

Peace in Our Times



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

Resistance and Victory in Okinawa

A delegation of six members of Veterans For Peace spent 10 days in Okinawa in September standing with the Okinawan people against expansion of U.S. military facilities on the island. Although the island is .6 percent of the Japanese land mass, it hosts 70 percent of the U.S. military bases in the country. Half the size of Long Island, the island is the site of 30 bases and home to 50,000 troops. The Okinawan people have been carrying out militant nonviolent protests against the construction of helipads in the Yanbaru forests of the northern Takae region, which the United States already uses for jungle warfare training, as well as against the creation of a landing strip that will jut out into pristine Oura Bay at Henoko.

Of the six VFP members in the delegation, three were former Marines were stationed in Okinawa during their military service. The six, Will Griffin, Mike Hastie, Matt Hoh, Mike Hanes, Ken Mayers, and Tarak Kauff, were joined by Doug Lummis, president of the local VFP chapter, Ryukyu Okinawa Chapter Kokusai. Below are some of their impressions from their time together, with photos by Mike Hastie.



Tarak Kauff:

We arrived in Okinawa on August 31. We went out early the next day to stand with the resistance to the building of U.S. Marine helipads for the Osprey helicopters at Takae. When the local people saw and recognized the Veterans For Peace delegation, as we arrived at the blockade

to stop the construction trucks, many of them remembered us from our last solidarity visit in 2015 and we were enthusiastically welcomed.

We hadn't been there long when we received word that Japanese riot police were coming from both directions. People took up positions on the ground, locking

arms and legs, on both ends of a vehicle blockade.

What was the importance of doing this, of having a delegation of U.S. Marine and Army veterans, here in Okinawa?

Veterans For Peace understands that the most powerful obstacle to world peace is
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What Would Sitting Bull Do?

By Winona LaDuke

It's 2016 and the weight of American corporate interests has come to the Missouri River, the Mother River. This time, instead of the Seventh Cavalry, or the Indian police dispatched to assassinate Sitting Bull, it is Enbridge and Dakota Access Pipeline.

In mid-August, Standing Rock Tribal Chairman Dave Archambault II was arrested by state police, along with 27 others, for opposing the Dakota Access Pipeline. In the meantime, North Dakota Gov. Jack Dalrymple called for more police support. Every major pipeline project in North America must cross Indigenous lands, Indian country. That is a problem.

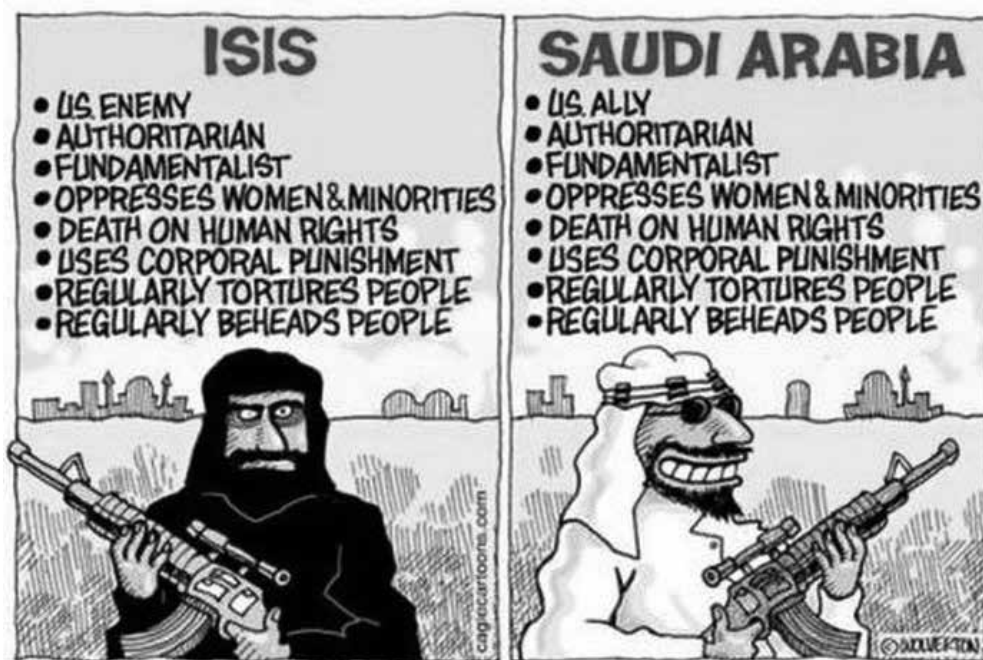
The road west of Fargo is rarely taken. In fact, most Americans just fly over North Dakota, never seeing it. Let me take you there.

My head clears as I drive; my destination the homeland of the Hunkpapa Oceti, Standing Rock Reservation. It is early evening, the moon full. If you close your eyes, you can remember the 50 million buffalo—the single largest migratory herd in the world. The pounding of their

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Letters



Taking Exception to Clinton's Exceptionalism Speech

August 31, speaking to an audience at The American Legion convention taking place in Cincinnati, Hillary Clinton offered remarks about "American exceptionalism," a statement she often uses, and one to which I am compelled to take exception.

A moment later, and what I found particularly disturbing, she explained her meaning of the term: "It means that we recognize America's unique and unparalleled ability to be a force for peace and progress."

Well. Madam Secretary, we have been witness to 15 years of unparalleled force, demonstrated daily with no let-up by our exceptional military might, and rather than peace forthcoming, what we have to show for our noble efforts and expense is worldwide death and destruction, and a growing, threatening population of enemies.

Maybe a few more such years will provide peace. That should work.

Stan Levin
Korean War veteran
San Diego chapter, Veterans For Peace

The True Meaning of September 11, 2001

We all speak today of healing, understanding and peacemaking.

The images of September 11, 2001, are etched in our minds. But we need to be more concerned with what we have done with 9-11 than with 9-11 itself. Yes, we mourn the loss of so many innocent vic-

tims, we laud the heroes of the firefighters and so many others, and we will always be outraged at the inhumanity of the attackers. But I don't think that the 2,977 victims on 9-11 died to usher in a period of perpetual war. We must remember that the tragedy of 9-11 was used as an opportunity for war—how to initiate war on Iraq was on the lips of our leaders the day after. We need to add to our minds' images the 6,236 U.S. armed services personnel who have died in Iraq and Afghanistan, the 40,000+ who bear visible wounds, the 400,000+ who bear the invisible wounds of PTSD and TBI, and, yes, the hundreds of thousands of Iraqi and Afghan dead. We must remember it all if we are to heal.

We must do more than remember. We must honor the victims of 9-11 by welcoming home ALL U.S. troops currently in Iraq by the end of this year. We must honor the victims of 9-11 by proclaiming loudly that the 15-year, \$300 million per day war in Afghanistan, the longest in our history, has gone on long enough. Honor the victims of 9-11 by saying NO to a U.S. military budget that is nearly equal to that of all other countries combined.

In the words of President Eisenhower, "Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed." Or earlier words, "whosoever your treasure is, there your heart is also."

Wars are much easier to start than to end. Let us take up the heavy, sweet burden of waging peace.

Ed Flaherty
President, Iowa City chapter,
Veterans For Peace

A Note from the Editors

Solidarity with Indigenous Struggles

The battle against fossil fuel dependency, extraction and transportation is raging. It's a global struggle and wars are being fought over it. Veterans For Peace has a commitment to end war, all wars, so this is a natural alliance for us. After all, the oldest ongoing war has been one of Western extractive and exploitive civilizations attempting to suppress, subjugate and even destroy Indigenous people and their cultures—cultures that for millennia have had a close and intimate love affair with the earth.

Dave Archambault II, the tribal chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux, feels this issue is global. He has said, "We all have similar struggles, where this dependency this world has on fossil fuels is affecting and damaging Mother Earth. It is the indigenous peoples who are standing up with that spirit, that awakening of that spirit and saying, 'It is time to protect what is precious to us.'"

Many indigenous people, including Native Americans, still hold a deep rever-

horrendous genocidal wars on their nations. We were, all of us, human beings who once knew how to live in harmony with the earth.

This knowledge and the deep spiritual connection with the living earth and "all our relations" may be essential to the struggle for survival of life on the planet.

Many still remember the old ways. Winona LaDuke says, in the article, "What Would Sitting Bull Do?" "If you close your eyes, you can remember the 50 million buffalo—the single largest migratory herd in the world. The pounding of their hooves would vibrate the Earth, make the grass grow."

And about the river the Sioux Nation has gathered at to protect, she says, "In the time before Sitting Bull, the Missouri River was the epicenter of northern agriculture, the river bed so fertile. The territory was known as the fertile crescent of North America... I would not bet against a people with nothing else left but a land and a river."

Those of us who are products of primarily white European culture need to rediscover within ourselves the wisdom that has enabled indigenous people to survive the most intentional and horrendous genocidal wars on their nations. We were, all of us, human beings who once knew how to live in harmony with the earth.

ence and connection to the living planet. They have expressed through the centuries a deep knowledge of the natural world and a commitment to nurture and live in harmony with the earth.

Those of us who are products of primarily white European culture need to rediscover within ourselves the wisdom that has carried and enabled indigenous people to survive the most intentional and

Veterans For Peace is taking the struggle at Standing Rock most seriously. We recognize that it is a battle that must be won, and in addition to a VFP Statement of Support (printed in this issue), a number of VFP members have gone to Standing Rock to be in solidarity with the Indian Nations fighting nonviolently for the earth and all of us. As long as we are welcome, we will keep going.



Peace in Our Times

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U.S. Military Attempts to Greenwash Its Impact

By Ann Wright

The World Conservation Congress of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) was held in Honolulu this past September. The IUCN has come in for criticism for its lack of focus on the detrimental effects of wars and military operations on nature. Of the over 1,300 workshops crammed into a six-day marathon environmental meeting, followed by four days discussion of internal resolutions, nothing specifically addressed the destruction of the environment by military operations and wars.

The heavy funding the IUCN gets from governments is undoubtedly the rationale for not addressing the “elephant in the room” in a conference for the protection of the endangered planet—a tragic commentary on a powerful organization that should acknowledge all pressures on the planet.

At a presentation at the USA Pavilion during the conference, senior representatives of the U.S. Army, U.S. Air Force and U.S. Navy regaled the IUCN audience of conservationists with tales of caring for the environment, including protecting endangered species on hundreds of military bases in the United States.

The presenters did not mention what is done on the over 800 U.S. military bases outside of the United States. In the one-hour military-style briefing, the speakers failed to mention the incredible amount of fossil fuels used by military aircraft, ships, and land vehicles that leave mammoth carbon footprints around the world; they did not mention the wars that kill humans, animals, and plants; the military exercises bombing entire islands and large swaths of land, and the harmful effects of burn pits that have incinerated the debris of war in Afghanistan and Iraq.

How can you conserve nature when you are bombing nature in wars of choice around the world [and] practicing military operations in areas that have endangered species?

Each military service representative focused on the need for training areas to prepare the U.S. military to “keep peace in the world.” No mention was made of “keeping the peace” through wars of choice that have killed hundreds of thousands of human beings, animals, and plants and the bombing of the cultural heritage in many areas around the world, including Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Pakistan, Libya, Yemen, and Somalia.

Miranda Ballentine, Air Force Assistant Secretary for Installations, the Environment and Energy, said the U.S. Air Force has over 5,000 aircraft, more than all the airlines in the United States—yet she never mentioned the millions of gal-

lons of jet fuel are used by these aircraft, nor how many people, animals, and cultural sites the aircraft have bombed. To give some idea of the scale of the footprint of U.S. military bases, Ballentine said the Air Force has over 160 installations, including 70 major installations covering over 9 million square miles of land, larger than the country of Switzerland. Air Force bases have 200 miles of coastland; 115 endangered species on 45 installations. Incredibly, Ballentine said that due to commercial development around military bases, these bases have become “islands of conservation,” that conservation takes place inside the protected base while there are larger conservation issues are exacerbated outside the fence lines of the bases.

Adding to the mammoth size of the military base footprint, Dr. Christine Altendorf, the regional director of the U.S. Army’s Installation Management Command of the Pacific, said the U.S. Army bases have 12.4 million acres of land, including 1.3 million acres of wetlands, 82,605 archaeological sites, 58,887 National Historical Landmarks and 223 endangered species on 118 installations.

The U.S. Navy’s briefer, a Commander, added to the inventory of military equipment. He said the U.S. Navy has 3,700 aircraft, 72 submarines, 276 ships, including 10 aircraft carriers, and 70 naval installations in the United States have 4 million acres of land and 500 miles of coastline. The Navy presenter said the Navy has never heard of a marine mammal that has been harmed by U.S. naval vessels or acoustic experiments in the past 10 years.

Only One Question from the Audience?

At the end of the three presentations, there was time for only one question—and luckily, my intense hand-waving paid off

and I got to ask: “How can you conserve nature when you are bombing nature in wars of choice around the world, practicing military operations in areas that have endangered species like on the islands of Oahu, Big Island of Hawaii, Pagan, Tinian, Okinawa, and bombing islands into wastelands like the Hawaiian island of Koho’olawe and the Puerto Rican island of Vieques and now you want to use the North Marianas ‘Pagan’ Island as a bombing target. And how does the construction of the new South Korean naval base in pristine marine areas of Jeju Island that will be used by the U.S. Navy and the proposed construction at Henoko of the runways into the pristine Oura Bay in Okinawa fit into conservation of nature?”



Ann Wright (center) protesting construction of the navy base on Jeju Island.

nawa fit into conservation of nature?”

In the large audience of approximately 100 people, not one of them applauded the question, indicating that either audience was composed primarily of Department of Defense employees, or that the conservationists are uneasy about confronting the U.S. government and particularly the U.S. military about its large role in the destruction of much of the planet’s environment.

The Navy representative was the only person to respond to my question. He reiterated the national security necessity for military exercises to practice to “defend peace around the world.”

Unexploded Ordnance in Hawaii

Despite all odds, someone in Hawaii was able to get an exhibit of photographs of the cleanup of Koho’olawe placed on the third floor of the Hawaii Convention Center. There was no sign announcing the exhibition, just a series of photos with some explanation. In five days of attending the conference, I observed that 95 percent of the conference attendees walking past the exhibition did not stop to look at it—until I stopped them and explained what it was about, then they were very interested.

From 1941 to 1990, the island of Koho’olawe was used as a bombing range for U.S. military aircraft and naval vessels. One photograph in the exhibition showed the crater called “Sailor’s Hat,” which was made by several massive explosions of TNT in 1965 to recreate and study the effects of large explosions on nearby ships and personnel and to simulate in some manner the effects of a nuclear explosion. The crater affected the island’s fresh water aquifer and now no artesian water remains on the island.

Hawaiians stopped the bombing through courageous protests and staying on the island during bombings from the 1970s. The U.S. Navy returned Koho’olawe to the State of Hawaii in 2004 after a 10-year clean-up process. However, only 66 percent of the surface has been cleared of unexploded ordnance (UXO), and only 10 percent cleared to a depth of four feet. 23 percent of the surface remains uncleared, and none of the waters surrounding the island have been cleared of UXO, putting divers and ships at risk.

Okinawan Environmental Activists

Environmental activists from Okinawa had a booth at the IUCN at which they spoke of attempts by the U.S. military and the national Japanese government to construct a runway complex that juts out into Oura Bay, a pristine marine area that is the home of the dugong, a protected species of marine mammal.

The deputy governor of Okinawa and the mayor of Nago City, Okinawa, both of whom have been key figures in the grassroots campaign to stop the construction of the runways, gave presentations about the citizens’ struggle against the construction of the runways and the lawsuits filed by the provincial government of Okinawa against the federal Japanese government.

Jeju Island Not Represented

However, there was no mention of the environmental effects on the marine environment resulting from construction of a huge new naval base on Jeju Island, South Korea, the site of the previous IUCN conference four years ago. At that conference, IUCN, no doubt at the request of the South Korean government, refused to allow citizen activists to have a booth inside the convention or make presentations as the Okinawans did this year. As a result, the Jeju Island campaigners were forced to stay outside the conference site.

Four years later at the 2016 WCC conference in Hawaii, the Japanese government and Jeju Island Province sponsored a large multimedia pavilion about Jeju that did not mention the construction of the new naval base and the destruction of the cultural heritage of the site nor the displacement of the legendary women divers who had dived at the location for generations.

Col. Ann Wright (ret.), a 29-year Army/Army Reserves veteran and retired State Department official, served in Nicaragua, Grenada, Somalia, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Sierra Leone, Micronesia and Mongolia. She publicly resigned to protest the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Wright was also a passenger on the Challenger 1, which along with the Mavi Marmara, was part of the 2010 Gaza Freedom Flotilla. She is the co-author of *Dissent: Voices of Conscience and has written frequently on rape in the military.*

A Vision for Black Lives

Policy Demands for Black Power, Freedom, and Justice

The following platform grew out of a conference in Cleveland in 2015 when over 2,000 people gathered to reflect on the state of the Black Lives Matters movement. It is the result of a year-long process of convening local and national groups to create a United Front. In addition to the groups in the United Front, this document incorporates feedback from hundreds of people through surveys, national calls, and organizational membership.

Black humanity and dignity require Black political will and power. Despite constant exploitation and perpetual oppression, Black people have bravely and brilliantly been the driving force pushing the United States toward the ideals it articulates but has never achieved. In recent years we have taken to the streets, launched massive campaigns, and impacted elections, but our elected leaders have failed to address the legitimate demands of our movement. We can no longer wait.

In response to the sustained and increasingly visible violence against Black communities in the U.S. and

While this platform is focused on domestic policies, we know that patriarchy, exploitative capitalism, militarism, and white supremacy know no borders. ... This document articulates our vision of a fundamentally different world.

globally, a collective of more than 50 organizations representing thousands of Black people from across the country have come together with renewed energy and purpose to articulate a common vision and agenda. We are a collective that centers and is rooted in Black communities, but we recognize we have a shared struggle with all oppressed people; collective liberation will be a product of all of our work.

We believe in elevating the experiences and leadership of the most marginalized Black people, including but not limited to those who are women, queer, trans, femmes, gender nonconforming, Muslim, formerly and currently incarcerated, cash poor and working class, differently-abled, undocumented, and immigrant. We are intentional about amplifying the particular experience of state and gendered violence that Black queer, trans, gender nonconforming, women and intersex people face. There can be no liberation for all Black people if we do not center and fight for those who have been marginalized. It is our hope that by working together to create and amplify a shared agenda, we can continue to move toward a world in which the full humanity and dignity of all people is recognized.

While this platform is focused on domestic policies, we know that patriarchy, exploitative capitalism, militarism, and white supremacy know no borders. We stand in solidarity with our international family against the ravages of global capitalism and anti-Black racism, human-made climate change, war, and exploitation. We also stand with descendants of African people all over the world in an ongoing call and struggle for reparations for the historic and continuing harms of colonialism and slavery. We also recognize and honor the rights and struggle of our Indigenous family for land and self-determination.

We have created this platform to articulate and support the ambitions and work of Black people. We also seek to intervene in the current political climate and assert a clear vision, particularly for those who claim to be our allies, of the world we want them to help us create. We reject false solutions and believe we can achieve a complete transformation of the current systems, which place profit over people and make it impossible for many of us to breathe.

Together, we demand an end to the wars against Black people. We demand that the government repair the harms that have been done to Black communities in the form of reparations and targeted long-term investments. We also demand a defunding of the systems and institutions that criminalize and cage us. This document articulates our vision of a fundamentally different world. However,



Photo by Ellen Davidson

we recognize the need to include policies that address the immediate suffering of Black people. These policies, while less transformational, are necessary to address the current material conditions of our people and will better equip us to win the world we demand and deserve.

We recognize that not all of our collective needs and visions can be translated into policy, but we understand that policy change is one of many tactics necessary to move us toward the world we envision. We have come together now because we believe it is time to forge a new covenant. We are dreamers and doers and this platform is meant to articulate some of our vision. The policy briefs also elevate the brave and transformative work our people are already engaged in, and build on some of the best thinking in our history of struggle. This agenda continues the legacy of our ancestors who pushed for reparations, Black self-determination and community control; and also propels new iterations of movements such as efforts for reproductive justice, holistic healing and reconciliation, and ending violence against Black cis, queer, and trans people.

End the War on Black People

We demand an end to the war against Black people. Since this country's inception there have been named and unnamed wars on our communities. We demand an end to the criminalization, incarceration, and killing of our people. This includes:

1. An immediate end to the criminalization and dehumanization of Black youth across all areas of society including, but not limited to; our nation's justice

and education systems, social service agencies, and media and pop culture. This includes an end to zero-tolerance school policies and arrests of students, the removal of police from schools, and the reallocation of funds from police and punitive school discipline practices to restorative services.

2. An end to capital punishment.
3. An end to money bail, mandatory fines, fees, court surcharges, and "defendant-funded" court proceedings.
4. An end to the use of past criminal history to determine eligibility for housing, education, licenses, voting, loans, employment, and other services and needs.
5. An end to the war on Black immigrants, including the repeal of the 1996 crime and immigration bills, an end to all deportations, immigrant detention, and Immigration and Custom Enforcement (ICE) raids, and mandated legal representation in immigration court.
6. An end to the war on Black trans, queer, and gender-nonconforming people, including their addition to

anti-discrimination civil rights protections to ensure they have full access to employment, health, housing, and education.

7. An end to the mass surveillance of Black communities, and the end to the use of technologies that criminalize and target our communities (including IMSI catchers, drones, body cameras, and predictive policing software).
8. The demilitarization of law enforcement, including law enforcement in schools and on college campuses.
9. An immediate end to the privatization of police, prisons, jails, probation, parole, food, phone, and all other criminal justice-related services.
10. Until we achieve a world where cages are no longer used against our people we demand an immediate change in conditions and an end to public jails, detention centers, youth facilities, and prisons as we know them. This includes the end of solitary confinement, the end of shackling of pregnant people, access to quality healthcare, and effective measures to address the needs of our youth, queer, gender-nonconforming, and trans families.

Reparations

We demand reparations for past and continuing harms. The government, responsible corporations, and other institutions that have profited off of the harm they have inflicted on Black people—from colonialism to slavery through food and housing redlining, mass incarceration, and surveillance—must repair the harm done. This includes:

1. Reparations for the systemic denial of access to high-quality educational opportunities in the form of full and free access for all Black people (including undocumented and currently and formerly incarcerated people) to lifetime education including: free access and open admissions to public community colleges and universities, technical education (technology, trade, and agricultural), educational support programs, retroactive forgiveness of student loans, and support for lifetime learning programs.
2. Reparations for the continued divestment from, discrimination toward and exploitation of our communities, in the form of a guaranteed minimum livable income for all Black people, with clearly articulated corporate regulations.
3. Reparations for the wealth extracted from our communities through environmental racism, slavery, food apartheid, housing discrimination, and racialized capitalism in the form of corporate and government reparations focused on healing ongoing physical and mental trauma, and ensuring our access and control of food sources, housing, and land.
4. Reparations for the cultural and educational exploitation, erasure, and extraction of our communities in the form of mandated public school curriculums that critically examine the political, economic, and social impacts of colonialism and slavery, and funding to support, build, preserve, and restore cultural assets and sacred sites to ensure the recognition and honoring of our collective struggles and triumphs.
5. Legislation at the federal and state level that requires the United States to acknowledge the lasting impacts of slavery, and establish and execute a plan to address those impacts. This includes the immediate passage of H.R.40, the “Commission to Study Reparation Proposals for African-Americans Act” or subsequent versions that call for reparations remedies.

Invest-Divest

We demand investments in the education, health, and safety of Black people, instead of investments in the criminalizing, caging, and harming of Black people. We want investments in Black communities, determined by Black communities, and divestment from exploitative forces, including prisons, fossil fuels, police, surveillance, and exploitative corporations. This includes:

1. A reallocation of funds at the federal, state, and local level from policing and incarceration (JAG, COPS, VOCA) to long-term safety strategies such as educa-

tion, local restorative justice services, and employment programs.

2. The retroactive decriminalization, immediate release and record expungement of all drug-related offenses and prostitution, and reparations for the devastating impact of the “war on drugs” and criminalization of prostitution, including a reinvestment of the resulting savings and revenue into restorative services, mental health services, job programs and other programs supporting those impacted by the sex and drug trade.
3. Real, meaningful, and equitable universal health care that guarantees: proximity to nearby comprehensive health centers, culturally competent services for all people, specific services for queer, gender-nonconforming, and trans people, full bodily autonomy, full reproductive services, mental health services, paid parental leave, and comprehensive quality child and elder care.
4. A constitutional right at the state and federal level to a fully funded education that includes a clear articulation of the right to: a free education for all, special protections for queer and trans students, wraparound services, social workers, free health services (including reproductive body autonomy), a curriculum that acknowledges and addresses students’ material and cultural needs, physical activity and recreation, high-quality food, free daycare, and freedom from unwarranted search, seizure, or arrest.
5. A divestment from industrial multinational use of fossil fuels and investment in community-based sustainable energy solutions.
6. A cut in military expenditures and a reallocation of those funds to invest in domestic infrastructure and community well-being.

Economic Justice

We demand economic justice for all and a reconstruction of the economy to ensure Black communities have collective ownership, not merely access. This includes:

1. A progressive restructuring of tax codes at the local, state, and federal levels to ensure a radical and sustainable redistribution of wealth.
2. Federal and state job programs that specifically target the most economically marginalized Black people, and compensation for those involved in the care economy. Job programs must provide a living wage and encourage support for local workers centers, unions, and Black-owned businesses that are accountable to the community.

3. A right to restored land, clean air, clean water, and housing and an end to the exploitative privatization of natural resources—including land and water. We seek democratic control over how resources are preserved, used, and distributed and do so while honoring and respecting the rights of our Indigenous family.
4. The right for workers to organize in public and private sectors especially in “On-Demand Economy” jobs.
5. Restore the Glass-Steagall Act to break up the large banks, and call for the National Credit Union Admin-



Photo by Ellen Davidson

istration and the U.S. Department of the Treasury to change policies and practices around regulation, reporting, and consolidation to allow for the continuation and creation of black banks, small and community development credit unions, insurance companies and other financial institutions.

6. An end to the Trans-Pacific Partnership and a renegotiation of all trade agreements to prioritize the interests of workers and communities.
7. Through tax incentives, loans and other government directed resources, support the development of cooperative or social economy networks to help facilitate trade across and in Black communities globally. All aid in the form of grants, loans or contracts to help facilitate this must go to Black-led or Black-supported networks and organizations as defined by the communities.
8. Financial support of Black alternative institutions including policy that subsidizes and offers low-interest, interest-free, or federally guaranteed low-interest loans to promote the development of cooperatives (food, residential, etc.), land trusts and culturally responsive health infrastructures that serve the collective needs of our communities.
9. Protections for workers in industries that are not appropriately regulated, including domestic workers, farm workers, and tipped workers, and for workers—many of whom are Black women and incarcerated people—who have been exploited and remain unprotected. This includes the immediate passage at the federal and state level of the Domestic Workers Bill of Rights and extension of worker protections to incarcerated people.

Community Control

We demand a world where those most impacted in our communities control the laws, institutions, and policies that are meant to serve us—from our schools to our local budgets, economies, police departments, and our land—while recognizing that the rights and histories of our Indigenous family must also be respected. This includes:

1. Direct democratic community control of local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies, ensuring that communities most harmed by destructive policing have the power to hire and fire officers, determine

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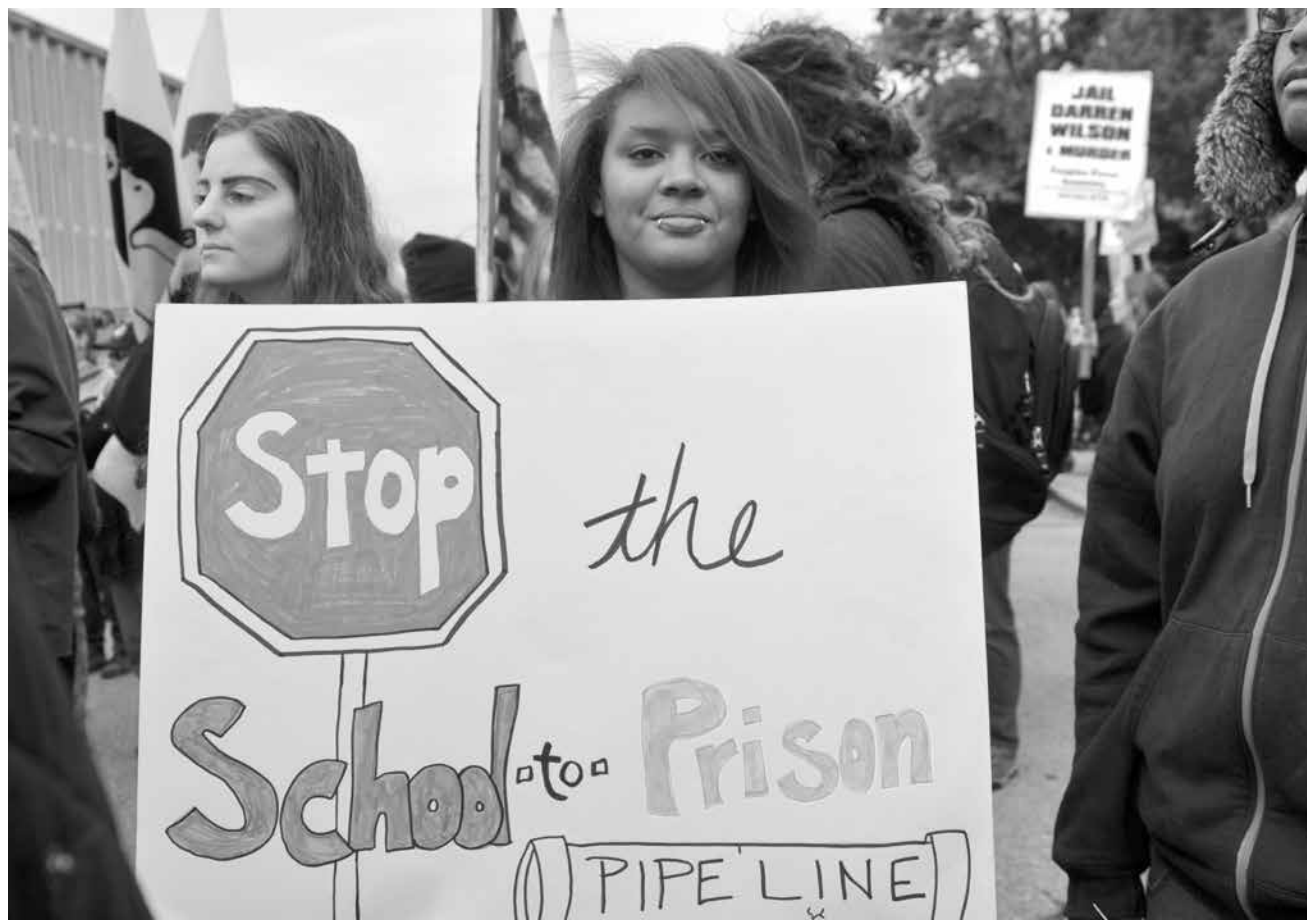


Photo by Ellen Davidson



Young boy with camouflage facepaint trying out the warmaking wares at the Miramar Air Show.

Military Event Sends Wrong Message

By Dave Patterson

Given our quagmire in the Middle East it's high time that we gave some thought to how our politicians and military contractors promote war as the answer to our problems. In San Diego the promotion of war is anchored in the annual Miramar Air Show.

According to the air show website, it's the largest in the world, with as many as 500,000 people attending. What they don't tell us is that the air show is designed to appeal to our senses, not our intellect, and when we participate we get an adrenaline high and exciting memories to take home. We also take home the potential burden of our military people and civilians being injured or killed just to provide us those thrills. We also forget that the very nature of war is death and destruction, not fun and games.

On June 2, a Navy Blue Angels pilot was killed and an Air Force Thunderbirds

plane destroyed. The loss of life and aircraft underscores the question: Why do we put our highly trained military people at risk to entertain the population and promote war at venues like the Miramar Air Show? Since budget sequestration in 2013, the military contractors have stepped in to make sure the show goes on. This is

contractors occupy front-row "corporate" cabanas paid for with profits from selling military technology and weapons to the U.S. government. The contractors wine and dine military brass and politicians while being entertained by military people performing death-defying aerial maneuvers. The public can sample the good

[The military contractors] want us to feel good about how the military technology works, not the consequences of its use.

an important event to them because they make huge profits when the public doesn't question the cost or amount of weaponry that is purchased. They want us to feel good about how the military technology works, not the consequences of its use.

At the Miramar Air Show, the military

life as well if you are willing to shell out up to \$220 per person for the Devil Dog or Semper Fi chalets. Otherwise, we can pay to sit in grandstands or pay nothing for the overflow parking lot, in the heat with the military families, while their

loved ones perform dangerous acts that should be limited to training only. Must we wait for a horrific accident to stop these shows?

Many of us worry that the impact on small children will last a lifetime. The children can grow up thinking that military action is a solution to our problems, and not to be questioned. Clearly, the wars that we have been engaged in since World War II have been folly, costing dearly in lives and treasure. We need our youth thinking out of the box if we hope that they will get us out of this cycle of endless war.

The economics of making war are on full display at the Miramar Air Show, where we can get a look at what \$500 billion or \$600 billion buys. We leave the show thinking that making war is good for our economy, but the reality is very different. It's different because making war kills people and destroys infrastructure. The people on the other end of our weapons often end up in refugee camps where their children have no schools or health care.

We Americans don't consider the cost of rebuilding and educating those whom we make war against, and the cost to civil society when fascists and religious extremists become the only educators available to those children. We aren't thinking about how the billions spent could instead rebuild our infrastructure and feed and educate our own youth. The war promoters say that our economy is dependent on making war. If this is true, we need to move our economy away from making war, and that starts by ending the Miramar Air Show.

Thus, San Diego Veterans For Peace has embarked on a 5-year plan to steer public opinion away from the Miramar Air Show and toward rejecting it. We expect the politicians and war contractors to declare our effort folly or anti-American. They won't give up on the Miramar Air Show easily, so we are asking the public to think about what really is happening there and choose to not attend. The Miramar Air Show—just don't go.

Dave Patterson is a past president of San Diego Veterans For Peace.



Left to right: Veterans For Peace members Mike Hanes, Mike Sullivan, Stan Levin, Big Jim Brown, and Jack Doxey at the Miramar Air Show.

Low Intensity Warfare

Up here
we're working up
this winter's wood
Down there
below the Rio
below the Durangoes
in the fruit section
of our global IGA
deep in the sweet underbelly
of America
Down there
we're stacking up
bodies

Up here
fall is in the air
the mornings are crisp and clear
the leaves die beautifully
in earth browns
translucent yellows

blood reds
Down there
young peasants
are slipping into puddles
of mangled skin
Down there
Willie Peter*
is hard at work
Down there
the morning air
smells of burning flesh

Up here
business
is as usual.

* "Willie Peter" is army slang for white phosphorous

—Doug Rawlings

Koch Brothers Trying to Destroy VA Health Care

By Denny Riley

Ann Jones, author of *They Were Soldiers* and many other powerful books, spoke at the Veterans For Peace convention in Berkeley. A few days later an expanded version of her address was published in TomDispatch as “How Veterans Are Losing the War at Home: Making America Pain-Free for Plutocrats and Big Pharma, But Not Vets.”

Her words expose the well-funded movement to close down the Veterans Administration healthcare system. This comes as our military, through our unending and undeclared wars, will forever be churning out young people in need of the healthcare they were promised when they signed up.

I get my healthcare through the VA, and I have fewer complaints about it than most people who are tethered to the multi-billion-dollar private healthcare industry in this great land of ours. In fact, I try not to complain about the VA at all, because it gets enough bad press without my two cents.

Who cannot believe we see only bad press on the VA because it's the billionaires who want to close it down (read privatize) while the people who want the VA to stay open are disabled veterans, not a particularly well-moneyed demographic? Is it a coincidence that the scandal about veterans waiting months for an appointment was uncovered in Arizona, the home of John McCain, the senator whose shtick is being a veteran yet who votes against everything beneficial to veterans?

The Koch brothers, ranked the fifth and sixth richest people in the world, are the primary force behind the drive to take veterans' healthcare away, two brothers who have never spent a day in the service of their country, two brothers whose father was a founder of the John Birch Society, a man who made his fortune selling oil to Nazi Germany. Two brothers who, as the expression goes, were born on third base and think they hit a triple want to destroy VA healthcare.

You'd think veterans would be motivated to stop this threat. The Koch Brothers have bankrolled a pseudo-veterans organization called Concerned Veterans of America, or CVA. Please check that group out. The few veterans involved in CVA spout rhetoric about serving our country the same way the American Legion and the VFW do, but CVA has no agenda to serve fellow veterans or the community, while it has been named in Congress as a veterans organization that supports privatizing our healthcare.

Of the two major party candidates for president, one has a pitiful 10-point plan to fix the VA (#6: A 24-hour White House hotline for VA complaints) with the final point being “Give every veteran the choice to use private healthcare.” The other candidate claims to “hate the idea of privatizing the VA,” the kind of avowal that is usually followed by “however...”

The entire situation pushes my button. I stewed over it a couple days and decided to visit the two VA healthcare centers where I go for care. My objective was to talk to people about this serious threat to the VA. One of the healthcare centers is 20 miles away, the other 30.

I drove to the one 20 miles away because coincidentally I had an appointment. My only plan was to say to people, “Sure is busy here,” and after they replied, say, “Hard to believe they're going to close down the VA.” See where that would go.

I said my lines to receptionists, nurses, nurse practitioners, and doctors, and in the waiting rooms I sat beside vets and repeated my lines to them.

Everyone responded to my first line with, “Yep,” or “Once again,” or “Always is.”

Everyone responded to my second line with surprise



Ann Jones addressing the 2016 Veterans For Peace convention in Berkeley.

and rejection. Nobody I spoke to showed an inkling of knowledge about the situation. “Where did you see that?” was a common question, the query of people who believe all they need to know they can get from their television. Everyone responded as though I'd heard a bogus rumor. “Far fetched,” a nurse told me. Everyone assured me it wouldn't happen, it couldn't happen, and dropped the subject. I was surprised no one considered it even a possibility, but I didn't want to appear a zealot. I wanted to plant a seed to get people interested and curious; to start a conversation, but it went nowhere.

As I headed back home feeling it hadn't gone too well, I remembered a similar self-appointed campaign a few years back when people were skeptical of my message.

*You'd think veterans would be
motivated to stop this threat. ...
Everyone assured me it wouldn't
happen, it couldn't happen, and
dropped the subject.*

I figured if I typed my words into a sort of official looking page, and shared that as though I were a guy who just happened upon it, they'd accept it, sooner than they'd accept me saying it. So I tried that approach. Here it is.

VA MAY CLOSE

People within our government are making moves to hand over Department of Veterans Affairs healthcare to private companies.

The first steps were taken with passage of the Veterans' Access to Care Through Choice, Accountability, and Transparency Act. When that bill was about to expire Congress passed the Care Veterans Deserve Act.

Both bills are loaded with praise for those of us who served but they also propose sending veterans into the private sector to hunt for a doctor who may accept the coverage.

Feedback from those who've tried this has been abysmal.

Both acts were sponsored in the Senate by John McCain and backed by Concerned Veterans of America—a sham veterans' organization funded by the billionaire Koch brothers.

The Koch brothers have spent hundreds of millions in an effort to close down Social Security and the Department of Education. Yet they didn't hesitate to pocket \$170 million as contractors in Iraq and Afghanistan. Now they are after the Department of Veterans Affairs.

For additional information on the future of your healthcare do an Internet search for Koch Brothers VA

Armed with this brilliant document, I planned to return to the VA. I didn't have an appointment and I had no idea how handing out a flyer might go. Many, if not most patients at the VA, festooned in their old military regalia, have a right-wing, proud-to-have-served appearance, and the reading material around the waiting areas is pro-military—*Stars and Stripes*, the VFW magazine, etc. And the VA has its own police force; “To Protect Those Who Served,” it says on the side of their imposing tinted windowed SUVs, making this a somewhat intimidating situation to enter into with the objective of provoking a social movement.

Then I saw a facebook posting of three Marine veterans—Ken Meyers, Matt Hoh and Mike Hanes—along with two U.S. Army paratrooper veterans—Tarak Kauff and Will Griffin—in Okinawa breaking into a rendition of “Heart of My Heart” and “We'll Meet Again” while surrounded by two dozen Japanese police who didn't want them there.

That afternoon I was back at the VA. Over and over I sat down next to guys in the waiting areas and asked if they'd seen the flyer, only I didn't say I wrote it. I said, “I found it over there. What do you think?”

“They won't be able to get away with it,” was a common response. I said no one seems to know about it. I was told the doctor's won't let them do it. One man said, “I guess the Koch brothers are at it again.” I left copies of the flyer in all the waiting areas. It was not a success. I did not engage anyone. I'll have to return again and probably again.

The next day I drove to the VA healthcare facility 30 miles from my home and did the same thing, heard the same responses. Feeling my energy lag I went to the cafeteria and bought a cup of coffee. The woman ahead of me saw the headline on my flyer.

“What's this?!” she kind of shrieked. I gave her my little rap. She took a flyer and held it like it might get away as she read it. “This will never work,” she said. I asked what she did. She told me she was the head of outpatient services. I asked her to go to TomDispatch and read Ann Jones' article. She asked if she could have a few more of the fliers. She said something must be done about this, and she walked away.

I drank my coffee and decided the day had been a success. I found one person.

In a week I'll write another information sheet and go back to both VAs and do it again. Maybe I'll sing “Heart of My Heart.”

Denny Riley is an Air Force veteran of our wars in Vietnam and Laos and a member of VFP Chapter 69 in San Francisco. His writing has appeared in Counter-Punch and Z Magazine. A novel he recently completed, How to Roll a Number, is looking for an agent.

Veterans Challenge Islamophobia

U.S. Navy veteran Nate Terani spoke at the opening plenary of the 2016 Veterans For Peace convention in Berkeley. Below is his address.

By Nate Terani

Brothers and sisters, good morning. My name is Nate Terani and I'm one of the Regional Campaign Organizers for Veterans Challenge Islamophobia. I'm a veteran of the U.S. Navy and I'm an American Muslim.

(I've been asked to share a little bit about my personal story with you).

My grandparents immigrated to New York from Iran, over 50 years ago, and I grew up, predominantly, in scenic Central New Jersey. I played little league for the Raritan Redsox and soccer for the Raritan Rovers and I was equally terrible at both sports.

My best friend growing up in New Jersey was Jimmy; his dad was a firefighter and we used dress up in his dad's firefighter boots and fight over who got to wear the fire helmet before we'd get behind the wheel of our firetruck to speed off to save people from a pretend three-alarm rager.

Islam is violent, and so we must go to war with it ... to make peace with it? It sounds crazy, but it has worked like gangbusters.

That's why all of our heroes growing up in the neighborhood were cops and firemen and we wanted to be them. We loved country music, Garth Brooks, Clint Black and—secretly—Shania Twain.

I grew up with a single mom who worked from morning till night to support us.

Mom and I were like Batman and Robin, but she was Batman of course. She had to do all the things she did and still always had time to come home, help me with my homework, or take me out to the soccer field and be my goalie. She's the strongest, most loving person, I've ever known. She was our Cub-Scout den mother. She is a lifelong athlete, having competed in the 1972 Olympics in two events, basketball and swimming.

When I was being sworn in to the Navy, I gave her my camera to take some photos of the ceremony, but she was crying so hard that she only captured a few broken images of the carpet.

When I asked her why she was crying—was she sad, mad, or anxious about my joining the Navy?—she said, “Well, yes anxious, but I'm crying because I'm so proud of you.”

She was proud of me. A Muslim mom, crying, because she's immensely proud of her Muslim son joining the U.S. Navy. She cried even harder when I was selected to serve as the first Muslim-American member of the U.S. Navy Presidential Honor Guard.

I joined the Navy not because of a want or need to commit violence, but because of the tenets set forth in my faith about the responsibility of service to one's people. Now, I'm certain that, in this room, we can debate the appropriate sentiment over one's serving in the military.

But what cannot be debated is the absolute love of country held by American Muslims. You see, I tell you my very personal story, because we, as a society, have lost control of the narrative with regard to the American Muslim community and Muslims, writ large.

There are forces in this country, outside of this room, that would have you believe that my story is not possible

in America. That my religion runs counter to the values upon which we were founded.

But, you see, I learned from my grandfather, an Islamic scholar, about the tenets and commandments of my faith, and it was *because* of my faith that I found the strength and resolve I needed to persevere.

My faith propels me to protect and stand up for equality and freedom of religion. But it also compels me to always live in truth and right action.

So please don't get me wrong, my faith compels me to speak out against injustice. It compels me to speak out and say, wait a minute, we are *really* at war in the Middle East for money and oil?

Wait a minute, we've caused the deaths of hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians, destroyed their nations, desecrated and smeared the very tenets of an *entire* religion of 1.6 billion people so we could perpetuate endless warfare around the world?

I tell you my story because for so many Americans, a “Muslim” is a nameless, faceless, hooded thug in the desert, yelling in Arabic while committing unspeakable acts of inhuman violence. For so many Americans, a Muslim is the bearded recluse plotting and scheming an attack in the shadows of a Mosque.

For so many Americans, before 9/11, a Muslim was the unknown. It was within the vacuum of this “unknown,” after 9/11, where eager, warmongering voices were waiting to fill the silence. These voices, these “talking heads” had a plan. The plan was: create an enemy, play upon the fear of the American public, create flashing graphics of color codes and danger signs.

Have it all revolve around the *new* enemy ... Islam. Islam is to blame for your feelings of fear.

Islam is violent, and so we must go to war with it ... to make peace with it? It sounds crazy, but it has worked like gangbusters.

And those who knew better spoke out, but had their voices drowned out for being unpatriotic and un-American.

A 24-hour stream of bigotry, hatred and mass brainwashing was occurring to perpetuate the existence of the enemy—*them* vs. *us*—the battle for Western civilization. Hatred and warfare which *we* perpetuate to demonstrate our *civilized* ways.

And as Muslims in the United States were having their mosques and homes firebombed, girls walking home having their headscarves violently yanked from their heads before being assaulted, college students being shot execution-style in their homes, simply for being Muslim, some people started to question the road we had come down, as a nation.

What was occurring? What was the name of this new mass societal insanity, this explosion of bigotry? *What, was it?* Islamophobia.

It's a mouthful, to be sure. But, it represents what we must defeat to recapture the soul of our nation.

It is *the* civil rights battle of our time.

Without Islamophobia, the powers-that-be could not perpetuate their endless cycle of warfare. Because, without Islamophobia, there no longer exists a “clash of civilizations.” There is no longer a *them* vs. *us* because the *them* is us.

This is precisely why Veterans Challenge Islamophobia exists. VCI was born of the ideal that as American military veterans, we hold a special and sacred trust with the American public.

That trust, bestowed upon us, uniquely imbues us with the responsibility and more important the ability to call out bigotry, hatred, and the perpetuation of endless warfare.

We have a unique voice in reaching out to the American Muslim community, to let them know they have allies, and their allies are American veterans.

We stand with them, and for them and, for those of us who *are* Muslim vets, we stand among them.



In the wake of the Orlando shooting and the attempt to pit the Muslim community against the LGBT community, VCI was able to mobilize and respond on the ground to show unity and support.

VCI organizers have met with and sat with leaders within Muslim communities throughout Ramadan for their Iftar dinners to break fast together.

We're doing some great things.

But, there are too few of us. So, we need your help. We need you to join us, we need to do this together, as a family for peace, as a movement for peace.

Because, without overcoming Islamophobia, we cannot overcome the march toward war in the 21st century,

There's something else my religion teaches me, it is to have an unerring faith in the possibilities humanity can achieve—together, united.

So, please join us in this endeavor. Thank you!

The Border

***They have built a border:
At the dinner table, when they want their fruits and vegetables—
Between sweaty fields and their inherent privilege.***

***They have built a border:
At the car wash, when they want their luxury vehicles polished—spotless, sir—
Between breaking backs and their abundant vanity.***

***They have built a border:
Behind the picket fence, when they want their gardens groomed—a little less roses, sir—
Between the roots of honest labor and blooming decadence.***

***They have built a border:
At the drive-thru window, when they want fast food—
Between a minimum wage and an artificial convenience.***

***They have built a border:
In their industry, when they want their factories fine-tuned—
Between diligence and mechanized indifference.***

***They have built a border:
At the curb of Home Depot, when they want jornaleros—
Between cheap labor and the structures of discrimination.***

—José Hernández Díaz

Letter from Leonard Peltier

Time Is Running Out for Freedom for Indigenous Political Prisoner

Sisters, brothers, friends and supporters:

June 26 marks 41 years since the long summer day when three young men were killed at the home of the Jumping Bull family, near Oglala, during a firefight in which I and dozens of others participated. While I did not shoot (and therefore did not kill) FBI agents Ronald Williams and Jack Coler, I nevertheless have great remorse for the loss of their young lives, the loss of my friend Joe Stuntz, and for the grieving of their loved ones. I would guess that, like me, many of my brothers and sisters who were there that day wish that somehow they could have done something to change what happened and avoid the tragic outcome of the shootout.

This is not something I have thought about casually and then moved on. It's something I think about every day. As I look back, I remember the expressions of both fear and courage on the faces of my brothers and sisters as we were being attacked. We thought we were going to be killed! We defended our elders and children as they scattered for protection and to escape. Native people have experienced such assaults for centuries, and the historical trauma of the generations was carried by the people that day—and in the communities that suffered further trauma in the days that followed the shootout, as the authorities searched for those of us who had escaped the Jumping Bull property.

As the First Peoples of Turtle Island, we live with daily reminders of the centuries of efforts to terminate our nations, eliminate our cultures, and destroy our relatives and families. To this day, everywhere we go there are reminders—souvenirs and monuments of the near extermination of a glorious population of Indigenous Peoples. Native Peoples as mascots, the disproportionately high incarceration of our relatives, the appropriation of our culture, the never-ending efforts to take even more of Native Peoples' land, and the poisoning of that land all serve as reminders of our history as survivors of a massive genocide. We live with this trauma every day. We breathe, eat and drink it. We pass it on to our children. And we struggle to overcome it.

Like so many Native children, I was ripped away from my family at the age of 9 or so and taken away to get the "Indian" out of me at a boarding school. At that time, Native Peoples were not able to speak our own languages for fear of being beaten or worse. Our men's long hair, which is an important part of our spiritual life, was forcibly cut off in an effort to shame us. Our traditional names were

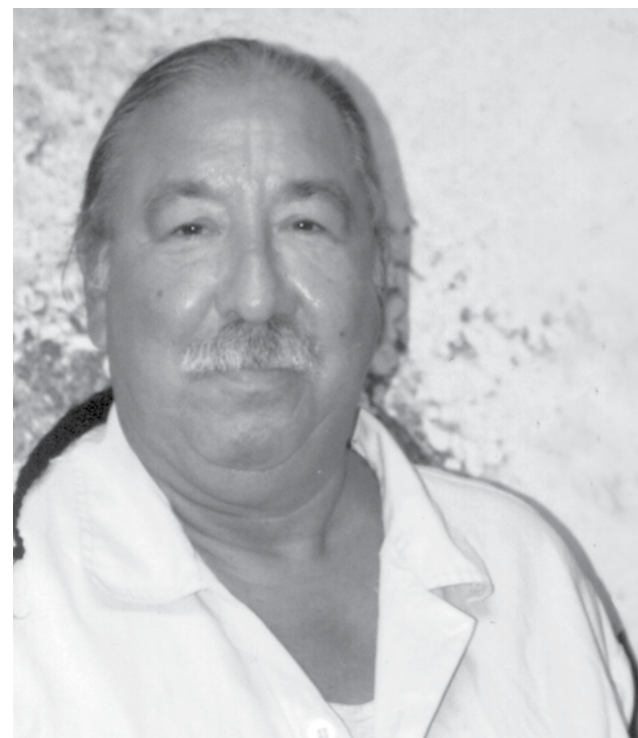
replaced by new European-American names. These efforts to force our assimilation continue today. Not long ago, I remember, a Menominee girl was punished and banned from playing on the school's basketball team because she taught a classmate how to say "hello" and "I love you" in her Native language. We hear stories all the time about athletes and graduates who face opposition to wearing their hair long or having a feather in their cap.

With this little bit of my personal history in mind, I think it is understandable that I would then, as a young person in the 1960s and '70s, be active in the Indigenous struggle to affirm our human, civil, and treaty rights. Our movement was a spiritual one to regain our ceremonies and traditions and to exercise our sovereignty as native or tribal nations. For over 100 years, some of our most important ceremonies could not be held. We could not sing our songs or dance to our drum. When my contemporaries and I were activists, there were no known sun dances. Any ceremony that took place had to be hidden for fear of reprisals. One of our roles as activists for the welfare of our Peoples was to create space and protection for Native peoples who were trying to reconnect to our ancient cultures and spiritual life. This was dangerous and deadly. It meant putting our lives on the line because people who participated in these ceremonies,

As the First Peoples of Turtle Island, we live with daily reminders of the centuries of efforts to terminate our nations, eliminate our cultures, and destroy our relatives and families.

and people who stood up for our elders and our traditional way of life, were brutally beaten, killed, or disappeared. Paramilitary groups and death squads ruled some reservations and each day was a battle. If an uninvited, unknown, or unrecognized vehicle pulled up to your house, the first reaction was that you were being visited by someone who meant to do you harm in some way. This was learned behavior on the reservations. This was excruciatingly true in the 1970s.

Hey, I don't want to be all doom and gloom here. I see over the decades that in some important ways, life has improved for our Peoples. President Obama's extraordinary efforts to forge a strong relationship with our Tribal Na-



tions is good cause for a new sense of optimism that our sovereignty is more secure. By exercising our sovereignty, life for our people might improve. We might begin to heal and start the long journey to move past the trauma of the last 500 years. But what will we do if the next Administration rolls back those gains made over the past eight years?

I often receive questions in letters from supporters about my health. Yes, this last year has been particularly stressful for me and my family. My health issues still have not been thoroughly addressed, and I still have not gotten the results of the MRI done over a month ago for the abdominal aortic aneurysm.

As the last remaining months of President Obama's term pass by, my anxiety increases. I believe that this President is my last hope for freedom, and I will surely die here if I am not released by January 20, 2017. So I ask you all again, as this is the most crucial time in the campaign to gain my freedom, please continue to organize public support for my release, and always follow the lead of the International Leonard Peltier Defense Committee.

Thank you for all you have done and continue to do on my behalf.

In the Spirit of Crazy Horse...

Doksha,

Leonard Peltier

For more information on how to support Leonard Peltier and the International Leonard Peltier Defense Committee, visit whoisleonardpeltier.info.

International Indigenous Day In Solidarity and Resistance

Wednesday, October 12
12–9 PM in CDT
Oteci Sakowin Camp, Standing Rock

- Stand with Standing Rock
- Honor the Treaties
- Free Leonard Peltier and All Political Prisoners
- Water is LIFE!!
- Protect Sacred Sites

Entertainment: Robby Romero Red Thunder, Darren Thompson, All Nations Drumgroup
Speakers: Water Protectors, Dennis Banks, Jimbo Simmons. Others TBA
Food, Videos

Solidarity with the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation— Water Is Life, Land Is Holy, Rock Is Standing

*Mni Wiconi—water is life.
living water is the drink
of the bright Missouri
when there is no black snake of the prophecy,
when no pipeline passes through.*

*Land is holy to the nations
who live here
by their choosing and by their tears,
those who were not consulted,
those whose burial sites,
and environmental wellbeing
are on this path
from an oil field to a profit.*

*And the rock is standing,
when all who have hands to join
come together,
children of the sacred land, water,
children of the spirits
of those who lie buried—*

*Lakota, Crow, a hundred tribes—
and some children of the invaders, too,
long ago and yesterday trespassers
on native lands and ways of life.*

*This snake shall not pass—
not the Dakota Access Pipeline,*

*not the expectation that those with power
will always be free
to spoil the land,
to poison the water,
to buy the courts and lawmakers,
to break the hands of protest.*

*This snake shall not pass—
in the way of many broken promises.*

—Maren C. Tirabassi



Veterans For Peace member George Taylor, visiting pastor, All Saints Lutheran Church blocks the oil train.

Veterans Block Oil Train in Spokane

SPOKANE, Wash.—Three members of the Spokane chapter of Veterans For Peace were arrested by Spokane City Police after a one-hour blockade of a BNSF oil train by protesters. The three, George Taylor, Rusty Nelson, and Maevea Aeolus, occupied the tracks in the name of climate change and the burning of fossil fuels as the main accelerant of climate change.

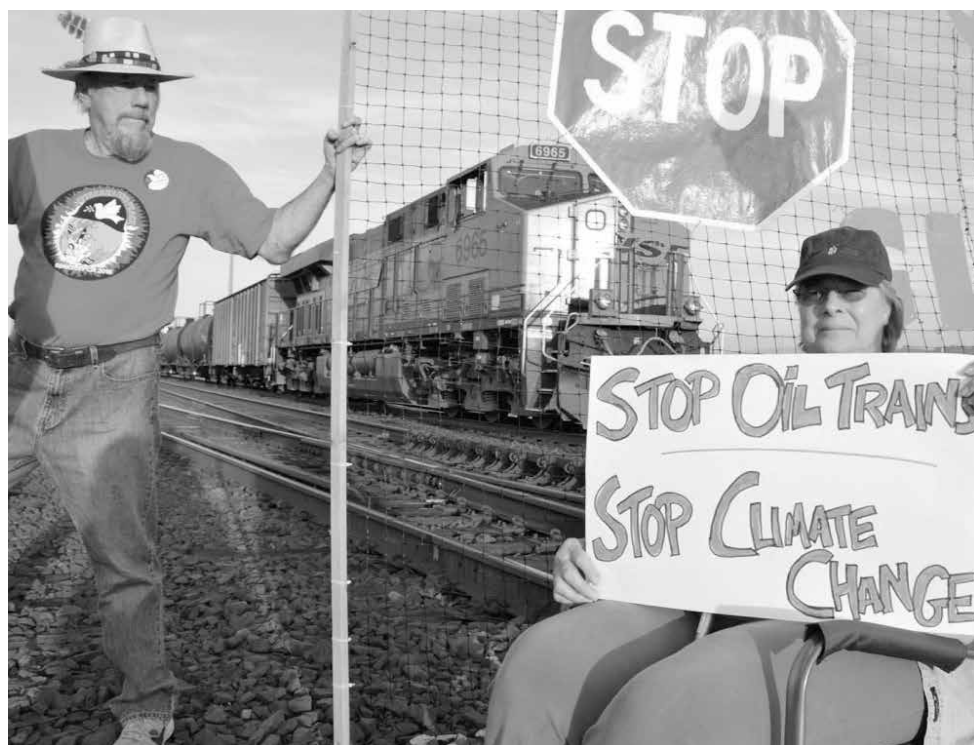
During the protest the eventual arrestees read prepared statements. The following are excerpts from each:

"I sit here with my brother veterans today, knowing we'll be arrested. I am willing to take this stand for the greater good. We must protect our beautiful city and earth from the few who only seek profit at a great cost to the many. Will you the people of Spokane stand with us? We are sitting on the tracks for all of you."—Maevea Aeolus, nurse, and counselor

"These fossil fuel trains must be stopped by citizens who are concerned that coal and oil extraction companies

are putting short-term profits ahead of the long term health of the planet that we all live on and are charged to take care of for future generations so that our children and grandchildren to the seventh generations will have air to breathe, water to drink, and food to eat. This is what Holy Scripture invites us to and common sense demands that we do all in our power for future generations by acting now before it is too late."—George Taylor, visiting pastor, All Saints Lutheran Church

"I am here for you, whoever you are and whatever part you play in corporate rule, social and economic justice and injustice, and the plundering of the earth's resources. You need me here only as much as you need drinkable water and breathable air; as much as you need sources for energy and shelter that won't cause earthquakes, exacerbate violent weather, or precipitate war and oppression; as much as you need sustainable infrastructure and wise governance."—Rusty Nelson



The Only Way to Save Life on Earth No Fracking, Drilling or Digging

By George Monbiot

Do they understand what they have signed? Plainly they do not. Governments such as ours, now ratifying the Paris agreement on climate change, haven't the faintest idea what it means—either that or they have no intention of honouring it.

For the first time we can see the numbers on which the agreement depends, and their logic is inescapable. Governments can either meet their international commitments or allow the prospecting and development of new fossil fuel reserves. They cannot do both.

Existing Coal, Oil and Gas Fields Will Blow Carbon Budget

The Paris agreement, struck by 200 nations in December, pledged to hold "the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 degrees centigrade above pre-industrial levels" and aspired to limit it to 1.5 degrees centigrade. So what does this mean? Thanks to a report by Oil Change International, we can now answer this question with a degree of precision.

Using the industry's own figures, it shows that burning the oil, gas and coal in the fields and mines that is already either in production or being developed is likely to take the global temperature rise beyond 2 degrees centigrade. And even if all coal

the opening of new coal mines, oilfields, and fracking sites is carbon capture and storage: extracting carbon dioxide from the exhaust gases of power stations and burying it in geological strata. But despite vast efforts to demonstrate the technology, it has not been proved at scale, and appears to be going nowhere. Our energy policies rely on vaporware.

As for the belief among some governments that they can overshoot the climate targets, then at a later date suck carbon dioxide out of the air: this depends on scenarios that would be no less realistic if they involved sorcery. The most popular proposal is to combine the capture and storage phantasm with biofuel plantations covering an area between one and three times the size of India, then harvesting the material they grow, burning it in power stations and burying the emissions. The use of a mere few hundred million hectares of fertile land would have to compete with all the other problems the biofuel wand is meant to magic away, such as the use of petroleum in cars and kerosene in planes, as well as the minor issue of feeding the world's people.

All this nonsense is a substitute for a simple proposition: stop digging. There is only one form of carbon capture and storage that is scientifically proven and that can be deployed immediately: leaving fossil fuels in the ground.

There is only one form of carbon capture and storage that is scientifically proven and that can be deployed immediately: leaving fossil fuels in the ground.

mining were to be shut down today, the oil and gas lined up so far would take it past 1.5 degrees centigrade. The notion that we can open any new reserves, whether by fracking for gas, drilling for oil or digging for coal, without scuppering the Paris commitments is simply untenable.

This is not an extreme precautionary case. Quite the opposite, in fact: the report uses the hazard assessment adopted by the United Nations. This means a 66 percent chance of preventing 2 degrees centigrade of global warming and a 50 percent chance of preventing 1.5 degrees centigrade—an assumption of risk that in any other field would be regarded as reckless.

Even so, to prevent the odds from becoming any worse, a 2 degrees centigrade target means that we can use only around 85 percent of the fossil fuel that's currently good to go, while a 1.5 degrees centigrade target means we can extract little more than a third (the figures are explained by the U.S. environmentalist Bill McKibben in an article in *The New Republic*). So what's the point of developing new reserves if the Paris agreement precludes the full extraction of those already in production?

The only means of reconciling governments' climate change commitments with

Not developing fossil fuel reserves is much easier than breaking them open then having to close them later. As the Oil Change report points out, shutting working mines and wellheads means confronting and compensating companies that have invested heavily in production, and retraining and re-employing the people who would lose work. Some of this will have to happen anyway, if governments are to honor their promise in Paris. But their effort should be to minimize pain, not to extend it.

Their choices are as follows. First: a gradual, managed decline of existing production and its replacement with renewable energy and low-carbon infrastructure, which offer great potential for employment. Second: allowing fossil fuel production to continue at current rates for a while longer, followed by a sudden and severe termination of the sector, with dire consequences for both jobs and economies. Third: continuing to produce fossil fuels as we do today, followed by climate breakdown. Why is this a hard choice to make?

Our governments seem determined to choose option three. Globally, some \$14 trillion is being lined up for new fossil fuel extraction and freight over the next

continued on page 20 ...



Veteran's Report From Standing Rock

By Marty Bates

We left for Cannon Ball, N.D., on August 29 in our travel van with supplies we had picked up the previous few days. We had some donated items and some items we had purchased according to the needs expressed by Michelle Cook of the camp. They asked for winter things so we got quilts, blankets, coats, raincoats, gloves, and hats. We also got some food items and some things for the kitchen.

We arrived at the Sacred Stone Camp late on Monday. The next day we got around and introduced ourselves and delivered supplies for which the campers were very grateful. They have a system of collecting the donations in a central location and then doling them out from there. They seem very organized.

The first day we worked around the kitchen and met folks, then drove over to the larger camp north of Cannon Ball river, the Oceti Sakowin camp. In the larger camp there were loudspeakers, announcements, and ceremonial presentations. It was wonderful to be representing Veterans For Peace when these historic presentations took place; more sovereign nations were gathered here than had gathered at the battle of Greasy Grass. Also the Resistance Radio has a van there and Govinda Dalton is running the radio. You can find him on Facebook to follow some of the activity there. He interviews folks that come in to camp. I didn't realize in time to give him an interview. They are trying to use the radio to get announcements out to the other camps.

The Red Warrior Camp is also on the ground that the Oceti Sakowin camp is on. They are actually two different camps but in the same area. There are some politics, agreements, and disagreements between the camps. Anyone who goes will hear about them, I think the recent few actions have led to a coming together of the mild differences. One significant difference is that the Sacred Stone Camp is on private property and relatively safe from outside

intervention, the other camps are on U.S. Army Corps of Engineering land and at any point the campers could be evicted.

On Wednesday, we heard early about the action on Highway 6. Two men had

lock-boxed themselves to two separate pieces of equipment. Early notification of this action helped a lot of people get to the site that might not have otherwise made it. Shortly after we arrived we heard that

VFP Statement in Support of the Pipeline Resistance at Standing Rock

Veterans For Peace stands in solidarity with the historic resistance at the Camp of the Sacred Stones in North Dakota. We join our Indigenous sisters and brothers in opposing the construction of an oil pipeline by the Dakota Access company that threatens drinking water and sacred burial grounds.

We acknowledge that the courageous stand of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and many allied tribes is being carried out by caretakers of the earth who are protecting and defending their ancestral lands and the water that runs through it

those typically home to vulnerable and marginalized populations—being deemed exploitable and expendable by our government and certain corporations. These are areas that VFP advisory board member and investigative journalist Chris Hedges has referred to as “sacrifice zones.”

As veterans, we see the connections between greed, racism, violence, and environmental destruction in our own communities, and war and militarism abroad. We strive to achieve “Peace at Home and Peace Abroad” as a lens through which we view our mission.

The continued assault against the sacred land and water as well as the destruction and desecration of sacred sites is an atrocity and must be stopped.

for current and future generations.

The continued assault against the sacred land and water as well as the destruction and desecration of sacred sites is an atrocity and must be stopped. The United States must honor its treaties and recognize Indigenous rights.

We strongly condemn the violence being used against the resistance and believe it to be both a crime and a human rights abuse.

We consider the violation of Indigenous lands, culture and tradition to be another example of specific geographic regions—

the highway patrol set up roadblocks on the highway so supporters that tried to come later couldn't get through. I got out a VFP flag during our support and held it aloft in the strong breeze; my wife, Janie Stein, and several Native veterans also took turns holding the flag.

Thursday, we presented the signed VFP flag to the Sacred Stone Camp, this was the flag that we had carried in Black Lives Matter marches, School of the Americas Watch marches, and several other events. It's also the flag that Jill Stein signed, as well as Arn Menconi, Green Party candidate for U.S. Senate from Colorado. We also had many local folks sign with messages of support.

Later, we were asked if we had a second flag to present to the main camp, the Oceti Sakowin camp, which we did. This same day, while at the larger camp, we witnessed several historic speeches by visitors from other tribes. I also presented some vets with some VFP pins and some supporters with some VFP Proud Supporter pins. Friday, we got up and gathered at the cooking fire and finished some conversations and exchanged some contact information and then headed for home. It was a great trip for us, and we intend to return.

Marty Bates is the president of the Dan Lyons Chapter of VFP in Northern Colorado.



call for international observers by facilitating the presence of VFP members at the Camp of the Sacred Stones.

Four Arrows (Wahinkpe Topa), aka Don Trent Jacobs, an American Indian scholar and activist and co-founder of the Northern Arizona chapter of Veterans For Peace, has this to say regarding the Standing Rock resistance: “The last healthy land masses on our planet are not coincidentally those occupied by Indigenous Peoples. That they are on the front lines in standing against oil and mining operations threatening to destroy waterways should not be surprising. The Indigenous worldview, one that guided humans to live in relative ecological harmony, sees this place as sacred, ... At this crossing point in American history, at the threshold of a mass extinction, the Standing Rock protest is much more than symbolic and deserves all the support VFP can give it.”

For more information on how you can support this profound and historic struggle, go to sacredstonecamp.org.

We believe the Standing Rock action is consistent with our philosophy and approach to help build a more just, peaceful and sustainable world.

We understand that different nonviolent struggles for social and ecological justice are linked by the common thread of resistance to subjugation and oppression.

As Veterans For Peace, we are committed to acting nonviolently and many of our members are trained and experienced in nonviolent resistance. We have responded to the Standing Rock Sioux



What Would Sitting Bull Do?

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hooves would vibrate the Earth, make the grass grow. There were once 250 species of grass. Today the buffalo are gone, replaced by 28 million cattle, which require grain, water, and hay. Many of the fields are now in a single GMO crop, full of so many pesticides that the monarch butterflies are dying off. In my memory, that old world remains.

If you drive long enough you come to the Missouri River. Called Mnisose, a

tribes, taking the best bottom lands from the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara, the Lakota and Dakota. Over 200,000 acres on the Standing Rock and Cheyenne River reservations in South Dakota were flooded by the Oahe Dam itself, forcing not only relocation, but a loss of the Lakota world. The Garrison, Oahe, and Fort Randall dams created a reservoir that eliminated 90 percent of timber and 75 percent of wildlife on the reservations.

That is how a people are made poor.

line—is now three years behind schedule.

In late July, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe represented by Earthjustice filed a lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Standing Rock claims the project violates federal and treaty law. Standing Rock also filed an intervention at the United Nations, in coordination with the International Indian Treaty Council. As Chairman Archambault would explain in a *New York Times* story:

“... The Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of the Interior and the National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation supported more protection of the tribe’s cultural heritage, but the Corps of Engineers and Energy Transfer Partners turned a blind eye to our rights. The first draft of the company’s assessment of the planned route through our treaty and ancestral lands did not even mention our tribe.

In Iowa, where work on the pipeline is under way, three fires erupted causing heavy damage to equipment and an estimated \$1 million in damages. Investigators suspect arson, according to Jasper County Sheriff John Halferty.

In October 2015, three Iowa farmers

sued Dakota Access LLC and the Iowa Utilities Board in an attempt to prevent the use of eminent domain on their properties to construct the pipeline.

The health of the Missouri River has been taken for granted. Dammed in the Pick Sloan Dam projects, each project increases contamination and reduces her health. Today, the Missouri is the seventh most polluted river in the country. Agricultural run-off and now fracking have contaminated the river. My sister fished a gar out of the river, a giant prehistoric fish, only to find it covered with tumors.

Here’s just one case... in a January 2015 spill, saltwater contamination from a massive pipeline spill reached the Missouri River. In the baffling way of state and federal agencies, North Dakota’s Health Director David Glatt did not expect harm to wildlife or drinking water supplies because the water was diluted. The saying is: the solution to pollution is dilution.... That is convenient, but not true.

Blacktail Creek and the Little Muddy River were contaminated with nearly three million gallons of saltwater with elevated levels of chloride contamination. All was diluted. Except for that gar fish with the tumors. There are pipelines everywhere, and fewer than 150 Pipeline Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) pipeline inspectors in the whole country.

And, now comes the risk of oil. The pipeline companies generally discuss a 99 percent safety record, but studies have found that to be grossly inaccurate. In fact, a former *Scientific American* editor, Trudy Bell, reports, “PHMSA data from 2001 to 2011 compelled KAI to conclude the average pipeline therefore has a 57 percent probability of experiencing a major leak, with consequences over the \$1 million range in a 10-year period...” Not good odds.

As the numbers on the ground grew from 200 people to 2,000, state law enforcement decided to put up a safety checkpoint, and rerouted traffic on 1806 from Bismarck to Standing Rock, hoping to dissuade people from coming and put the squeeze on Standing Rock’s Prairie Knights Casino, served by that road.

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great swirling river, by the Lakota, she is a force to be reckoned with. She is breathtaking.

“The Missouri River has a fixed place in the history and mythology” of the Lakota and other Indigenous nations of the Northern Plains, Dakota Goodhouse would explain.

In the time before Sitting Bull, the Missouri River was the epicenter of northern agriculture, the river bed so fertile. The territory was known as the fertile crescent of North America. That was then, before the treaties which reduced the Lakota land base, but the Missouri remained in the treaty—the last treaty of 1868 used the Missouri as a boundary.

Then came the theft of land by the United States, and the taking of the Black Hills, in 1877, in part retaliation against Sitting Bull’s victory at the Battle of the Little Big Horn. In a time prior to Black Lives Matter or Native Lives Matter, great leaders like Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse were assassinated at the hands of police. One truth: the Lakota people have survived much.

Forced into the reservation life, the Lakota attempted to stabilize their society, until the dams came. The 1944 Pick Sloan project flooded out the Missouri River

Today, well over two-thirds of the population of Standing Rock lives below the poverty level—and the land, and Mother River, is what remains, a constant, for the people. That is what is threatened today.

Enbridge and partners are preparing to drill through the riverbed. The pipeline has been permitted in sections from the west and from the east. The northern portion was moved away from the water supply of Bismarck, into the watershed of Standing Rock. That’s unfortunate.

Despite Lakota legal and regulatory objections, the Dakota Access Pipeline construction began in May 2016, and if finished will snake through North and South Dakota, Iowa, and Illinois, where it will link to a 774-mile pipeline to Nederland, Texas.

More than 570,000 barrels of Bakken crude oil will pass through the pipeline daily, along with 245,100 metric tons of carbon daily, or enough carbon to combust the planet to oblivion.

The pipeline would span 200 water crossings, and in North Dakota alone would pass through 33 historical and archaeological sites. Enbridge just bought the Dakota Access pipeline, noting that the proposed Sandpiper route—Minnesota’s 640,000-barrel-per-day Bakken





Take Me To The River

24 Hours at Standing Rock

By Craig Wood

STANDING ROCK, N.D.—The 440-mile ride from Minneapolis to the Standing Rock Indian Reservation encampment in North Dakota was smooth and pleasant—well, there were some cops.

A gruff policeman we met at a gas station west of Fargo was helpful with directions, but had nothing good to say about thousands of entrenched protesters at Standing Rock showing opposition to the controversial North Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL). He warned Barry [Riesch] and me about area volatility and made a sour face about “third-world living conditions” at the encampment.

We took the famed Lewis and Clark Highway (1806) south from Bismarck and were stopped at a roadblock about 20 minutes later by nearly a dozen national guardsmen wearing combat gear. One asked, “Do you know what’s going on down the road?” I nodded and he waved us through after seeing donated supplies in the back of the truck and cautioning us about pedestrians walking along the side the road. This was not the friendly tourist information booth I recalled from my childhood when my sister and I rode out west with our parents in a station wagon.

From there it was a another 20-minute

drive to Standing Rock, an easygoing wend through grassy hills that provides frequent glimpses of a slow-moving Missouri River on the left and tranquil vistas punctuated by gumbo buttes on the right. When you see the sign Little Heart Pond, you’re about 15 minutes away from Sacred Stone Camp. The encampment is just north of the Cannonball River—you’ll see the tents.

Two volunteers greeted us at the main

[U]p to 200 tribes may already be represented in one way or another in this peaceful action—some from as far away as South America.

gate and directed us toward a supply tent to drop off our gifts—food, water, toilet paper and tampons of various sizes. Volunteer Lance RedHawk from Lacrosse, Wis., mentioned how surprised he was at the amount of donations that poured in a daily basis. Another volunteer, though, mentioned that supplies sometimes run low.

With the cold season coming there’s a push to winterize camp. Elders were concentrating on procuring tools, firewood, items from hardware stores and construc-

tion supplies. Families along with lone tribal members from much warmer climates have already committed to staying on in a state that routinely posts 50-below wind-chill temperatures.

Martin Bates of La Forte, Colo., recently returned to Standing Rock with two large army surplus tents after raising about \$2,500 dollars on a GoFundMe site. Bates said the encampment grew noticeably in size since his last visit in late August and estimated that up to 200 tribes may already be represented in one way or another in this peaceful action—some from as far away as South America. The encampment population, including visitors, is estimated to be between 5,000 and

is played and dances are danced. Members of a tribe in Ecuador who believe they are descendants of jaguars talked about how a thousand of their members (including children) stopped an oil company from drilling in their country.

An ongoing discussion about protecting water runs through camp day and night. You can go from a conversation about how drilling was stopped in Nebraska to the lawful depth a tool can dig into the earth within a few steps. A tent to handle ongoing and new legal concerns was set up on September 15.

Sleeping out is safe and reports of alcohol or drug use are rare. Those caught are directed to the main gate. Drumming along with intermittent barking-dog or wolf cries may go on late so earplugs are recommended for light sleepers.

Typically there’s another communal gathering in the morning where camp concerns and events are planned. It’s also an open-mike for poets, musicians, or anyone else who wants to take part in the time-honored tradition of talking out loud in front of others. Joan Baez sang the day before.

Elders took turns at the microphone reminding the after-breakfast crowd of the seriousness of their clean water mission. A woman and man both talked earnestly about the importance of not wearing sexually suggestive clothing.

The woman recommended appropriate dresses and both urged everyone to stay focused on issues and participate in everyday communal camp work. “Volun-

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7,000, according to volunteers at the main gate—more people come on weekends.

With thousands of people camped out the outdoor kitchen is busy and someone is always chopping wood. One volunteer said that at least a thousand people are served at every meal. Tribal members from Maine brought moose meat that day so we had moose soup and moose meat slices for supper. The next day Spam tacos were one of the options for lunch.

There’s a communal gathering after supper—elders speak, stories are told, music

Apartheid Israel's War on Water

Photo by Ellen Davidson



The Palestinian village of Susya, which has been demolished and rebuilt, struggles to get its water supply from nearby cities.

By Sumaya Awad

London is known the world over for its rainy weather, so most people would be shocked to find out that Ramallah, one of the largest cities in the West Bank, actually receives more annual rainfall. So why during the month of June did Palestinians face some of the harshest water shortages in decades?

The answer is outrageous. Since 1967, when it first occupied the West Bank, Israel has seized control of almost all the major water resources. Quotas on the Palestinian consumption of water are strictly enforced, and attempts by Palestinians to develop their own water infrastructure have been thwarted by the Israeli military.

In 2011 alone, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) destroyed 89 water structures. The only source of underground water in the West Bank is the Mountain Aquifer, of which Israel controls 80 percent. Palestinians are also not permitted to draw water from the Jordan River.

The destruction of Palestinian buildings—homes, outdoor bathrooms, cisterns, or other rainwater gathering structures—is often justified by the Israeli army on grounds that they are “weak infrastructure.” The other usual pretext for demolition is the lack of building permits—permits that the Israeli government makes near impossible for Palestinians to obtain.

Palestinian towns and villages in the West Bank struggle to find adequate water resources for their parched communities, while Jewish-only settlements right next door live well-hydrated on occupied land using appropriated water sources.

Palestinians consume 70 liters of water per capita per day on average, according to a report from Amnesty International. In some areas, the figure is as low as 20 liters per day, well below the 100 liters per capita recommended by the World Health Organ-

ization (WHO). By contrast, Israelis consume up to 300 liters per capita per day.

Such staggering inequality in water consumption is not only indicative of the discrimination in resource distribution, but of the apartheid laws on which the Israeli state is built.

Lush gardens, swimming pools, and green lawns sit only a few miles from completely dry villages, where Palestinians receive water once a week, or once every few weeks, if at all. Put more vividly, 450,000 Israeli settlers use more water than the 2.3 million Palestinians living in the West Bank combined. Palestinians are forced to spend as much as a quarter of their income on water tanks from private businesses.

Aside from the daily incursions, house

The village of Susya fights a daily battle to obtain barrels of water from nearby cities, often enduring hour-long waits at checkpoints and spending large sums of money on poor quality water. The nearby settlement Shadmot Mechola advertises on its website “breathtaking tours of Am-aryllis bulbs, hot houses, tours of dairy farms, vineyards and orchards, (and) tours of farms in the Jordan Valley who specialize in crops of vegetables, fruits, flowers and spices for export in hot dry climate.”

The site fails, of course, to note that these crops grow on occupied land fed by water stolen from Palestinian villages.

During the month of June—the month of Ramadan this year, during which Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset—the national Israeli water company Mekorot

any water at all for more than a week. ... It would be hard to live without water under normal circumstances, but during Ramadan, we are all fasting and it's so hot, this is miserable.”

Other areas in the West Bank had to wait 40 days before receiving half their weekly quota from Mekorot.

Many Palestinians are forced to buy water from private companies. Given the conditions of unemployment and poverty in Palestinian communities due to years of economic strangulation by Israeli occupation, residents don't have the extra money to purchase water from private companies.

Forced to buy water for high prices in order to feed cattle and avoid the myriad illnesses that result from poor hydration or contaminated water, many residents find themselves in debt.

Israeli control of Palestinian water allocations is in line with its ongoing occupation of Palestinian land. The Israeli apartheid state flourishes and expands in part because of its appropriation of water resources, land and coastal territory.

As the water crisis in the West Bank has become dire, so has the situation in Gaza, the largest open-air prison in the world today.

Ever since Israel's blockade of Gaza began in 2007, the Mediterranean Sea has been deemed off limits to Gaza's residents. This leaves the coastal aquifer as Gaza's main water source. Ninety-six percent of the water provided by the aquifer, however, is deemed unfit for human consumption.

According to Abeer Abu Shawish:

“The over-extraction of this aquifer and the intrusion of seawater, coupled with the infiltration of agricultural fertilizers and untreated sewage, have all resulted in levels of chloride and nitrates up to three times the World Health Organization's

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Lush gardens, swimming pools, and green lawns sit only a few miles from completely dry villages, where Palestinians receive water once a week.

demolitions and raids that Palestinians in the West Bank endure, the restrictions on the mobility of people and goods make it difficult for Palestinians to develop water sanitation infrastructure of their own or to use naturally built water infrastructure, such as caves.

The Palestinian town of Susya, in the West Bank not far from Hebron, used to use water cisterns and caves to gather rainwater to use for irrigation. In 1999 and 2000, Israeli troops raided the village, attempted to expel its inhabitants, sealed off the caves and destroyed the cisterns. These demolitions are part of the Israeli plan to terrorize inhabitants and force them to move elsewhere, allowing Israeli forces to use the land for more illegal settlements.

restricted water distribution to certain areas of the West Bank. Residents in these areas were forced to live on less than half their normal water allocations.

Shaher Eshtieh, the mayor of Salfit, one of the villages affected by the water crisis, told Al Jazeera:

“We've never seen anything like this; we are in full crisis mode, working around the clock to help our people, but we are doing this on our own...We've continuously reached out to the Palestinian government, the prime minister even, but they've been no help, and the Israelis are denying there is a problem.

“For the past three days, my house has had a bit of water, just enough for drinking and cooking—not cleaning or anything—but before that, we were without

Interview with Ilan Pappé

Ethnic Cleansing in Palestine

By Alejandra Ríos

Ilan Pappé is a historian, socialist activist, professor at the University of Exeter, and supporter of the Campaign for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS). Of Israeli origin, he is a world-renowned scholar on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and has written numerous books on the subject, including *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* and *The Idea of Israel: A History of Power and Knowledge*.

He was interviewed by Alejandra Ríos for Left Voice, where this article first appeared.

Alejandra Ríos: You've talked and written about the concept of homeland as justification for destroying the native population. What is the meaning of this concept and what are some examples of its use in other places? In what sense is it applied differently in Palestine than in other countries?

Ilan Pappé: The context is the phenomenon of settler colonialism: the movement of Europeans, because they felt unsafe or endangered, into non-European areas in the Americas, Africa, Australia and Palestine. These people were not only seeking a new home, but also a new homeland. Namely, they had no wish or plan to come back to Europe.

The only problem was that the lands they coveted were already inhabited by other people. In most cases, their solution was the genocide of indigenous people. In two cases, the solution was different: apartheid in South Africa and ethnic cleansing in Palestine.

AR: In your book, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, you suggest that the objectives of Israel have remained the same since 1948. Can you elaborate?

IP: As any settler colonial movement, the Zionist movement is motivated by the logic of elimination of the native. In



the period after the second World War, elimination is more complex and maybe less inhuman, but still drastic. The desire of the Zionist movement to create both a Jewish state and a democratic one means that there is always a wish to take over as much of Palestine as possible and leave in as few Palestinians as possible.

This is the background for the Israeli ethnic cleansing operation in 1948, an operation that ended with expulsion of nearly a million Palestinians and a Jewish

then the demographic problem emerged again. This time, the means were apartheid, military occupation and cutting the land into enclaves and Bantustans.

AR: You have described Israeli actions in Gaza as “incremental genocide.” What is the meaning of this term?

IP: “Incremental” means that there is no dramatic, massive killing of people of a certain race or nation. However, a strategy like the one Israel has been conducting since 2006 has led to what the U.N.

the ground, in terms of settlement and colonization, that it would be impossible to create a normal Palestinian state, even if one were to accept this solution. The best you can hope for are two Bantustans: one in the West Bank and one in the Gaza Strip. This is not a solution.

Finally, there will be no solution to the conflict without respecting the right of the Palestinian refugees to return and the two-state solution does not respect this right.

AR: What has been the effect of the growing international criticism of Israeli actions against the Palestinian people? How has this affected the peace movement in Israel?

IP: In the last 10 years, civil societies around the world had enough of their government's passivity on Palestine. Therefore, they took independent action by supporting the Palestinian civil-right call for boycott, divestment, and sanctions against Israel.

The world governments are still not pressuring Israel to change its policy and therefore it is difficult to expect any change from within. There is no peace camp in Israel. There is now a small group of activists who are encouraged by the BDS movement and are trying to educate Israelis about the human and civil rights violations in the past and present. These groups from within will not survive; it is necessary to put more international pressure on Israel.

AR: What role do academics or intellectuals have in the struggle for the liberation of Palestine?

IP: A very important role. They can tell the story about Palestine that Israel wants to hide from the world. There is enough evidence, and today there are enough scholars using it, to tell the history as it really happened. We will need to deal bravely with this history if we would want to have a genuine process of reconciliation in Israel and Palestine.

AR: How important is the BDS campaign? What do you think it can achieve?

IP: Very important. It has two major roles: first, to send a painful but necessary message to Israel that there is a price tag attached to its continued policy of dispossession and colonization. And secondly, to galvanize world public opinion and activism around a campaign that would not let the Palestine issue be forgotten.

Second, Israel created such a reality on

The desire of the Zionist movement to create both a Jewish state and a democratic one means that there is always a wish to take over as much of Palestine as possible and leave in as few Palestinians as possible.

takeover of 80 percent of the land. However, the ethnic cleansing of 1948 was not a complete project. There was still 20 percent of the land that Israel did not have and there was a Palestinian minority within Israel. The vision of a purely de-Arabized Palestine was still there, though the means differed.

The means included the imposition of military rule over the Palestinians in Israel and refusing to allow the refugees to return. The space was not enough and the opportunity to enlarge it came in 1967, but

called “the transformation of the Gaza Strip into an uninhabitable place”—so this is not just the constant killing of civilians that makes it genocidal, but also the destruction of the infrastructure.

AR: Do you think that Israel is carrying out ethnic cleansing in the West Bank and East Jerusalem on a similar scale as what took place in 1948?

IP: Well, the fact is, just in the Greater Jerusalem areas since 1967, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were transferred in various means—from massive expulsion or by moving their neighbourhood to the West Bank or by not allowing them to return if they left the country. After 1967, ethnic cleansing is more about moving Palestinians into enclaves rather than out of the country.

AR: You argue against a two-state solution on the grounds that it is not viable and instead are in favour of a bi-national state. What are your reasons for coming to this conclusion? How do you think a bi-national state could be achieved and how would it operate?

IP: The two-state solution is not viable for three major reasons. First, it only applies to 20 percent of Palestine and to less than half of the Palestinian people. You cannot reduce the problem of Palestine in such a way either geographically or demographically.



Palestinian refugees fleeing their homes in 1948

Okiwana: Resistance and Victory



admire the solidarity, courage, and fierce determination of the people to protect the land from yet more destructive U.S. military presence on pristine and precious forestland.

Two former Viet Nam-era Marines, Ken Mayers and Doug Lummis, who lives in Okinawa permanently, sat on the ground with the protesters on the south side and Viet Nam Army medic veteran Mike Hastie, our photographer, and Will Griffin, Iraq and Afghanistan veteran who was videotaping, were on the north side, along with Makishi Yoshikazu, our driver from VFP ROCK and Ken Muriyama, our interpreter. Matt Hoh and Mike Hanes, two more recent Marine veterans, were perched holding a banner on top of the van we came in, also sideways across the road, blocking it. I hunkered down with Ken and Doug and linked arms. The police moved in, the protesters linked arms more tightly. The pictures and my comrades will tell the more of the story.

Doug Lummis:

After greeting most of the team at Naha airport, getting them set at the hostel they were staying at, I joined the VFP delegation at Takae on Thursday, September 1, and again on Saturday, September 3.

On Thursday there was a series of fierce encounters with the riot police, some people were carried off multiple times. The riot police would make human jail cells by forming a square and linking arms and then drag and carry people there to be imprisoned.

The person next to me whispered, "When we get enough people in here, we can break out."

After the "jail cell" was full, we did indeed make a rush against one side of it and almost broke out; a whole lot more riot police members had to rush there to shore up the crumbling wall. All this time the people—mostly the older women—were speaking with poetic eloquence (and great volume) to these police, who were young enough to be their children or grandchildren, urging them to think what they were doing.

In the middle of the action one young riot policeman, finding himself stepping on elderly ladies, started to cry. He backed up and became a part of the jailhouse wall, his face red and tears streaming.

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the U.S. empire and its warmaking proclivity. Here in Okinawa, where some 80 percent of the population, including the governor and many mayors are in opposition to new U.S. base construction and 60–70 percent would like all U.S. bases closed, there was and is a real chance for a people's victory. A victory, which, if it comes, will have ripple effects and give inspiration and hope to millions of other people in countries where U.S. military presence is not wanted.

As former U.S. military personnel, we were here to offer our solidarity, and our experience, in opposition to U.S. militarism, which unfortunately, with over 800 bases worldwide, is practically everywhere.

The protesters sat in ranks on both north and south sides of the vehicles, further strengthening the blockade. There was much bullhorn talk back and forth. The police commander's voice was drowned out by angry vocalizing from the protester side. One could not help but



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In the end, after a long and difficult struggle, they managed to get a few trucks in to the site, but it was late afternoon, and the workday was pretty much over. This was the day when the Japanese government announced they were going to begin actual construction, and they didn't.

The VFP guys said they enjoyed the "rugby match" (they were in the thick of it).

On Saturday, some 500 people gathered in Takae. Around noon, people began leaving, and Yamashiro Hiroji, a key resistance leader, worried that the trucks would come after the number dwindled. They decided that instead of blocking the gate they would barricade a bridge that the trucks would have to cross. We all moved there.

There were about 80 protesters' cars, and people parked them along both sides of the bridge, leaving one lane at the center, which we could block or not with people, depending on what cars wanted to pass. The riot police, who were on the gate side of the barricade, began moving some of their buses out, and the protesters let them. Of course it was hoped that they were going home, but more likely they were going out so they could escort some

trucks through the barricade. We learned that 14 (I think it was) trucks had entered one of the completed helipads and were waiting there.

Yamashiro Hiroji calculated that if we could hold out until 3 p.m., they would give it up. 3 p.m. came: no trucks, no riot police. The barricade became a celebration, and the bridge became a dance hall. It took another hour to untangle all the cars and clear the bridge: still no police (except the ones very properly directing traffic). It is possible, of course, that they brought the trucks in last night after everyone went home, but still, they lost yet another day's work.

The news that the Japanese Self Defense Force are beginning training to bring construction workers and equipment in by helicopter can be taken as, "Oh, No! They are outflanking us," or as a sign of their desperation. It sounds to me more like an attempted show of strength than a feasible way to get what they need into the construction site.

It ain't over till it's over.

Will Griffin:

Upon arrival and after a night's sleep, on Thursday, September 1, we traveled to Takae, the area in which four new heli-



pads are being constructed for the USMC Osprey Helicopters. Two helipads already exist and four more are being added. The decision to add these new helipads was made by both the Japanese and U.S. governments without consulting the villagers.

When we joined the protests in front of the gate of the helipad site, we found the locals were creating roadblocks to prevent construction trucks from entering the helipad site. The locals used their personal vehicles to park in the middle of the road, preventing any vehicle from passing by. In a very organized fashion the locals would only allow other local drivers, such as the pineapple farmers who were delivering their fresh harvest, to pass through.

Soon enough, the police arrived in large buses. Approximately 150 police officers surrounded us while we stood shoulder to shoulder with the locals. The police asked everyone to move their vehicles off the road. They were met only with singing voices and chants of disapproval.

The police officers were not from Okinawa, but sent from other prefectures of Japan. The financial burden of costs for the police force, their vehicles, and the luxurious resorts they sleep at are all paid for by Okinawans. The large majority of islanders never wanted the helipads built but are held financially accountable for the costs of using the police forces against

their will.

Protesters sat on the ground with linked arms and we joined them. After some time the police began pulling protesters off one by one and placing them inside of their kettle. Police "kettling" is a tactic for controlling large crowds during protests by forming large cordons of officers and placing the protesters inside of this human-linked kettle. All of us interlinked their arms and legs to resist the police officers, but after an hour everyone was contained.

Then the police began placing Go-Jacks, a self-loading jack dolly, underneath the wheels of each vehicle. They lifted each vehicle and pushed the vehicles to the side of the road to make enough space for the large construction trucks to drive through. Shortly after, a convoy of construction trucks came roaring past us. We delayed their efforts for three hours.

We returned to Takae on Saturday. This time we mobilized at a different gate but near the same helipad site. The locals created another roadblock but this time it was on a narrow two-lane bridge about an eighth of a mile from the gate. After parking our vehicles on the bridge, we marched up the hill and stage a demonstration directly in front of the gate while a small number of protesters remained with the vehicles.

The demonstration consisted of maybe 300 to 500 people sitting directly in front of the gate. Speakers were invited to give talks and speeches into a microphone that was connected to large megaphones placed on top of a van. One by one, lawyers and activists told their stories to each other. Michael Hanes, a former Force Recon Marine who saw combat in Iraq, was invited to speak and explained the importance of standing up against the U.S. war machine. He told how he saw himself as a young Marine when he looked into the eyes of the Japanese Police officers. Once he believed he was doing the right thing, but he learned the truth the hard way, by invading Iraq 13 years ago. Michael asked the police officers to look into the mirror when they went home that night and ask themselves if they were they doing the right thing.

Police officers surrounded the people with a marathon of silent stares. After standing in uniformed lines for about 20

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Okinawa

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minutes, they disappeared. We learned afterwards that two mainland Japanese congressmen were in attendance at the protests that day. Did the police leave because of the congressmen or because of the large number of protesters? We will never know for sure.

We went back and waited on the bridge for the police to come back. They never came. Around 3:30 p.m., we realized that no construction trucks were coming. Even if the trucks did arrive, they wouldn't have time to do any work on the base. Time had run out. After a few announcements from the leaders of the peace movement, we all realized we had won.

Shortly after realizing we had reached victory, everyone celebrated through chants, speeches, song and dance. A survivor from the Battle of Okinawa in 1945 told us how he still hated the Japanese for subjugating and sacrificing them in the war and spoke of their history as Okinawans. Others explained to us their lifelong fight for peace. This day was one of few days that represented peace on the island. One day of preventing the construction of military bases is one more day of

peace.

The bridge was wrapped with democracy.

During last year's VFP delegation we learned that the people of Okinawa have a separate history from Japan. Essentially, Okinawans aren't Japanese. They had a different culture, language, and history that was almost destroyed through their colonization by Japan in 1872 and the takeover by the United States after World War 2.

The islanders of Okinawa have endured the worst of history, a quarter of their people were killed in the World War 2 invasion, yet they continue to struggle more than 70 years later against the occupation of the largest empire ever in the history of the world. Their deep organizational skill and strong hearts give inspiration to others from around the world also working nonviolently to stop U.S. militarism.

As U.S. veterans, we owe a duty to these people to inform them that the U.S. military does not represent us. We are fighting the same evil. When we come together and join hands, no government or military can stop us. These delegations also provide a way for veterans to address their own past actions and personal histories; this is a way for veterans to make amends. When veterans from all militaries join together, war will end. I've recently met veterans from the Japanese military that fought in the Battle of Okinawa as well as veterans from the Republic of Korea military, and when we work together we become an unstoppable force.

Matt Hoh:

In my years of postwar recovery this trip may have provided the strongest and most concise dose of healing I have experienced. To be able to be put once again into action, to use myself for the values I believe in, has done a great deal to overcome the guilt I carry for participating in our wars overseas. I also learned a great



deal emotionally: how to remain healthy, how to live a life of purpose and mission, how to live and act your values, etc. Every day was a lesson in these matters, again from both my fellow VFP members and from our Okinawan friends.

The daily interactions we experienced with the Okinawans, whether our friends in the resistance or strangers on the streets, were inspiring and meaningful. The appreciation from both friends and strangers was heartfelt, sincere, and, at times, overwhelming. It was clear we made a real difference with our temporary presence; supporting the morale of the resistance and educating other Okinawans that not all Americans support America's military occupations and war

policies.

To fight an empire, it is essential that people resist the illegal and immoral actions of great powers together. The VFP delegation to Okinawa changed the lives of the islanders, as they changed ours. We brought hope and strength to each other. After receiving countless hugs, kisses, handshakes, and gifts from the locals I realized that VFP and the Okinawan people had created bonds that will last an eternity. No military can ever break those bonds.

Mike Hanes:

This delegation was a huge success! VFP Peace Teams are sent overseas to areas where U.S. bases are present to uphold one of the major tenets of our Statement of Purpose, to "restrain our government from intervening overtly and covertly in the internal affairs of other nations."

It is also important to express in-person solidarity with local people who are in opposition to these U.S. bases, not only because we give each other strength and motivation, but because all peoples in opposition need to be aware that they are not alone in their struggle.

We spent a good deal of time standing, sitting, or lying down linking and locking arms with the Okinawan people protesting. That seemed to have a tremendous impact on the morale of the people trying to stop the building of Osprey helipads on pristine land—their land that they love. Not only were the protesters affected but we also saw reactions in the faces of the Japanese police. At one time during the intense scuffling, a young policeman broke down in tears. It is said that the Japanese police do not like this post in Okinawa even though they are housed in luxurious resort quarters. We protested at the gates at Kadena Air Base as well, but spent most of our time at Takae. One

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day there were so many protesters that we actually stopped the construction for a whole day. One day of victory that I will remember forever!

I am grateful that I could be part of this.

Ken Mayers:

Edmund Hillary, who, with Nepalese Sherpa Tensing Norkay, “conquered” Everest in the mid-20th century, was asked, “Why climb Everest?” His response, “Because it’s there!” In short, that’s my response to the question, “Why should VFP delegations go to overseas areas where the U.S. military has bases that are resisted by local populations?” Because the damned bases are there. But the big difference between Everest and the bases is that the bases shouldn’t be there. And particularly for those of us who once served on those bases and who are conscious of the affront to world peace represented by those bases, there is an obligation to act.

The U.S. empire and the global corporate oligarchy constitute a hydra-headed monster with an insatiable lust for power. In Greek mythology, the evil, snakelike Hydra had nine heads. If one got hurt, two would grow in its place. Unfortunately, the monster we face has a lot more than nine heads. In his remarkable book, *Blessed Unrest*, Paul Hawken argues that myriad relatively small non-governmental organizations act, in effect, as the planet’s immune system. Each NGO takes on a specific toxin in the socio-political-economic system. Veterans For Peace and a few similar organizations around the world have a primary focus on militarism and its manifestations.

My memories of Okinawa are closely tied to my previous experiences on Okinawa in 1959, 1960, 1964, 1965, 1966, and 2015. Okinawa is very much like going home, since it was my home for an accumulated three-and-a-half extremely important years of my life. I feel like I owe Okinawa and the Okinawan people an exceptional debt of gratitude, and these del-

egations to Okinawa gave me the joyful opportunity to work off part of this debt in the company of extraordinary colleagues.

Mike Hastie:

An Okinawan child gave me the thumbs up at a demonstration and that said it all about what it is like to experience solidarity with people who are suffering from the effects of U.S. military might. Our delegation had a powerful commitment to help the Okinawan people in their cause to stop another U.S. military base from being built in Oura Bay at Henoko, and the planned building of four more helipads in Takae. I could tell from the faces of the committed Okinawan demonstrators that we were a tremendous boost in their struggle and morale. They were excited to see us, and that energy sustained us the entire time we were there. Their kindness and love toward us was very healing. I am a photojournalist, and I make a point of watching people’s faces as they connect to other faces in their struggle. It is a soul connection. As

an American veteran of the Viet Nam war, this was my opportunity to go back in time and attempt to correct the long history of U.S. domination throughout the world. This was the island of Okinawa, where thousands of Okinawan civilians lost their lives in the Battle of Okinawa in 1945. The powerful human connection with the Okinawan people was the same feeling I experienced when I went back to Viet Nam in 1994 and 2016 to make amends. Once you become a global citizen, your DNA is joined forever. We are all human beings who want a better world. All human beings live in the same global nest, and an act of violence against one country is an act of violence to the entire human race. You can’t set fire to one small room in a large Victorian home and not have it affect the entire home. That is why the Veterans For Peace delegation went to Okinawa, because we all live in the same human home.

It is my hope that I will be sitting in a huge arena someday, somewhere and there will be thousands of veterans from all over the world wearing T-shirts that say “War Is Over.” Can you imagine what these veterans will bear witness to? Can you imagine the rigorous honesty that will be born in that kind of setting? As their stories and testimonies build throughout the world, it will become absolutely apparent that there is *one* collective human voice crying for peace.

Our delegation in Okinawa moved with one purpose in mind, this mission of peace. We were cohesive in our commitment, and we moved throughout those days with high-energy determination. Maybe, our military training taught us something that was positive. All of us have unique and individual personalities, but we moved well together, because our purpose was larger than we were. Humor and storytelling was an intricate part of our mission. When you put 7-8 people together with a common purpose, you build community. Our solidarity became a tall mountain. The delegation to Okinawa is a microcosm of what has to happen in the future involving veterans bearing witness to truth. If we do not act now, we will become the possessions of the rich, living in sorrowful permission. When I saw myself in the faces of the Okinawan people, I saw profound hope. Without world community, we will not survive.





Israeli settlement overlooking the town of Susya has trees and lawns—no water shortage here.

Photo by Ellen Davidson

Israeli Water

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recommended standards.”

According to the Palestinian Water Authority, 45 percent of the water processed in desalination plants is also contaminated. The PWA itself is billions of dollars in debt because it's had to resort to buying water tanks from large businesses, more often than not Israeli businesses, in order to supply water to local residents. Left with choosing between spending exorbitant amounts on water tanks from private businesses or consuming contaminated water, most of 1.8 million residents in Gaza choose the latter.

Most of Gaza's water-related infrastructure was destroyed during Israel's brutal assault of 2012, which took the lives of more than 1,000 Palestinians.

Though many attempts to rebuild the

water infrastructure have been launched both by Gaza's residents and international aid organizations, most have been halted due to lack of equipment.

Most equipment and materials required to rebuild infrastructure are labeled as “dual-use items” and are thus forbidden from entering Gaza. Dual-use items are items with both civilian and military uses. In 2009, items such as chocolate, toys and, of all things, coriander, were prohibited from entering Gaza because they were deemed “luxury items.”

Water, then, becomes a weapon Israel uses to enforce collective punishment on the Palestinian people.

The struggle against Israel's control of water and its restrictions on permits and equipment to build safe water infrastructure are directly linked to the ongoing project of Israeli usurpation of Palestinian land and its oppression of millions of Palestinians, both within Israel proper and in

the West Bank and Gaza.

An end to Israeli occupation and apartheid is part and parcel of demanding an end to these horrific methods of punishment.

One of the most direct ways to do so is to forge links between the movement for boycott, divestment and sanction (BDS) to secure basic Palestinian rights with those communities in the U.S. fighting for access to the same life-essential resource of water.

It is also direct proof of the fact that activism works and that mobilizing students and organizing campaigns has a very real effect on political outcomes. Come September, as new BDS campaigns are launched and old ones continue, it is crucial to help build these campaigns and show support and solidarity with these ongoing efforts.

This piece was reprinted with permis-

The most recent pushback by state legislatures across the United States has proven that the BDS campaign is a real threat to Apartheid Israel.

The BDS campaign, launched in 2005 in response to a call by the Palestinian civil society, is growing stronger with new campaigns being launched on college campuses across the country. The most recent pushback by state legislatures across the United States has proven that the BDS campaign is a real threat to Apartheid Israel.

sion from the Socialist Worker, socialist-worker.org

Sumaya Awad is a student at Williams College. She was a visiting student at Columbia University, majoring in history and religion in the 2014–2015 academic year.

No Drilling

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20 years. Governments are intervening all right: to try to crush political opposition to these projects, while using public money to protect them from market forces.

In Britain, for example, tax rebates for North Sea oil and gas companies are so generous that over the next five years the government is likely to give them around \$6.4 billion more than it receives in revenues. There are similar tax breaks for fracking companies—but not, of course, for renewable energy.

While local people have been granted a special veto over wind turbines, the government has awarded itself special powers to override local decisions on fracking, to ensure that it goes ahead. And if brute power is insufficient, it is backed up by bribery: the prime minister, Theresa May, has offered local people cash payments of almost \$13,000 per household from the tax revenues (if there are any) that fracking is meant to generate. There is no such entitlement to share the income from wind

power: we wouldn't want to encourage it.

There's a reason for this blatant asymmetry: fossil fuel companies are rich and powerful. Preventing climate breakdown means defending democracy from plutocrats. It's their interests versus the rest of humanity's.

So when British Prime Minister Theresa May announced at the United Nations last week that she was ratifying the Paris agreement, perhaps what she meant was that she was going to reverse her government's suite of energy policies. Or maybe it wasn't that. Perhaps she meant that she doesn't intend to do anything except sign a piece of paper. Has she even considered the implications of this choice? I doubt it. After all, it's only the future of life on Earth that's at stake.

George Monbiot is a British writer, and environmental and political activist. He is the author of several books, including Captive State: The Corporate Takeover of Britain and Feral: Searching for Enchantment on the Frontiers of Rewilding. Monbiot founded the ArrestBlair.org website which offers a reward to people attempting a peaceful citizen's arrest of former British prime minister Tony Blair for alleged crimes against peace.

Take Me to River

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teer at the kitchen—chop wood—if you see litter on the ground, pick it up—this isn't a San Francisco hippie party” said one elder.

Earlier a group of about 400 marched at least a mile down Highway 1806 to an area where construction was halted after activists attempted to stop work on land they believed contained sacred sites and part of an ancestral burial ground. An ugly scene ensued including the use of dogs by a security company on protesters.

Today's march was prompted by a tip that a company that owns the earth-moving equipment was going to move it that day and members of the encampment wanted to be on hand to document the condition of machines in case the company later claimed disgruntled activists

caused “excessive damage.”

No machines were moved, so the group walked back to the encampment, pausing a couple times to have small ceremonies and drop tobacco on the land.

Twenty-four hours isn't a lot of time, but it may be enough if you keep your eyes and ears open in a place the BBC has called “the largest gathering of Native Americans in over a hundred years.” I'll never forget the sight of a Native American girl standing in the sand with a small drum singing to the Cannonball River.

The legal issues are too many and complex to go into—at least for me. For now, serious-minded people are invited to participate in solidarity with those who care about the environment and don't want to gamble with the purity of drinking water.

Craig Wood is a semi-retired building contractor, former South Minneapolis community newspaper writer, and member of Veterans For Peace.

Tony Blair: Worst Human Being Alive?

By David Swanson

I realize that, living here in the United States, the nation doing the most in the world to create wars, proliferate nukes, and destroy the habitability of the earth's climate, I really have a duty to pick someone in the United States as the worst individual human being alive.

But the United States operates by incestuous swarm. We have another Cheney running for Congress and another Clinton running for president. We have Trump's campaign manager in trouble for taking money from Russians, much of which he funneled to Hillary Clinton's campaign

like his daddy, in contrast, is just another respectable old retired emperor.

I do think, however, that it is perfectly fair to hold against Blair the fact that he shifted from mass killing straight into mass money-making while promoting more death and destruction. Money-grubbing British prime ministers from now on will know that they can become stinking rich upon retirement if they do the bidding of their corporate and foreign overlords while in office.

If you think I'm exaggerating, go watch George Galloway's new film, *The Killing\$ Of Tony Blair*. This film tells the story of Blair's whole career, and it's ugly. He cuts



chair's brother. Meanwhile, Trump's daughter has been hauled before a virtual Un-American Activities Committee for vacationing with the supposed girlfriend of Vladimir Putin who may or may not have cheated on Rupert Murdoch with Tony Blair—yes, the same Rupert Murdoch who raises funds for Hillary Clinton, and yes, that Tony Blair—the one whose corrupt deal with Murdoch put him in power in the first place.

These characters, including Blair, are at least honorary Americans. But Blair is something even worse than the worst of the worst of them. Blair did to the Labour Party what Bill Clinton did to the Democratic Party—what Jeremy Corbyn is trying to undo and Hillary Clinton trying to permanently entomb. Blair did to Kosovo and Afghanistan and Iraq what Clinton, Bush, and Obama did to those places. But while Bush went home to paint pictures of himself in the bathtub, Blair went on a Clintonite mission to get rich and evangelize for war and corruption.

I don't know if it's fair to hold this against him, but Blair took into wars on Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq a nation with far greater resistance to such lawless mass killing than the United States had. That is, he had people telling him openly that his actions would be criminal and reprehensible. He may now be the least popular person in Britain. He can't go outside without being protested. George W. Bush,

a deal with Murdoch to allow media monopolies in exchange for press support. He takes money from a car racing plutocrat in exchange for allowing tobacco ads at car races. He sells out to corporations left and right. He peddles BAE jets to Indonesia for killing people in East Timor. He sells BAE air traffic control systems to Tanzania, which has no air force. He simply shuts down a prosecutorial investigation of BAE's Saudi corruption in the deal that saw Bandar Bush pocket \$2 billion. He privatizes schools and hospitals, anything that can make a buck for anybody who knows how to kick some back.

Blair joins with Clinton the First and then Obama in the killing in Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq, and then shifts into former-prime-minister-now—"consultant" mode, taking millions from JP Morgan Chase, Petro Saudi, and other companies for providing his connections to other corrupt people around the world. He takes obscene speaking fees. He hires himself out to dictators in Kazakhstan, Egypt, Kuwait, and Libya. The film juxtaposes their atrocities with Blair's purchased praise of their many merits. Blair persuaded Bush to protect Gadaffi from lawsuits by alleged victims, but apparently forgot to tell Hillary not to bomb Gadaffi or get him killed.

What really wins Blair the prize of worst person on earth, though, is his acceptance

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Shannon Flights Remain Shrouded in Secrecy

Irish Government Refuses to Reveal Details of U.S. Military Use of Airport

The Irish Department of Foreign Affairs has refused to release any information in response to freedom of information requests by Shannonwatch regarding U.S. military flights through Shannon Airport. Citing the creation and maintenance of trust and confidence between governments the department has said it will not provide records requested under freedom of information (FOI) because it would hamper the international relations of the State.

The peace and human rights group Shannonwatch is gravely concerned by the ongoing refusal to provide access to information about the flights through Shannon. "It's impossible to see how making aircraft details public could affect our relations with the U.S., or any other state, if what they tell us about the planes not being engaged in military operations is true" said Clare Daly, the United Left Alliance member of parliament who made the FOI requests. "Since Ireland claims to be a neutral state we should not be allowing foreign military within our territory on the scale that is happening today. And we should certainly not be doing it without informing the Irish people of the details."

Daly continued "The refusal to provide a list of the U.S. military planes that passed through Shannon or Irish airspace amounts to a cover-up of Irish support for a foreign military power and an attempt to deny our involvement in ongoing wars of aggression in the Middle East. It is in direct contravention of our obligations as a neutral state, and it makes us complicit in the displacement of millions of refugees from their homes."

A Red C poll earlier this year found that 57 percent of Irish people oppose the U.S. use of Shannon Airport for military transit purposes.

The poll, which was commissioned by members of parliament Mick Wallace and Clare Daly last March, also found that 6 out of 10 Irish people want neutrality to be enshrined in the constitution. At present, Irish neutrality is a policy choice, de-

cided on by the government of the day.

"Having access to details of the scale of foreign military use of Shannon is a matter of public interest" said John Lannon of Shannonwatch. "The covert nature of the U.S. military use of the airport since 2002 demonstrates that Fine Gael, Fianna Fail and Labour have no interest in protecting Irish neutrality. In fact the opposite is the case; they have gone against the will of the Irish people by giving a militarized superpower unrestricted access to Shannon and Irish airspace."

"There is a clear lack of accountability in relation to the U.S. military use of Shannon," Lannon continued. "The Department of Foreign Affairs' refusal to reveal what military planes has landed follows years of denials about rendition planes that also landed at Shannon. We cannot believe government claims that the U.S. Air Force planes we see coming and going are unarmed and not engaged in military operations, especially when the department refuse to tell us why they are there."

In total four freedom of information requests were denied by Department of Foreign Affairs. The requests sought lists of flights by foreign military aircraft that landed at Shannon between January 1, 2015, and June 30, 2016. Copies of statistical reports received by the Department in relation to U.S. military aircraft that flew through Irish airspace were also requested.

In his response to an appeal of the original denial of the FOI request last August, Jackson, deputy director of the International Security Policy Section of the Department of Foreign Affairs, claimed that the public interest in maintaining the "mutuality of trust with regard to communications between states" outweighed the public interest in disclosing information about the military flights.

"Our foreign policy is now being dictated by the U.S. and its NATO allies" said John Lannon. The United States has been invading, bombing, and supplying weapons to groups fighting in the Middle East for the last 15 years, and has been using Shannon as a covert operations base. It is most certainly a matter of public interest, not just in terms of foreign policy but also from a security and safety point of view. Every U.S. military plane that passes through Shannon increases the risk of terrorist attack on our shores."

There were a total of 1,109 requests by foreign military aircraft to land in the State between January 1, 2015, and June 30, 2016. Of these, a staggering 947 (93 percent) were from the United States.

For more information contact Shannonwatch at shannonwatch@gmail.com or visit shannonwatch.org.

Sitting Bull

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We just drove around; the scenic route is beautiful. And as supporters surge in numbers, the casino hotel and restaurants are full.

While North Dakota seeks to punish the Lakota, Chairman Archambault expresses concerns for everyone:

"I am here to advise anyone that will listen that the Dakota Access Pipeline

have exceeded his scope of authority, and violated civil and human rights to water. Chairman Archambault continues, "Perhaps only in North Dakota, where oil tycoons wine and dine elected officials, and where the governor, Jack Dalrymple, serves as an adviser to the Trump campaign, would state and county governments act as the armed enforcement for corporate interests."

And, there are a lot of people at Standing Rock today who remember their history and the long standoff at Wounded Knee

'Let us put our minds together to see what kind of future we can make for our children.'
The time for that is now.

project is harmful. It will not be just harmful to my people but its intent and construction will harm the water in the Missouri River, which is one of the cleanest and safest river tributaries left in the United States. To poison the water is to poison the substance of life. Everything that moves must have water. How can we talk about and knowingly poison water?"

In the meantime, North Dakota Gov. Jack Dalrymple announced a state of emergency, "making additional state resources available to manage public safety risks associated with the ongoing protest of the Dakota Access Pipeline." He may

in 1973, In fact, some of those in Standing Rock today were there in 1973 at Wounded Knee, a different, but similar battle for dignity and the future of a nation.

I am not sure how badly North Dakota wants this pipeline. If there is to be a battle over the pipeline, it will be here. For a people with nothing else but a land and a river, I would not bet against them. The great Lakota leader Mathew King once said, "The only thing sadder than an Indian who is not free is an Indian who does not remember what it is to be free."

The camp represents that struggle for freedom; and the future of a people. All of



Chief Sitting Bull

us. If I ask the question, "What would Sitting Bull do?" the answer is pretty clear. He would remind me what he said 150 years ago, "Let us put our minds together to see what kind of future we can make for our children." The time for that is now.

Winona LaDuke is a Native American activist, environmentalist, economist, and writer, known for her work on tribal land claims and preservation, as well as sustainable development. In 1996 and 2000, she ran for vice president as the nominee of the Green Party of the United States. She is the executive director of Honor the Earth.



Over the past two years we delivered 298 letters and 32 postcards. They come from medics whose friends died in their arms, from granddaughters who never met their grandfathers, from United States citizens who sacrificed their careers and even their citizenship to stop the war. And so many others. Please take the time to listen to their voices.

—Doug Rawlings

I ordered three copies but after looking it over, realize I have to order more. This is a book I want to give friends. A great book. Really a treasure.

—Tarak Kauff

**Available now at LuLu.com,
BarnesandNoble.com and
soon at amazon.com**



Photo by Ellen Davidson

Black Lives

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- disciplinary action, control budgets and policies, and subpoena relevant agency information.
2. An end to the privatization of education and real community control by parents, students, and community members of schools, including democratic school boards and community control of curriculum, hiring, firing and discipline policies.
3. Participatory budgeting at the local, state, and federal level.

Tony Blair

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of an appointment as Middle East Peace Envoy to Israel and Palestine, a job he apparently held right up until enough people realized it wasn't a fake report meant to be funny but an actual no-kidding job that he was actually engaged in.

*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.*

Political Power

We demand independent Black political power and Black self-determination in all areas of society. We envision a re-making of the current U.S. political system in order to create a real democracy where Black people and all marginalized people can effectively exercise full political power. This includes:

1. An end to the criminalization of Black political activity including the immediate release of all political prisoners and an end to the repression of political parties.
2. Public financing of elections and the end of money controlling politics through ending super PACs and unchecked corporate donations.
3. Election protection, electoral expansion, and the right to vote for all people including: full access, guarantees, and protections of the right to vote for all people through universal voter registration, automatic voter registration, pre-registration for 16-year-olds, same-day voter registration, voting day holidays, enfranchisement of formerly and presently incarcerated people, local and state resident voting for undocumented people, and a ban on any disenfranchisement laws.
4. Full access to technology including net neutrality and universal access to the internet without discrimination and full representation for all.
5. Protection and increased funding for Black institutions including historically Black colleges and universities, Black media and cultural, political, and social formations.

Don't Use Vets to Dismiss QB's Brave Protest

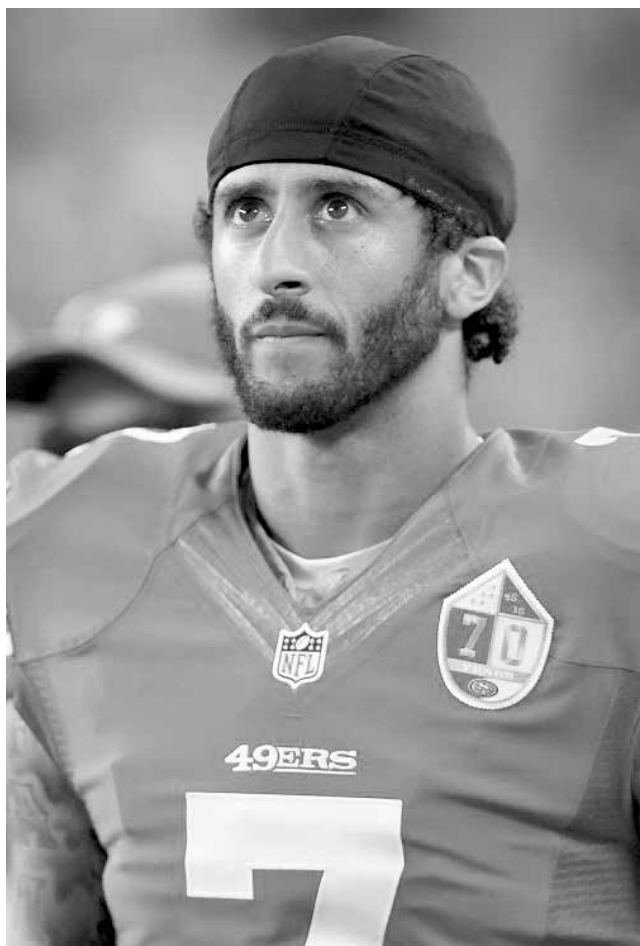
By Doug Rawlings

When San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick protested systemic police violence against Blacks and other people of color by refusing to stand for the national anthem at a pre-season football game, he ignited a national debate about everything from police misconduct to why we bother to sing the national anthem before sports events.

It was long overdue. But since the public first learned of Kaepernick's silent protest and his reasons for doing so, his critics have demanded he shut up as they deem his actions to be offensive to veterans.

Colin Kaepernick has shattered another taboo. He has wrested Sunday afternoons from the hands of corporate shills and forced a meaningful discussion of the insidious plague of racialized police violence into our stadiums' hallowed press boxes.

That pushes my buttons. I am a veteran who was sent to Vietnam from 1969 to 1970. I'm sick of watching unscrupulous politicians use veterans as human shields to blunt criticism of their favored policies. As a member of Veterans For Peace, I have taken a pledge to not remain silent about the devastating impact of war. Nor do I think we should remain quiet about the epidemic of police vio-



Colin Kaepernick.



Miami Dolphins Jelani Jenkins, Arian Foster, Michael Thomas, and Kenny Stills kneel during the national anthem.

lence in our country.

This is what Kaepernick, who is biracial, was referring to when he told reporters "it would be selfish on my part to look the other way. There are bodies in the street and people getting paid leave and getting away with murder."

A Football Fan's Dilemma

I am a diehard New England Patriots fan who has convinced himself that football is all about what happens between the white lines. Who cares that Tom Brady is a right-leaning Republican who is proud to be associated with Donald Trump, if he can deliver those exquisite passes? As for Kaepernick the football player, I have begrudgingly respected his ability to shred the most elaborate NFL defenses since he led his team to the Super Bowl in 2012 in only his second year in the league. So I can imagine how jarring it must be for my fellow football fans to suddenly see him step forward as a citizen and use his

fame to make football about more than the game itself.

Which is exactly what powerful political statements should do to us—make us stop and think and even reconsider deeply held beliefs. Make us uneasy. In the spirit of Muhammad Ali, who publicly refused military service during the Vietnam War and took a principled stand against the deep racist currents running through this culture; and the great Cleveland Browns running back Jim Brown and Boston Celtics star Bill Russell, who both supported Ali, Colin Kaepernick has shattered another taboo. He has wrested Sunday afternoons from the hands of corporate shills and forced a meaningful discussion of the insidious plague of racialized police violence into our stadiums' hallowed press boxes.

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A National Anthem We Can Stand For

By John Tarleton

Colin Kaepernick has brought renewed attention to the national anthem, a patriotic hymn composed in the early 1800s that has been fixture at sporting events since World War II. Kaepernick and others who have joined him have noted the contrast between the anthem's celebration of freedom and the injustices experienced by people of color. So how would it sound if the stirring melodies of the anthem were set to lyrics that envisioned a radically different kind of society?

Longtime activists Ellen Davidson and Tarak Kauff decided to find out in 2011 and wrote a new version of a very old song.

"The original version of the anthem was so militaristic and glorifying of war," said Davidson. "This was an aspirational hymn to what can be."

The lyrics appear below. To hear Davidson and the

Veterans For Peace chorus perform the song, go to independent.org.

***O say can you see revolution's bright light?
Peace and justice prevailed, and our truth is still
gleaming.***

***This broad movement of ours has come strong through
the night.
We have dared to create a new world with our
dreaming.***

***And the truth's steely glare, their lies bursting in air
Gave proof through the night that our cause it was fair.***

***O say do those hand-painted banners yet wave
O'er a land that is free, with resistance so brave?***

A Veteran Explains Why He Supports Colin Kaepernick

By Jason Farbman

In August San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick refused to stand for the national anthem, saying “I am not going to stand up to show pride in a flag for a country that oppresses black people and people of color. ... There are bodies in the street and people getting paid leave and getting away with murder.”

Amid an uproar online and in the media, former Army Ranger Rory Fanning shared a photo of himself at Wrigley Field, refusing to stand for the national anthem as a show of support for Kaepernick’s act. Within two days the photo had been shared one hundred thousand times online. For a time #VeteransForKaepernick was the top trending hashtag on Twitter.

Fanning served two tours in Afghanistan with the 2nd Ranger Battalion, in the same unit as former NFL star Pat Tillman. In 2009 he walked across the country for the Pat Tillman Foundation. He is currently on an anti-recruitment tour of the Chicago Public Schools (CPS), sponsored by the Chicago Teachers Union.

Jacobin contributor Jason Farbman spoke with Fanning about the outpouring of support for Kaepernick, the role of athlete protest, and the connections between sports and the military.

Jason Farbman: What made you decide to “sit with Kaepernick”?

Rory Fanning: Because he’s right. We know there’s no accountability for police when they murder African-Americans at unprecedented rates. Just as the United States has been killing people around the world since 9/11 with impunity, the U.S. state is also killing its own citizens (disproportionately black) with impunity here at home.

Last year 1,200 people were killed by police—zero of which resulted in convictions for murder or even manslaughter.

Personally, I have a difficult time standing for the national anthem. I entered the military fully expecting to be fighting for the cause of freedom and democracy, and trusting that I would be making the world safer after 9/11.



Rory Fanning at Wrigley Field.



Garfield High School football players and coaching staff took a knee during the national anthem at a game against West Seattle High School.

But once in Afghanistan in January 2003, I quickly learned my job was to draw the Taliban back into the fight. The Taliban surrendered only a few months after the initial U.S. invasion. This is to say nothing about the bait-and-switch invasion of Iraq.

Then after returning from Afghanistan I saw how the security state had grown at home. I saw that the United States has the largest prison population in the history of the world, with African-Americans (there are a lot of people of color in the military) being disproportionately incarcerated. Public schools are being gutted in every city. The media and politicians barely mention our endless trillion-dollar wars and drone operations.

One could add many more items to this list of reasons not to stand for the national anthem. Kaepernick chose one, which is incredibly important and on a lot of minds right now.

He is choosing not to lie to himself, the world, or all the people who thought they died to ensure we lived in a free country, by claiming this is “the land of the free” when it is not. This is the opposite of an insult to those who died thinking they were fighting for liberty.

And yet initial accounts in the mainstream media portrayed Kaepernick’s act as the self-indulgence of a petulant, spoiled athlete.

The thought that Kaepernick has nothing to lose is completely wrong. I just spent the last two years working with former Chicago Bulls player Craig Hodges on his memoir. Hodges used his position to fight for justice, leading an attempt to boycott Nike and another to demand President George W. Bush do more to address the needs of black people. Craig was blackballed by the NBA and lost everything as a result.

We saw the same thing happen to John Carlos after he stood with his fist raised in Mexico in 1968. As Carlos recounts in his autobiography, he too lost everything. So it’s actually a very courageous and risky thing Kaepernick is doing. This is to say nothing about all the threats he’s received.

I don’t want to see what happened to Hodges and Carlos happen to Kaepernick. This is a big reason why I sat dur-

ing the national anthem during the Cubs game.

JF: What was the response like at Wrigley Field?

RF: Judging from what I saw online I didn’t imagine the response would be good. I prepared myself for beer to be thrown on me, that someone might try to pick a fight, or even that I might be kicked out of the stadium. But actually the response was quite different: next to no pushback from everyone else in the bleachers, all of whom were standing.

JF: And online, there has been a rising tide of support for Kaepernick—particularly from active duty soldiers and veterans. Why?

RF: Many soldiers thought they were going overseas to sacrifice for freedom and democracy. But they are not seeing those ideals being practiced in this country.

Kaepernick’s protest is resonating with

in JROTC, up to 40 percent will actually join the military. If these kids stay in Chicago they face few job prospects and could be killed with impunity.

With no good options, they are cornered into joining the military where they risk be killed and are certainly being asked to kill brown people. We are not seeing the same sort of recruitment and JROTC kids in wealthier white suburbs.

Much like veterans, athletes have potential access to platforms from which to draw attention to important political issues that might get overlooked or get misrepresented in the mainstream media. With athletes, that platform is potentially enormous. What might it take to see more athletes speaking out for justice?

We know by now that there are lots of other professional athletes that have some ideas about the injustice in the world. When those athletes look at those who speak out—

He is choosing not to lie to himself, the world, or all the people who thought they died to ensure we lived in a free country, by claiming this is ‘the land of the free’ when it is not.

soldiers who feel like they’ve been lied to. One thing that has come across clearly from so many soldiers’ tweets and posts is that soldiers do not feel like they are risking their lives so the state can kill with impunity here in the United States.

JF: Speaking of the military, you’ve been touring Chicago public schools on an anti-recruitment tour sponsored by the Chicago Teachers Union. You’ve spoken with hundreds of students. What have you learned?

RF: I’ve seen firsthand how public education is being privatized and destroyed. There are also next to no jobs available in the inner city of Chicago. And the military is taking advantage of this. The Chicago public school system has more kids in the Junior ROTC program than in any other city.

Fifty percent of them are black, 45 percent Latino. Of Chicago’s 10,000 students

like Colin Kaepernick—what lessons do we want them to draw? That if you open your mouth and you say what’s right, that you’ll be attacked viciously and potentially lose everything you’ve worked your entire life for? If that’s the case we shouldn’t expect more athletes to stand up for what’s right; we should expect them to keep their mouths shut.

We want athletes to see that if they say what’s right, then they’ll be supported by masses of people. That it will do some good. And that’s why I went out to support him and I’ve been so excited to see such an outpouring of support—particularly from people in the military.

Jason Farbman is a member of the International Socialist Organization in New York. As a Foreign Language/Area Studies Fellow at the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies at NYU, he studied social organizations during the Water War in Cochabamba, Bolivia.