



New Hampshire Peace Action News

FALL 2011

VOLUME 25, NO 3

Peace of Mind Workshop

By Susanna Keilig

Peace of Mind 2011 was a weekend retreat where 20 or so high school students participated in different workshops, discussion groups, and activities in order to further inform themselves about different issues happening in the world today and prepare for activism throughout the school year.

Located at the beautiful World Fellowship Center, this retreat placed the teens in an open and welcoming environment. Though coming from all different regions of the state, (and in some cases, the world) these students were able to immediately open up to one another and become friends. During the different activities they participated

in, every student got a chance to share their opinions and the ideas they had to offer. Antigona Sylva, a student from Manchester Central High School, says "It was nice being able to speak my mind, and have people listen to what I have to say."

The main activities the students were involved in were a mix of workshops, discussions, and an activist panel. Asher Platts, AKA the Punk Patriot, led one of the first workshops by discussing how important and easy it is to become an activist. "I enjoyed learning about the different kinds of activism I can get involved in within my own community," says Erin McAuliffe, a senior at Hopkinton High School.

Maggie Fogarty ran a fascinating workshop called "Systems of Oppression" which let the students explore all the different ways people are still being held back and oppressed. Furthermore, Andy Davis, a current coordinator at the World Fellowship Center, led a discussion where he taught the students about the history of the center, and how important it has become to the community.

There was also an activist panel, in which Styve Bwanga discussed the situation going on right now in the Congo, and Will Hopkins discussed the wars the U.S. is fighting in the Middle East. Though both stories were

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NH Peace Action Education Fund
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New Hampshire Peace Action Annual Event

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

The 29th Annual New Hampshire Peace Action *Annual Event and Fundraiser* is scheduled for:

**Friday, November 4, 2011
6:30 pm**

PLEASE NOTE THE VENUE CHANGE, this years Event will be held at:

**McLane Audubon Center,
84 Silk Farm Rd, Concord.**

This years program features Col. Ann Wright. Col. Wright served in the United States Army, reaching the rank of Colonel, and went on to a highly successful career as a diplomat, receiving the Presidential Medal of Freedom and serving as Deputy Chief of Mission for the US Embassy during the invasion of Afghanistan. Col. Wright resigned from her post in protest to the war in Iraq, and has since gone on to serve actively in the peace movement taking a lead

role on both of the Gaza flotillas, serving on the advisory board of Veterans for Peace, and has been arrested for civil disobedience surrounding the treatment of Bradley Manning, the Afghanistan War, the Iraq War and US policies of torture.



Doors open and 6:30 pm to appetizers and cash bar. Tickets are \$35 at the door, \$10 for students. Order and pay for your tickets by October 30th and receive a \$5 discount!

NH Peace Action Education Fund is the education arm of New Hampshire Peace Action. The Ed Fund provides education on peace and justice issues through speakers such as Ann Wright, our news-

letter, *Peace Action News*; and events such as our non-violence conference. We work to raise awareness and promote action around nuclear disarmament, military spending, US military involvement around the world, and other peace and justice concerns.

All proceeds will go to funding this critically important work. Visit us online at www.nhpeaceaction.org.

Call the office at 603-228-0559 to reserve your spot today!

NH Peace Action is committed to giving all members access to events like this. Please call or email info@nhpeaceaction.org if you would like to come to this event but find it would be cost prohibitive for you.

Goodbye Susi, Hello Doreen

As many of you know, our long-time Administrative Assistant Susi Nord has decided to leave us. She will be sadly missed in the office but will continue to participate in the New Hampshire Action community.

We have chosen as her replacement, Doreen Desmarais. Doreen comes to us with a background in non-profit office administration and support, having worked at the Laborer's Union in Hooksett, NH as well as many years at the

NH School Principals Association here in Concord. She is excited at the prospect of working with such a meaningful and progressive organization as the NH Peace Action and looks forward to meeting as many of the members as possible. Stop by and say hello if you get the chance.

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From the Director: How to Make an Activist

By Will Hopkins

To do the job of an infantryman in Iraq, I had to tell myself a story that made it okay. I knew when I left that we were being lied to, that the insurgents were Iraqis trying to protect their homes, and that I was in the wrong. Accepting that reality wholesale would have paralyzed me; how could I have killed if I was cognizant that it was wrong?

So I made up a story for myself. I held, at this point in my life, that the US had been wrong to attack Iraq, but that we held an absolute responsibility after destroying the country, to see it through to some semblance of stability by maintaining a military presence to protect the civilian population from militants. This belief was cemented when I first had to deliver emergency medical care to a civilian injured by an improvised explosive device. When my year ended, I came home and went right back into college, and my first semester back, I took advanced composition with long-time NH Peace Action board member Lynn Chong.

Lynn was always respectful of me and what I had done, but felt the need on occasion to mix in a bit of truth about the war in Iraq. At one point, she handed out flyers with a page from "Addicted to War" on one side, and facts about what this country could do with the money we were spending in Iraq on the other. Lynn would apologize to me profusely, as she knew I was just back. Lynn asked me how I felt about what I had done, and I told her where I stood. For our final paper, Lynn allowed us each to write a position piece on anything we wanted; she quietly suggested to me that I defend my views on the Iraq conflict.

I wrote the piece as honestly as I could, outlining the destruction, and suggesting that we owed it to Iraq to fend off the insurgents so that it could rebuild itself. As I wrote, I could envision only the destruction we continued to inflict upon them. I stretched logic to its breaking point, and knew my work was filled with fallacies. I had written a piece on beliefs that I knew I had to bend reality to justify. Lynn gave me an "A", but I knew I didn't deserve it.

She left it at that, and I was forced to reexamine what I had done and what I believed. About a year later, I had come around, and I began volunteering for the Kucinich campaign. Lynn took the opportunity to quietly slip me two tickets to the NH Peace Action

25th Anniversary event. Gently, and with wisdom and compassion, she had guided me to my path, and set me to what has become my life's work. One step at a time, making me look at reality and examine what I believed, and then presenting for me the path of truth and justice that I may choose to walk it in my own way, and in my own time.

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



Will at the Peace of Mind Conference at the World Fellowship Center in September.

Wanted Bird Dogs for Peace

The presidential primaries are here and we need YOU to help bird dog all the candidates.

If you want to help, please contact Will at (603) 228-0559 or will@nhpeaceaction.org.

THE MARTYRS OF BIL'IN (IN OCCUPIED PALESTINE)

By Will Thomas

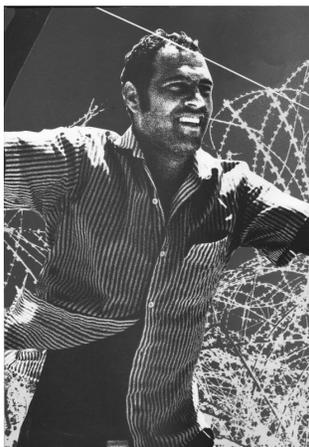
Bassem Abu Rahma, age 31, was violently struck in the chest by a high velocity tear gas canister at close range on April 17, 2009. He, along with about 100 others from his village, Bil'in, were protesting the fence that the Israeli government had built that separated Bassem and other Palestinians from their olive trees and farm lands.

The Israeli Defense Force (IDF) had warned the villagers that where they were demonstrating was a "military security zone." Bassem and others replied that this land was legally, their property. Not far from the fence, up on a large hill, was a new Israeli settlement consisting of nearly a hundred houses which was built on land that belonged to Bassem and the other Bil'in villagers.

The young IDF soldier who fired the tear gas canister was following his superior officer's command as were other military personnel who shot "rubber bullets" (which, on occasion, have caused deaths), fired "sound grenades," and sprayed something called "skunk juice" which takes days for the stench to dissipate from the body even after vigorous washing with soap and water.

After Bassem was hit, he collapsed and was immediately carried away for medical aid, but sadly, died a short time later. As part of a delegation sponsored by an organization called Interfaith Peace-Builders (IFPB), we were taken to the fence/wall where the Bil'in villagers march and hold a vigil every Friday. Our tour leader was Iyad Burnat who is now the head of the Popular Resistance Movement in Bil'in.

After Bassem died, Iyad told us that he was buried at the spot where he fell after being struck by the canister which we discovered was manufactured in



Bassem Abu Rahma

Jamestown, PA. All 31 of us in the IFPB delegation were moved, angered, and ashamed upon seeing his gravestone. "Greetings from Uncle Sam."

Later that day, we went to Iyad's house and saw a video of the demonstration which included Bassem's comments to the IDF at the fence and even footage of him falling and being carried away. Later, after we had returned to the U.S., we learned that Iyad had himself been injured by a tear gas canister which struck him in the knee. Despite the military's use of force, the people of Bil'in continue to march and to protest, non-violently, for the return of their fields and an end to the repression caused by the military occupation of their land.

In addition to this story, Bassem's sister, Jawaher Abu Rahma, continued to participate in the weekly actions against the fence despite the death of her brother. While at a rally on December 31, 2010, the IDF fired an unusually high number of tear gas canisters at the Bil'in demonstrators. Jawaher, unfortunately, was exposed to much of the chemicals that irritate eyes and breathing passages. Rushed to a hospital in Ramallah, she died the next day, January 1, 2011, due to cardiac arrest caused by lung failure after inhaling massive amounts of the Pennsylvania-manufactured gas. She was 34.

Bassem and Jawaher, of course, are not the only ones to suffer as a result of the Israeli military's systemic use of violence. Such a policy, it is clear, indicates that the use of violence is not due to isolated cases of individual soldier's ill judgment, but rather is part of a widespread policy of repression. The endgame, of course, for the Israeli government, as it uses high velocity tear-gas projectiles, rubber bullets (which also may prove fatal), and 0.22 caliber ammunition shot by snipers, is to suppress the Palestinian Popular Struggle.

Having traveled twice to Occupied Palestine, one valuable thing I have learned about Palestinians is their use of non-violent resistance which is a powerful tool that may well lead to an end to Israeli occupation and its cruel oppression. Israel's harsh military occupation has denied the Palestinian people their freedom,

offended their dignity, and violated their basic human rights. These wrongs must be addressed.

Who can and must confront such wrongs? It is you, it is I, and all those who believe in true justice.

It will take enormous organizing and action to educate, inform and challenge those in positions of power to take a closer look at the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Israeli Lobby in the U.S. is powerful as evidenced by the influence of the America Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). To challenge the Lobby, perhaps one can join "Jewish Voice for Peace," or the organization "US Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation of Palestine." Other Jewish pro-justice groups include B'Tselem—The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, ICAHD – Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions, and "Coalition of Women" (a leading Israeli feminist peace organization).

We, who demand freedom for Palestinians and real security for Israelis. We will remain vocal and unrelenting until these goals are reached. We ask you to do the same and to remember the martyrs of Bil'in, Bassem Abu Rahma and his sister, Jawaher Abu Rahma who died in the struggle to "Free Palestine."

Finally, as the apartheid regime of South Africa eventually collapsed, a key reason cited was the BDS campaign (Boycott, Divest, and Sanctions) that targeted South African companies, artists, and academics. South Africa became a pariah among the world's nations. Nobel Peace Prize winners Bishop Desmond Tutu, Jimmy Carter, and Mairead Maguire all state that Israel's government and military have imposed an apartheid system in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza. In 2005, some Palestinian

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Jawaher Abu Rahma

Peace of Mind *continued*

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about different parts of the world, they were directly related to one another in how war makes victims out of all people; whether they are the ones being attacked, or the soldiers themselves. "Hearing people speak who have actually gone through things, like the poverty in Africa or the brainwashing process in the military, really reminds you why you want to help this world. These stories may bring to life some of the horrors in this world, but inspire you to change them," says Griffin Sinclair-Wingate a junior at Oyster River High School.

At the retreat, students were also able to explore what the World Fellowship grounds had to offer. Rope swinging, swimming, learning how to rowboat, participating in the talent show, dancing, or just lying in the sun taking in the gorgeous view of the mountains were some of the favorite activities.

The Peace of Mind retreat created a warm and open environment in which teenagers from all over the world could come together and learn about activism. Most important however, was learning about how to take what they had learned and use it within their own communities.

Susanna Keilig is a Senior at Hopkinton High School

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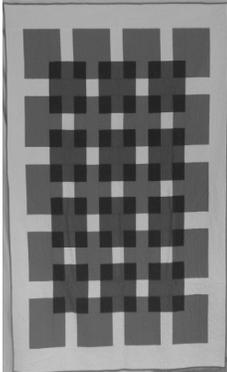
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THE MARTYRS OF BIL'IN *continued*

leaders began a Palestinian-led BDS campaign against the state of Israel. A key figure in this movement is Omar Barghouti whose book, "BDS: Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions – The Global Struggle for Palestinian Rights", has been a spark to this campaign. To learn more about the movement go to www.BDSmovement.net and to www.PACBI.org (academic and cultural boycott of Israel).

Will Thomas is a retired high school teacher and the New Hampshire Coordinator for Veteran's For Peace.

Quilt Raffle
Drawing held at Fall Fundraiser



Win this beautiful quilt

Hand pieced and quilted by
Anne Miller
Quilt measures 70' x 80'
Tickets are \$5 and are available
at
the NHPA office in Concord

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Regime Change and the United Nations Charter

By Joan Roelofs

Should non-violent intervention (by nations) in the affairs of other countries be considered aggression in violation of the UN Charter? The Charter does not specifically forbid these, but interpretations of the Charter by the UN General Assembly suggest that such actions should be outlawed. If one favors peace, can one support "cold war"? Blockades are considered an act of war. What other non-violent activities might be regarded as international aggression?

The UN General Assembly Friendly Relations Declaration (1970) and the Declaration on Intervention (1981) are two of a number of declarations on the subject. Here are some provisions:

No State or group of States has the right to intervene, directly or indirectly, for any reason whatever, in the internal or external affairs of any other State. Consequently, armed intervention and all other forms of interference or attempted threats against the personality of the State or against its political, economic and cultural elements, are in violation of international law.

No State may use or encourage the use of economic, political or any other type of measures to coerce another State in order to obtain from it the subordination of the exercise of its sovereign rights [or] and to secure from it advantages of any kind. Also, no State shall organize, assist, foment, finance, incite or tolerate subversive, terrorist or armed activities directed towards the violent overthrow of the regime of another State, or interfere in civil strife in another State.

The use of force to deprive peoples of their national identity constitutes a violation of their inalienable rights and of the principle of nonintervention. Every State has an inalienable right to choose its political, economic, social and cultural systems, without interference in any form by another State.

The Charter of the Organization of American States is more specific on this

issue:

No State or group of States has the right to intervene, directly or indirectly, for any reason whatever, in the internal or external affairs of any other State. The foregoing principle prohibits not only armed force but also any other form of interference or attempted threat against the personality of the State or against its political, economic, and cultural elements.

Nevertheless, in addition to invasions and assassinations, manipulation using non-lethal means has been a consistent foreign policy of the US government. Other countries have also engaged in financing foreign political parties, political movements, regime change groups, election processes, labor unions and non-governmental organizations. In addition, the European Union, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and the World Bank fund such activities. However, the US has been a leader in this form of intervention.

CIA covert cold war activities were global in scope. Sometimes the funding went to our friends, often friendly dictators, to keep them in power. At other times, it was regime change or overthrow groups we helped. Aid sometimes went to the "non-communist left" to reduce the attraction of communist or socialist political movements. "Technical assistance" in controlling elections and media propaganda were also offered.

Among the more notorious of these interventions were the support (and pretty much the creation) of the Christian Demo-

party in Italy in the 1940s, when communist electoral victories would otherwise be likely; funding of a conservative pro-US and pro-nuclear weapons enclave of the British Labour Party, to defeat its anti-nuke and nationalization policies; subventions to anti-Allende parties in Chile; and the creation and financing of a coalition to defeat the Sandinistas in the 1990 Nicaraguan election. In many cases, US government funds via the Central Intelligence Agency were supplemented by corporations, foundations, and non-governmental organizations. For example, in the case of Chile, International Telephone and Telegraph (ITT) helped; in Nicaragua, the German political party foundations chipped in.

When CIA interventions were revealed in 1967, there was shock, not so much because the US was covertly funding foreign political and labor groups, but because organizations such as the National Education Association, American Newspaper Guild, American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, and the National Student Association were secretly used as pass-throughs, and all but the top officers were unwitting.

As a result, the US National Endowment for Democracy (NED) was created by Congress in 1983 to do openly what had been CIA cold war covert activities. Both overt and covert manipulations continue. Other capitalist democracies now have government foundations similar to NED, and they work collaboratively, e.g., the Canadian Rights and Democracy and the British Westminster Foundation for Democracy. Other US agencies work with NED and the CIA, notably, the Agency for International Development (USAID) and United States Information Agency (USIA).

"Democracy promotion" means "free-market" promotion. However, aid is given to ethnic and feminist organizations to weaken a concept of social democracy or socialism that sees international capitalist institutions such as multinational corporations, the World Trade Organization, and NATO as the barriers to progress.

The destruction of communism had lots of help from these sources. The grant-

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Joan Roelofs

cratic

(Continued from page 6)

ees' activities included destabilization, the creation of mobs preventing elected governments from ruling, chaos, and violence. Among those funded were the Civic Forum in Czechoslovakia, Solidarity in Poland, Union of Democratic Forces in Bulgaria, Otpor in Serbia, and similar groups in the "color revolutions" of USSR succession states. Sometimes mobs (especially of young people) were moved around from one country to another to give the impression of vast popular opposition. The Rockefeller and Ford Foundations, and the Soros philanthropies were often partners in these operations. Reformers seeking social democracy or democratic socialism weren't funded; such systems might oppress the "vulture capitalists."

There are ongoing attempts to destroy the Venezuelan and Cuban revolutions—also that of Nepal. The US press does not see these matters fit to print, unless already leaked by independent journalists. However, the NED web site includes full details of the overt work. Here, among the grants for Nepal (which has recently had a communist revolution):

Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE) \$110,215. To engage youth in Nepal in a discussion of democratic and economic reforms. CIPE will work with Samriddhi to strengthen its institutional capacity and to bring youth together through workshops and entrepreneurial clubs to create a core of future policymakers interested in the nexus between a market-based economy and democratic freedoms.

Often, regime change activities have included considerable violence—Cuba, Nicaragua, and Yugoslavia are obvious examples. Nicaragua brought a successful case against the US in the International Court of Justice, which declared as violations of international law not only the Contra war and the mining of harbors, but also providing the Contras with a manual on psychological operations for guerrillas. The US then withdrew from compulsory jurisdiction of the Court, and ignored the decision. Yugoslavia brought a case against the NATO nations' bombing, but it was dismissed for lack of jurisdiction, because Serbia was not a party to the ICJ; the former Yugoslavia had been.

However, non-lethal interventions have not been tested in a significant case in international courts or arbitration. It is hard to bring such a case: a regime that has been ousted has no standing, and neither has a rebellion that has not triumphed. Yet it would seem that the current practice, even if tolerated legally, violates the spirit of "Every State has an inalienable right to choose its political, economic, social and cultural systems, without interference in any form by another State."

Economic coercion to influence domestic and

foreign policies of foreign countries is widespread, hence deemed acceptable in customary international law. There is a long history of votes at the UN being bought by bribes of aid or threats of benefit withdrawal. Here is a recent example. The American Servicemembers Protection Act (2002) provides that the US will give no military aid to states that are parties to the International Criminal Court, unless they sign agreements not to bring US nationals before the Court. The US is not a party to the Court, although the ICC has postponed defining aggression as a crime in hopes that this omission would persuade the US to join.

Many horrible practices once accepted as customary are now prohibited, as international law has evolved. Much of the evolution has been propelled by social justice advocates. What are the next steps for humanity to end the misery and destruction that persist despite our best "regime change" efforts?

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*The Board and Staff of
NH Peace Action Education Fund
would like to thank the
Anne Slade Frey Charitable Trust
for ongoing support of this newsletter
and our other educational programs*

Events and Announcements

Saturday, October 22, 2011

7 PM

A Talk with Brian Wilson

Come and hear the inspiring story of S. Brian Wilson, author of *Blood on the tracks*. Brian is a Vietnam veteran whose war-time experiences transformed him into a revolutionary nonviolent pacifist. He gained renown as a participant in a prominent 1986 veterans fast on the steps of the US Capitol and was nearly killed one year later when he was run over by a US Navy Munitions train while engaging in a nonviolent blockade in protest of weapons shipments to El Salvador.

South Congregational Church

27 Pleasant St

Concord, NH

Free and open to the public

Wednesday, October 26, 2011

7 PM

Junko Kayashige was a first grader and was less than a mile away from the epicenter of the atomic bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima; most of her family, who were in her house with her that day died either in the initial explosion or as a result of the burns and radiation. Junko herself suffered severe burns on her face, neck, arms, and back and suffers continued effects from the radiation. She now serves humanity as an anti-nuclear activist and artist and is coming all the way from Japan to tell her story.

Concord Friends Meeting

11 Oxbow Road

Canterbury, NH

Free and open to the public.

It is always a good time to join
NH Peace Action!
(Clip this coupon and return to us today)

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