

June 2013

PASI NEWS

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

Calendar:

- SAT., June 1, 12 Noon. Staten Island Pride Parade & Festival. Gather to march with PASI at St. George Library on Central Ave.
- SAT., June 8, 5:45 – 8 PM. “Media for the 99%” PASI ‘s last MEETING before the summer. Staten Island Museum, 75 Stuyvesant Pl.
- SAT., June 8, 3 PM. Meeting of NYers Against Gun Violence. St. Mary’s Episcopal Church, Davis & Castleton.
- SAT., Jun 15, 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM, Peace & Justice Fair, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 7420 4th Avenue, Brooklyn.
- SUMMER TABLING all summer!

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Adam Weissman
<http://wn.com>

Media for the 99%

Speaker: Adam Weissman, TradeJustice, NY Metro

Saturday, June 8, 5:45 to 8 pm

Staten Island Museum, 75 Stuyvesant Place

We live in a volatile media world. Traditional newspaper and TV news outlets are being replaced by online sources. We are bombarded with late-breaking news but are we well-informed?

If you are curious on how to navigate this brave new media world, come to the next PASI meeting on June 8th 2013 to participate in the program “Media for the 99%.” Adam Weissman from TradeJustice NY Metro will lead the discussion. Adam has been campaigning to raise awareness about Trans-Pacific Partnership Trade Agreement (TPP). You might not be aware of the TPP because it is shrouded in secrecy. By the end of October 2013, President Obama expects to finalize this trade agreement with 10 other nations, which will grant foreign corporations the power to sue our government when U.S. laws block their environmentally destructive projects and toxic exports.

Our speaker’s practical experience in using the media will guide the discussion. What are the options to being bombarded by corporate media? Turn off the TV? Avert our eyes from the news feed on our smart phones? Strengthen alternative media institutions like listener-sponsored WBAI 99.5 FM?

Adam Weissman has been an activist for human rights, animals rights, and environmental defense for over 2 decades. He is the founder of Global Justice for Animals and the Environment, an organization devoted to opposing free trade agreements that undermine animal and environmental protection, violate the rights of indigenous communities, and compromise food safety. He also works with TradeJustice NY Metro, a coalition of labor, environmental, animal rights, AIDS activist, food justice, queer liberation, international solidarity, and immigrant community organizations committed to opposing the global expansion of the NAFTA free trade model.

The June 8th meeting is free and open to the public. Light refreshments will be served.

Join PASI’s Summer Tabling Crew

Get in the swing of summer by joining the PASI Summer Tabling Crew. We have the table, literature, buttons, pens, and shopping bags. If you know of any beach festival, street fair or block party where you think PASI should set up and engage Staten Islanders in one-on-one dialogue about peace & justice, jobs & schools, or drones & scandals, let us know by calling 718-989-2881 or emailing pasi.eblast@gmail.com. Have table, will travel.



Bush I & Bush II Statues at Bush II Library (Washington Post)



(<http://www.myfoxdfw.com/story/22126781/george-w-bush-library-opening-to-public>)



<http://www.artcity.com/2013/02/08/painter-and-president-george-w-bush-better-at-dogs-than-humans/>



Demonstrators readying for solemn march to Hancock Air Field in Syracuse (PASI Photo)

The Artful Dodger

by Sarah Walters

In the gospel of St. John, Jesus says to Pontius Pilate “I came to bear witness to the truth”. Pontius Pilate then replies, “To hell with truth.”

With the support of all the past living Presidents, the library of President George W. Bush opened in Dallas in April to the public. What can one say about a presidency that from beginning to end mirrored Pilate’s words. His presidency began with the question of the validity of the election and ended with an economic fiasco that has wrought untold misery upon millions of Americans who lost their jobs and homes. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan that were based on falsehoods have wreaked death and destruction in these countries. Worse, the wars have opened a Pandora’s box by pitting Sunni against Shia Muslims in countries across the Middle East with dire consequences for the rest of the world that could take centuries to heal.

However, what has the mainstream media focused on in discussing George W’s retirement? His artwork. This artful dodger who dodged the draft but sent close to 4500 American soldiers to their deaths and destroyed Iraq is spending his time on his ranch with a palette and brush painting pictures of his feet in his bathtub.

I have recommendations for “43” to paint other than his feet or Barney’s feet. He could paint a soldier who has no feet because he lost his legs in Bush’s phony war. He could paint a body floating in a street in the ninth ward of New Orleans as a result of Hurricane Katrina whose feet sink below the surface of the muddy waters of the Mississippi. He could paint a detainee that has been rendered to a secret site where his feet and hands are tied while he is being water-boarded.

Yes, indeed the library of George W. Bush, our 43rd president is a toast to Pontius Pilate – “To hell with Truth.”

Syracuse Peace Conference—Unmasking Drone Warfare

by Mary Beth Moore, S.C., LI Alliance for Peaceful Alternatives

The shorthand is “drones” and the technical name is “unmanned Aerial Vehicles [UAVs]”, but either way they have carried out bombing attacks since 2001, tools in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and now continuing in the so-called “war on terror.” Drone warfare was the theme of the Syracuse Peace Conference, held in the city of that name from April 27-29th, which drew some 275 peacemakers from around New York State . The purpose of the conference was to learn the facts, get inspired and move to action to protest drone warfare. The conference culminated in a rally and solemn procession to Hancock Air force Base just outside the city, one of the sites where human beings carry out remote attacks in six countries.

The conference presenters were uniformly excellent. Kathy Kelly of Voices for Peace gave an inspiring opening conference, movingly conveying her personal encounter with an anguished Pakistani mother whose innocent child had been maimed by a drone. She put a human face on statistics: between 2004 and 2012 the CIA has conducted over 330 drone attacks in Pakistan alone, killing about 3,000 people including 175 children. Noted author and activist Bruce Gagnon posed a simple logical argument: the deliberately killing another human being in the conduct of war is deemed legal; the deliberate killing of another human being outside the conduct of war is deemed murder. If the United States

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<http://forusa.org/fellowship/2011/winter/healing-moral-injury/11606>

The Moral Injury to Our Nation

Commentary by Richard Greve

The United States remains on the wrong track---the track of endless wars and the domination of other countries through the use of military power. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have led to our nation using and admitting to torture people (a major violation of International Law), rendition (the sending of people to other countries to be imprisoned and tortured), and the extensive use of Drone Warfare (targeting "suspected" individuals for assassination without the due process of capture and trial based on evidence).

These actions have thrown us into a moral abyss that leaves us with no credibility regarding human rights and International Law. Our major news media have sanitized these wars and have failed us as institutions of a free press. They do little to challenge government policies and do not provide us with the harsh realities of US government crimes. Our policies are also clearly making enemies against us all over the world, inciting acts of revenge against an empire that uses such tactics as torture, rendition, and drone warfare.

There are serious consequences to the policies that the US carries out in the world. Americans should consider how we would feel if foreign armies invaded us, as happened in Iraq and Afghanistan. How would we feel if we were surrounded by foreign bases and navies, including submarines carrying nuclear weapons, as is the case with Iran? How would we feel if we were constantly threatened with attacks of war by the world's largest military which continually insists "all options are on the table"? When most countries hear that threat, it means the inconceivable threat of nuclear weapons.

What if our government were to put peace and diplomatic relations "on the table," not military action or the threat of mass destruction and adopted policies based on universal rights? What if our country was on the side of peace, not war? We have a Statue of Liberty in our harbor that should stand against torture, rendition, drone warfare, and endless war and domination of others. These wars and militarism are bringing us to financial ruin, and requiring cutbacks of vital programs, as well as dragging us into a moral pit. Let's climb out of this pit by involving ourselves more with anti war groups, such as PASI, and voting for anti war candidates who respect the human rights of others all over this planet.

Unmasking Drone Warfare (cont'd from page 2)

government is not at war with Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, how can deliberate killing be justified? Deborah Sweet of "World Can't Wait" challenged participants to move past their political affiliations to make clearer judgments about the Obama administration's justification of and secrecy about targeted killings. (As is public knowledge, President Obama himself gives the final o.k. for targeted drone attacks.) Among compelling testimonies from several U.S. veterans, retired Colonel Anne Wright stood out. A career officer who resigned her commission in 2003 over the Iraq war, she urged all to consider the rage engendered by drone attacks. Sarah Ahmed, a young woman from Iraq affirmed that for victims, all they know of the United States is that it perpetrates drone attacks. On Sunday, conference participants proceeded to Hancock Air Force Base in a solemn march. Thirty-one protesters were arrested for trespassing on the Base.

The conference experience can't be conveyed without noting the solidarity, hope and commitment among participants. This is the alternative community we long for. The local organizers created an atmosphere of welcome, with hot coffee available all day, and sufficient food for breakfast and lunch for all participants. The message is clear: we must resist the onslaught of an endless war and its tools, such as drones, if true security and the health of the planet is our goal.

Take action: go to www.knowdrones.com to educate others about drones. Write to President Obama with the message: "Drones are immoral and illegal. They create rage against the United States wherever they are deployed. Stop drone warfare."



Major Scandals the Media is Ignoring by Richard H. Schwartz

There has been recent media frenzy over three White House-related scandals, with much time and space devoted to coverage of the aftermath of the Benghazi killings, the IRS targeting of conservative groups, and the Justice Department's subpoena of Associated Press reporters' phone records, as part of an investigation of national security leaks. Republican politicians are trying to hype these scandals as much as possible, even comparing them to the Nixon Watergate scandal and arguing that Obama deserves impeachment because of them. These issues certainly raise serious questions related to embassy security, money in politics, and press freedom and should be investigated. However, there are arguably far worse scandals that involve Republican politicians, to which the media has been giving very little or no attention. Please consider:

Scandal #1 – Failure to Address Climate Change: In spite of a scientific consensus that climate change is happening, is largely human caused, and poses great threats to humanity, as indicated by 97 percent of the peer reviewed articles that address the issues and by statements from science academies worldwide, the vast majority of Republicans are in denial of the threats. They are ignoring the very rapid melting of the polar ice caps and glaciers all over the world, and the major increase in the number and severity of heat waves, droughts, wildfires, storms, and floods. In early May of 2013 the level of atmospheric CO₂ in the atmosphere exceeded 400 parts per million (ppm) for the first time in at least 3 million years, and it is increasing by 2 – 3 ppm per year. This is significant because climate experts feel that a level above 350 ppm poses the danger of a catastrophic tipping point being reached, when climate change could spiral out of control. The last time that CO₂ levels were this high, ocean levels were over 80 feet higher and average temperatures were 5 – 10 degrees F higher.

Scandal #2 – Extreme Use of Filibuster: Republicans have been doing everything possible to have President Obama and the Democrats fail, so that they can return to power. They have voted against and sometimes filibustered legislation that they previously supported and sometimes even co-sponsored.

Scandal #3 – Votes Against Job Creation: In spite of the current high unemployment rate and the fact that our infrastructure needs extensive repairs, with the American Society giving the infrastructure a grade of D, Republicans have blocked legislation that would have created 2 million good jobs and greatly improved our infrastructure, thereby increasing tax revenue and decreasing the need for unemployment and other benefits, helping to greatly improve our economy.

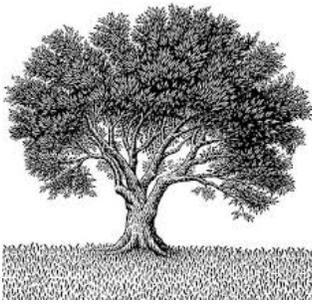
Scandal #4 – Allowing Sequestration: Because they are more concerned about benefiting the wealthiest Americans and highly profitable corporations than the vast majority of Americans, Republican politicians have let the sequester occur. The across the board cuts have had devastating effects, including children losing out on pre-school, a reduction of medical screenings, cutbacks in meals on wheels, and reductions in other programs that many Americans depend on. The sequester also threatens our fragile economy, with projections of up to 700,000 jobs being lost.

Scandal #5 – Failure to Pass Gun Control: In spite of the support of close to 90 percent of Americans for background checks before gun purchases, efforts to accomplish this failed to break a Republican filibuster, as almost 90 percent of Republican senators opposed the legislation.

Scandal #6 – Blocking Appointments: Republicans have blocked approval of many of Obama's judicial and cabinet appointments, preventing courts from adjudicating cases in a timely manner and preventing several US departments from acting effectively. One especially harmful example is that Republicans, in order to protect the interests of energy companies, have blocked Obama's appointment of Environmental Protection Administration (EPA) director Gina McCarthy, in spite of the fact that she served under four Republican governors and has an extensive background working to improve the environment.

It is essential that Democrats talk up these underreported scandals and that the media give them extensive coverage. Otherwise the Washington gridlock will continue and there will be very little if any progress in addressing climate change, unemployment, gun control, and other important current issues, with very negative consequences for the vast majority of Americans and our imperiled planet.

*Richard H. Schwartz is Professor Emeritus, College of Staten Island, author of *Judaism and Vegetarianism*, *Judaism and Global Survival*, *Mathematics and Global Survival*, and *Who Stole My Religion*, and 200 articles at JewishVeg.com/Schwartz. He can be reached at president@JewishVeg.com.*



Palestine – 65 Years Later *by Barbara Walker*

This year marks the 65th anniversary of the declaration of a new state of Israel and the end of the 1947-1948 War in Palestine or al-Nakba.

At the end of the war, the new state of Israel controlled the area that had been recommended by the UN General Assembly Resolution 181 and took control of almost 60% of the area allocated to a proposed Arab state. After the 1940's war, there was a major displacement of Palestinians within their homeland and as refugees in surrounding countries and a world-wide Diaspora. For more than six decades, there has been constant conflict in the region resulting in wars, occupation, expanding settlements, and despair of a peaceful resolution. Given this impasse, what are the prospects for a peaceful and just resolution?

Here are some sources of this despair.

- The Balfour Declaration of 1917 that set in motion the founding of Israel stated "that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine..." Palestinians today live in the occupied territories without the rights of citizenship in any country.
- Numerous United Nations Security Council Resolutions were passed to ameliorate the devastating results of the armed conflicts in the area but have not been carried out. For example, the UN Security Council Resolution 242 (November 22, 1967) called for withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from the Palestinian occupied territories and "termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force."
- Israel has built a security barrier, parts of which are built on Palestinian land and separate Palestinians from their agricultural fields.
- Since 1967, 28,000 Palestinian homes, businesses, livestock facilities and other structures vital to life and livelihood have been destroyed or demolished.
- There are 522 road blocks and checkpoints obstructing Palestinian West Bank movement.
- 350,150 Israeli settlers live in 121 officially recognized settlements in the West Bank. 300,000 Israelis live in settlements in East Jerusalem.
- Nearly three million Palestinians in the West Bank may not travel to Gaza (except through Jordan and Egypt) and 1.5 million Gazan Palestinians may not travel to the West Bank using any crossing.
- In late December 2008 and January 2009, Israel launched Operation Cast Lead in Gaza killing 1,287 Palestinians. Palestinians killed nine Israelis during the operation.

Since the United State government is key in the Israel/Palestine conflict, its promotion of respect for human rights and international law should be the guiding principle in its intercessions and should be a stated requirement of all concerned parties. In this connection, it is hoped that any consideration of the recently re-presented Arab Peace Initiative and other conflict resolution initiatives will this time focus seriously on addressing Palestinian requirements and on rectifying Palestinian losses (e.g. their land).

Please send a message to the White House and Congress demanding that the U.S. government seriously pursues a just resolution to the Israel/Palestine conflict. Leave your message to the White House on the comment line 202-456-1111 or on the website www.whitehouse.gov. Contact Representative Grimm and Senators Gillibrand and Schumer by calling the Congressional Switchboard 202-225-3121.

**Peace Action of
Staten Island**

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It's Time to Renew Your 2013-2014 PASI Membership.

If you aren't a member yet, we welcome you!

Membership form

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

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- Other _____

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***Pssst... You can save a stamp
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**PASI 2013 Meeting
Schedule**

June 8, 2013
FALL Dates to be
announced

**Adam Weissman on
Media for the 99%**

**Saturday
June 8, 5:45 PM**
PASI Meeting
Staten Island Museum,
75 Stuyvesant Pl, SI, NY
**(Only 1 block from the
SI Ferry!)**



At left, our Make Food Not War 2013 Peacemakers. From left Gonzalo Mercado, Rev. Susan Karlson, Tiokasin Ghosthorse, with Chair Eileen Bardel and M.C. David Jones on May 18, 2013.

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.