



New Hampshire Peace Action News

SUMMER 2011

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Impact of the Federal Budget on New Hampshire

By Susan Bruce

Just about every state in the nation is facing a looming budget crisis. In NH, we've seen the demonization of public employees as a reason to justify cuts to the state employee pension system, a lot of anti-union talk, and the passage of a right to work bill.

The current NH House has a GOP majority, but these aren't the old school Yankee Republicans we used to have in abundance in NH. This is a majority comprised of Tea Partiers, Reactionaries, and even some John Birchers. They only want to cut spending. This legislature isn't interested in increasing revenue sources – in fact they've chosen to cut them. This legislature thinks that if you cut revenue and spending, somehow that will balance the budget. Legislators love to use the "sitting around the kitchen table"

budget analogy. They've taken it to a whole new level, this year. Think of it like this: You've cut all of your spending to the bone, and still your salary isn't enough to pay your bills. What do you do? Quit your job.

At a time when unemployment numbers are still very high, and an education is more important than ever, some of the most egregious cuts in the NH House budget are to the state university system. NH ranks 50th in the nation for state spending on post-secondary education. That's not a barely in last place, either. NH is very firmly in last place. At a time when a college education is ever more crucial to employers, the NH legislature has chosen to cut the state's contribution to our university system's budget by about 45%.

States have already been warned

not to expect any help from the federal government. On the national level, all we hear about is the deficit. The GOP majority wants to fix the deficit by gutting Social Security, Medicare, and any other social program. What they aren't willing to touch is the defense budget.

This unwillingness seems unwise when the Pentagon cannot pass an audit and defense spending is nearing **\$1,000,000,000,000.00** annually when nuclear weapons and veterans benefits are figured in. Not to mention US military expenditures are just about as much as the rest of the world combined, and account for over 50% of our discretionary spending.

A new report from the National Priorities Project shows that since the 9/11 attacks, the US has spent

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Iron Chef Fundraiser Event at Common Man Restaurant in Plymouth

By Lynn Chong

On Thursday evening, May the 5th, the Common Man Inn and Restaurant in Plymouth held a combo iron-chef competition and ice-cream competition that, we are grateful to say, raised approximately \$1,000 for NH Peace Action. The event, officially titled *A Taste of the Common*

“Each team’s table included shrouded surprise ingredients to make an appetizer and ... an entrée.”

Man, is an annual fundraiser for area charities and showcase for the business students at Plymouth State. A silent auction set up by New Hampshire Peace Action members included donated gift baskets from Concord and Plymouth area stores, maple syrup, framed art and other goodies, also raised around \$600.

Organized by Diane Downing, six chefs from the socially-responsible restaurant chain arrived “on stage” and became two teams, by way of drawing knives. (Like drawing straws!) Three drew boning knives and three drew carving knives, and thus the excitement began. Each team’s table included shrouded surprise ingredients to make an appetizer and ingredients to make an entrée, one-half hour per challenge, while the crowd of onlookers watched gas jets turned on, mortars and pestles put to work, water put to boil. The appetizer requirement had for an odd and cheeky ingredient (must use!): Cocoa Puffs! The entrée must include cherry Kool Aide! Cocoa Puffs were used as breading. Cherry Kool Aide made flavored instant rice, oh, and meat glaze! A team of judges including Diane Downing; Tiffany Eddy - Channel 9; Scott Whitley from Pat Whitley radio show; and Rick Broussard, editor of *New Hampshire Magazine*, did the

tasting and declared the winning team.

In the ice-cream room, teams of Plymouth State University business students scooped out tastes of their invented ice cream flavors. Every combination of flavors and ingredients commanded oohs and aahs. The students dressed appropriately to their named concoctions and decorated their spaces. Very hard to choose a winner, but at evening’s end the votes were tallied and the top teams were introduced and rewarded.

From this wonderful community event, with PSU students and many local families in attendance, we must draw the conclusion: better to make ice cream and interesting food than to make war. Much kinder, gentler, finer. Thank you to Diane Downing, Alex Ray, and all at the Common Man.

Lynn Chong is a member of the New Hampshire Peace Action Education Fund Board and a professor at Plymouth State University.

New Hampshire Peace Action Annual Meeting

By Ken Jopp

Saturday, June 4th, was a perfectly beautiful day for the New Hampshire Peace Action annual picnic and meeting at the Daniel Webster Farm in Franklin. Director Will Hopkins started the meeting off with a summary of the year’s activity and a preview of the day’s speakers and program. Anne Miller, previous director and current secretary and treasurer of NHPA gave a financial report. John Lamperti, Board Chairman, told of recent business and then conducted an entertaining selection of new board members.

The new members spoke briefly of their previous peace action involvement. Mike Bradley of Hillsboro, told of his many interests and efforts including work on establishing, per Dennis Kucinich, a federal Department of Peace. Sue and Dick deSeve of Gilmanton gave us a brief history of their peace efforts. Dick, who works for the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Service, is also on the SEIU negotiating team.

A lovely lunch was served, compliments of Alex Ray of Common Man fame, supplemented by pot luck items

provided by members, including delightful desserts.

Reports from various members from around the state followed: Leo Sandy, Culture of Peace Alliance and Alex Fried, UNH Peace and Justice League. Palestinian Education Network announced the World Fellowship Conference in July (see page 6) and gave a short talk by unexpected visitor Kathy Sheetz, who had been on the Freedom Flotilla to Gaza and is scheduled to be on the next one, The Audacity of Hope, expected to leave this

“Saturday, June 4th, was a perfectly beautiful day for the New Hampshire Peace Action annual picnic and meeting .”

month. (www.ustogaza.org/latest/u-s-boat-the-audacity-of-hope-set-to-sail-to-gaza).

Frank Irvine of Pace et Bene and UCC Peace and Justice Task Force and Selina Taylor of the New Hampshire Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty also

spoke.

The featured speaker was Michael Ferber, board member NH Peace Action Education Fund and UNH professor, who spoke on the work of Gene Sharp author of works on nonviolent revolutionary movements such as the recent uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt.

Ken Jopp is a member of NH Peace Action and the Palestine Education Network.

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From the Director: Think Our Involvement in Libya is a Good Thing?

By Will Hopkins

Libya has the largest oil reserves in Africa which is worthy of note when you consider the lack of US and NATO involvement in the suppression of the *Arab Spring* in Yemen, Syria, and Bahrain. The presence of oil also plays into the way the Libyan leader has been portrayed in our media.

Muamar Gaddafi, a socialist, sought early in his career to nationalize the vast oil reserves of Libya. This has been a source of continued tensions between Libya and the nations of NATO, in particular the United States. The US had it's first military actions against Libya in March of 1986, when the US conducted military training exercises in international waters contested by Libya. Training Exercises provoked Libyan Fighter jets to deploy into the area. The resulting conflict left 35 Libyan military dead, several boats sunk and Libyan Surface to Air Missile sites were destroyed - no American assets were lost. Later that year, in response to Libyan agents being implicated in a nightclub bombing in West Berlin, the US dropped over 60 tons of munitions in under twelve minutes. This bombing campaign killed more than sixty people, including western diplomatic staff, civilians, Libyan military, and Gaddafi's daughter.

The United States was able to quell hostilities with Gaddafi for a time, but Wikileaks diplomatic cables leaked almost a year ago suggest things recently took a turn for the worse. In 2004, George W. Bush lifted some economic sanctions on Libya, which resulted in a more free flow of oil to Western oil companies. In 2006 Gaddafi began suggesting he might try to exert more control over that flow of oil, saying "Oil companies are controlled by foreigners who have made millions from them—now, Libyans must take their place to profit from this money." US diplomatic cables released by Wikileaks show that between 2007 and 2009 there was increasing alarm that Libyan oil reserves would be nationalized. One such cable states, "Those who dominate Libya's political and economic leadership are pursuing increasingly nationalistic policies in the energy sector that could jeopardize efficient exploitation of Libya's extensive oil and gas reserves," (Wikileaks reference ID 09TRIPOLI71).

Libyan rebels have been in consistent touch with multinational oil companies, and have employed PR and lobbying firms in DC. While not a huge amount is known about the



Will and other Veterans for Peace marching in the Manchester Memorial Day Parade.

Libyan rebel faction, they are widely accepted to be primarily made up of Islamic fundamentalists, and many parallels are drawn to Operation Cyclone in Afghanistan in the 1970s, where a socialist leadership of questionable legitimacy was opposed by a US supported group of fundamentalists as we protected the corporate interest. Operation Cyclone brought us Al Qaeda and Osama Bin Laden.

The US has shown no sign that it has problems with the wonton slaughter of protesters in Arab nations in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Yemen, and Syria. In Libya we see a familiar story; when the corporate interest is at stake, the US will happily spin, demonize, and paint a picture to make our foreign policy look altruistic.

Will Hopkins is the Director of NH Peace Action and NH Peace Action Education Fund.



2011 Vets for Peace Memorial Day Parade

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Honduras: Repression, Resistance, and Hope

By John Lamperti

In Honduras repression and resistance date to the Spanish conquest. The current outbreak of both began with the June 28, 2009 military coup that deposed elected president Manuel Zelaya. Street protests against the coup were met with severe military and police violence, and opponents have created the **National Front for Popular Resistance** (FNRP) with the goal of restoring democracy.

During his term in office “Mel” Zelaya offered hope for the workers, the campesinos and the poor of Honduras, where some 40% of the people live on less than \$2 per day. “Over the last year, Zelaya’s positions moved to the left. He pushed social programs and more attention for the poor who have no work,” said Giuseppe Magno, the outgoing Italian ambassador. President Zelaya ordered a large increase in the minimum wage, proposed converting some military facilities to civilian use, and planned a non-binding popular vote on whether to revise the country’s constitution. But the coup led by two generals, both **School of the Americas** (SOA) graduates, put an abrupt stop to hopes for reform.

The Honduran coup was condemned throughout the hemisphere, including initially, the United States. But the U.S. rapidly ended its criticism and never severed its close ties with the Honduran military as U.S. law required.



Honduran woman and child

Porfirio Lobo was installed, with US support, as president in January 2010 after a fraudulent election managed by the coup plotters themselves. That support ignored massive popular protests within Honduras, which were met with violence from military and police that left dozens dead or disappeared and many hundreds badly beaten or arrested by the end of 2009. Few other nations joined the U.S. in recognizing Lobo’s “election.”

I visited Honduras in May with a delegation headed by Father Roy Bourgeois, the founder of **SOA Watch**, dedicated to closing the school. During our visit, President Lobo welcomed foreign industrialists to a convention called “Honduras is Open for Business.” Foreign companies have long dominated the Honduran economy, making it the original “banana republic.” African palm oil groves have replaced many acres of bananas, but the pattern of exploitation of people and resources continues. “Open for Business” portrays Honduras as a stable democracy and a good place to invest, but the people our delegation visited told us a different

story.

On May 1, we took part in the traditional mass march through the capital. T-shirts with the letters FNRP were everywhere, and speakers called for “taking power” through future elections. Later, visits to organizations such as **COFADEH** (Committee of Families of the Detained and Disappeared of Honduras) were more somber. This group was founded in 1982 by relatives of people “disappeared” by the regime. There we heard testimony of repression unleashed against defenders of the legal government. A year ago COFADEH had already documented 47 murders of coup opponents, 14 of them in the first months of the Lobo administration. There have been

many more since that time.

In the countryside, control of the land is the critical issue. The Lower

Aguán Valley in north-

ern Honduras has seen violent land struggles between campesino families and large landowners seeking to grow more African oil palms. Miguel Facussé, one of the nations’ most powerful men has been at the center of conflicts that have led to dozens of deaths. Our delegation visited campesino villages and organizations in the Aguán region, and we met five widows whose farmworker husbands were



Faces of the disappeared

(Continued on page 5)

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shot and killed by private guards one day last year. Another death was reported as we ended our visit, and violence has escalated since. The valley is heavily militarized, and local people see little difference between the soldiers, police, and the private guards of Facussé and others.

We next visited “La Voz de Zacate Grande,” a community radio station in southeastern Honduras under attack for siding with local families whose land is again claimed by (among others) Miguel Facussé. The French organization **Reporters Without Borders** said the criminalization of opposition media, in this case and others, had become “a sinister norm since the coup d’état of June 28, 2009.”

None of the killers, in the cities or in rural areas, have been prosecuted; impunity is the rule. Bertha Oliva, the coordinator of COFADEH, testified in Washington before the **Inter-American Commission on Human Rights**. “You must not think that we live under a state of law,” she told the commission. “We live under state terrorism.”

While we were in Honduras, the government dropped trumped-up charges against former president Zelaya, part of a deal to end Honduras’s suspension from the **Organization of American States**. Zelaya could now return, and he did just that on May 28, flying to Tegucigalpa from Managua. On the plane with the ex-president were some 30 Latin American officials and social leaders, and – Father Roy and his SOA Watch coworker Lisa Sullivan, the only U.S. citizens invited to take part. Mel Zelaya was joyfully greeted by the biggest demonstration in Honduran history, uncountable hundreds of thousands. He will surely play an important role in the opposition, but a long struggle lies ahead.

There’s much work to be done in the United States as well. Shortly after the coup I wrote about two “lessons” this country should have learned: to cut all support for the Honduran military, and to close the SOA. Neither has happened, and our government fully backs the Lobo regime.

On May 19 President Obama asserted that “The United States supports a set of universal rights. And these rights include free speech, the freedom of peaceful assembly...” and more. “We cannot hesitate to stand squarely on the side of those who are reaching for their rights...” he added. Mr. Obama was speaking of the Middle East, but “universal” principles should also apply to Honduras. Apparently they do not. Instead of the “change” we hoped for, our country is once again backing the wrong side.

John Lamperti is a professor at Dartmouth College and chair of the NH Peace Action board

NH Budget (continued)

(Continued from page 1)

more than \$7.6 trillion on defense and homeland security. (<http://nationalpriorities.org/en/publications/2011/us-security-spending-since-911/>)

All of that so-called defense spending has a direct impact on our state budgets. So far, NH has contributed a total of \$5.1 billion just to the Iraq/Afghanistan wars. That amount of money would fund all in-state expenses of a four-year education for each incoming freshman class for the next 20 years. (<http://costofwar.com/en/publications/pdf-viewer/whats-at-stake/NH/>)

NH is cutting money to hospitals, to mental health programs, to Head Start, and to NH Public Television. NH funds the state park system with user fees, the only state in the union to do so. There’s a reason why other states don’t do it this way - it doesn’t work. As a result of this bizarre method of funding, our state parks are in disrepair. For a state that relies so heavily on tourism, this is a disaster.

NH has an infrastructure problem. Our bridges, dams, roads, drinking water, and wastewater systems are all in desperate need of repair. <http://www.infrastructurereportcard.org/state-page/new-hampshire>

Much of the northern part of the state is still not wired for Internet. Not only is this a deterrent to business, it’s also a serious problem for hospitals, fire, and police departments.

Every dollar we spend on guns and war is a dollar we aren’t investing in the future of our state. It’s important that we begin to make that connection in our own minds, and in the minds of our friends, neighbors, and elected officials. Our disproportionate spending on defense isn’t just a national issue. It’s hurting us right here at home.

Susan Bruce is a New Hampshire Peace Action Education Fund board member, writer, blogger and long-time North Country activist.

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New Hampshire Peace Action Staff

Will Hopkins, Director

Susi Nord, Administrator

Liza Richardson, Membership Renewal Advocate

Events and Announcements

Palestine Education Network Weekend at World Fellowship

Friday July 22 - Sunday July 24, 2011

With Special Guest Josh Ruebner

National Advocacy Director of the US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation

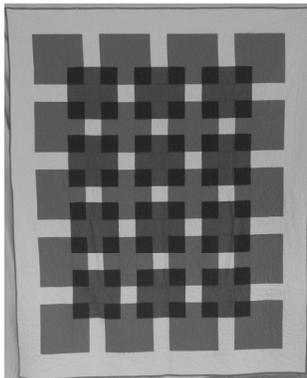
At The World Fellowship Center
in Albany, NH

Call (603) 447-2280 or visit
www.worldfellowship.org for reservations

Josh Ruebner will be speaking on Friday about
Israeli Settlements and Palestinian Statehood in the Obama era
and on Saturday about
US Aid to Israel: Political, Legal, and Moral Considerations

Quilt Raffle

Drawing held at Fall Fundraiser



Win this beautiful quilt

Hand pieced and quilted by Anne Miller
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NHPA Fall Fundraiser
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Proceeds to benefit NH Peace Action Ed Fund

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