

January 2013

PASI NEWS

Newsletter of Peace Action of Staten Island, www.peacesi.org 718-989-2881

Calendar:

- SAT., JAN. 12, "Economic Democracy." PASI Meeting, Staten Island Museum, 75 Stuyvesant Place, 5:45 – 8 PM
- JAN. 14-18 NEW PRIORITIES LOBBY WEEK. Call U.S. Capitol Switchboard at 201-224-3121.
- SAT., MARCH 9, "Post-Superstorm Sandy Priorities." PASI MEETING.
- SAT., MAY 11, "Iraq – 10 Years After." PASI MEETING.
- SAT., MAY 18. MAKE FOOD NOT WAR. SAVE THE DATE.
- SAT., JUNE 8, "Media for the 99%." PASI MEETING.

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Saturday, January 12, 5:45 to 8 pm

Economic Democracy: The Cure for Capitalism

Speakers: John Lawrence and Rich Florentino

Staten Island Museum, 75 Stuyvesant Place

"Another world is possible!" say John Lawrence and Rich Florentino, speakers at Peace Action of Staten Island's first meeting of 2013.

"We can create a more egalitarian democratic economy in which everyone has universal healthcare, access to high quality life-long education and arts, economic security and work that they enjoy," asserts John Lawrence.

According to our speakers, an institutional cornerstone of a just society is democratic workplaces in which workers own and manage their own work.

In their talk at PASI's meeting, they will discuss the movement for economic democracy.

Rich Florentino explains: "Though we do not overlook the powerful, entrenched interests that

are arrayed against this movement, we will make the case that this is an idea whose time has come."

This talk is free and open to the public. It will take place on Saturday, January 12th beginning at 5:45 pm at the Staten Island Museum at 75 Stuyvesant Place, across from the State Island Ferry terminal. Light refreshments will be served.

In addition to the talk, the Nominating Committee for the election of PASI officers and at-large board members will be selected.

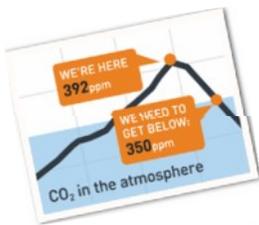
John Lawrence is a clinical psychologist and professor at the College of Staten Island. He also writes about social justice issues and is on the editorial board of [Grassroots Economic Organizing \(GEO\) Newsletter](#). Rich Florentino is a retired engineer who has been active in the Occupy Movement.

MAKE FOOD NOT WAR DINNER

SAVE THE NEW DATE: SATURDAY, MAY 18TH

Peace Action of Staten Island wishes to extend a big thank you to all our supporters for their patience after the November 2nd Make Food Not War Dinner had to be postponed due to Superstorm Sandy. The dinner's original location at St. Sylvester's School has been turned over to recovery efforts and we had to find a new location.

"We have good news for everyone!" reports Eileen Bardel, PASI's Chair. "We have a new date, Saturday, May 18th, with our same wonderful caterer, Lifestyles for the Disabled. Everyone, please, please SAVE THE DATE MAY 18TH. We expect to have a wonderful event, featuring our amazing honorees Rev. Susan Karlson, Tiokasin Ghosthorse, Gonzalo Mercado, and Senator Diane Savino. More details to come! If you have any questions, please call us at 718-989-2881."



PASI Should Play a Leading Role in Efforts to Reduce Climate Change

Kudos to PASI members who have been so active in helping people harmed by Superstorm Sandy. While these kind efforts are very valuable in the short run, it is also important to consider the long run potential consequences of climate change. Very unfortunately, as NY Governor Andrew Cuomo said, we may be approaching a “new normal,” as “hundred year” storms seem to be occurring every two years. Here are a few facts that reinforce the seriousness of the situation:

- *This year is on track to be the world's warmest year since temperature records have been kept about 130 years ago;*
- *The warmest ten years all occurred since 1998.*
- *July, 2012 was the warmest month in the lower 48 states since temperature records were kept; over 25,000 high temperature records were broken in the US in 2012.*
- *Polar ice caps and glaciers have been melting faster than the worst case projections of climate scientists.*
- *There has been a major increase in recent years in the number and severity of storms, floods, droughts, and wildfires. Superstorm Sandy and the recent major drought afflicting most of the US are just two of the recent examples.*

However, “denial is not just a river in Egypt.” Many people are in denial about climate change, largely due to lies and misrepresentations spread by energy companies and by conservative commentators and media. By contrast, **there is a strong scientific consensus, as indicated by over a thousand peer-reviewed articles in respected scientific journals and statements by science academies all over the world, that climate change is happening, is a great threat to humanity, and is largely due to human activities.** Making the situation even more critical, many climatologists and other experts believe that the world may be very close to a tipping point when climate change could spiral out of control with catastrophic consequences.

There is a new group “350.org” led by author and activist Bill McKibben, that has been doing wonderful work in organizing events worldwide to increase awareness of climate threats and the importance of effectively responding to them. The reason for the group’s name is that climate scientists think that 350 parts per million (ppm) of CO₂ in the atmosphere is a threshold value for avoiding a climate catastrophe. Unfortunately, there is already an average of 400 ppm and the amount is increasing by 2 - 3 ppm per year. Climate experts also think that an increase of more than 2 degrees Celsius would have disastrous consequences, but now believe that we are on track to reach as much as four degrees Celsius by the end of this century.

Hence it is essential that major steps be taken to reduce climate change starting as soon as possible. **PASI should try to play a major role in increasing awareness about this. Doing so would be consistent with PASI’s mission because military experts are warning that desperate, hungry, thirsty refugees fleeing from the effects of climate change will make instability, violence, terrorism, and war more likely.** Some of the ways that we can help increase awareness include letters to editors, meetings with politicians, and personal conversations with friends, neighbors, relatives and co-workers. Of course we should also try to minimize our personal environmental impacts in all aspects of our lives when we can.

As president of Jewish Vegetarians of North America, I want to stress that, in addition to reducing energy use and moving to renewable energy sources, it is essential that there be a major societal shift toward plant-based diets if there is to be a chance to avert a climate catastrophe. A 2006 UN Food and Agriculture Organization report, “Livestock’s Long Shadow,” indicated that animal-based agriculture emits more greenhouse gases (GHGs), in CO₂ equivalents than all the cars, planes, ships, and other means of transportation worldwide combined. A 2009 cover story in World Watch magazine, “Livestock and Climate Change,” written by two environmentalists associated with the World Bank, argued that the livestock sector is responsible for at least 51 percent of all human-caused GHGs!

In conclusion, it is urgent that there be major efforts to help avert a climate catastrophe because if it is not averted, little else will matter. PASI and other progressive groups should be actively involved in order to help shift our imperiled planet to a sustainable path.

Richard H. Schwartz is Professor Emeritus, College of Staten Island, President, Jewish Vegetarians of North America (www.JewishVeg.com)



GOING DEEP INTO DRONE WARFARE *by Jim Clune*

Peace Action chapters around the New York State have expressed an interest in addressing the phenomenon of drone warfare. These types of strikes have become very popular in the DC Beltway and a political stance against them would be swimming against the tide. They are popular because they make waging war seem easy and cost free because the pilots are not in immediate physical danger, and because it's a jobs program--just ask Chuck Schumer. [See <http://truth-out.org/news/item/497:lobbying-report-drones-fly-through-congress-to-enter-us-skies>.] Of course, tackling any manifestation of militarism is unpopular, but Peace Action has never that I know of shied away from doing this hard and necessary work.

Presuming Peace Action chapters and members are serious about tackling this, I thought it might help to provide a list of resources. I'll try to list this in the order of general usefulness--with the idea that the further on I go, the fewer people will want to read all this stuff. So--get in as deep as you feel you can.

I'll start with www.upstatedroneaction.org. This is the primary site for the Upstate Coalition to Ground the Drones and End the Wars and has focused on resistance at Hancock Field in Syracuse, where drones operations take place. The site has a blog and a reference page to other sites. For down-state, there is Nick Mottern's www.Knowdrones.com website. It is attractive and well organized. Voices for Creative Nonviolence (www.vcnv.org) has been campaigning against drone killings for quite a while, including sending delegations to Afghanistan and Pakistan. They have a drone awareness page. Code Pink has www.droneswatch.com and organized the recent trip of people to Pakistan in October. Fellowship of Reconciliation in the UK is doing good work. And, on Facebook, there is the Congressional Unmanned Systems Caucus, a window into beltway thinking.

Must reads-- There are two pieces that are extremely helpful for background. Medea Benjamin (of Code Pink) has written a book--"Drone Warfare; Killing by Remote Control" with the best general introduction I've seen yet. And the Stanford/NYU study Living Under Drones (www.livingunderdrones.org/report) is a very thorough study of the effects on Pakistan. (Its executive summary is good reading if you don't want to go through the whole thing.)

There is also the FOR-UK report--"Convenient Killing: Armed Drones and the Playstation Mentality" available at www.for.org.uk/files/drones-conv-killing.pdf. Plus, look up a 15 minute video by Peter W. Singer, a researcher at the Brookings Institute and the author of "Wired for War", available at www.linktv.org/programs/ted-talks-pw-singer. His "Wired for War: The Robotics Revolution and Conflict in the 21st Century" explains the background for the technological shifts involved.

The New York Times article on 11-24-12 by Scott Shane on possible new Administration guidelines (http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/25/world/white-house-presses-for-drone-rule-book.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0), and Shane and Becker's NYT article on 5-29-12 about "kill lists" are well known (<http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/29/world/obamas-leadership-in-war-on-al-qaeda.html?pagewanted=all>). There are more, but these are a start.

Brian Terrell started a 6 month prison sentence on November 30th for protesting drones at Whiteman AFB in Kansas. Speakers that would be good are Brian after he's released, Medea Benjamin, Kathy Kelly of Voices for Creative Nonviolence, Ed Kinane from Syracuse Peace Council and others.

I do know that one of the main strengths of the School of Americas Watch has always been combining street action and resistance at Fort Benning with lobbying Congress when appropriate. A deliberate two-pronged approach. Street action and engaging lawmakers are not mutually exclusive, even if some people emphasize one or the other.

Would somebody please take the initiative to get interested in your chapter?

Jim Clune, long-time peace activist, is former President, Broome County Peace Action and serves on the Executive Committee of Peace Action NYS



Senator Charles Schumer from NY supports drone warfare.



Drone warfare protestor outside Hancock Field in Syracuse.



Replica of a MQ-9 Reaper Drone at a recent protest.



Check out short talk by modern warfare scholar Peter W. Singer. See link at left.

Reflections on a Chilling Tale by Sarah Walters



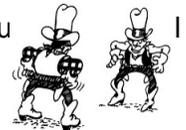
Israeli activist Sefi Yahav speaks about his experience as a soldier in Israel on September 8, 2012. (Photo: PASI News)

Our September 8th Peace Action meeting opened with a presentation from Sefi Yahav, a young Jewish Israeli activist who informed the attendees of what is happening on the Israeli-Palestinian issue. His thesis concentrated on several issues. Most importantly he discussed the plight of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, but also issues concerning Asiatic and African Jews. His presentation is one that would not be seen on the nightly news. He argued with passion and sincerity against the continued injustice towards the Palestinian people including expropriation of their lands, extrajudicial killings and arbitrary arrest and detention. In Gaza, it is a worse scenario. In 2009, as he explained, the Israeli military attacked Gaza killing scores of innocent people and using white phosphorous bombs. Gaza has no infrastructure, little in the way of health facilities, schools or sewage plants. The killing of innocents continues in this open air prison unabated. He stated most intensely that the Israeli government from its inception has been run by a European Jewish elite and that Asian Jews and non-Jewish migrant workers are also greatly discriminated against.

His presentation was a chilling tale, but we need to be reminded that the US gives Israel over \$3 billion a year in aid that is used for the military hardware that is used against the Palestinians and to build illegal settlements. The US has been Israel's most fervent ally and an enabler in continuing this oppression and occupation.

As a Jew and a historian, I can only say that after centuries of oppression, ghettoization and segregation that Jews had suffered in Western and Eastern Europe culminating in the Holocaust, it pains me so deeply that Jews have turned around and oppressed another people. This is a tragedy beyond comprehension. I feel it is our responsibility as American Jews who for decades fought for civil rights, who marched with Dr. King, joined the Mississippi freedom riders, including some who died in that cause, to take a stand on the Palestinian issue. We as American Jews can no longer turn our eyes and bury our heads in the sand and pretend that all is well in Israel. It is not. We must let our elected officials know that uncritical support for Israel is a cause of inhumane and cruel treatment of the Palestinian people.

If we do not help people who are suffering, then we shall lose out and then who are we?



From 2000 to 2009, the United States paid for and delivered at least 93 F-16D fighter jets, valued at \$2.48 billion, to Israel through the Foreign Military Sales program. This aircraft has been implicated in attacks on civilians in Gaza. (Photo credit: U.S. Department of Defense)



Gunfight at the OK Corral by Sarah Walters

While we have been stunned by the horrific acts that took place December 14th at Sandy Hook elementary school in Newtown, Connecticut, most Americans fail to see or ask the reason “why.” In response to this incredible tragedy, we are inundated now with calls for teachers to be armed, for bans on assault rifles and large magazine clips, to have a more intense background check and to close loopholes at gun shows. There has even been discussion about our appalling record on mental health programs and how they have been ravaged by budget cuts.

However, where is the discussion about American history that has brought us to this point? Our history begins with the genocide of the native peoples here, African slavery, Chinese labor and the theft of land from Mexico in the so-called Mexican American war. Where is the discussion of the US support of every dictator that has done our bidding while destroying their own people? The CIA has been involved in the overthrow of democratically-elected presidents: Mohammed Mosadegh (Iran) and Salvadore Allende (Chile) just to name two. We are war mongers. We have destroyed Iraq and are continuing this insaneness in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Our drones have killed thousands of people, many of them innocent children. We continue to supply Israel with weapons that they in turn use to kill innocent Palestinian civilians. We have the largest population in prisons in the West and we spend more on the military that any other country. Then we wonder why we have been inundated with shootings on a weekly basis. If one puts credence in the saying, “What goes around, comes around”, then what else can we say.

We are a country in deep trouble.

Sarah Walters is active in PASI and the Granny Peace Brigade

The Passion of Bradley Manning *A Book Review by Sally Jones*

At age 25, Bradley Manning is two years older than our oldest grandson. He was less than 4 years old for the first Gulf War and 13 years old on 9/11/01. This March this young man will be going on trial facing life in prison for downloading classified and secret video (including the "Collateral Murder" video) and documents that were published through the efforts of WikiLeaks that are still being combed by major news organizations the world over to get to the truth about the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and U.S. State Department dealings world-wide. What motivated this young soldier to put his life on the line? Why have there been so few other whistleblowers doing the same thing?

These questions are explored in a very engaging way by author Chase Madar in his book "The Passion of Bradley Manning: The Story of the Suspect Behind the Largest Security Breach in U.S. History." One of the more disturbing points raised by Madar is how little support Bradley Manning is getting from American intelligentsia, in contrast to the support that Daniel Ellsberg received when he released the more highly-classified, top-secret "Pentagon Papers" on the Vietnam War. President Obama is not being called to task for his handling of whistleblower Manning in the same way President Nixon was excoriated for going after Daniel Ellsberg in 1971.

What comes to light in the book is a portrait of an extraordinary young man, Bradley Manning, who does his own thinking and research, makes his own decisions, and has a very strong moral compass. His chat room postings to Adrian Lamo, the hacker who turned him in to the military authorities, give us a flavor of this:

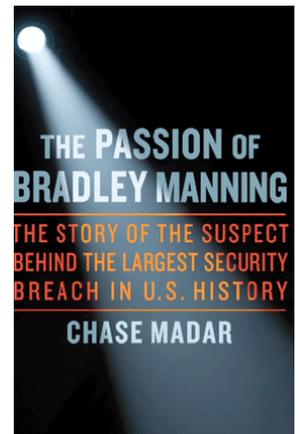
"(03:31:33 PM) bradass87: I prefer a painful truth over any blissful fantasy."

"(03:24:10 PM) bradass87: we're human... and we're killing ourselves... and no-one seems to see that... and it bothers me."

"(03:25:28 PM) bradass87: apathy is far worse than the active participation."

I recommend picking up this book. (You are welcome to borrow my copy.) Then go to www.bradleymanning.org and get involved in defending this American hero.

Sally Jones is active in PASI and chair of Peace Action Fund of NYS.



Author Chase Madar (pictured above) spoke about Bradley Manning's case at the College of Staten Island on December 5, 2012.

WANTED: 2 Million Friends for Peace in Afghanistan

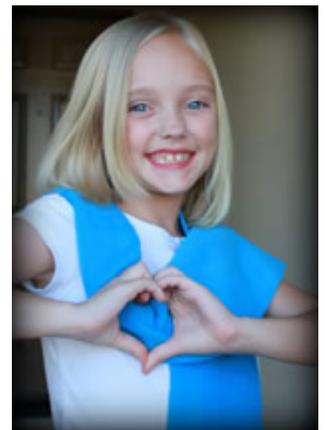
October 2012 marked the beginning of year 12 of the longest war in US history. Polls show the majority of Americans have concluded the war isn't worth it. Peace Action has been petitioning President Obama and Congress to bring our troops home.

There are still close to 70,000 US and NATO troops in Afghanistan facing another two years of war and occupation with reports of insider attacks by Afghan troops against our troops and allies on the rise.

Amid all the grim news in Afghanistan, there is what looks like a ray of hope. Peace Action is supporting a new initiative by the youth-led Afghan civil society organization Afghan Peace Volunteers called 2 Million Friends for Peace in Afghanistan. The two million refers to the approximate number of Afghans killed in forty years of war. The campaign aims to find two million friends or supporters worldwide, and to deliver its call for a cease fire and negotiated end to the war. We encourage you to take part:

1. Commit to Be a Friend at www.2millionfriends.org
2. Sign the ceasefire petition to the U.N. (link at the above website)
3. Join the Blue Scarf movement www.bluescarf.org or wear your PASI blue wristband.

Imagine the power of 2 million friends!



A young girl demonstrates friendship with Afghani children by wearing a sky blue scarf. (Photo: www.bluescarf.org)

**Peace Action of
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**PASI 2013 Meeting
Schedule**

January 12, 2013
March 9, 2013
May 11, 2013
June 8, 2013

Another world is possible!

**ECONOMIC
DEMOCRACY**

Saturday
January 12, 5:45 PM
PASI Meeting
Staten Island Museum,
75 Stuyvesant Pl, SI, NY

Thank You for Joining or Renewing Your PASI Membership.

If you aren't a member yet or still need to renew, it's easy.

Membership form

We have a sliding scale membership. No member turned away.

Name _____
Street _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____
Email _____

I can help with

- Actions
- Lobbying
- Membership
- Speakers Bureau
- Fundraising
- Communication/Publicity

Contribution

- \$26 (regular)
- \$40 (family)
- \$10 (senior, student, fixed)
- Other _____

*Make check out to PASI and
mail to address at left.*

***Pssst... You can save a stamp
by joining online at
www.peacesi.org***

*Peace Action of Staten Island, Inc. is a 501(c)3 non-partisan, non-profit organizations. Peace Action is
dedicated to promoting the non-violent resolution of conflict, the abolition of nuclear weapons, halting the global
spread of conventional arms, building a human rights culture and supporting human needs instead of militarism.*

Make Food Not War Dinner

**Celebrating Our 10 & 1/2 Anniversary &
Honoring Staten Island Peace Makers**



SAVE THE NEW DATE:

Saturday, May 18, 2013*



***Rescheduled from November 2, 2012 due to Superstorm Sandy.**

Thank you, everyone, for your patience!