “Manchester boys.”

To the Americans and British, Gaddafi's true crime was his iconoclastic independence and his plan to abandon the petrodollar, a pillar of American imperial power. He had audaciously planned to underwrite a common African currency backed by gold, establish an all-Africa bank, and promote economic union among poor countries with prized resources. Whether or not this would have happened, the very notion was intolerable to the United States as it prepared to “enter” Africa and bribe African governments with military “partnerships.”

The fallen dictator fled for his life. A Royal Air Force plane spotted his convoy, and in the rubble of Sirte, he was sodomised with a knife by a fanatic described in the news as “a rebel.”

Having plundered Libya's \$30 billion arsenal, the “rebels” advanced south, terrorizing towns and villages. Crossing into sub-Saharan Mali, they destroyed that country's fragile stability. The ever-eager French sent planes and troops to their former colony “to fight al-Qaida,” or the menace they had helped create.

On October 14, 2011, President Obama announced he



Libya. Photo by Mads Nissen.

science of the world.”

The massacre story was fabricated by Salafist militias facing defeat by Libyan government forces. They told Reuters there would be “a real bloodbath, a massacre like we saw in Rwanda.” The Commons committee reported, “The proposition that Mu'ammarr Gaddafi would have ordered the massacre of civilians in Benghazi was not supported by the available evidence.”

Britain, France, and the United States effectively destroyed Libya as a modern state. According to its own records, NATO launched 9,700 “strike sorties,” of which more than a third hit civilian targets. They included fragmentation bombs and missiles with uranium warheads. The cities of Misurata and Sirte were carpet-bombed. UNICEF, the U.N. children's organization, reported a high proportion of the children killed “were under the age of 10.”

More than “giving rise” to Islamic State—ISIS had already taken root in the ruins of Iraq following the Blair and Bush invasion in 2003—these ultimate medievalists now had all of north Africa as a base. The attack also triggered a stampede of refugees fleeing to Europe.

Cameron was celebrated in Tripoli as a “liberator,” or imagined he was. The crowds cheering him included

was sending special forces troops to Uganda to join the civil war there. In the next few months, U.S. combat troops were sent to South Sudan, Congo, and the Central African Republic. With Libya secured, an American invasion of the African continent was under way, largely unreported.

In London, one of the world's biggest arms fairs was staged by the British government. The buzz in the stands was the “demonstration effect in Libya.” The London Chamber of Commerce and Industry held a preview entitled “Middle East: A vast market for UK defense and security companies.” The host was the Royal Bank of Scotland, a major investor in cluster bombs, which were used extensively against civilian targets in Libya. The blurb for the bank's arms party lauded the “unprecedented opportunities for UK defense and security companies.”

Last month, Prime Minister Theresa May was in Saudi Arabia, selling more of the £3 billion (\$3.86 billion) worth of British arms that the Saudis have used against Yemen. Based in control rooms in Riyadh, British military advisers assist the Saudi bombing raids, which have killed more than 10,000 civilians. There are now clear signs of famine. A Yemeni child dies every 10 minutes from pre-

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Letters

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Vietnamese and U.S. veterans today.

If you want to really thank a veteran, thank them for telling the truth, that war is hell and that there are no winners, only those who profit while others are buried six feet under, wounded, diseased, filled with mental anguish.

The strong among us recognize we were betrayed and lied to and have turned away from violence. Now our path to healing is to wage peace, save lives where we can, volunteer in our local communities, oppose all forms of violence and hate.

You can thank us by working for peace and to end these senseless endless wars by bringing our troops home and taking care of veteran survivors when they return.

Support the VA and VA healthcare, get homeless veterans off the streets, assist veteran families who have lost a member in war or have a returning vet family member suffering from PTSD or moral injury, which affects the whole family.

If you really can wrap your mind around the true consequences of war and the responsibility all taxpayers share, then you will understand when I say moral injury affects us all.

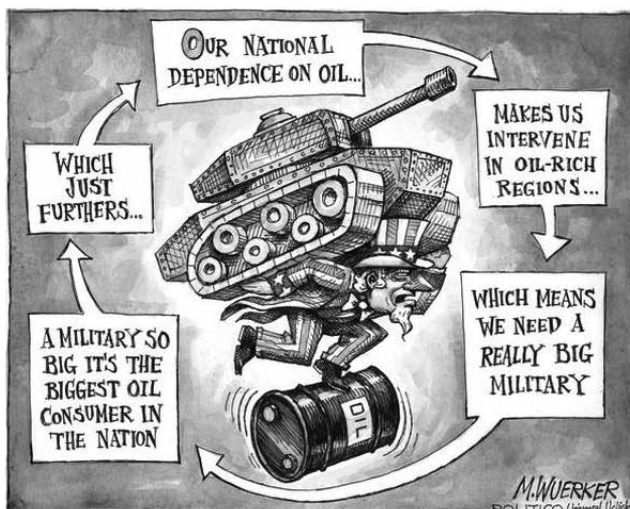
Daniel Shea

Veterans For Peace, Portland, Ore.

More Troops for Afghanistan?

U.S. generals want another surge in Afghanistan. Only 5,000 will do the trick to help the peace process, they say. Kill and bomb more people to encourage people to negotiate for peace. Do you believe it?

In Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and Syria, tens of thousands of Americans have died, along with millions of Asian and Middle Eastern peoples. One lying president after another tells us the sky is falling. It's the commies,



the horrible dictators, the treacherous religious terrorists. By late 1967, when the surge of American troops was really building in Vietnam, President Lyndon Johnson knew the war was a loser, as did Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, but both continued to lie. And people continued to die. Presidents prey on our fears. We citizens accept the lies, and off our youth go, to war after war.

These politicians aren't really interested in communists or terrorists. Politicians want the oil, gas, copper, tin, titanium, or markets for their corporate friends. They know war is good for their political career. And they will be rewarded by a grateful military-industrial complex. WalMart, GM, and so many others do hundreds of billions of dollars in business with the "commies" in China and Vietnam without a blink of the eye.

The oil-soaked Middle East dictatorships like Saudi Arabia and Qatar fund the schooling, training, and operations of religious terrorists, yet these dictators are our buddies—buying billions in American weapon systems.

Simultaneously, we send our youth to fight the religious terrorists our CIA and these dictatorships created. And our military/industrial complex makes money pro-

viding weapons to both sides.

We have bled our soldiers and other peoples of their blood. We have bled our nation of trillions of dollars that should have been spent building a better life for all Americans. War profiteers, CEOs and shareholders make hundreds of billions while the underfunded Veterans Affairs hospitals try to take care of all our physically, mentally, and morally crushed soldiers. And military families pay the highest price of all—dead and damaged loved ones.

The CIA, with its mercenaries, billions, and bags of tricks, is forever starting wars, saying it is trying to "save" a democracy or promote democracy or freedom. Then, American soldiers step into the quicksand of war. Wars don't create peace. They create the silence of death. Bullets, torture, or assassinations kill people, but cannot kill ideas.

And now President Trump is supposed to decide if we need another surge of 5,000 American troops in Afghanistan.

We must admit that in the present wars, we are on the side of the gangsters, drug kings, murderous militias, dictators, torturers, and power-hungry religious fanatics. What we've done in these countries has *not* worked. Our wars and weapons have pushed these countries from bad to worse. Millions are homeless and refugees. Their hatred will last for decades.

Between 45 and 85 million died in WWII. In a nuclear war with nations using just 1 percent of their nuclear weapons, it's estimated tens of millions would die in the first hour. Millions would die afterwards from radiation effects and firestorms. Those firestorms, sweeping large areas, creating dark dust clouds, would cause a worldwide extended winter of possibly 10 years, with drastically shortened food-growing cycles. Two billion would be threatened with famine. Life on Earth, as we know it, would be gone.

We must stop the wars. Stop creating wars. And stop supplying weapons to all sides.

Buzz Davis

Veterans For Peace, Tucson, Ariz.

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Moral Injury

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science, and a sacrificial lamb sent to slaughter in retribution for our collective guilt and inner inadequacies. In fact, no one knows the sacrilege of war better than we who must fight it and then have to live with the memories of what we have done, and what we have become.”

Having now listened to or read Daniel’s words; if you heard John Bourton’s, and if you watched Ben Griffin speak, you will understand that Daniel, John, Griffin, Joe Glenton, Michael Lyons—all the members of Veterans For Peace UK and U.S., in fact, are now considered “dangerous” in the extreme by a maniac elite for whom the lives of combat troops and civilians alike mean absolutely nothing—“dangerous,” because if we find dissent here, in the very place the elites expect absolute obedience, where they have put these men through a conditioning process so thorough they hoped it would extinguish all independent thought, then there is unnerving proof that their depraved program is not inviolable. If these individuals survived that psychological onslaught and came out with their critical faculties and their humanity intact and are using them to expose the very system that tried to crush them, then there is a way out of this perpetual war nightmare for all of us.

Voices We Need to Hear

That is why the voices of dissenting servicemen, -women, and veterans must be heard. There is nothing more powerful than a firsthand account from an insider. There is nothing that carries more moral force than a man or woman acting out of their conscience. Nothing is more inspirational than an individual breaking free of a corrupt system then turning to expose its rotten core for all to see. And gratifyingly, this exposing of elite criminality appears to have benefits regarding moral injury also: Joe Glenton, during an online discussion on the subject with other VFP UK members, asserted that, in dealing with moral injury, “rebellion is the best therapy.” A riveting phrase crystalizing the healing potential a stand taken against the military behemoth can contain. If moral injury is “soul damage,” then rebellion is “soul relief.” Psychomachia becomes deliverance. Veterans For Peace’s work, its very existence, the efforts of its members, is a wound in the heart of the beast that will bleed no matter what tattered and inadequate dressing is applied.

And we can be sure, the damage that individuals like Joe Glenton, Mike Lyons, Chelsea Manning—and anyone willing to be imprisoned rather than “make a butchery of my conscience,” as John Bunyan put it—have inflicted upon that deeply iniquitous system is significant. Why punish them so severely otherwise? Theirs is an apostasy that can never be forgiven, and it is their badge of honor.

A video of Bourton and Lenham’s talks can be found at vimeo.com/216415622.

Alison Banville is co-editor of BSNews.

The Curse of U.S. Imperialism Throughout History

By Roger Carasso

U.S. history is the history of expanding imperialism. It started with the Indians, whose population plummeted by 70 percent by 1900, before rising again. John O’Sullivan’s 1845 phrase of “manifest destiny to overspread the continent” meant that Mexico was next. It lost over half its territory to the United States following its defeat and the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

Having spanned the continent, the United States then turned its expansion overseas. Victory over Spain in the 1898 Spanish-American War led to the occupation of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines, the gateway to Asia.

In 1895, Secretary of State Richard Olney boasted, “Today, the United States is practically sovereign on this continent and its fiat is law.” This was followed by taking Panama from Colombia in 1903 and Theodore Roosevelt’s 1904 Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine that claimed for the United States the right to an international police power anywhere in the hemisphere. This was followed by numerous interventions—typically to establish dictatorships there.

World War I gave the United States the opportunity for the first time to intervene in European affairs when France, England, and Russia were too weak to defeat Kaiser Germany without American help. Woodrow Wilson also sent troops to Russia



to try to defeat the Bolshevik Revolution, an aggression that was shared by a dozen other countries, including France and England—and not forgotten by the Russians.

World War II extended American influence in Europe. When Harry S. Truman became president in 1945, he was informed of the atomic bomb project. If the bomb worked, Truman said, “I’ll certainly have a hammer on those boys,” alluding to the Russians. He used the atom bomb unnecessarily, according to the top military leaders of the time, including President Eisenhower (see his *Memoirs*). It was intended to frighten the Soviet Union and head off Russian troops pouring into Manchuria, as per the Yalta Conference agreements.

The defeat of the Axis meant the defeat of forms of capitalism. Socialism seemed to many to offer a better answer. It was the task of the United States, as the foremost global capitalist power, to make sure that neither socialism nor communism would

spread. Already in 1941, Henry Luce, publisher of *Life*, *TIME*, and *Fortune*, opined that “the American Century” had dawned and we would dominate the world. American foreign policy became anchored in preventing Soviet expansion, although it was the United States that, in fact, was expanding globally.

In 1947, the Truman Doctrine asserted the right of the United States to intervene anywhere globally to suppress revolution. The United States also questioned the Soviet right to have friendly regimes on its borders. The CIA was busy at work trying to destroy leftist regimes—for example, the governments of Patrice Lumumba in the Congo (1960), Mohammad Mossadegh in Iran (1953), Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala (1954), Fidel Castro in Cuba (1960–), Salvador Allende in Chile (1973), the Sandinistas in Nicaragua (1980s), and Jean-Bertrand Aristide in Haiti (2004), regardless of whether they were democratically elected or had the support of their people. The United States had deployed hundreds of bases throughout the world and accounted by itself for over one-third of the whole world’s military expenditures according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. U.S. hegemony seemed assured by the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990–1991. It had its corrupt and incompetent puppet, Boris Yeltsin, preside over a truncated Russia from 1991 to 1999. After the Gulf War, President George H.W. Bush exulted, “By God, we’ve kicked the Vietnam syndrome [hesitancy to intervene abroad] once and for all.” After overthrowing the regime of Manuel Noriega in Panama, he proclaimed that, globally, “What we say goes.” We are the undisputed rulers of the world.

But things were not all that promising. Yeltsin was succeeded by Vladimir Putin in 2000, and China had a mushrooming economy. U.S. industry, which had been supreme throughout the previous century, began a sharp decline through globalization and the new primacy of a financial oligarchy.

NATO Expanding Eastward

In 1998, the United States decided to expand NATO eastward to Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic, despite Secretary of State James Baker’s promise to Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev that NATO would not move “one inch” to the East. More former Soviet countries were incorporated, including the Baltic Republics on Russia’s doorstep. George F. Kennan had warned in 1998 that this NATO expansion was a “tragic mistake” that would start a new Cold War. His words were unfortunately prophetic when, fearing the Ukraine would be the next NATO member, President Putin in 2014 unleashed Russian forces in eastern Ukraine, pretty much as Kennan had predicted.

In the meantime, the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq and subsequent occupation unleashed a catastrophic chain of events that led to disintegrating societies in Libya (whose government we overthrew), Yemen, Syria, and elsewhere, and a rise of terrorism spearheaded by ISIS/ISIL. America’s enormous military capacity seemed stymied by these events. Its economy suffered from neglect of domestic needs in order to feed huge military expenditures in the trillions.

As of this writing, U.S. leaders are pondering whether economic sanctions on Russia are insufficient and need to be supplemented by heavily arming the Ukrainians. Our goal remains global supremacy, but it brings up the question of whether our resources will continue to be adequate for this global hegemony, which has, without exception, favored the wealthy classes at the expense of the poorer classes. This is not surprising, since we are a plutocracy, with some remaining democratic traits under constant Republican attack. One family, the Waltons (Walmart), owns as much as the poorest 40 percent of the population. World-wise, eight persons in 2016 owned as much as half of the human species. The United States has become so degraded that it is now ruled by a Republican egocentric maniac, pathological liar, fraudulent “populist” President.

Roger Carasso is professor emeritus of political science at California State University, Northridge. His letters to the editor have been printed in many prominent publications.

U.S. Military Bases Spread Like Cancer Across the Globe

Two hundred and seventeen delegates from 32 countries attended the Fifth International Seminar on the Abolition of Foreign Military Bases, held in Guantánamo, Cuba, May 4-6. The theme was "A World of Peace Is Possible."

The focus of the conference was the impact of the military bases the United States and other countries, including the United Kingdom, France, China, Russia, Israel, and Japan, have around the world. The United States has the overwhelming number of military bases in the lands of other countries—over 800.

Speakers included World Peace Council President Maria Soccoro Gomes from Brazil; Silvio Platero, president of the Cuban Peace Movement; Daniel Ortega Reyes, member of the National Assembly of Nicaragua; Bassel Ismail Salem, representative of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine; representatives of the Okinawan movement against U.S. military bases at Takae, Henoko and Futemna, and Col. Ann Wright of Veterans For Peace. Below are Wright's remarks to the conference.

By Ann Wright

Today at the Fifth Conference on the Abolition of Foreign Military Bases, with a new President of the United States, in office barely four months, who has sent 59 Tomahawk missiles into an air base in Syria and who is threatening further U.S. military actions from North Korea to more attacks on Syria, I represent a group of veterans of the U.S. military, a group that rejects U.S. wars of choice and rejects the huge number of U.S. military bases we have on the lands of other nations and peoples. I would like for the delegation from Veterans For Peace to stand.

We also have others from the United States here today, women and men who are civilians who believe the U.S. must end its wars on other nations and stop killing their citizens. Would members of the CODEPINK: Women For Peace dele-

stan, and Mongolia, the last four embassies as deputy ambassador or at times, acting ambassador.

However, in March 2003, 14 years ago, I resigned from the U.S. government in opposition to President Bush's war on Iraq. Since 2003, I have been working for peace and ending U.S. military operations around the world.

First, here in the city of Guantánamo, I want to apologize to the people of Cuba for the U.S. military base the U.S. forced on Cuba in 1898, 119 years ago, the military base outside the United States that my country has occupied the longest in its history.

Secondly, I want to apologize for the purpose of the U.S. Naval Base Guantánamo. I apologize that for 15 years, since January 11, 2002, the Guantánamo prison has been the site for the illegal and inhumane imprisonment and torture of 800 persons from 49 countries. Forty-one prisoners from 13 countries remain imprisoned there including seven men charged and three convicted by the U.S. military commission court. There are 26 indefinite detainees known as "forever prisoners" who will never receive a military commission trial because they would undoubtedly reveal the illegal, criminal torture techniques U.S. officials, both CIA and U.S. military, used on them. Five prisoners were cleared for release, including two whose repatriation deals stalled at the Department of Defense in the last days of the Obama administration and who, tragically, probably will not be released by the Trump Administration. Nine prisoners died while at the U.S. military prison, three of whom were reported as suicides but under extremely suspicious circumstances.

In the past 15 years, those of us on the U.S. delegations have held countless demonstrations in front of the White House. We have disrupted Congress demanding that the prison be closed and the land be returned to Cuba, and we have been arrested and sent to jail for disrupting Congress. During the Trump presidency, we

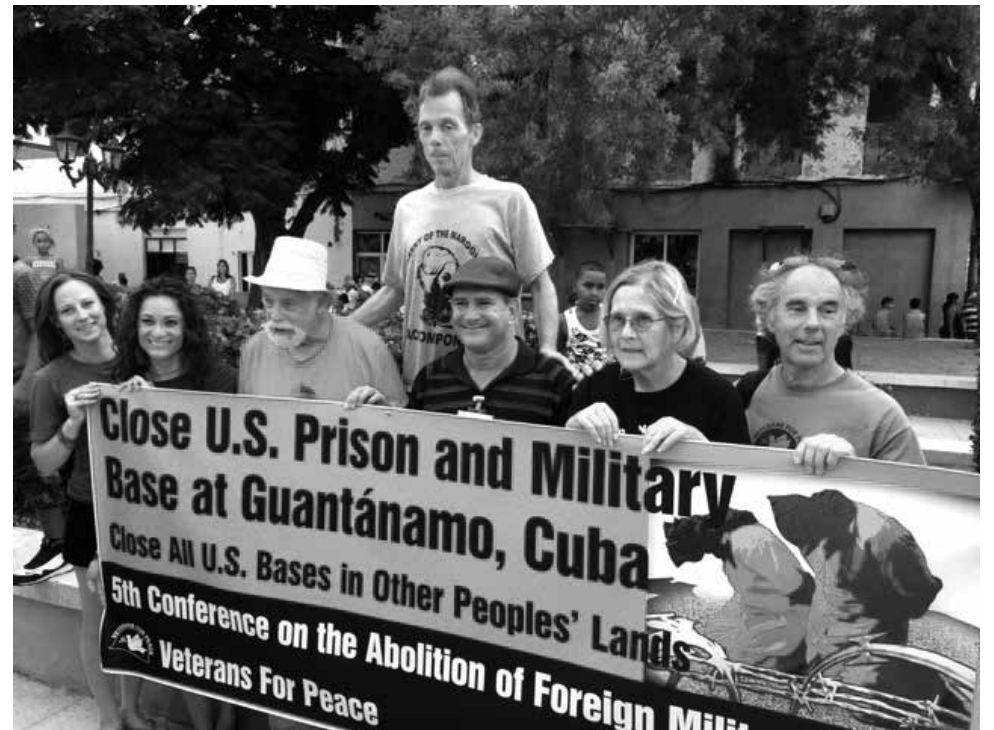
We will continue to demonstrate, disrupt, and be arrested in our efforts to close the U.S. military prison and the U.S. military base at Guantánamo.

gation, Witness Against Torture and U.S. members of the World Peace Council, and U.S. members of other delegations please stand up?

I am a 29-year veteran of the U.S. Army. I retired as a colonel. I also served in the U.S. Department of State for 16 years in U.S. Embassies in Nicaragua, Grenada, Somalia, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Sierra Leone, Micronesia, Afghani-

will continue to demonstrate, disrupt, and be arrested in our efforts to close the U.S. military prison and the U.S. military base at Guantánamo!

U.S. military has over 800 military bases around the world and is expanding the number rather than decreasing them, particularly in the Middle East. Currently, the United States has five major air bases in the region, in the United Arab Emir-



Veterans For Peace delegation in Cuba.

ates, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Incirlik, Turkey.

In Iraq and Syria, U.S. "lily pad" bases, or small temporary bases, have been created as the United States increases its support for groups fighting the Assad government and ISIS in Syria and support for the Iraqi Army as it battles ISIS in Iraq.

In the past six months, the U.S. Air Force has built or reconstructed two airfields in northern Syria near Kobani in Syrian Kurdistan and two airfields in Western Iraq. U.S. military forces in Syria are supposedly limited to 503, but troops who are in the country under 120 days are not counted.

Russia also has military bases, and its military is using facilities in former Soviet republics through the Collective Security Treaty Organization, including two bases in Armenia; a radar and naval communications station in Belarus; 3,500 military personnel in South Ossetia, Georgia; the Balkhash Radar Station, the Sary Shagan anti-ballistic missile test range, and the Space Launch Center in Baikonor, Kazakhstan; Kant Air Base in Kyrgyzstan; a military task force in Moldova; the 201st Military Base in Tajikistan, and also a Russian Navy resupply facility at Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam.

The tiny, strategically located country

Our coalition of peace groups ... will continue to work to end U.S. military bases in other people's countries as we work for a peaceful world not threatened by the United States.

Additionally, U.S. military forces are using the military bases of other groups, including a military base in northeastern Syria, which is currently controlled by the Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) in the Syrian city of Al-Hasakah, located 70 kilometers from the Syrian-Turkish border and 50 kilometers from the Syrian-Iraqi border. Reportedly, the United States has deployed 800 servicemen on the military base.

The United States created a new military base in the western part of Syrian Kurdistan, also known as Rojava. And it is reported that "a large group of the well-equipped U.S. Special Forces" is located at the Tel Bidr base, located to the northwest of Hasakah.

The Obama administration had capped the number of U.S. military in Iraq at 5,000 and in Syria at 500, but the Trump Administration is apparently adding another 1,000 into Syria.

Syria is the site of Russia's only military bases outside of Russia with the naval facility in Tartus, and now at Khmeimim Air Base with Russia military operations in support of the Syrian government.

of Djibouti has military bases or military operations from five countries—France, the United States, Japan, South Korea, and China—China's first overseas military base.

The U.S. base, Camp Lemonnier at the Djibouti-Ambouli International Airport, is the site of a large drone base hub used for assassin operations in Somalia and Yemen. It is also the site of the U.S. Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa and the forward headquarters of the U.S. Africa Command. It is the largest permanent U.S. military base in Africa with 4,000 personnel assigned.

China is the latest country that has built a \$590 million military base and port in Djibouti only a few miles from the United States facilities in Djibouti. The Chinese say that the base/port is for U.N. peacekeeping and anti-piracy operations. Additionally, the Export-Import Bank of China has eight projects in the region, including a \$450 million airport in Baidley, a city south of the capital of Djibouti; a \$490 million railway from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to Djibouti; and a \$322 million water pipeline

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U.S. Bases

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to Ethiopia. The Chinese also have created bases on atolls in the disputed areas of the South China Sea, creating tensions with Vietnam and the Philippines.

In support of U.S. military operations in the Middle East, the U.S. military bases in Greece and Italy—the Naval Support Group in Souda Bay, Crete, Greece, and the U.S. Naval Air Station in Sigonella, the U.S. Naval Support Group, and the U.S. Naval Computer and Telecommunications Center in Naples, Italy.

In Kuwait, the United States has facilities on four bases including: three camps at the Ali Al Salem Air Base including Camp Arifian and Camp Buchring. The U.S. Navy and Coast Guard use the Mohammed Al-Ahmad Kuwait Naval Base under the name Camp Patriot.

In Israel, the United States has 120 military personnel at the Dimona Radar Facility, an American-operated radar base in the Negev desert as a part of the Iron Dome project—and located in the same area as the Israeli nuclear bomb facilities. One hundred and twenty U.S. personnel operate two X-Band 1,300-foot towers—the tallest towers in Israel—for tracking missiles up to 1,500 miles away.

In Bahrain, the United States has the U.S. Naval Support Group/Base for the

Fifth Fleet and is the primary base for naval and marine actions in Iraq, Syria, Somalia, Yemen, and the Persian Gulf.

On Diego Garcia, an island whose indigenous population was forcibly removed by the British, the U.S. Naval Support Facility provides logistic support for the U.S. Air Force and Navy to operational forces in Afghanistan, the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf, including up to 20 pre-positioned ships that can supply a large armed force with tanks, armored personnel carriers, munitions, fuel, spare parts, and even a mobile field hospital. This equipment was used during the Persian Gulf War when the squadron transported equipment to Saudi Arabia. The U.S. Air Force operates a High-Frequency Global Communications System transceiver on Diego Garcia.

In Afghanistan, where the United States has had military forces for almost 16 years, since October 2001, the United States still has 10,000 military personnel and approximately 30,000 civilians working on nine bases.

U.S. military bases are intentionally located near nations that the United States calls a threat to its national security. The bases in Germany, Poland, and Romania and frequent military maneuvers in the Baltic States keep Russia on edge. The U.S. bases in Afghanistan, Turkey, and Iraq keep Iran on edge. The U.S. bases in Japan, South Korea, and Guam keep

North Korea and China on edge.

Our coalition of peace groups in the United States will continue to work to end U.S. military bases in other people's countries as we work for a peaceful world not threatened by the United States.

Ann Wright served 29 years in the U.S. Army/Army Reserves and retired as a colonel. She was a U.S. diplomat for 16 years and served in U.S. Embassies around the world. She was on the small team that reopened the U.S. Embassy in Kabul, Af-

ghanistan, in December 2001. In March 2003 she resigned from the U.S. government in opposition to President Bush's War on Iraq. Since her resignation she has worked with many peace groups to stop the U.S. wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Yemen, and Syria and has been on Stop Assassin Drone missions to Afghanistan, Pakistan and Yemen, and other missions to North Korea, South Korea, Japan, and Russia. She is the co-author of Dissent: Voices of Conscience.

Sabaaneh

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raeli soldier with a large head and dumb, distorted facial features; the prisoner who is mouthless; the mother who is always between an imprisoned or dead husband; and the poor Palestinian child, who is fatherless even when the father is alive. And all of these are deeply connected to the homeland, Palestine: occupied, defaced, dissected, and in which there is no justice and no compassion.



The Palestinian family, tied to the homeland connected to their home, their key.

Yet somehow there is always a ray of sunlight in Sabaaneh's work, a flower that manages to grow, a prisoner who manages to overpower his jailer, a child who holds on to the land.

The suffering depicted in Sabaaneh's work is real, raw and painfully real. One particularly painful piece Sabaaneh drew is of the boy prisoner Ahmad Manasara, who received a 12-year sentence from an Israeli military court for a stabbing attack. He was called a 13-year-old terrorist by the Israeli press. He was shot and left bleeding on a sidewalk as passersby

cursed and beat him. Sabaaneh captured the moment that he was shot with a cartoon depicting a soldier shooting him and taking a photo on his phone at the same time. The boy was hospitalized for a while, chained to his bed at Hadassa hospital in Jerusalem. After his release from the hospital he was taken into police custody. A video of his interrogation found its way online. In the video the boy was repeatedly yelled at by his Israeli interrogators as he replied "I don't remember, I don't remember." Sabaaneh captured this in a cartoon as well and as usual, took it even further.



Sabaaneh spent time in prison and his brother Thamer has been imprisoned under administrative detention countless times. Whenever Sabaaneh crosses the border between Palestine and Jordan, he is held for hours by the Israeli security personnel, who question him about his art. Once he was asked why he draws Israeli soldiers, to which he responded, "What do you see all around you?" *White and Black* is a wake-up call, an expression of resistance and a call to action for all of us to join the struggle for justice in Palestine.

Miko Peled is the author of The General's Son: Journey of an Israeli in Palestine.

Britain Terror

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ventable disease, says UNICEF.

The Manchester atrocity on May 22 was the product of such unrelenting state violence in faraway places, much of it British sponsored. The lives and names of the victims are almost never known to us.

This truth struggles to be heard, just as it struggled to be heard when the London Underground was bombed on July 7,

mittee that "the threat from al-Qaida will increase at the onset of any military action against Iraq ... The worldwide threat from other Islamist terrorist groups and individuals will increase significantly."

Just as Blair brought home to Britain the violence of his and George W. Bush's blood-soaked "shit show," so David Cameron, supported by Theresa May, compounded his crime in Libya and its horrific aftermath, including those killed and maimed in Manchester Arena on May 22.

The spin is back, not surprisingly. Salman Abedi acted alone. He was a petty criminal, no more. The extensive network revealed last week by the American leak has vanished. But the questions have not.

Why was Abedi able to travel freely through Europe to Libya and back to Manchester only days before he committed his terrible crime? Was Theresa May told by MI5 that the FBI had tracked him as part of an Islamic cell planning to attack a "political target" in Britain?

In the recent election campaign, Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn made a guarded reference to a "war on terror that has failed." As he knows, it was never a war on terror but a war of conquest and subjugation. Palestine. Afghanistan. Iraq. Libya. Syria. Iran is said to be next. Before there is another Manchester, who will have the courage to say that?

John Pilger is an Australian journalist and documentary filmmaker based in the United Kingdom. He has written for The Guardian, The Independent, The New York Times, and The Los Angeles Times, among other publications.

The Manchester atrocity on May 22 was the product of unrelenting state violence in faraway places, much of it British sponsored.

2005. Occasionally, a member of the public would break the silence, such as the east Londoner who walked in front of a CNN camera crew and reporter in mid-platitude. "Iraq!" he said. "We invaded Iraq. What did we expect? Go on, say it."

At a large media gathering I attended, many of the important guests uttered "Iraq" and "Blair" as a kind of catharsis for that which they dared not say professionally and publicly.

Yet, before he invaded Iraq, Blair was warned by the Joint Intelligence Com-



Mohammad Sabaaneh meets with Veterans For Peace delegation to Palestine in February. Photo: Ellen Davidson

Bankrolling Violence?

In a bold new lawsuit filed in March, a group of Honduran farmers allege that the World Bank has aided an ongoing terror campaign against them. The civil suit argues that by supporting Dinant Corporation, a powerful Honduran palm oil company, the World Bank's business-lending arm knowingly profited "from the financing of murder." The case appears to be the first in which communities have accused the bank of criminal conduct.

Filed by the nonprofit EarthRights International in a U.S. court, the lawsuit details a violent land war against peasants in northern Honduras in which Dinant has hired "paramilitary death squads and private assassins" to kill local land

defenders. It alleges that Dinant guards have gone so far as to fire on—and injure—women and children taking shelter at a government site to escape flooding, and that peasants have been shot in their homes and fields. The lawsuit claims that the World Bank knew or had reason to know of Dinant's violent campaign in the region, but nonetheless provided "critical capital funding and moral cover" to the corporation.

According to the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, the lawsuit challenges the contention that there has been violence on both sides. Seventeen Honduran farmers and their family members are represented in the suit, including seven family members of farmers who were allegedly murdered.

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A worker on a palm oil plantation in La Confianza, Honduras.

Project RENEW

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the lead in establishing Project RENEW. We hired core staff, allocated some of our budget to bring in a technical expert, Bob Keeley from European Landmine Solutions, to help us structure the project and train staff. We focused on risk education—teaching people how to be safe, to avoid accidents and injury, and to report ordnance as they found it.

We soon learned that without trained personnel to safely destroy or remove dangerous ordnance when calls for help came in, our effort was quickly losing credibility with local people. We had to intensify our efforts to raise funds to deploy Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) teams to answer urgent calls for help.

Project RENEW struggled for funding, from sources ranging from the U.S. Department of State to the Norwegian government, which became one of Project RENEW's strongest assets.

In 2008 a team from Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) came to Quang Tri, looking to expand into Vietnam with its impressive global mine work, and entered into a partnership with Project RENEW. The Norwegian government provided substantial funding and critical technical support. This was at a time when the future of Project RENEW was uncertain because of a decision by VVMF in 2011 to pull out of the 10-year partnership. VVMF wanted to focus on its \$100 million Education Center.

The Norwegian funding was crucial. Soon afterward, the State Department pledged additional funds, through NPA, with complementary funding to Mines Advisory Group and PeaceTrees. Project RENEW and NPA received \$7.8 million for a three-year period. MAG received more than \$8 million.

We are now following a plan developed by NPA's country director at the time, Jonathon Guthrie, which is an evidence-based Cluster Munitions Remnants Survey (CMRS). That initiative combines surveying UXO-contaminated areas, interviewing local residents, comparing

bombing records turned over by the Department of Defense, and using that data to deploy teams that remove or destroy ordnance in those areas. As the footprints of cluster munitions strikes are reduced and eliminated and all other ordnance in the area neutralized, this evidence-based information goes into a comprehensive database available to all who need the information.

The Current Situation

There is broad cooperation in Quang Tri Province among all key actors, including NGOs and the Vietnamese military. That level of cooperation is unprecedented and is a positive indicator that we are moving toward the date, in a few short years, when the problem will be managed and can be turned over completely to the Vietnamese. The United States can then claim, with some truth and satisfaction, that we finally did the right thing.

The shift in strategic thinking has been

an educated and aware local population can keep everyone safe.

It is being done in Germany and other European countries, which still clean up thousands of bombs every year from World War I and World War II. In Quang Tri Province, going back to 1996, Project RENEW and other NGOs have destroyed more than 600,000 bombs. Last year EOD teams managed by Project RENEW and NPA conducted 723 spot tasks in response to call-ins from local people, resulting in 2,383 items of UXO being destroyed. Altogether, more than 18,000 items were found and destroyed during survey and quick response to UXO call-outs. Of those, 61 percent were cluster munitions.

Agent Orange Effects Linger

The other painful legacy of the war in Vietnam is Agent Orange. The Vietnamese still have not come close to any meaningful assistance in dealing with horrendous

their 20s or 30s, whose physical and cognitive deficiencies are so serious that they can do nothing for themselves.

With sponsorship from Veterans for Peace (VFP), Project RENEW tried to get funding from USAID to reach out to 15,000 Agent Orange victims in Quang Tri Province. That proposal was rejected. RENEW staff have not made a decision about whether to again seek U.S. government support for these families.

Why I'm Still Here

People ask me, after all these years, why are you still here? I'm not needed, really; the Vietnamese staff of more than 180 Project RENEW and NPA personnel are far more capable than I will ever be.

However, if I can make a small contribution to keep the effort on track, helping us focus on the eventual outcome of making all of Vietnam safe, then I'm committed to that mission. The Quang Tri model is working. If I can help keep the constructive and mutually respectful channels of communication open among U.S. veterans, Vietnamese veterans, Vietnamese government officials, and U.S. Embassy staff and Washington officials, then I'm happy to try to help for a while longer.

It will not be many more years, I'm convinced, until we can put an end to all the tragedy, pain, and sorrow of the past. Then Vietnamese can live with confidence and go about their daily tasks without fear of bombs and mines. They will know that they are managing the situation in the best way possible. And American veterans can say we helped bring a final end to the war in Vietnam.

Chuck Searcy enlisted in the U.S. Army from 1966 to 1969. He was assigned to the 519th Military Intelligence Battalion in Saigon from June 1967 to June 1968. After a varied professional career in Georgia and in Washington, D.C., Searcy moved to Vietnam in 1995 as representative of Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation (VVAF). In 2001 he became representative of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF) and helped launch Project RENEW in Quang Tri Province. In 2003 Searcy was awarded Vietnam's National Friendship Medal.

The United States dropped at least 8 million tons of ordnance during the war, of which the Pentagon has said about 10 percent did not detonate. That's a massive amount of ordnance still in the ground—impossible to clean up in a generation.

slow and difficult. At Project RENEW we believe that it is impossible to clean up every bomb and mine. The United States dropped at least 8 million tons of ordnance during the war, of which the Pentagon has said about 10 percent did not detonate. That's a massive amount of ordnance still in the ground—impossible to clean up in a generation.

However, it is possible to make Vietnam safe. We are demonstrating that every day in Quang Tri Province. A combination of trained, equipped, professional clearance and EOD teams, a reliable database, and

dous medical, health, and rehabilitation challenges that are attributed to dioxin poisoning.

The U.S. government is spending more than \$100 million to clean up the dioxin contamination at the Da Nang International Airport, and there are indications that the former airbase at Bien Hoa may be next, with a higher price tag.

But other than some expansion of funding for disability assistance in Vietnam, there has been little or no U.S. funding to help families suffering with two, three, or more severely disabled children, now in

Why Israelis Must Disrupt the Occupation

By Miko Peled

In the West Bank village of Nabi Saleh May 26, an Israeli sniper aimed at Palestinian protestors with live ammunition during confrontations following a protest against the occupation and in solidarity with the Palestinian prisoners hunger strike. Two weeks earlier in Nabi Saleh a protestor was shot and killed with the same type of weapon.

One of the most disturbing aspects about the reality in Palestine is its normalcy.

It has become normal to see Palestinians shot and killed, even children. The faces of young Palestinians show up daily on social media, boys and girls shot by soldiers, accused falsely of attempting to stab a soldier.

It has become normal to see Israeli soldiers shooting skunk water and tear gas, and snipers using live ammunition on unarmed protesters who want the land that was once theirs and the freedom they never had.

And it has become normal for us to engage in the endless, fruitless debate on whether Palestinians throwing stones at armed Israeli soldiers who invade their homes constitutes violence, or whether or not Zionism—which produced this violence—is a racist ideology. And all the while the suffering and the oppression of millions of Palestinians go on almost uninterrupted.

It is no secret that Israelis and Palestinians live two separate realities.

Even when we privileged Israelis go to the village of Nabi Saleh on a Friday to participate in the weekly protest, at the end of the day we are free to leave the village, leave the occupation, and return to

do? What is the role of the privileged Israeli activists within the resistance and why are we accomplishing so little?

To begin with, we need to admit that this is resistance, and ask whether we are willing to take part.

On any given Friday there may be about 10 Israeli activists, be it in Nabi Saleh or Bil'in, currently the two main locations for Friday protests in the occupied West Bank. Some Israelis walk in the back, some in the front.

Shadows?

Some like to say they are merely documenting. Most, like shadows, don't seem to know their place and don't want to interfere. Few confront the Israeli forces. So the question that begs to be asked is, what are we accomplishing?

If we don't use our privilege to push the envelope and to confront the Israeli authorities, then we are indeed mere shadows.

My latest visit to Nabi Saleh was on May 26, exactly two weeks after Saba Abu Ubaid, 23, was shot and killed by Israeli forces during a protest there.

The march began, as always, with people walking down the hill from the mosque after noon prayer, carrying flags and chanting. There were about 30 or 40 people (though in the charges that would be brought against me, the Israeli police claimed there were 200 protesters), mostly Palestinians with a few regular Israelis and other foreigners.

After a few minutes, we were confronted by the Israeli forces who informed us we were to disperse.

How does one begin to describe the out-



The author is arrested by Israeli soldiers in Nabi Saleh May 26.

place there just two weeks earlier, seeing snipers take their positions and take aim at the kids on the hills was cause for serious concern. I heard someone whose name badge identified him as Raja Keyes order the snipers to “shoot them in the legs.”

Nabi Saleh residents began sitting in front of the snipers to block their sights. More tear gas, more skunk water, and more snipers followed.

Keyes was right next to me when he walked to a group of women and children watching the events from the side of the road and, with a smile on his face, threw a tear gas grenade at them. One of the mothers ran up a terrace to interfere with the snipers and was pushed around by soldiers. I ran up toward her, went around a young officer who tried to stop me, and by the time I reached her, they came for me.

Four or five officers, including Keyes, had me in a tight grip. The officers were from Magav—although often described as “border police,” Magav is a unit within the Israeli military.

By that time, the officers had good reason to resent me and want me out of the way.

The photos and videos of my arrest made their way to social media, so suffice it to say they were not gentle and I was not compliant.

At one point after I was arrested, Keyes introduced himself formally to me as “force commander” and asked for my ID, which I did not have. Later on, when I was taken away in the armored vehicle, he was seated in the front and I proceeded to tell him that he was no “commander” and he was not heading any “force” but rather they were all a gang of armed bullies. But this is not about me or any other single activist. It is about the unique role we Israelis can play because Israeli law provides us with a shield that Palestinians and international activists do not have.

It is not our role to play unbiased spectators or to document, nor is it our role to just follow along. We can get in the faces of the commanders and the soldiers and disrupt their work. In fact, one of the comments made constantly by the commanders is that we are “disrupting their work, and will be arrested for that.”

My response is that this is precisely the point! Why show up if we let them go about their business? When we are arrested we are always charged with disrupting officers on duty, even when we don't, but that is exactly what we must do.

Along Highway 443—sometimes known as the “apartheid highway”—there is a sign in Hebrew that says: “By order of the commanding general, Israelis are prohibited from entering the villages along this road.” When activists do go to the villages to protest, they challenge this command. But still, the shield that our Israeli ID provides us can be used to disrupt the normalcy of the occupation everywhere.

Israelis, even dedicated, well-meaning ones, do far too little and we use far too little of our privilege to challenge and combat the injustice meted out against Palestinians. Most Israeli activists won't even call for refusal to serve in the Israeli army because they consider that too radical.

No one likes to be arrested, particularly when it involves a night or two in jail, sharing a smoke-filled room with no ventilation and no company save cockroaches and two-bit criminals who hate activists even more than they hate Arabs.

If we are to play a role in the overthrow of injustice, and if we are one day to see an end to the oppression of more than half of the people with whom we live, then we must use our privilege and act to end the normalcy and the oppression.

This article was first published by The Electronic Intifada on June 12, 2017.

Miko Peled is the author of The General's Son: Journey of an Israeli in Palestine.



our safe, clean, well-paved spheres. Unlike the Palestinians we leave behind, we will not have our homes be raided or our roads blocked, and our children will not have to hide for days or weeks from the threat of being shot, arrested, and tortured.

We return home sweaty and tired, covered in tear gas and skunk water and we feel we did our bit. But what bit did we

rage? Fully armed soldiers on occupied land telling the people whose village they invaded that they must disperse. But in Palestine, this is normal, so there is little outrage.

'Shoot Them in the Legs'

The usual pushing and shoving began and was followed by the firing of tear gas, skunk water, and, before too long, live ammunition. Considering what had taken

Bill Distler: A Veteran of Peace

By Gene Marx

Bill Distler was my friend, and it will never feel right to think of him in the past tense. He died much too soon in June, succumbing to glioblastoma in his sleep. It was the first time I had ever seen him at peace.

This 70-year-old peace vet entrapped me in his web of antiwar activism a dozen years ago. As alter egos, we shared the same guilt and moral injury, cringing when we were thanked for our service. After all, we didn't serve; we were used. We were also two Vietnam vets that became great listeners. In one of our first conversations he relived the fear and confusion that shredded his point man Willie Earl Granger in the hedgerows near Cu Chi Base Camp, Vietnam. I didn't deserve to hear that avowal but he needed a sounding board. It wouldn't be the last time, for either of us.

We always admitted that we were stupid cowards for ending up in Vietnam. From the day he returned to the United States, he knew he had to do something about it. By the time he saw an antiwar demonstration in Washington, D.C., after returning stateside, the seeds of peace activism were sown.

There were Americans who recognized the futility of war and they were in the streets. He never looked back; he started on an odyssey to convince everyone that war was never the answer.

It was mostly about the children. Bill recently wrote,



"Forty-seven years after returning from Vietnam, I became aware that there is always a film playing in the back of my mind. ... I see a line of children sitting on the ground, crying. Behind them, from the knees down, I see their parents standing there, helpless. They cannot comfort their children. They have nothing to comfort them with. Their countries are being destroyed by war. It is our job as adults to stop these wars."

He was tenacious. During the Reagan and Bush years, Nicaragua and El Salvador were Bill's righteous obsessions. He was justifiably concerned that the region could become the next Vietnam, ravaged by U.S. militarism.

For more than a decade, he and other peace vets rode a wave of solidarity in support of revolutionaries through Central America, born through a prism of combat credibility. This breakneck pace—including arrests for non-violent civil disobedience protesting U.S. interventionism—took a toll.

During the 1990s Bill deserved a respite, and took it.

It was mostly about the children. Bill recently wrote, '... It is our job as adults to stop these wars.'

He often spoke about shifting his focus to nature and the great outdoors—volunteering at San Juan National Historical Park, marrying and starting a family, and trying not to think about war too much. But Bill had never left Cu Chi. And children were dying, again, by U.S. bombs.

As the "War on Terror" was trending, Bill described the national malady that drove his passion as a spiritual disorder—a syndrome that convinces Americans "that God doesn't mind if we kill some children, as long as it is for a good cause."

Angry, and new to the antiwar fray with a son in Iraq, I met Bill at a Veterans For Peace chapter meeting in 2004. By that time, this "spiritual disorder" was morphing into a global pandemic.

Bush I and Clinton had already facilitated its incubation; and Bush II was priming the metastasis of endless war. And Bill was still on the frontline of opposition, for the children's sake.

Speaking, writing, running for Congress as a peace candidate in 2008, he knew he was planting shade trees



for future generations but never lost hope.

In support of the VFP Vietnam Full Disclosure Campaign, Bill wrote a letter to the Wall. Last week it was placed beneath Willie Earl Granger's etching on Panel 49W and read in part:

"Willie, I think about you and have thought about you every day since the mine went off that killed you. I think about your family and I hope they have peace.

"Even though we were arguing on the day you died, I think your family should know that you were so loved by everyone in our unit, that men were crying when the word came back to us that you had died in the field hospital.

"My purpose in writing this is not to stir up painful memories for your family, but to hope that these words will comfort them. ... Willie, every day for 44 years, as if you were an angel, I saw your face behind my left shoulder, watching over me in a helpful way. It seemed like you were always asking me: What are you going to do to make this right?

"Thank you, my friend. I hope you are satisfied with what I've tried to do."

Historian Howard Zinn once said, "Small acts, when multiplied by millions of people, can transform the world." And Willie always watched as Bill did more than his share.

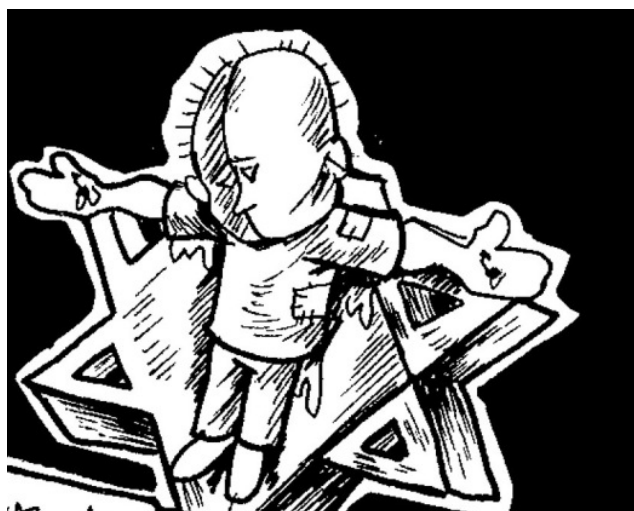
Gene Marx is a member of Veterans For Peace Chapter 111 in Bellingham, Wash. A memorial fund has been set up to assist the family of Bill Distler; to contribute, go to gofundme.com/distler-medical-funeral-fund.

When Genius and Courage Meet

By Miko Peled

It is pretty rare to see talent, courage, and a friendly disposition converge but that is exactly what you see when you meet Mohammad Sabaaneh. He is a brilliant political cartoonist and a book of his work, *White and Black, Political Cartoons from Palestine*, was just published by Just World Books. Why *White and Black*? Because that is exactly what the situation in Palestine is like, clearcut evil vs. good, occupation and oppression vs. occupied and oppressed.

I am not an art expert by any means, but I know Palestine and I know courage. Sabaaneh's art expresses the complexity of the Palestinian reality in an honest and unapologetic way. His cartoons cannot fit on a bumper sticker and they do not attempt to make simplistic statements. They are not a "Free Palestine" or "Smash the Occupation" type of cartoon but more like a little girl looking at a photo of her father and thinking to herself, "You have not been to my birthday, you have not given me a hug or put me to sleep. But I am not an orphan, I am the daughter of a prisoner." In a harsh element in one of his large, heavy-with-detail, Guernica-type cartoons, a Palestinian child is nailed to the Star of David.



Sabaaneh portrays the suffering of Palestinians at the hands of Israel with a brutal honesty that is unparalleled. If ever a picture was worth a thousand words, Sabaaneh's cartoons are, even though they often tell a complex story. The book is divided into five chapters that deal with every facet of Palestinian life, from history to life under occupation and political prisoners to relations with the

outside world. Among the many accolades the book received is one from Matt Wuerker, Pulitzer Prize-winning political cartoonist for Politico, who wrote, "His tenacity and courage are an inspiration for cartoonists around the world."



The cartoon above fits well with another drawing we find in the book, in which a baby goes directly from his mother's womb to the coffin, the umbilical cord still attached. The world watches, some even hold a poster of the dead child, but nothing is done to prevent the Israeli brutality that makes this a reality.

The recurring themes in Sabaaneh's work are the Is-
continued on page 21...