



Merrimack Valley People For Peace

Serving the communities of the Merrimack Valley

Merrimack Valley People for Peace, Inc. works for a sustainable future for all life on our planet. Our members commit themselves to the interrelated activities of education for peace and justice, the prevention of war, an end to arms sales, the abolition of nuclear weapons, and protection of the environment.

January 2006

Merrimack Valley People for Peace joins the United Nations and peacemakers around the world in proclaiming the years 2001-2010 to be the "International Decade for the Culture of Peace."

GOOD NEWS

compiled with the help of Boryana Tacconi

Happy New Year, everyone! As we brace ourselves for another round of work for peace, justice, and a healthier environment against all odds, we kicked the year off on January 6th with our annual MVPP January Potluck Supper, superbly organized by Mary and Jim Todd at the First United Methodist Church in North Andover. We had a great evening, sharing food and conversation, seeing familiar faces and welcoming new friends. Traditionally, at the January Potluck, MVPP members have collected funds for the Adopt-a-Minefield program. This year we also collected money for sending emergency survival blankets to Pakistan, where many thousands of earthquake survivors now have the additional burden of dealing with a harsh winter in the midst of their devastation and suffering. Through funds we voted from MVPP, plus individual donations, we collected \$650 for Pakistan relief and \$300 for Adopt-a-Minefield. Special thanks to Barbara Haack for coming up with the idea and information about the thermal blankets.

We thank Congressmen Meehan and Tierney for co-sponsoring on December 16th HR-2410, "The Depleted Uranium Munitions Study Act," joining their Massachusetts Congressional colleagues--Frank, Markey, Olver, and Neal. The bill, originally presented by Representative Jim McDermott of Washington, calls for medical and scientific studies on the health and environmental impacts from the U.S. military's use of depleted uranium (DU) munitions. McDermott introduced his bill in May 2005 in a speech entitled "If Depleted Uranium Is Safe, Let Them Prove It." Following Meehan and Tierney by a day, MA Congressman Jim McGovern became a co-sponsor too.

In early December, Marty Meehan also signed on to HR-3760, "To Establish a Department of Peace and Nonviolence." The bill, now with over 60 co-sponsors (including Jim McGovern, Ed Markey, and John Olver of Massachusetts), calls for a cabinet-level department in the executive branch of the Federal Government that would be dedicated to peacemaking and the study of conditions that are conducive to both domestic and international peace.

Rounding out a good month of December activity, Meehan and Markey joined Senators Kennedy and Kerry as 16 Democrats who signed a letter to President Bush, voicing concern about the draft U.S. nuclear weapons doctrine being prepared by the Pentagon. The draft doctrine drastically broadens the range of scenarios in which nuclear weapons might be contemplated, seeming to conclude that the U.S. is legally free to use such weapons pre-emptively if it chooses, even against non-nuclear weapon states. The letter urges Bush to personally review the draft and the very serious negative consequences its

policies would have for U.S. national and international security interests.

After spending over two years in Danbury (CT) Federal Correction Institution, Sr. Ardeth Platte was released just in time to return for Christmas to the Jonah House in Baltimore. Together with sisters Jackie Hudson and Carol Gilbert, she was convicted in 2003 of obstructing national defense and damaging government property. The three nuns had cut a chain link fence surrounding a Minuteman III silo in Colorado and then drawn a sign of the cross in their own blood. Because she has a long history of such protests, Platte got the longest sentence and was the last to be released. Sister Ardeth insists that she will not pay the government any restitution, which her sentence includes, because too much federal money is spent on war and defense. *"The charges remain bogus," she said. "It was, 'if you're not with us, you're against us.' And be assured, I would never stand with this government in any kind of killing."* During her imprisonment, she worked as a chapel clerk and ministered to women of many faiths. She received as many as 30 letters a day, she said, from supporters and people describing their own protests.

Maryland's State Legislature passed a bold new law on January 12th, directing firms with more than 10,000 employees to spend at least 8 percent of their payrolls on employee health benefits. The law targeted Wal-Mart, the world's largest retailer, whose low pay and scarce benefits have attracted widespread and still growing criticism. The law overcame not only fierce opposition from Wal-Mart, but also a veto by Republican Gov. Bob Ehrlich. The Maryland law has

MVPP Monthly Meetings – North Parish Church – Tuesdays 7:30 PM, January 24, 2006, and February 28, 2006.
<http://www.merrimackvalleypeopleforpeace.org/>

Printed on recycled paper

Weekly Vigils

Andover: Sunday, noon-1 pm; Shawsheen Square, Junction of Routes 133 and 28; Lawrence Friends Meeting/ Shawsheen Peace Witness; Allan Sifferlen, asifferlen@sbra.com.

Andover: Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 7-8 pm; Saturday, 10:45 am-noon (in good weather, 10-noon); Old Town Hall, 20 Main St.; Merrimack Valley People for Peace; Lou Bernieri, lbernieri@andover.edu.

Andover: Tuesday, 6:30-7:30 am; in front of Raytheon plant near Routes 133 and 93; Raytheon Peacemakers; Arthur Brien, 978-686-4418.

Gloucester: Saturday, noon-1 pm; Grant Circle.

Gloucester: Tuesday, 7-8 pm; Fisherman's Wives Memorial.

Ipswich: Saturday, 11-noon; at the bottom of Town Hill (Junction of Route 133).

Lawrence: Saturday, noon-1 pm; Broadway and Essex Streets; Lawrence Peace Coalition; Martina Cruz, martina_m_cruz@yahoo.com.

Marblehead: Wednesday, 5-7 pm; at the Peace Pole, Memorial Park (by the YMCA); Tom Gale, 781-631-1218.

Newburyport: Sunday, noon-1 pm; Market Square; Niki Rosen, 978-463-3208.

Reading: 2nd Saturday/each month, 11 am-noon; Reading Square; Reading People for Peace; Bob Connor, bobconnor1@yahoo.com.

Rockport: Wednesday, noon-1 pm; First Congregational Church (silent for peace).

Salem, MA: Saturday, 11-noon; Riley Plaza (by the Post Office).

You can buy Rainbow Peace Flags, buttons, bumperstickers, etc. at Saturday vigils in Andover.

buoyed activists trying to pass similar legislation nationwide. In at least 30 other states, plans are under way to introduce "fair share" laws. Proposals in Rhode Island and New Hampshire, for instance, would require companies with 1,000 or more employees to spend 8 percent of their payrolls for health benefits. In each state proposal, affected companies that do not meet the payment threshold would have to pay the difference into a state fund to assist the uninsured.

Needless to say, "fair share" measures are being strongly opposed by groups such as state and national Chambers of Commerce and the National Federation of Independent Business. Opposition to Maryland's law has been led mainly by Wal-Mart, which employs nearly 17,000 people in the state. *"If you are picking a fight with the biggest bully on the block, it's going to be a harder fight,"* said Jonathan Parker, national director of "Americans for Health Care," a project of the Service Employees International Union, which is backing similar legislation across the country.

The Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW), which last spring won an unprecedented victory over the fast food giant, Taco Bell, forcing it to raise the price for picking tomatoes, is now pressuring an even bigger Goliath - McDonald's - for a similar agreement. A growing chorus of supporters nationwide includes not only labor activists, but also religious leaders. In December, the National Farm Workers Ministry and Bishop John Nevins, Diocese of Venice (Immokalee's home diocese in Southwest Florida) both issued powerful statements calling on McDonald's to work with the CIW for substantive change. Similar statements and appeals were issued by the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the National Council of Churches, joined in the first days of January by the United Church of Christ, the Unitarian Universalist Association and the Buddhist Peace Fellowship.

In a victory for student environmental and human rights activists, the University of Michigan has suspended its business relationship with the Coca-Cola Company because of its practices in India and Colombia. The decision, effective January 1, 2006, suspends 13 contracts with Coca-Cola worth \$1.4 million annually because the company has not agreed to protocols for a third-party review of labor practices in Colombia and has not developed protocols for reviewing environmental concerns in India. In Colombia, Coca-Cola is

accused of murders, kidnappings, and torture of union leaders and organizers with the National Union of Food Industry Workers. In India, the company is the target of numerous community-led protest actions, its bottling plants being accused of creating severe water shortages and pollution.

Students in other colleges and universities in the U.S., Canada, and the United Kingdom are campaigning to revoke Coca-Cola contracts until the company meets the demands of the communities. In December 2005, New York University joined the list of schools, including our nearby Salem State College, that have kicked Coca-Cola out. The campaign was led by NYU students who are part of an effort by the "United Students against Sweatshops" to raise awareness about human rights violations in Coca-Cola bottling plants in Colombia and Turkey.

On December 9th, the 2005 Right Livelihood Awards were presented to global pioneers for justice, fair trade, and cultural renewal. They include **Francisco Toledo** (Mexico) *"...for devoting himself and his art to the protection, enhancement and renewal of the architectural and cultural heritage, natural environment and community life of his native Oaxaca;"* **Maude Barlow and Tony Clarke** (Canada) *"...for their exemplary and longstanding worldwide work for trade justice and the recognition of the fundamental human right to water;"* **Irene Fernandez** (Malaysia) *"...for her outstanding and courageous work to stop violence against women and abuses of migrant and poor workers;"* and the organization **First People of the Kalahari** and its founder, **Roy Sesana** (Botswana); *"...for resolute resistance against eviction from their ancestral lands, and for upholding the right to their traditional way of life."* Founded in 1980, the Right Livelihood Awards, often referred to as "Alternative Nobel Prizes," are presented annually in the Swedish Parliament. They honor and support groups and individuals offering practical and exemplary answers to the most urgent challenges of today's world.

RECENT EVENTS

Camilo Mejia, Iraq War Veteran and First War Resister, Speaks to Students and Parents in Lawrence: Latest MVPP Initiative on "Informed Recruitment" by Becci Backman

On December 7th, MVPP hosted the visit to Lawrence by Staff Sergeant Camilo Mejia at the end of his 6-day speaking tour throughout Eastern Massachusetts. The first Iraq War veteran imprisoned for refusing to return to Iraq, Camilo was the featured speaker at two very successful events in an area of our regional community that is a priority for military recruiters.

Thanks to the leafleting efforts of Jim and Mary Todd, Henry Misserville, Arthur Brien, Martina Cruz and her children prior to the visit, a steady stream of students and some parents came into the Lawrence Public Library at the close of school (the cookies and soda certainly helped!) to hear Camilo speak. One hundred people, of whom at least 80 were students, listened as Camilo forcefully recounted his military experience, both in Iraq and since his decision to resist. Some students remained for a short time, and others arrived late, so Camilo ultimately spoke to at least 90 students in all. The students picked up our resource materials, buttons, and the DVD, Iraq Veterans Speak Out. And they asked many questions.

Camilo's story was personal, his message focused. He enlisted in the Army (and "completed" his contract as a reservist in the Florida National Guard) to obtain money for college. (As of December 7th, Camilo was not yet discharged from the military and had been stop-lossed to 2031.) After completing his active service in 1998, he wanted to help with hurricane relief in his new home state. (Camilo is not a US citizen.) But after being shipped to Iraq, promoted to Staff Sergeant, and called upon to command his unit to kill women and children and to perform torture measures on prisoners, Camilo confronted his soul. He came home on leave and refused to report and return to Iraq. Instead, after months of studying, soul-searching and hiding out with friends, he made his way to the Peace Abbey in Sherborn, MA. With the assistance of Brookline attorney, Louis Font, Camilo prepared his application for conscientious objector status, and turned himself in. He was convicted of desertion and served nine months in an Army prison. He does not regret the decision he made.

Camilo made it clear that the promises he was given by the Army were, at best, half-truths. His college education has not been substantially paid for. And he learned no relevant career skills in the Army. He described his belief that too many in command in Iraq were ordering the troops to commit acts designed to help advance the careers of the officers in charge. His own commanding officer could not explain why they were there except that "they were fighting for oil."

Camilo candidly answered all the questions asked. Two hours after the event began, students remained, in part because a Marine recruiter in attendance was trying to reconnect with a couple of students who had become leery after hearing Camilo's message.

The evening event, held at the United Methodist Church, was attended by more than 50 people, mainly adults, and while his message was the same, he skillfully adapted it to the older audience. His very powerful story was well received and appreci-

ated. His courage to share his personal reflections and decisions from both his war experience and his war resistance had an impact on many that lasted long after his visit.

Follow-up to Camilo Mejia's Presentations

As a result of these events, MVPP is hopeful that we have made valuable contacts to help in Lawrence with our "informed recruitment" activity (term used by Camilo and *Iraq Veterans Against the War*). A few teachers at Lawrence High reported afterwards that students had expressed to them appreciative comments on Camilo's presentations. MVPP members have since met to develop a focused strategy with respect to Lawrence High School. That strategy includes: (1) understanding the chain of command necessary to implement the activities we propose at Lawrence High; (2) getting an opt-out letter distributed to every Lawrence high student; (3) gaining access to students that equals the access of military recruiters; (4) getting a factual answer about the level of recruitment currently underway at Lawrence High; and (5) identifying and working with students who want to assist us with exposing the realities of military service.

A report will be made at the next MVPP meeting. An essential part of informed recruitment is offering students viable alternatives. MVPP needs to work with concerned community organizations to develop a local supplement to the booklet "A Guide for Alternatives to the Military" (www.bostondirectaction-project.blogspot.com) compiled by Boston Direct Action Project.

Markey's Emergency Town Meeting on Domestic Surveillance in Lexington on January 4

report and commentary by Bobbie Goldman

MVPP President, Bobbie Goldman, joined approximately 500 people who attended the Emergency Town Meeting on January 4th called by Congressman Ed Markey on the Bush Administration's program on domestic surveillance. The gathering also featured two panel speakers--Carol Ross, Executive Director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts (ACLU-MA), and Marc Rotenberg, Executive Director of the Electronic Privacy Information Center (EPIC).

Congressman Markey began the meeting with tapes of President Bush insisting there would be no wiretapping without warrants, and he proceeded to present 8 Bush "myths," with eloquent responses by the panelists; e.g. Bush's claims that he may legally violate the law, that only "terrorists" or "known bad people" are wiretapped, etc.

All three were impressive, voicing grave concern and outrage about the Constitutional crisis in our country today. They talked about the administration roping in critics by putting those with oversight functions in untenable positions. They explained that the administration informed some elected officials of the surveillance, but warned them that if they discussed it with anyone, they would be breaking the law. They asserted that increasing concentrations of executive power have weakened and degraded the oversight functions of the judicial and legislative branches and that we must restore the rule of law. In addition, both panelists reviewed the 4th Amendment to our Constitution, and how these rights are currently being denied.

We now know that the Federal government is spying on American citizens in their phone conversations and on the Internet, and

that the government has the power to watch us, but we do not have the power to watch them. The executive branch has been ordering phone companies to release our private information. Freedom of the press is also at stake, with the administration going after the journalists and newspapers that leaked the story, instead of being concerned about the story itself. In fact, we now know that the New York Times may have known the information about the National Security Agency before the presidential election, and by sitting on it, they may have indeed strongly influenced the outcome of this crucial election.

Markey is going to return to Washington with an overwhelming mandate from 500 people, voiced from the birthplace of the American Revolution: Congress, with the Supreme Court, must set limits on executive power. Those who broke the story about domestic spying to the New York Times are heroes, and not criminals, and we must act now to change the climate in Washington. The President is supposed to uphold and defend the law and is not above the law. As Mark Rotenberg said, the most patriotic thing for an American to do is to expect the President not to break the law. This is the essence of American democracy. The price of liberty is eternal vigilance.

Meehan's Town Meeting on Iraq in Andover on January 4 by Don Abbott

More than 100 people, including several MVPP members, responded to Congressman Marty Meehan's call for a Town Meeting on Iraq on January 4th in Andover. Meeting with these citizens for over two hours in Memorial Hall Library, Meehan heard repeated calls for him to be even more aggressive in his work to end the military and economic occupation of Iraq by the U.S., to set a distinct direction for the Democratic party as a true opposition party (based on positive values, not just anti-Bush stances), and to hold President Bush and his administration accountable for their deception and illegal activity in the conduct of this war of choice. Praised for his recent leadership on important issues, especially what he has done so far to promote an effective exit strategy for the U.S. in Iraq, Meehan heard constituents urge him to be even bolder--to accelerate the process while insuring our commitment to "rebuild and rehabilitate" the region.

The Constitutional crisis surrounding the Bush administration's consolidation of executive power also was a major topic of concern. As a member of the House Judiciary Committee, Meehan called for independent investigations on Presidential conduct relative to pre-war intelligence and domestic surveillance. Impeachment talk was in the air, but Meehan asserted that positive results in the 2006 elections have to come first: "I'm not against impeachment. I'm just trying to come up with a realistic strategy." Here too, constituents urged him to lead the call now to hold the executive branch accountable, or as one person in the crowd said, to avoid "making excuses for not being able to do anything."

Newburyport Peace Vigil on January 8 Honors Dead Iraq War Marine, Grandson of Haverhill City Councilor by Don Abbott

On November 15, 2005, a local Marine, Lance Corporal Nickolas D. Schiavoni of Haverhill, was killed in a suicide car bomb attack near Fallujah in Iraq. At the time, he was serving his second tour of duty in Iraq. He received a Purple Heart during his first tour. He would have turned 27 early this month. He left his wife, Gina Howe Schiavoni, and their two small children.

Schiavoni was the grandson of David J. Swartz, Haverhill City Councilor.

In the weeks following Schiavoni's death, Swartz has occasionally attended the Newburyport vigil, regularly held since before March 2003 in Market Square at noon every Sunday. The vigil is led by a core group including MVPP members Niki Rosen and Barbara Haack. Swartz requested that the group dedicate its vigil on January 8th, the day following Schiavoni's birthday, to the memory of his grandson.

As reported in the *Globe North* section in the Boston Sunday Globe of January 8, Swartz, who is a former state representative, has voiced objection to the Iraq War since before his grandson's death, stating that the U.S should only go to war when threatened. "Government is not impervious to error. The price we're paying is far in excess of any achievement we're making. I think this is a waste of humanity."

In reference to the vigil, Swartz said: "In my own small way, this is what I can do to bring other grandsons home, to save them from harm." Niki Rosen voiced a similar sentiment: "I'm also a grandparent. My oldest grandchild is 22. It could be me." Then, she added: "We're trying to send a message of peace, to end the war, bring our troops home now." Sixteen people, including several MVPP members, participated in this memorial vigil on this snowy day.

Curbside Chatter

1. Vigiler's Sign: "We Don't Belong in Iraq. Zero Reasons for Being There."

Woman Pedestrian: "Oh, yes we do belong there, buddy!"
Vigiler: "80% of the Iraqis disagree with you, ma'am."

2. Pedestrian, smirking: "Death to our enemies!"
Vigiler: "Love to our enemies, starting with you."

URGENT ACTION

LAS MUJERES DICEN NO A LA GUERRA!
WOMEN SAY NO TO WAR!
LES FEMMES DISENT NON A LA GUERRE!

Editor's note: On January 5th, CODEPINK: Women for Peace began global circulation of their own Urgent Peace Plan to end the war in Iraq, a statement originally signed by more than 200 prominent women joined by more than 3,000 others. In just a few days, 10,000 had been added to the list. From now until March 8, 2006--International Women's Day--they seek at least 100,000 signatures to be delivered to leaders in Washington, D.C. and to embassies worldwide. This date will come a week and a half shy of the third anniversary of the date of the U.S. choice to invade Iraq.

We print this Call for Peace below with strong encouragement to our members to sign: www.womensaynotowar.org/article.php?list=type&type=100. Men "in solidarity" with Women Say No to War are invited to participate.

Women's Call for Peace: An Urgent Global Appeal

We, the women of the United States, Iraq and women worldwide, have had enough of the senseless war in Iraq and the cruel attacks on civilians around the world. We've buried too many of our loved ones. We've seen too many lives crippled forever by physical and mental wounds. We've watched in horror as our precious resources are poured into war while our families' basic needs of food, shelter, education and healthcare go unmet. We've had enough of living in constant fear of violence and seeing the growing cancer of hatred and intolerance seep into our homes and communities.

This is not the world we want for ourselves or our children. With fire in our bellies and love in our hearts, we women are rising up--across border--to unite and demand an end to the bloodshed and the destruction.

We have seen how the foreign occupation of Iraq has fueled an armed movement against it, perpetuating an endless cycle of violence. We are convinced that it is time to shift from a military model to a conflict-resolution model that includes the following elements:

- The withdrawal of all foreign troops and foreign fighters from Iraq;
- Negotiations to reincorporate disenfranchised Iraqis into all aspects of Iraqi society;
- The full representation of women in the peacemaking process and a commitment to women's full equality in the post-war Iraq;
- A commitment to discard plans for any foreign bases in Iraq;
- Iraqi control of its oil and other resources;
- The nullification of privatization and deregulation laws imposed under occupation, allowing Iraqis to shape the trajectory of the post-war economy;
- A massive reconstruction effort that prioritizes Iraqi contractors, and draws upon financial resources of the countries responsible for the invasion and occupation of Iraq;
- Consideration of a temporary international peacekeeping force that is truly multilateral and is not composed of any troops from countries that participated in the occupation.

To move this peace process forward, we are creating a massive movement of women--crossing generations, races, ethnicities, religions, borders and political persuasions. Together, we will pressure our governments, the United Nations, the Arab League, Nobel Peace Prize winners, religious leaders and others in the international community to step forward to help negotiate a political settlement. And in this era of divisive fundamentalisms, we call upon world leaders to join us in spreading the fundamental values of love for the human family and for our precious planet.

Issues/Perspectives

“Finding Dr. King’s Moral Compass in an Age of Deceit” A Message from the Fellowship of Reconciliation; January 13, 2006

www.forusa.org/media/kingcompass_011306.html

"A nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death." --Martin Luther King, Jr., April 4, 1967

Dr. King’s prophetic warning has seldom seemed more compelling than on this Martin Luther King Day. Spending on an immoral war continues to spiral obscenely, despite the erosion of public support for the war and the abandonment of any pretence of reconstructing Iraq. And, unfazed by the disaster wrought in Iraq, the clamor grows daily for military action against neighboring Iran.

Instead of “programs of social uplift,” we see a massive increase in hunger, with 36 million people, or 13% of the U.S. population, experiencing food shortages in the past year. We remain the only industrialized nation without a national health care program. And a United Nations index of income inequality shows the United States to be more unequal in income distribution than every other industrial democracy.

But the journey to “spiritual death” encompasses more than just economic or social ills. We have created a culture of deceit and mistrust, as evidenced by the plague of corruption scandals in public and private institutions. Our lawmakers take bribes to legislate. Corporations criminally enrich themselves at our expense. Government officials lie to us. Secret agencies spy on us. Torture, once unjustifiable and illegal, is now permitted and necessary.

How deep is the malaise when official outrage at revelations of torture and extrajudicial spying are not directed at the practices themselves, but at the whistleblowers who revealed them to the public? How far adrift are we when the very word “morality” is understood to mean personal piety, rather than socially ethical behavior?

A growing number of Americans feel that there is something deeply dysfunctional in our society. They are right. When truth, integrity – even reality – become irrelevant, we are in deep trouble. Dr. King offered a moral foundation for society as it fought the triple evils of war, racism and poverty. We have lost this moral compass.

Now, more than ever, is the time to lift up Martin Luther King's vision of a beloved community. It is, truthfully, the only vision that can guide America to a path of restoration, redemption, and true justice for all.

Wisdom from Dr. King:

*“Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces,
I would still plant my apple tree.”*

*“Freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor;
it must be demanded by the oppressed.”*

To continue to receive this newsletter... **We Invite You to Join /Rejoin Us**

\$20.00 Individual
\$10.00 Student/Senior
\$30.00 Family

Circle One

\$50.00 Supporting
\$75.00 Sustaining
\$100.00 Peacemaker

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ E-Mail _____ Date _____

Return to
P.O. Box 573

MVPP is registered with the IRS as a 501(c)(3) organization. Contributions to MVPP are tax deductible. Last year, approximately one-third of our members joined/renewed at higher than the basic rate.

Check here [] if you prefer to receive your newsletter via e-mail.

“After the War”

by Howard Zinn

The Progressive, January 2006 (<http://progressive.org>)

Editor's Note: An idea whose time keeps coming.

The war against Iraq, the assault on its people, the occupation of its cities, will come to an end, sooner or later. The process has already begun. The first signs of mutiny are appearing in Congress. The first editorials calling for withdrawal from Iraq are beginning to appear in the press. The anti-war movement has been growing, slowly but persistently, all over the country.

Public opinion polls now show the country decisively against the war and the Bush Administration. The harsh realities have become visible. The troops will have to come home.

And while we work with increased determination to make this happen, should we not think beyond this war? Should we begin to think, even before this shameful war is over, about ending our addiction to massive violence and instead using the enormous wealth of our country for human needs? That is, should we begin to speak about ending war—not just this war or that war, but war itself? Perhaps the time has come to bring an end to war, and turn the human race onto a path of health and healing.

A group of internationally known figures, celebrated both for their talent and their dedication to human rights (Gino Strada, Paul Farmer, Kurt Vonnegut, Nadine Gordimer, Eduardo Galeano, and others), will soon launch a worldwide campaign to enlist tens of millions of people in a movement for the renunciation of war, hoping to reach the point where governments, facing popular resistance, will find it difficult or impossible to wage war.

There is a persistent argument against such a possibility, which I have heard from people on all parts of the political spectrum: We will never do away with war because it comes out of human nature. The most compelling counter to that claim is in history: We don't find people spontaneously rushing to make war on others. What we find, rather, is that governments must make the most strenuous efforts to mobilize populations for war. They must entice soldiers with promises of money, education, must hold out to young people whose chances in life look very poor that here is an opportunity to attain respect and status. And if those enticements don't work, governments must use coercion: They must conscript young people, force them into military service, threaten them with prison if they do not comply.

Furthermore, the government must persuade young people and their families that though the soldier may die, though he or she may lose arms or legs, or become blind, that it is all for a noble cause, for God, for country.

When you look at the endless series of wars of this century you do not find a public demanding war, but rather resisting it, until citizens are bombarded with exhortations that appeal, not to a killer instinct, but to a desire to do good, to spread democracy or liberty or overthrow a tyrant.

Woodrow Wilson found a citizenry so reluctant to enter the First World War that he had to pummel the nation with propaganda and imprison dissenters in order to get the country to join the butchery going on in Europe.

In the Second World War, there was indeed a strong moral imperative, which still resonates among most people in this country and which maintains the reputation of World War II as “the good war.” There was a need to defeat the monstrosity of fascism. It was that belief that drove me to enlist in the Air Force and fly bombing missions over Europe.

Only after the war did I begin to question the purity of the moral crusade. Dropping bombs from five miles high, I had seen no human beings, heard no screams, seen no children dismembered. But now I had to think about Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the firebombings of Tokyo and Dresden, the deaths of 600,000 civilians in Japan, and a similar number in Germany.

I came to a conclusion about the psychology of myself and other warriors: Once we decided, at the start, that our side was the good side and the other side was evil, once we had made that simple and simplistic calculation, we did not have to think anymore. Then we could commit unspeakable crimes and it was all right.

I began to think about the motives of the Western powers and Stalinist Russia and wondered if they cared as much about fascism as about retaining their own empires, their own power, and if that was why they had military priorities higher than bombing the rail lines leading to Auschwitz. Six million Jews were killed in the death camps (allowed to be killed?). Only 60,000 were saved by the war—1 percent.

A gunner on another crew, a reader of history with whom I had become friends, said to me one day: “You know this is an imperialist war. The fascists are evil. But our side is not much better.” I could not accept his statement at the time, but it stuck with me.

War, I decided, creates, insidiously, a common morality for all sides. It poisons everyone who is engaged in it, however different they are in many ways, turns them into killers and torturers, as we are seeing now. It pretends to be concerned with toppling tyrants, and may in fact do so, but the people it kills are the victims of the tyrants. It appears to cleanse the world of evil, but that does not last, because its very nature spawns more evil. Wars, like violence in general, I concluded, is a drug. It gives a quick high, the thrill of victory, but that wears off and then comes despair.

I acknowledge the possibility of humanitarian intervention to prevent atrocities, as in Rwanda. But war, defined as the indiscriminate killing of large numbers of people, must be resisted.

Whatever can be said about World War II, understanding its complexity, the situations that followed—Korea, Vietnam—were so far from the kind of threat that Germany and Japan had posed to the world that those wars could be justified only by drawing on the glow of “the good war.” A hysteria about communism led to McCarthyism at home and military interventions in Asia and Latin America—overt and covert—justified by a “Soviet threat” that was exaggerated just enough to mobilize the people for war.

Vietnam, however, proved to be a sobering experience, in which the American public, over a period of several years, began to see through the lies that had been told to justify all that bloodshed. The United States was forced to withdraw from Vietnam, and the world didn't come to an end. One half of one tiny country in Southeast Asia was now joined to its communist other half, and 58,000 American lives and millions of Vietnamese lives had been expended to prevent that. A majority of Americans had come to oppose that war, which had provoked the largest anti-war movement in the nation's history.

The war in Vietnam ended with a public fed up with war. I believe that the American people, once the fog of propaganda had dissipated, had come back to a more natural state. Public opinion polls showed that people in the United States were opposed to send troops anywhere in the world, for any reason.

The Establishment was alarmed. The government set out deliberately to overcome what it called “the Vietnam syndrome.” Opposition to military interventions abroad was a sickness, to be cured. And so they would wean the American public away from its unhealthy attitude, by tighter control of information, by avoiding a draft, and by engaging in short, swift wars over weak opponents (Grenada, Panama, Iraq), which didn't give the public time to develop an anti-war movement.

I would argue that the end of the Vietnam War enabled the people of the United States to shake the “war syndrome,” a disease not natural to the human body. But they could be infected once again, and September 11 gave the government that opportunity. Terrorism became the justification for war, but war is itself terrorism, breeding rage and hate, as we are seeing now.

The war in Iraq has revealed the hypocrisy of the “war on terrorism.” And the government of the United States, indeed governments everywhere, are becoming exposed as untrustworthy: that is, not to be entrusted with the safety of human beings, or the safety of the planet, or the guarding of its air, its water, its natural wealth, or the curing of poverty and disease, or coping with the alarming growth of natural disasters that plague so many of the six billion people on Earth.

I don't believe that our government will be able to do once more what it did after Vietnam—prepare the population for still another plunge into violence and dishonor. It seems to me that when the war in Iraq ends, and the war syndrome heals, that there will be a great opportunity to make that healing permanent.

My hope is that the memory of death and disgrace will be so intense that the people of the United States will be able to listen to a message that the rest of the world, sobered by wars without end, can also understand: that war itself is the enemy of the human race.

Governments will resist this message. But their power is dependent on the obedience of the citizenry. When that is withdrawn, governments are helpless. We have seen this again and again in history.

The abolition of war has become not only desirable but absolutely necessary if the planet is to be saved. It is an idea whose time has come.

“The Constitution in Crisis: The Downing Street Minutes and Deception, Manipulation, Torture, Retribution, and Cover-ups in the Iraq War”

House Judiciary Committee Minority Staff Report
www.house.gov/conyers/Censure_PR.htm

Editor's note: On December 20, 2005, Representative John Conyers, Jr. (D-MI), Ranking Member of the House Judiciary Committee, released the Minority Staff Report on the misconduct of the Bush Administration concerning the Iraq War. In the 1970s, Conyers played a prominent role in the impeachment process of Richard Nixon. His recent statement about this Report, plus its full text, is available online as referenced above. We print the Executive Summary of the Report below.

In response to the Report, Conyers went further. First, he introduced a Resolution, HR-635, “creating a Select Committee with subpoena authority to investigate the misconduct of the Bush Administration with regard to the Iraq war and report on possible impeachable offenses.” Second, he introduced Resolutions regarding both President Bush, HR-636, and Vice President Cheney, HR-637, “proposing that they be censured by Congress based on indisputable evidence of unaccounted for misstatements and abuse of power in the public record.”

As several Andover citizens told Marty Meehan in clear terms at his Town Meeting earlier this month, we expect our elected officials publicly to confront the grave Constitutional crisis we face today, hold the Bush Administration accountable, restore rule of law, and reinstate checks and balances in our government.

Executive Summary

This Minority Report has been produced at the request of Representative John Conyers, Jr., Ranking Member of the House Judiciary Committee. He made this request in the wake of the President's failure to respond to a letter submitted by 122 Members of Congress and more than 500,000 Americans in July of this year asking him whether the assertions set forth in the Downing Street Minutes were accurate. Mr. Conyers asked staff, by year end 2005, to review the available information concerning possible misconduct by the Bush Administration in the run

up to the Iraq War and post-invasion statements and actions, and to develop legal conclusions and make legislative and other recommendations to him.

In brief, we have found that there is substantial evidence the President, the Vice President and other high ranking members of the Bush Administration misled Congress and the American people regarding the decision to go to war with Iraq; misstated and manipulated intelligence information regarding the justification for such war; countenanced torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and other legal violations in Iraq; and permitted inappropriate retaliation against critics of their Administration.

There is a prima facie case that these actions by the President, Vice-President and other members of the Bush Administration violated a number of federal laws, including (1) Committing a Fraud against the United States; (2) Making False Statements to Congress; (3) The War Powers Resolution; (4) Misuse of Government Funds; (5) federal laws and international treaties prohibiting torture and cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment; (6) federal laws concerning retaliating against witnesses and other individuals; and (7) federal laws and regulations concerning leaking and other misuse of intelligence.

While these charges clearly rise to the level of impeachable misconduct, because the Bush Administration and the Republican-controlled Congress have blocked the ability of Members to obtain information directly from the Administration concerning these matters, more investigatory authority is needed before recommendations can be made regarding specific Articles of Impeachment. As a result, we recommend that Congress establish a select committee with subpoena authority to investigate the misconduct of the Bush Administration with regard to the Iraq war detailed in this Report and report to the Committee on the Judiciary on possible impeachable offenses.

In addition, we believe the failure of the President, Vice President and others in the Bush Administration to respond to myriad requests for information concerning these charges, or to otherwise account for explain a number of specific misstatements they have made in the run up to War and other actions warrants, at minimum, the introduction and Congress' approval of Resolutions of Censure against Mr. Bush and Mr. Cheney. Further, we recommend that Ranking Member Conyers and others consider referring the potential violations of federal criminal law detailed in this Report to the Department of Justice for investigation; Congress should pass legislation to limit government secrecy, enhance oversight of the Executive Branch, request notification and justification of presidential pardons of Administration officials, ban abusive treatment of detainees, ban the use of chemical weapons, and ban the practice of paying foreign media outlets to publish news stories prepared by or for the Pentagon; and the House should amend its Rules to permit Ranking Members of Committees to schedule official Committee hearings and call witnesses to investigate Executive Branch misconduct.

The Report rejects the frequent contention by the Bush Administration that there pre-war conduct has been reviewed and they have been exonerated. No entity has ever considered whether the Administration misled Americans about the decision to go to war. The Senate Intelligence Committee has not yet conducted a review of pre-war intelligence distortion and manipulation, while the Silberman-Robb report specifically cautioned that intelligence manipulation "was not part of our inquiry." There has also not been any independent inquiry concerning tor-

ture and other legal violations in Iraq; nor has there been an independent review of the pattern of coverups and political retribution by the Bush Administration against its critics, other than the very narrow and still ongoing inquiry of Special Counsel Fitzgerald.

While the scope of this Report is largely limited to Iraq, it also holds lessons for our Nation at a time of entrenched one-party rule and abuse of power in Washington. If the present Administration is willing to misstate the facts in order to achieve its political objectives in Iraq, and Congress is unwilling to confront or challenge their hegemony, many of our cherished democratic principles are in jeopardy.

This is true not only with respect to the Iraq War, but also in regard to other areas of foreign policy, privacy and civil liberties, and matters of economic and social justice. Indeed as this Report is being finalized, we have just learned of another potential significant abuse of executive power by the President, ordering the National Security Agency to engage in domestic spying and wiretapping without obtaining court approval in possible violation of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act.

It is tragic that our Nation has invaded another sovereign nation because "the intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy," as stated in the Downing Street Minutes. It is equally tragic that the Bush Administration and the Republican Congress have been unwilling to examine these facts or take action to prevent this scenario from occurring again. Since they appear unwilling to act, it is incumbent on individual Members of Congress as well as the American public to act to protect our constitutional form of government.

"Shoot the Moon and Forget about the Bell Curve"

by Elizabeth de la Vega www.tomdispatch.com/index.mhtml?pid=44299, 12/22/05

Editor's Note: The writer is a former Federal prosecutor who appears regularly online at Tomdispatch.com. Readers will recall a piece of hers printed in our November-December newsletter. With the full article referenced above, here are the final paragraphs of another very thoughtful column by her. I find it a refreshing tonic in those frequent times when "overwhelming odds" or "considered opinions" tell me it is foolish and even futile to act if there is so little chance for success -- for example, now, when it is "obviously pointless" to pursue the matter of accountability through impeachment proceedings.

"...The truth is that the closer you get to the reality of the war against Iraq and the lies that brought us there - and these are quite literally matters of life and death - the easier it is to know what to do: Shoot the moon and forget about the bell curve.

"As Congresswoman (Lynn) Woolsey (D-CA) has known all along, the most potent antidote to the obscenity of abstraction is fact. Focus on the facts. Make sure you get them right and don't overstate your case. Talk about the lies that sent us to Iraq. Talk about the tens of thousands of innocent Iraqis slaughtered, the soldiers killed and wounded, the families they've left behind. Don't play the administration's word games about torture: talk about water boarding, humiliation, and beatings. Write letters, demonstrate, make calls, send e-mails, wear t-shirts, campaign for candidates who oppose the war, join groups, organize groups, talk to anyone who will listen and even people who won't. Advocate impeachment, push the Senate to analyze the

administration's use of pre-war intelligence, call for a special prosecutor - and tell Congress it's time to bring the troops home. Don't worry about the odds.

"What good does any of this do? The answer is we don't know - which is exactly why we have to do it."

"Perhaps Bush's savviest achievement has been to make the public think that Rumsfeld and Cheney are the dark geniuses behind the administration's malevolence. If Bush is taken as too shallow to have a fascist ideology; as too weak to stick with hard policies that undermine democracy; as a religious nutcase whose apocalyptic fantasies don't matter; as a man, in sum, the average citizen can regard as slightly less than average - then what he is pulling off will not be called by its proper name until it is too late. 2005? Oh yes, that was the year of the coup."

--James Carroll; The Boston Globe; 12/26/05

Letter to the Editor

Nothing right about war in Iraq
Newburyport Daily News, December 20, 2005

To the editor:

In response to Paul M. Matosic's Dec. 5 letter: Just what is right about the war we are waging in Iraq? President Bush finally conceded on Dec. 12 that since the inception of the U.S. invasion, at least 30,000 Iraqis — children, women, men, soldiers, insurgents — have been killed. How can you justify killing so many for a lie? President Bush, acknowledging that there were no WMD, and that Iraq had nothing to do with 9/11, now says that his administration went in to topple Saddam Hussein, and that he would do it again, even if 30,000 Iraqis die in the process. These people are expendable.

We Americans have not allowed this horrendous fact to enter into our collective conscience. Where is our soul?

Of course all of us, regardless of our beliefs about the appropriateness of this war, mourn the deaths of our own soldiers. But an increasingly larger number of us now know that our brave soldiers died in vain. And David Swartz, grandfather of fallen Cpl. Nicholas Schiavoni, is right about describing Bush and Company's war a "senseless fiasco." Swartz is a dedicated American who knows that our country is complicit in a crime against humanity. He wants the truth to be told, and that makes him patriotic. We can't hide anymore.

Barbara Haack
West Newbury

Upcoming Events

compiled with the help of Sue Imhoff

Saturday, January 21, 8:00 pm: CD Release Concert by Pat Scanlon: "Blue State Liberal." "Blue State Liberal" is the 3rd release by environmental activist, Vietnam Veteran (1969), and singer-songwriter/banjo player, Pat Scanlon. His songs are catchy reminders of the need for political awareness, environmental preservation, and social and economic programs. With the earth and its population in such a vulnerable position, Pat's words have become increasingly poignant and relevant. He invokes the spirit of Pete Seeger and Arlo Guthrie with friendly, toe-tapping tunes designed to inspire progressive action. Admission \$15.00. Proceeds from kitchen sales to benefit MVPP. Further information: www.PatScanlon.com or 978-475-1776. **North Parish Church (Parish Hall), 190 Academy Road, North Andover, MA.**

Sunday, January 22, 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm: A Sunday Evening Forum: "Life in Palestine Today." A presentation of what is happening in Palestine and reports from peace activists who have recently been in the West Bank of Gaza. Presenters include: Bo Fauth, frequent traveler to the Holy Land and parishioner at Christ Church, Cambridge, and Warren Radtke, Episcopal Priest who has just returned from Palestine. The evening is sponsored by the Friends of Sabeel New England, an ecumenical grassroots movement, rooted in solid Christian Biblical interpretation and nourished by the hopes, dreams, and struggles of the Palestinian people. **South Church, Fellowship Hall, 41 Central Street, Andover.**

Monday, January 23, 8:00 pm to 10 pm: Evening of Solidarity and Fundraising for *Fund the Dream Project*. Join Diana Saenz, Tontongi, Askia Toure, Jose Gouveia, Jamie Bissonette, Gary Hicks, Shira Ehrlich and others for an evening in the spirit of Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream of a society free of racism, economic exploitation, and war. Current activities include the Boston Workers Alliance, Martial Arts Training for all, and ongoing discussion among activists to make Dr. King's dream (and now ours) a reality. Admission \$12.00. Further information: 617-661-6130 or jbissonette@afsc.org or richard-cam@aol.com. **Richard Cambridge's Poetry Theater, 47 Palmer Street (off Church Street at Harvard Square), Cambridge.**

Monday, January 23, 6:30 pm (in Manchester, NH); and Monday, January 30, 7:00 pm (in Dover, NH): "In Their Own Words: Iraqi Perspectives on the Occupation" with independent journalist and filmmaker Brian Conley. Brian spent three weeks in Baghdad in late October and early November 2005 exploring the lives of ordinary Iraqis who have now been living under U.S. occupation for nearly three years. His firsthand perspective and footage from Baghdad show the continuing security, health, and infrastructure crises that continue to go unreported by the mainstream press. Sponsored by New Hampshire Peace Action, Joe Public Films, Seacoast Peace Response, and New Hampshire IMC. Further information: 607-498-3580 or visit Brian's blog at www.aliveinbaghdad.org or anne@nhpeaceaction.org. **Manchester City Library Auditorium, 405 Pine Street, Manchester, NH (1/23) and Dover Friends Meetinghouse, 141 Central Avenue, Dover, NH (1/30).**

Wednesday, January 25, 6:30 pm: The Nuclear Freeze Movement at 25: Grassroots Outreach Then and Now. Hear firsthand from the "mother of the freeze," Dr. Randall Caroline Forsberg, Executive Director of the Institute for Defense and Disarmament Studies, as we commemorate 25 years of action and advocacy against nuclear weapons. Free and open to the public. Further information: jtaylor@wand.org or 781-643-6740. **Boston Research Center, 396 Harvard Street (Harvard Square), Cambridge, MA.**

Wednesday, January 25, 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm: "FUND JUSTICE, NOT WAR" - Planning and Working Meeting. All in the UJP coalition and friends interested in funding justice/not war are invited to this meeting. We propose to spend the first part of the evening updating "The War and Economy" workshop so that it more fully addresses issues of race and class. Katrina and its aftermath have exposed our bankrupt national priorities, caused deep discontent nationwide, and demanded that we link our anti-war, social justice, and ending racism work. We must build the broader alliances necessary for fundamental social change. Further information: Susan at 781-316-1618 or vicky.steinitz@umb.edu. **Democracy Center, 45 Mt. Auburn Street near Harvard Square, Cambridge.**

Friday January 27, 5:00 pm through Sunday, January 29, 2:00 pm: "People's Music Winter Gathering 2006." The good people of The People's Music Network for Songs of Freedom and Struggle (PMN), who held this gathering in Lawrence/Andover a few years ago, are back "in the neighborhood" (Amherst). Plenary sessions on military recruitment and globalization, Friday night concert at 7:00 pm featuring local and national performers (tickets \$15 in advance/\$20 at concert), workshops on Saturday and Sunday, Children's Concert on Saturday at 1:30 pm, Round Robin on Saturday night, and Songs of the Spirit on Sunday morning. Further information: www.peoplesmusic.org/ or Diane Crowe at 413-548-9394 or Tom Neilson at 413-367-9742. **Amherst College, Amherst, MA—concerts at Johnson Chapel.**

Monday, January 30, 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm: "Revisiting the Assassination of Martin Luther King" with William F. Pepper. Pepper is legal counsel to the family of Martin Luther King, Jr. and author of An Act of State: The Execution of Martin Luther King and Orders to Kill; The Truth Behind the Murder of MLK. He has devoted his adult life to a long struggle to shine the light of truth on a tragic moment in American history. Registration is encouraged. Fill out a form with the title above, and include a check for \$5.00 made payable to the Town Of Brookline. To register with a credit card, call 617-730-2700 or online at www.brooklineadulted.org. Further information: amyh@texnology.com or Sue at 617-232-3601. **Brookline High School, 115 Greenough Street, Brookline.**

Wednesday, February 1, 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm: The Eleanor Roosevelt Lecture on Global Vision: "In Our Hands; Human Rights Is a Way of Life" by Shulamith Koenig. Part of the Women of Courage Lecture Series. Koenig has made human rights her life's work, creating a worldwide corps of human rights educators who will serve a role models and catalysts in their communities. She has worked tirelessly to support the UN Decade of Human Rights Education (1994-2004), organizing consultations and workshops in more than 60 countries. In 2003, she was the recipient of the prestigious UN Human Rights Award. Free and open to the public. Seating is limited; come early (6 pm for light refreshments). Further information: 617-491-1090 or adminassist@brc21.org. **Boston Research Center, 396 Harvard Street (Harvard Square), Cambridge.**

Saturday, February 4, 8:00 pm: Folk Concert by Geoff Kaufman. Kaufman has been leading audiences to find truth, humor, and beauty in folk music from the decks of Pete Seeger's Sloop Clearwater on the Hudson River to festivals and coffee-houses all over the U.S. and Europe. Come for an uplifting evening and sing along. Co-sponsored by the Merrimack Valley Chapter of Amnesty International and by MVPP. \$12 suggested donation. Refreshments available including Fair Trade Coffee. Doors open at 7:30 pm. **Unitarian Universalist Congregation, 6 Locke Street, Andover.**

Tuesday, February 14, 7:00 pm: "My Winter Vacation in Iraq—2004." Presentation by William Burke on his time in Iraq with the Christian Peacemaker Team in February 2004. Sponsored by Seacoast Peace Response, Tuesday speaker series. Further information: Amy Antonucci at amyla44@juno.com or 603-750-7506. **UU Church, 292 State Street, Portsmouth, NH.**

Tuesday, March 7, 6:00 pm: Walk for a New Spring. The Buddhist Monks from the New England Peace Pagoda in Leverett will be stopping at Andover during their walk. Share a pot-luck supper with them at The Andover UU congregation at 6 Locke Street. We will be looking for some overnight hosts for that Tuesday evening.

Save the Dates. March 15-22, 2006: "Three Years Too Many. End the War. Bring All the Troops Home Now." United for Justice with Peace has issued a nationwide call for the week marking the 3rd anniversary (March 19) of the start of a war that should never happened, a war of our country's choosing. UPJ urges opponents of the Iraq War to organize a wide array of events in their hometowns for the entire week surrounding this anniversary. It is vital to bring anti-war sentiment out into the streets of every community around our country.

Books of Note

Recommended Reads, compiled by Don Abbott

Paulo Friere: Pedagogy of Indignation, Paradigm Publishers, 2004. The last book written by the renowned Brazilian educator before his death, it further illuminates one of Friere's lifelong convictions about the teaching of critical thinking: the ethical and political dream of overcoming unjust reality is not only legitimate but always practicable, precisely where we are at a given place in time. At its core, a liberating educational process intends toward justice and social change. It occurs when we learn and practice the tense and dramatic relationship between authority and freedom. Because it understands history as possibility, never as determination, it is "substantively hopeful and produces hope."

Jeff Halper: Obstacles to Peace; A Re-Framing of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict, third edition, 2005, distributed by ICAHD (Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions) UK. For information about ICAHD: www.icahd.org/eng/. The coordinating director of ICAHD, Halper is a Jewish Israeli-American peace activist and professor of anthropology at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. A brief, highly informative guidebook with the primary "re-framing" goal of balancing Israel's concerns over security with its accountability as the occupying power in the region. Ordering information: www.icahd.org/don/don.html or Don at bdabbott@comcast.net or Mary at mtodd@mdc.net.

Si Kahn and Elizabeth Minnich: The Fox in the Henhouse; How Privatization Threatens Democracy, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2005. Kahn, in addition to being a singer, songwriter, and activist, is executive director of Grassroots Leadership; Minnich is senior fellow at the Association of American Colleges and Universities. As the majority political agenda, home and abroad, relentlessly plays to market forces that shift significant responsibilities from government to corporations, along comes this impassioned argument that corporations are replacing the public sector at huge peril to our rights and welfare. An invaluable analysis and guide not just for organizers, activists, and resisters, but for everyone who knows that it is dead wrong to hand over everything to an oligarchy.

Ahmed Kathrada: Memoirs, Struik Publishers, 2005. The long-awaited story of a remarkable and most modest hero of South African resistance and reconciliation. An Indian, Muslim South African who became politically active at 10, "Kathy" was convicted of sabotage in 1964 and imprisoned until his release in 1989. Lesser known to us than his close colleagues and friends, Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu, he played a central role in ending apartheid and charting a courageous course away from revenge toward democracy in his country. He has served as a member of South Africa's first freely elected Parliament, Parliamentary Counselor to the Office of President Mandela, and Chair of the Robben Island Museum. A fascinating collection of memoirs from an ordinary man who has lived an extraordinary life as a true shaper of history.

State of the World 2006, Worldwatch Institute, 2006. The 23rd edition of the annual Worldwatch report with a special focus on China and India. It examines the global impact of these two nations as they join the United States and Europe as major consumers of resources and polluters of local and global ecosystems. From the Foreword by Sunita Narain, director of the Centre for Science and Environment in New Delhi: "The western model of growth that India and China wish to emulate is intrinsically toxic. It uses huge resources—energy and materials—and generates enormous waste. The industrialized world has mitigated the adverse impacts of wealth generation by investing huge amounts of money. But... it remains many steps behind the problems it creates. India and China have no choice but to reinvent the development trajectory."

Late Breaking News Briefs

"Bring Our National Guard Home"

On Saturday, January 14th, Bobbie Goldman, Becci Backman, and Bob Connor attended a statewide meeting in at the Worcester Age Center in Worcester, sponsored by *United for Justice with Peace* and *Military Families Speak Out* to assess last fall's unsuccessful petition drive, "Bring Our National Guard Home," and to work on strategies to end the U.S. occupation of Iraq as quickly as possible and bring our troops home. It was a productive gathering of 100 seasoned and new peace activists and military families, looking to coordinate efforts and make the most impact. We broke into three groups which (1) agreed on immediate and ongoing tactics for bird-dogging Massachusetts Congressmen; (2) coordinated efforts to initiate town meeting resolutions and non-binding resolutions in state representative districts; and (3) developed specific tactics for utilizing the media to educate the public and influence decision-makers.

The results were shared with the larger meeting. We all left feeling energized and better focused about how we can work effectively with an ever-expanding group of activists to effect change.

-- Bobbie Goldman

Unity Service in Haverhill on January 13

The annual event, where Temple Emanu-El and Calvary Baptist Church worship together, remembering Martin Luther King, had special meaning this year. In the previous two months, vandals had attacked both institutions, so there was fresh evidence that Rev. King's work must continue.

Each congregation contributed lively and meaningful music. Speakers from churches and organizations around Haverhill read from King's speeches or commented on the recent events. The vandalism had stimulated many visitors to stand with these two congregations, filling Temple Emanu-El with at least 300 people.

Rabbi Korinow said this song is gaining popularity in Israel:

Shalom - Salaam

Od yavo shalom aleinu (3 times)}

V'al kulam } 2

Salaam! Aleinu v'al kol ha-olam }

Salaam, salaam } 2

(May peace come soon to us and to all,

Salaam - Peace! Upon us and upon all the world)

-- Brian Quirk

Poetry

My Non-Seasonal Greeting for 2006

by Cynthia Fisk

When a great mix of high-pitched voices is raised on high
Will the response be a resonant "hurray" or just a sigh?
It all depends on what those voices are struggling to say.
Even so, who or what is on high won't begin to save the day.
What can, is commitment and passion for all that's just
Brought forth in a newfound unity that leaves discord in the dust.

Let us join hands and hearts to declaim our determination
To speak truth to power in ways that don't foster recrimination.
Whatever the month, under a full or new moon,

resolve to embrace

The message of love and compassion, reaching out to erase
A legacy of materialistic, ego-centered races to the top.

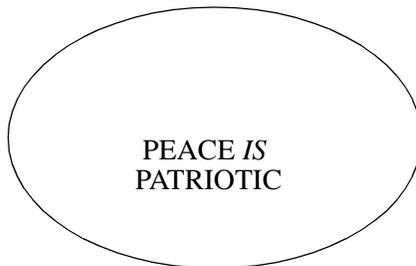
Instead, honesty and trust will take root as a verdant,
vibrant crop.

And a resilient, all-embracing peace will be there for all of us.

An MVPP member, Cynthia Fisk of Gloucester is a vital member of North Shore Peace and Justice Coalition. Now in her eighties, she is a longtime activist for peace and justice who is still writing every day.

Merrimack Valley People For Peace
P.O. Box 573
North Andover, MA 01845-0573

<http://www.merrimackvalleypeopleforpeace.org/>



The MVPP Newsletter is printed monthly and has a current distribution of 200. We are grateful for suggestions, comments, and help with publication. (Unless 2006 appears on your label, your dues have expired. Please remember to renew.)
MVPP President: Bobbie Goldman. Vice President: Becci Backman. Newsletter Editor: Don Abbott. Newsletter contributors: Becci Backman, Arthur and Margaret Brien, Cynthia Fisk, Bobbie Goldman, Barbara Haack, Sue Imhoff, Brian Quirk, Boryana Tacconi, and Mary Todd.

CALL AND WRITE YOUR REPRESENTATIVES & SENATORS TO MAKE YOUR VIEWS KNOWN

President George W. Bush

The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500
White House Comment Desk: 202 456-1111
E-mail: president@whitehouse.gov

Senator Edward M. Kennedy

304 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
202 224-4543 fax: 202 224-2417
2400 JFK Building, Boston MA 02203
617 565-3170 fax: 617 565-3183
Form: <http://kennedy.senate.gov/contact.html>

Senator John F. Kerry

304 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
202 224-2742 fax: 202 224-8525
One Bowdoin Sq., Boston, MA 02114
617 565-8519 fax: 617 248-3870
Form: <http://kerry.senate.gov/text/contact/email.html>

Representative Martin Meehan (District 5)

2447 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
202 225-3411 fax: 202 226-0771
305 Essex Street, Lawrence, MA 01840
978 681-6200 fax: 978 682-6870
E-mail: martin.meehan@mail.house.gov

Representative John Tierney (District 6)

120 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
202 225-8020 fax: 202 225-5915
17 Peabody Sq, Peabody, MA 01960
978 531-1669 fax: 978 531-1996
E-mail: <http://www.house.gov/tierney/email.htm>

A link to all in US legislature:

<http://thomas.loc.gov/home/legbranch/legbranch.html>

How Senators and Representatives voted:

Senate: http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/legislative/a_three_sections_with_teasers/votes.htm
House: <http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2004/index.asp>

State Voting Information: Look up who you vote for at
<http://www.wheredoivotema.com/bal/myelectioninfo.php>