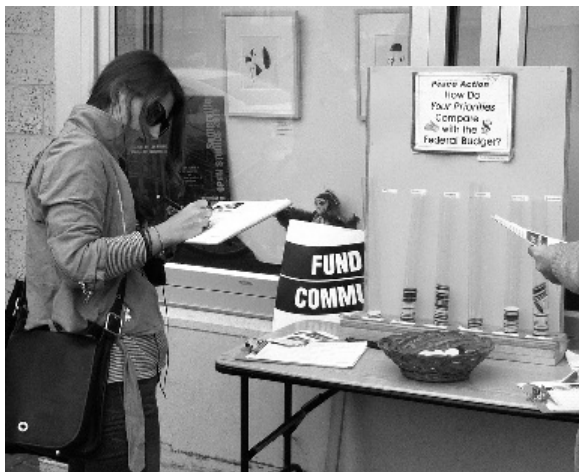


Fund Our Communities, Not War!

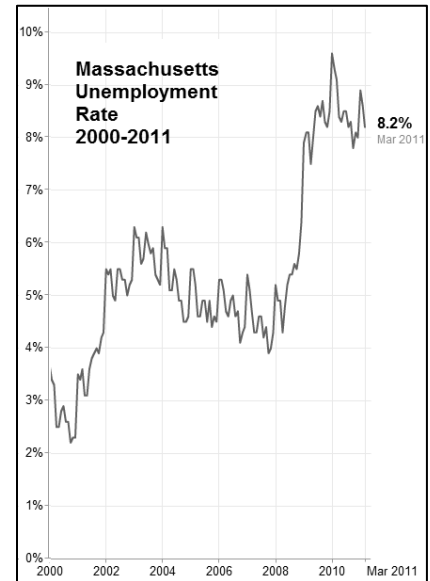
Three years into the Great Recession, Massachusetts is facing its third year of state and local budget cutbacks. There is a shortfall of \$2 billion at the state level. Joblessness is at 8%, up from 4-5% before the crash.

While House Republicans and President Obama have dueling budgets, neither are looking seriously at where much of the nation's money is spent – our outsized military. Saving a trillion by military cuts would be easy. Expensive and redundant weapons systems, unnecessary foreign bases, futile wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya, nuclear weapons, mercenaries, the size of our standing army, are all great opportunities to save money and divert it to where it's needed most.

In the State House, Peace Action has joined with a coalition of labor and human service



groups to support "An Act to Invest in Our Communities", introduced by Sen. Sonia Chang-Diaz and Rep. Jim O'Day, which would provide \$1.2 billion in new revenue by shifting the tax burden onto those most able to afford it. Please contact your Rep. and ask him or her to support the Act. More info: <http://bit.ly/fX4TKm>



Joining with the Massachusetts Coalition to Fund Our Communities / Reduce Military Spending 25%, Peace Action was on the streets of Brookline, Belmont, Somerville, Natick and Boston in April spreading the word, asking passers-by how our tax dollars should be spent by playing the "budget game", and collecting petition signatures (*Davis Square, left*). Contact the office to find out how you can get involved!

Afghanistan Decision Looms

When President Obama announced in December 2009 that he would escalate the Afghanistan war by sending 30,000 additional troops, he promised the American people that troop withdrawals would start in July 2011. More recently, he said in Lisbon in November 2010 that the war will be turned over to Afghans by the end of 2014.

It will soon be time for the President to follow through on his commitment and start drawing down troops to reduce the U.S. commitment in Afghanistan. How large a withdrawal will Obama announce?

Although Osama bin Laden has been killed, there is no sign that the Administration is rethinking its quest to control Afghanistan and Central Asia. Similarly, Senator John Kerry, in a May 1 op-ed in the *Boston Globe*, showed that he remains locked in the assumption that it is up to the United States to determine the future of Afghanistan. "Do we need to build a democratic Afghanistan that can secure its borders and deliver services to its citizens? Or is it enough to create an Afghan state — undemocratic, corrupt, or otherwise — that will still deny sanctuary to extremist groups that could harm the United States and its allies?" Kerry wrote.

Mass. Peace Action, UJP and Veterans for Peace are keeping up the pressure on Kerry to set an early date for troop withdrawals from Afghanistan. We hold a vigil the third Wednesday of every month outside Kerry's downtown Boston office.

Democratic Town committees are supporting a resolution calling for an end to the Afghanistan War at the Massachusetts Democratic Issues Convention to be held in Lowell June 3-4. Peace Action is enthusiastically supporting their effort.



Antiwar Protest, JFK Federal Bldg, Dec. 2010

What Would St. Patrick Do?

A pleasant surprise awaited members of Mass. Peace Action and the hundreds of other peaceniks who marched through South Boston in the St. Patrick's Day Peace Parade on March 20: the response from Southie residents and their guests—many sporting green clothes, green hair, green beer—was overwhelmingly positive. People applauded, danced to our band, cheered, high-fived with marchers. Thumbs up greatly outnumbered the few thumbs down and “fingers.”



The central slogan of the Peace Parade was “Bring Our Troops Home and Take Care of Them When They Get Here.” Led by Veterans for PPeace and also including an exuberantly noisy LGBT contingent, the Peace Parade had to step off a mile behind the “official” parade marshaled by the Allied War Veterans' Council. Years ago a judicial ruling declared the parade a private event, so that the Council can exclude the unwanted. It doesn't want “peace” associated with “veterans”—“too political”, as if war is not political. People of different sexuality have also been excluded, even those of Irish descent. A woman from Milton writing to the *Boston Globe* wondered which “pious, gentle” St. Patrick would choose: the AWVC's parade, “which glorifies war,” or the unofficial one. She concluded that “he would march with the Veterans for Peace.”

Irish or not, that's what many peace activists did. Our reward was 3½ miles of smiles and cheers, a hopeful sign that popular opinion is increasingly turning against war. —Eva Moseley

Carol Anello, an exemplary peace leader from Needham, died April 27. She persuaded her Congressman, Joseph Moakley, to take bold positions. Through a local activist group, Friends of Central American People, and Jim McGovern, who was then Moakley's aide, she influenced Moakley's thinking on Central America; he went on to lead Congressional opposition to the Contra war. She then convinced Moakley to sign on to the Nuclear Weapons Freeze. Carol taught us that to make a difference, knowing your Congressional office is essential. She was an inspiring leader and a thoughtful friend. We miss her quiet persistence.



Festival for a Nuclear-Free Future

An afternoon of family-friendly activities will showcase the need to end the nuclear age, which started exactly 66 years before this day in the desert of New Mexico. We will have music, banners, large puppets, games to visualize the costs of nuclear weapons and nuclear energy, some short talks, a world map showing the numbers of nuclear weapons and the regional nuclear-free zones, tabling, petitions, handouts. The idea is to show how people can do their part in bringing an end to the nuclear age.

Saturday, July 16, 2011, 2-5 pm
Copley Square, Boston

The focus will be on nuclear weapons and nuclear energy: accidental nuclear war, the new nuclear buildup, nuclear proliferation and terrorism, nuclear material disposal, dangers inherent to nuclear energy, lessons of Fukushima, and Pilgrim license renewal. **MOST OF ALL**, we want to focus on the positive: what individuals and groups can do, and are needed to do; what has already been accomplished in terms of weapons reduction, nuclear-free zones, and scrutiny of nuclear power plants; and issues, ideas, plans and strategies for the next year or so.



The festival will be sponsored by the Nuclear Abolition Task Force of United for Justice with Peace, Massachusetts Peace Action, American Friends Service Committee, and Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. We are seeking potential co-sponsors with similar goals, to help us flesh out the ideas, and to share the work and satisfaction of making it happen. —Guntram Mueller

The Afghanistan War in Washington

Thursday, May 19, 2011

All Saints Parish, 1773 Beacon St., Brookline

Matthew Hoh, a Tufts graduate and former Marine officer and State Department representative in Afghanistan, left the government over Afghanistan and now heads the Afghanistan Study Group, a Washington group of scholars and analysts.



President Obama promised the American people that troop withdrawals from Afghanistan would start in July 2011. How large a withdrawal will he announce? How can we affect the decision? Why does militarism drive U.S. policy in Afghanistan, Libya and elsewhere?

MASSACHUSETTS Peace Action

is a nonprofit, nonpartisan grassroots organization building the sustained political power to foster a more just and peaceful U.S. foreign policy. Our priority issues in 2011 are abolishing nuclear weapons, ending the war in Afghanistan, and creating an economy that meets human & environmental needs rather than military objectives. We are an affiliate of Peace Action, the nation's largest grassroots peace and justice organization. Our work is funded entirely by membership dues and donations from our members. Thank you for your support.

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Maura Clifford, Simmons
Bridget Kostigen, Newton
Country Day School

Summer 2011

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Manu Moritz, Macalester College

Disaster at Fukushima



by Gary Goldstein, Massachusetts Peace Action Education Fund board member and Professor of Physics, Tufts University

Despite many initial assurances after the disaster at the Japanese nuclear reactors that they would be brought under control and that any radiation emissions would be well below safety thresholds, circumstances were quite different. As I write this, six weeks after the catastrophic combination of an enormous earthquake and an unbelievable tsunami struck northeast Japan, the reactors are not under control. Efforts to restore the three reactors to a safe level have been improvised, given that the series of problems that have occurred were unanticipated. From the start, the essential pumps for the cooling water were not working and backup systems were inadequate. The lack of emergency power also implied that the monitors for the conditions of the reactors were not working, leaving the operators in the dark, literally and figuratively.

Under those conditions heat built up in the reactor cores and in the storage facilities for the spent fuel. Without cooling, the fuel rods melted, causing major damage to the containment structures. The intensely hot liquid metal is extremely radioactive and can melt and fracture everything in its environs. By the 3rd day sea water was being poured into the reactor containment vessels. Water in contact with the melting fuel turns to steam that lofts up into the clouds. Clouds carry radioactive particles with the winds and deposit those particles with the rain. This fallout covers soil, pastureland, and farms, getting into the food chain. Such emissions continue, even as efforts to cool the reactors go on.

Radioactive substances are being dispersed within the atmosphere over much of the northern hemisphere. Fallout is spreading radioactivity wherever the contaminated rain falls. Large leaks of radioactive water into the ocean are occurring, contaminating sea life. Do contaminated fish make their way to markets in Alaska and the US West Coast?

Measurements of increased levels of radioactive Iodine and Cesium in New England are reported. The levels are far below concern at this time, but radioactive substances are still being spewed into the air above Fukushima Daiichi. Cesium 137 will continue to build up on the ground here as long as the reactors are uncontrolled. There is no reason to be sanguine. Even the spokesman for the company that runs the reactors said that it will take months to adequately cool the reactors and fuel storage pools.

US advocates of nuclear power claim that we have better safety systems. Perhaps in principle that is correct. One problem is that real oversight by the NRC is not adequate. Secondly, the safety systems are very complex, as we see in Japan, and failure of one part of the system can produce unforeseen results for which there are no straightforward remedies. Third, and perhaps most important, safety systems are very expensive. Owners and operators are concerned about costs and cut corners wherever they can. There are no ideal nuclear reactors. The series of catastrophes at Fukushima Daiichi could happen at many of the US over aged reactors under unexpected stresses. Proper disposal of reactor waste remains an unsolved problem; dangerous levels of the most radioactive waste builds up at reactor sites and requires constant cooling, which failed in Japan.

With all of these problems it is hard to understand the government's support for an expansion of nuclear power. On top of all the risks that make the safety requirements vital, the government plans to provide insurance, since it can't be purchased on the private market, and to guarantee that taxpayers will assume liability for damages. What should be happening now is a thorough examination of the existing reactors and their safety systems. Aged reactors like Vermont Yankee should be decommissioned. After 25 or 30 years the structures that contain the reactor cores have been degraded by continual exposure to radiation. It is seen in Fukushima that such aged reactor containers are subject to fracturing and cracking, as has apparently happened in at least one of those reactors. What is needed now in the US is a moratorium on nuclear power and a thorough inspection of all 104 reactors. As for Fukushima, we have to hope that some of those improvised attempts to bring the melting reactor fuel under control will succeed, and soon.



MetroWest Peace Action News

On March 8th Walpole Peace and Justice sponsored Alice Rothchild, speaking about her book, *Broken Promises, Broken Dreams*. The event was attended by some 50 people including a local high school history class.



On March 30th Professor Mazin Qumsiyeh presented his slide show about popular non-violent resistance in Palestine. He led a frank and delicate discussion that allowed people to air their views. Pax Christi Metrowest, MetroWest Peace Action and Peace for Palestine sponsored the Natick event.

On Saturday April 16th, members of Walpole Peace and Justice vigiled on the Walpole Common with their military spending budget banner from 10 - 12 and at 1:00 Fund Our Communities tabling began in front of the Natick Library. We distributed literature, sold buttons, had people sign a petition to Congressman Markey and held signs in the brisk air. (Left, Natick tablers on Tax Day, April 18.)

On May 18th at the Millis Library, 25 Auburn Rd., Millis, MetroWest Peace Action will sponsor *View From a Grain of Sand*, a film about Afghan women, at 6 PM. – Carol Coakley

Join Mass. Peace Action!

Contribute, network and learn

Coupled with budget concerns, public awareness that "war is not working" has led to a growing national desire to re-orient national priorities toward peace, human rights and an equitable society "back home." MAPA is working to translate that shift into changes in U.S. foreign and domestic (budget) policy.

The best way to accomplish our goals is to grow our membership statewide. Membership provides consistent support for our educational and advocacy work – through dues and volunteer action. But membership is also a great deal: for \$40 a year (\$10 for students and unemployed), you get national newsletters, information about MAPA events, and opportunities to learn. As a member, you can help MAPA's committees, and participate as part of a national Peace Action network with close to 100,000 members like you.

"Organizational members" are allied groups from peace, religious, labor, social justice and environmental areas that receive Peace Action support and resources for a \$75 annual membership fee.

Join us! We need your help and participation.



Are you long on time but short on cash? No problem; Mass Peace Action's volunteer brigade welcomes you with open arms. No experience necessary; just enthusiasm and a willingness to help with the nuts and bolts of operating your local grassroots peace organization.

We are always looking for extra hands to assist us in holding signs at visibilities, gathering signatures at literature tables, setting up and managing ticket and book sales at speaking events and concerts, preparing and sending out membership mailings, doing data entry in the office, and much more.

Just call or email us and tell us your skills and available dates and times. The more the merrier!

Legacy of Peace

Peace Action Education Fund's Legacy of Peace program assists members and supporters by providing information on planned giving options.

The Program offers a number of useful pamphlets free of charge:

- *Reflecting on Tomorrow*
- *37 Things People "Know" About Wills That Aren't Really So*
- *How to Make a Will that Works*
- *Better Estate Planning*

Write to Peace Action, 11 Garden St., Cambridge, MA 02138 to receive your copy of one or all of these pamphlets.

Lobbying for Peace

Massachusetts Peace Action delegations have been visiting Congressional offices this spring. We want them to remember that we are watching and getting the word out about their votes.

In February, Carol Coakley, Shelagh Foreman, and Cole Harrison visited the offices of Reps. Tsongas, McGovern, and Markey; Sen. Brown; and the Foreign Relations Committee, which Sen. Kerry chairs. We discussed the need to audit the Pentagon, pushed for an end date for withdrawal from Afghanistan, asked what victory in Afghanistan really means, and asked about cutting the \$185 billion nuclear weapons complex and delivery systems modernization.

We thanked Sen. Brown's aide for the vote for the new START Treaty. Kerry's Foreign Relations Committee staff said that the torrent of calls organized by disarmament groups about the New START Treaty made a perceptible difference in the tone.

Back in Massachusetts, Coakley and Jobs for Afghans met with Rep. Tierney to discuss a "Marshall Plan" for Afghans. We thanked Congressman Tierney for investigating contractor payouts and for continuing to ask tough questions about the Afghan war.

Guntram Mueller and Cole Harrison represented Mass. Peace Action in Washington in April at the Alliance for Nuclear Accountability's DC Days. The ANA group met with Rep. Tsongas (*center*) and with staff for Reps. Capuano, Keating, Tierney, Lynch, Markey, and Olver; Sens. Brown and Lieberman; the Foreign Relations Committee; and the State Department.

Join a delegation and help monitor your members of Congress! Our Congressional Scorecard is at <http://bit.ly/gDnajo>.

