



Winter Olympics Offer Hope for Peace

by Michael VanElzakker

From the 2018 Winter Olympics stadium in South Korea to TV rooms across the globe, millions of viewers cheered the extraordinary sight of North and South Korean athletes and citizens marching together under banners depicting a unified Korean Peninsula. The Olympic games have provided a welcome “truce” in this season of nuclear saber-rattling and have offered a ray of hope that the Korean crisis might be resolved through peaceful means.

In our home state, Mass. Peace Action held “watch parties” in several communities for the Opening Ceremonies in PyeongChang on Feb. 9th. We witnessed the Korean crowd’s ecstatic cheers and the standing ovation for the North and South unity march, while stone-faced, hawkish US Vice-President Pence refused to stand or clap for their entrance.

We have launched an “Athletes for Peace in Korea” petition. (See link at end of article.) Anyone who self-identifies as an athlete or former athlete is encouraged to sign this call for the US Olympic Committee to support de-escalation, negotiation, and a formal peace treaty to finally end the Korean War, which is still only in a state of armistice, now entering its 65th year.

The 2018 Olympic games are taking place at a precarious time in our world’s history, when we have come closer to



a catastrophic, perhaps nuclear, war than most people realize. Since Trump took office, he has been recklessly escalating tensions with the nuclear-armed DPRK government in North Korea, both exaggerating that government’s intentions and attempting to provoke it.

The US, Japan, and Republic of Korea (South Korea) have agreed to postpone temporarily the massive military exercises they conduct several times a year off the coast of the Korean peninsula. But there are ominous signs that the US is poised to resume its threatening posture soon after the games are over. On the same day as the opening ceremonies, the Trump Administration moved the supercarrier USS Carl Vinson to Korea’s East Sea (Sea of Japan) coast. And before the Olympics began, the Administration also deployed an amphibious assault ship, (capable of carrying more than 30 F-35s) and several nuclear-capable stealth bombers to Guam.

Meanwhile, we carry on in the trenches. For the past several months, our Nuclear Disarmament Working Group has been active in promoting our “No War With Korea!” public education campaign.

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See page 2 for newsletter Table of Contents

cont’d on page 2

Winter Olympics *cont'd from page 1*

In October, Mass. Peace Action co-sponsored a screening of “Memory of Forgotten War,” a documentary by Korean-American filmmaker and academic Ramsey Liem.

After the screening, Dr. Jill Stein reported on her recent trip to South Korea; she described working with the peace activists there who oppose the installation of the US-made THAAD anti-missile system. This film screening was so popular that we are planning to do it again soon.

Later in October, we invited the excellent Korea-raised investigative journalist Tim Shorrock to attend a rally and give a talk. Tim is a frequent contributor to *The Nation* and his astute writings are highly recommended. We also hosted the Korean musician and peace activist Joyakgol who gave an inspiring presentation.

In November, Mass Peace Action co-sponsored a talk at Boston College by the US’s leading historian of Korea, Prof. Bruce Cumings from the History Department at the University of Chicago. Over 250 attended, mostly students. Prof. Cumings’ book *The Korean War: A History* is both accessible and crucial for understanding the current political situation in Korea.

We hold frequent rallies calling for “No War With Korea!” and “Negotiate Don’t Invade!” and “Stop Spending on Wars and Reinvest in Our Communities!” We urge all people who care about peace and justice to join us. Now is the time to become informed and engaged. Nuclear war is not inevitable. Peace is possible.

To sign petition Athletes for Peace, go to: <http://masspeaceaction.org/athletes-for-peace-open-letter-to-the-u-s-olympic-committee/>

—*Michael VanElzakker is a research fellow in psychiatry at Mass. General Hospital, where he studies post traumatic stress disorder in veterans.*

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Winter Olympics	1
Peace Calendar	2
Presidential First Strike	3
Women’s March	4
Boycott Victory	5
Student Organizing	6
Middle East	7
Board Candidates	8
Annual Meeting	9
Sixtieth Anniversary	9
Poor People’s Campaign	10
Beyond Boston	11
Lobby Day	12
Join Us	12

Peace and Justice Calendar

Mar 17: MAPA Annual Meeting:
Resisting War, Poverty, and Racism
12-5pm First Church in Cambridge, 11 Garden St.

Mar 21: Memory of Forgotten War (film on Korean War)
Remarks by Prof. Paul Atwood; 7pm, Morse Institute
Library, 14 E. Central St., Natick

Mar 24: March for Our Lives -- 12 noon, Boston Common

Mar 26: The Occupation of the American Mind (film)
6-8:30pm Cambridge Main Library, 449 Broadway

Apr 05: Medea Benjamin: Inside Iran-book talk & signing
7 pm, University Lutheran, 66 Winthrop St, Camb.

Apr 07: Conference--Minds Not Missiles:
Reducing the Threat of Nuclear War
9-5pm MIT, Bldg 34-101 at 50 Vassar St, Cambridge

Apr 07: Poor People’s Campaign Town Hall Meeting
10 am, 1199SEIU, 108 Myrtle St, Quincy

Apr 12: A Call to Action:
Faith Communities & the Poor People’s Campaign
St Paul’s AME Christian Life Center,
85 Bishop Richard Allen Drive, Cambridge

Apr 14: Tax Day Rally: Repeal the Trump Tax,
Pass the People’s Budget
12pm Cambridge Common

Apr 16: Shout Heard Round the World
10am-6pm Lexington, MA,
March to Hanscom Air Force Base.

Apr 21: Music for Peace: Chamber Music Boston
7:30pm Harvard-Epworth Methodist Church,
1555 Mass. Ave, Cambridge

Apr 26: How to Get Press for Peace & Progressive Issues
7:00 pm, location TBA.
Jason Pramas and Chris Farone

Restrict the President's First Strike Power

by Jonathan King

In the face of escalating tensions between the US and North Korea, two conferences held in the fall and winter took steps forward in the struggle for political sanity and nuclear disarmament. Responding to Trump's threat that his finger was on the nuclear launch button, Mass. Peace Action and allied organizations co-sponsored an important conference, attended by more than 200 people, at Harvard University on November 4th: "Presidential First Strike: Is it Legal? Is it Constitutional? Is it Just?"

A number of leading constitutional experts and Cold War scholars addressed these questions throughout the day. The gathering, organized by Prof. Elaine Scarry with assistance from the author, Cole Harrison, and Mike VanElzakker, was the first in decades to explicitly challenge the President's right to launch a nuclear attack without Congressional authorization. At the center of the program discussions was the Constitutional mandate in Article 1, Section 8: "The Congress shall have the power...to declare war."

Many of the panelists expressed deep concern, even more severe since Trump's election, that the President has the power to launch a nuclear war unilaterally. "This unthinkable level of injury resides in the hands of a solitary person," noted Scarry.

One of the more eye-opening presentations came during the final panel from former US Defense Secretary William Perry. He described his successful negotiation, at the end of President Clinton's tenure, of an agreement with North Korea that it would relinquish its development of nuclear weapons in exchange for humanitarian aid and reduction of sanctions. Tragically, when George Bush was elected, he unilaterally abrogated the agreement.

Rep. Jim McGovern and Senator Ed Markey both spoke passionately about the dangers inherent in the current

situation and called for revival of a grassroots movement to pressure Congress to act. The Conference closed with a call urging participants to solicit additional sponsors and support for the Markey-Lieu bill, S200 Restricting First Use of Nuclear Weapons Act of 2017.

Don't Bank on the Bomb

Another approach to addressing the nuclear danger was presented in the Jan. 27th conference on "Divesting from the Business of Nuclear Weapons." It put forward the "Don't Bank on the Bomb" campaign, which was initiated

in the Netherlands and has recently had significant success. The Dutch Civil Servants National Pension Fund and the Norway National Pension Fund Global decided to divest their holdings from corporations manufacturing nuclear weapons, as well as banks that invest in such corporations. Lucas Perry described software developed by the Future of Life Institute to determine which US funds are invested in nuclear weapons corporations.

The local event was co-sponsored by the Cambridge Peace Commission, held at the Cambridge Main Library, and chaired by Cambridge City Councilor Dennis Carlone. He reminded the audience of the unanimous passage

by the Cambridge City Council of an order for the Municipal Pension Fund to divest its holdings from stocks in corporations manufacturing nuclear weapons. The majority of such holdings are in Lockheed-Martin stock. This order has been put on hold by the intervention of the state pension board.

The board's action was similar to obstacles set up to inhibit earlier divestment campaigns, such as those directed against the former South Africa apartheid government and tobacco manufacturers. In both cases, legislative overrides were eventually passed supporting divestment.



Harvard Prof. Elaine Scarry

cont'd on page 4

The Women's March Was a Rousing Success!

by Michelle Cunha

The mood was festive and the weather was warm. About 15,000 people descended on the Cambridge Common on January 20 for the Cambridge / Boston Women's March. Grassroots speakers talked about trans rights, disability rights, immigration, Islamophobia, women in the Middle East, the high cost of the military, and many more topics. Several well-known local politicians also had the opportunity to speak, including state Attorney General Maura Healy, Rep. Mike Connolly, and Rep. Marjorie Decker.

For Mass. Peace Action, this was an opportunity to get our message out to those who generally don't hear it. I spoke about how the high cost of the military is sucking up all our tax dollars at the expense of basic human needs; how the rich don't pay their taxes, instead hiding their money in overseas accounts; and how we must repatriate the money to fund our social safety net.

MAPA Board member Valentine Moghadam spoke about women in the Middle East and their needs: not to be bombed, not to be disparaged for veiling, and to live in a region that is safe and free from outside foreign interests



Savina Martin

Other speakers included Savina Martin, Mass. co-chair of the Poor People's Campaign, and MAPA Board member (and city councilor) Denise Simmons.

The January Coalition, the ad hoc group that planned the Women's March, was made up of Boston Persists—Events for the Resistance, Cambridge Area Stronger Together, Cambridge-Somerville for Change, Human Rights Festival, Indivisible Mystic Valley, Indivisible Somerville, March Forward Massachusetts, Massachusetts Peace Action, Massachusetts People's Budget Campaign, and New England Independence Campaign.

The day ended without any arrests or injuries. A small group of counter protesters were escorted off the Common by the day's Peace Keepers, members of The January coalition and Veterans for Peace. Once the toxicity of their message was drowned out by the love of our message – intersectionality – the day was a rousing success.

--Michelle Cunha, assistant director of Mass. Peace Action, was a key member of the January Coalition that planned the Women's March.

Restrict Presidential First Strike *cont'd from page 3*

State Rep. Mike Connolly announced that he planned to introduce equivalent legislation with respect to corporations manufacturing nuclear weapons for the 2019 legislative session. An organizing committee was constituted to guide the effort, and will be working on gathering legislative co-sponsors in the late fall, after the November elections.

Conference speakers included Lindsay Koshgarian of the National Priorities Project, Shelagh Foreman of Mass Peace Action, Lucas Perry of Future of Life Institute, Sarah Eckel-Dalrymple from Code Pink, Rev. Herb Taylor of Harvard Epworth Church, Richard Krushnic of the Institute for People's Engagement, Rep. Connolly, and the author.

—Jonathan King is the chair of MAPA's Nuclear Disarmament Working Group.



From left: Sen. Ed Markey, Elaine Scarry, Cole Harrison, Rep. Jim McGovern, and Jonathan King at Presidential First Strike Conference, November 2017. Photo by Michelle Cunha.



A Massachusetts Victory for the Right to Boycott

by Eva Moseley

MAPA activists, as part of the Joint Advocacy Group (JAG), were able to claim a significant victory on Feb. 7, when a committee of the state legislature sent a bill they opposed to “study,” in effect to legislative oblivion. JAG, consisting of the Alliance for Water Justice in Palestine, Jewish Voice for Peace Boston, and MAPA, was formed in 2016 specifically to oppose an anti-BDS bill.

The BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions) movement uses these non-violent methods to try to change Israeli policies toward the Palestinians. The Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) wrote and promoted the anti-BDS bill, “An Act to Prohibit Discrimination in State Contracts,” on its face an anti-discrimination bill (and so redundant, its stipulations already in state law) but, as JCRC documents made plain, designed to suppress BDS.

JAG mounted a well-organized and sustained campaign, focused largely on lobbying: primarily members of the joint committee to which the bill had been assigned and also other influential legislators. The main arguments were that boycotts are constitutionally protected speech; if enacted, this law would be virtually impossible to administer (similar laws passed in other states are being challenged in court); Israel is as open to criticism as any other country; such criticism is not anti-Semitic; BDS is not only explicitly opposed to all forms of discrimination but is not aimed mainly at Israeli companies (the argument that it is “national origin” discrimination is irrelevant): its targets are companies that profit by the Israeli occupation, such as Caterpillar, Hewlett-Packard, and Airbnb.

This bill is dead for the current session, which ends next January. We remain vigilant: at least three governors, following failure of legislation, have issued executive orders outlawing BDS; we aim to make sure Charlie Baker doesn’t join them.

We are also turning our attention back to Congress, mainly to promote one bill and oppose another. The good bill is HR 4391, to end Israeli detention of Palestinian children, sponsored by Rep. Betty McCollum (Dem, MN); so far, of our delegation only Rep. Jim McGovern has co-sponsored; if you’re not in the 2nd C.D., please ask your Representative to sign on. The bad bill is a particularly punitive version of an anti-BDS law: H.1697, S.720, Israel Anti-Boycott Act, co-sponsored by 270 Representatives and 51 Senators, about 2/3 in each house being Republicans. Neither Mass. Senator has co-sponsored; Reps. Kennedy and Neal have. Thank the Senators, and your Rep. if it is neither of those two; if Kennedy or Neal, ask him to withdraw sponsorship.

Our long-term goal is to change US policy toward Israel. The current administration is only making things worse, promising to move the US embassy to Jerusalem; cutting support for UNRWA, which supports the Palestinians; claiming that it is the Palestinians who are unwilling to negotiate; and sending a biased and incompetent ambassador. But times are changing: even many American Jews question Israeli policies. Let’s convince our public officials to catch up with public opinion.

—Eva Moseley is a member of MAPA’s Palestine-Israel Working Group.

Supporting Our Student Leaders

by Caitlin Forbes



I was recently on a phone call with a potential student organizer. We had reviewed what was involved in this role and chatted about her interest in the peace movement. We were just about to wrap up, when she asked if there was anything else she should know. I paused for a moment, and then found myself saying yes, yes there was another important thing she should know. I noted that she would need to have a thick skin and a sense of humor. That building a peace chapter from the ground up requires a lot of trial and error. That we sometimes get frustrated and need to be able to laugh it off and start fresh. That we often worry we're not doing enough and it's easy to get overwhelmed or disheartened in today's political landscape. I explained that this wasn't easy work but it had the potential to make a profound impact. I pointed out some of the accomplishments of our current chapters and promised I would be there as support every step of the way.

As the student outreach coordinator for Mass. Peace Action, I get to spend my weeknights and weekends chatting with high school and college students, hearing about their goals and their passion for the peace movement. I support them when they feel disheartened and look for solutions to their frustrations. Last semester, I spent a lot of time thinking about these students and the challenges they face as organizers. I've

been so impressed by their fortitude. I'm determined to provide them with more support, more resources, and more ideas. The point of this article is to ask you, Massachusetts Peace Action members and supporters, to remember our student leaders and to support them however you can.

- Consider donating to the MAPA education fund and targeting your donation to the Steven Brion-Meisels Youth Fellowship. Your contribution helps students host the events I discuss below and allows them a modest stipend in recognition of their work. It also helps us recruit fantastic new leaders and grow this youth network.
- Send me names and emails of potential student leaders from any schools (high schools or colleges) in Massachusetts. We need new, energetic and committed students to join our cause.
- Connect me with faculty, resources or speakers that can support our students. They always need to raise awareness about their work, which means they need well-known speakers, resources that provide ideas about organizing, and support from professors on their campuses.
- To help, contact me at: caitlin@masspeaceaction.org

Student Chapter Update

Now that we're into the spring semester, we're taking stock of our student chapters, led by our fantastic student leaders who balance busy course loads and extracurricular activities while leading peace chapters committed to supporting MAPA's issues.

Highlights from this semester include some major speaker events at multiple campuses: Trita Parsi, academic, author and activist, spoke at Tufts, BC and Suffolk on the future of the Iran nuclear deal; Bruce Cumings, a distinguished historian, spoke at Boston College on the source of the North Korea conflict; and Emmanuel College and BC hosted Tim Shorrock, an investigative journalist and labor activist, to review the relationship between the US and North Korea.

I was lucky enough to attend Brandeis' campaign launch where they rallied new club members around three core

focus areas: No to the \$1.7 Trillion Nuclear Escalation! End the Endless Wars in the Middle East! and Support the People's Budget! The Brandeis club's decision to establish sub-groups to tackle different issues is meant to increase their reach and spread responsibility and leadership roles across the group.

We have a few new student leaders working with us this spring: We partnered with student Annie Tsan at Boston Latin to support her club as a MAPA chapter. Maddie Bohm took over leadership of our Newton North chapter and has been hosting regular meetings while planning multiple spring events. Suffolk University launched this spring, led by Lucy Giordano. And Ashley Squires has helped confirm an official partnership with UMass Lowell's Peace and Conflict club. Newton South is still active and in the process of considering next year's

cont'd on p. 7

Student Chapter Update *cont'd from p. 6*

leadership once Kimia Tabatabaei, our three-year chapter president, graduates.

Finally, we have also reached into New Hampshire where Siena Moskin is working to start a chapter at Hollis Brookline High School. We will be working alongside New Hampshire Peace Action to help her launch this effort.

All told, we currently have chapters or student leaders at ten schools working to help us build the peace

movement. While this is fantastic, we need to keep building this effort in order to be sustainable and allow for ebbs and flows in interest.

Please consider whether you know a student leader—from any high school or college in Massachusetts—who might want to get involved. We'd especially like to find students from Northeastern, BU, Harvard, and Emerson.

--Caitlin Forbes is the student outreach coordinator for Mass. Peace Action.

End War Without End in the Middle East

by Prasannan Parthasarathi

MAPA's Middle East work is focused at the moment on Iran, Syria, and Yemen. On Iran, we are defending the nuclear deal (in official parlance, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action or JCPO) as part of an effort to prevent a war between Iran and either the US or Israel. With respect to Syria, we continue to support an immediate cease-fire and a negotiated settlement. We are also pushing for the withdrawal of US forces and the cessation of US military actions, since both are leading to tensions with Russia and Iran. Finally, Yemen is facing a humanitarian crisis. We are calling for the US to withdraw support for the Saudi war on that country. This raises the issue of the US-Saudi Alliance, which is coming under growing criticism in Congress.

Our work on Iran consists of ongoing public education. In October, MAPA's own Kimia Tabatabaei and Brenton Stoddart reported back on their respective trips--Brenton on his months in Jordan and Palestine and Kimia on working and visiting her family in Tehran and rural Iran. In early November, Trita Parsi, a leading expert on US-Iran relations, spoke at area universities and delivered a public lecture at Suffolk on his just published book, *Losing an Enemy: Obama, Iran, and the Triumph of Diplomacy*. Parsi told audiences that the Obama Administration imposed sanctions in the hopes that restrictions on Iranian economic activity would cripple its nuclear efforts. Sanctions were ineffective, however, and Iran was on track to develop a nuclear bomb. The Obama administration's options were to face a nuclear-armed Iran or take the diplomatic route. Thankfully for us, given MAPA's support for total nuclear

disarmament, Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry opted for diplomacy. The Iran nuclear deal holds important lessons on the power of dialogue and negotiation. These lessons are even more crucial, given the ongoing US diplomatic blunders with North Korea.

On Syria, we continue to push the US to play a peaceful role in that conflict. The most important recent development was a bipartisan letter, cosponsored by Rep. Jim McGovern, calling upon House Speaker Paul Ryan to schedule a Congressional debate and vote on an Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF) before committing US military forces to battle in Syria. The US presence in that country is justified under two AUMFs. The first, passed in the wake of 9/11, authorized a war on al-Qaeda and the second, passed in October 2002, gave the green light to the invasion of Iraq. Neither has standing in the fight against ISIS or government forces in Syria.

On Yemen, MAPA is working hard to end the crisis in that country. We have sponsored events to raise awareness of the destructive Saudi-led air war, the displacement of millions of civilians, and the malnutrition and disease which are now rampant. In February Shireen Al-Adeimi, a Yemeni graduate student at Harvard spoke at a forum in Cambridge. We are now gathering signatures on a community leaders letter to our congressional delegation calling upon them to support H. Con. Res. 81, a bipartisan bill introduced by Representatives Ro Khanna (D-CA), Thomas Massie (R-KY), Mark Pocan (D-WI), and Walter Jones (R-NC), that aims to end U.S. support for the

cont'd on page 8

Dynamic candidates run for 2018 MAPA Board

by *Matthew Jourlait*

MAPA's members will fill nine board seats at our Annual Meeting on March 17. The board's 18 elected members serve two-year, staggered terms. In addition, the board has student and youth representatives. The 2018 Board nominees are:

New Candidates Running for Election:



Michael VanElzakker, Somerville

Michael is a research fellow in psychiatry at Mass. General Hospital, where he studies post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). He feels especially drawn to peace and justice activism by seeing the profound effects that violence and war can have on the

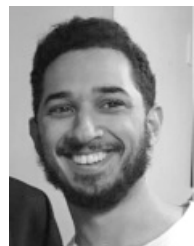
human psyche. He is now a leading member of our Nuclear Disarmament working group, and is active in MAPA's work to promote peace on the Korean peninsula. He is a member of the Democratic Socialists of America.



Jeff Napolitano, Springfield

Jeff has been a key peace organizer in the Pioneer Valley, where he directed the Western Massachusetts office of the American Friends Service Committee until it closed in 2017. He now leads the launch of the Resistance Center for Peace and Justice, which

continues the work of AFSC-WM. He is deeply committed to racial justice. Recently, Jeff has given presentations on how to stop the military from gaining access to students and their information.



Jared Hicks, Dorchester

Jared is a 26-year-old millennial. He volunteered for Bernie Sanders' Presidential campaign and was a Bernie delegate at the 2016 Democratic National Convention. He is a new member of the Boston Democratic Ward 17 committee and is honored to serve the political

revolution. He will forever feel the BERN. He is a founding member of Our Revolution Massachusetts (ORMA) and of Our Revolution Boston and serves on ORMA's Representative Council. He is also active in Dorchester People for Peace and works for the Massachusetts Nurses Association.

Newly Appointed as a Youth Representative:



Brenton Stoddart

graduated from Allegheny College with a B.A. in Political Science and a minor in Middle East and North African Studies. His passion for social justice issues worldwide led him to spend five months in Jordan, where he studied the local language, culture,

and customs. He gives talks at college campuses and local churches, based on his experiences, in order to humanize the Arab world and challenge rising Islamophobia in the US. He interned at Mass. Peace Action in 2016, works at Sensico Systems, and organizes in Congressional District 3 to advocate for peace.

Current Board Members Running for Re-election: Jaime Babson, Shelagh Foreman, Jonathan King, Eva Moseley, Prasannan Parthasarathi, and John Ratliff.

—*Matthew Jourlait is a freshman at Tufts University and an intern at Massachusetts Peace Action.*

End War Without End in Middle East *cont'd from page 7*

Saudi-led coalition in Yemen. Please add your name to this letter, which can be found at masspeaceaction.org/end-yemens-suffering-sign or bit.ly/end-yemen-suffering. A Senate vote on the comparable S.J.Res.54 is expected in March.

The Yemen issue shines a spotlight on the US-Saudi alliance, which is no longer sacrosanct in Congress. In March Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the architect of the Saudi/Emirati/US war on Yemen, will be visiting MIT. MAPA plans to be there. Stay tuned and join us when we greet the butcher of Yemen.

—*Prasannan Parthasarathi is the Middle East Working Group co-chair at Mass. Peace Action.*

Annual Meeting: Resisting War, Poverty and Racism!

We are one year into the Trump presidency, and the prospects for peace seem more dim than ever. Nuclear war becomes more likely as the crisis in Korea continues; the US-Saudi assault on Yemen has created one of the world's worst humanitarian crises; and spending on defense is growing rapidly as programs for social good are threatened. It is more important than ever for citizens to stand up and demand an end to militarism and a turn towards peace.

To address these urgent issues, Massachusetts Peace Action members will gather for our:



**Annual Meeting on Saturday, March 17, 2018
12:00 noon (lunch) to 5:00 pm
at the First Church in Cambridge, 11 Garden Street.
We will hear from two keynote speakers:
Jeffrey Sachs and Savina Martin.**



Sachs, a Columbia University professor who is one of the world's leading voices on economic development and the fight against poverty, will speak on "Endless War and the War Economy."

Savina Martin, co-chair of the Massachusetts Poor People's Campaign, was president of the Boston Union of the Homeless and a national coordinating team member. She works extensively with homelessness organizations, and as a veteran and a woman of color, works particularly with homeless women veterans.

Workshops will address nuclear disarmament, the Korean nuclear crisis, Middle East wars, Israel/Palestine, the Poor People's Campaign, and the 2018 elections.

In the business meeting, members will review and be asked to approve the organization's program plan, hear a finance report, and elect board members.

Registration and literature tables will open at noon, and lunch will be served. The keynote speakers will begin at 1:00 pm, workshops at 2:45 pm, and the business meeting at 4:00. The meeting will end at 5:00.

--Cole Harrison, Mass. Peace Action executive director

Peace Action Celebrates Sixty Years! *by Carol Coakley*

Peace Action, the largest grassroots peace group in the nation, began in 1957 when a group of citizens placed an ad in *The New York Times* decrying the effects of nuclear testing. In response, numerous anti-nuclear groups sprang up across the US, forming SANE: Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy. In the early 1980s, Randy Kehler in western Mass. and other activists started campaigning for a nuclear freeze. SANE and the Freeze merged in the late 1980s; in the 90s the group changed its name to Peace Action; it added ending current wars, and all war, to the goal of nuclear abolition. Some of you were at a big, noisy celebration of the first 60 years in October 2017.

Since the 1990s, Massachusetts Peace Action has been one of the most active chapters of this nationwide organization, emphasizing public education -- via vigils, marches, conferences, publications -- and lobbying our state and Congressional elected officials. Looking ahead to the next 60 years, we will continue to oppose endless war and demand nuclear abolition, with an ongoing emphasis on recruiting young activists.

Very special thanks to our emcee Jimmy Tingle. At the 60th celebration, his narration accompanied slides of historical highlights, punctuated by songs by Kate Seeger and friends, rap by The Foundation Movement, and speakers of all ages. A large and enthusiastic crowd, plus other donors and supporters, made sure that we surpassed our goal of \$60,000 by the end of 2017. They also proved that working for peace can be fun.

Poor People's Campaign takes on the war economy

by Rosemary Kean and Jacqueline King



The Poor People's Campaign rallied at the Mass. State House on February 5th. Photo by Alex Plowden.

In the spirit of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the modern-day Poor People's Campaign is preparing for six weeks of nonviolent civil disobedience this spring to protest ongoing poverty, systemic racism, environmental degradation and the war economy.

This season of moral resistance will begin on May 14, the day after Mother's Day, at state houses here in Boston and across the country, and will wrap up when local delegations travel to a national mobilization at the U.S. Capitol on June 23rd.

"We have come to say clearly that a politics that ignores the poor has gone on far too long, and we will not be silent anymore," said Savina Martin, co-chair of the Massachusetts Poor People's Campaign, at a press conference on the steps of the State House Feb. 5. More than 100 poor people, members of the clergy, community groups, young people, and others gathered there—and at similar press conferences in other states—to demand of state officials that they address deepening poverty in our country. After the press conference, a delegation marched into the offices of the House Speaker and Senate President to deliver letters calling for legislative action to combat poverty and discrimination.

A week later, on the 50th anniversary of the sanitation workers strike that brought Dr. King to Memphis, the campaign participated in a press conference organized

by the Fight for 15 announcing that fast-food workers in Memphis were walking off their jobs to call for higher wages and unions rights.

"The Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival" is a movement currently active in 32 states and the District of Columbia, led by Bishop William J. Barber II who organized the Moral Mondays campaign in North Carolina, and the Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis, co-director of the Kairos Center in New York and longtime organizer in the fight against poverty.

The PPC was formally launched on Dec. 4, 2017, exactly 50 years after King began his Poor People's Campaign in 1967. The renewed PPC is intentionally building on Dr. King's analysis and plans to bring people from all backgrounds across the country together to demand that our political system change its priorities and policies.

A primary purpose of the campaign is to root out false narratives that hold sway in our public dialogue, such as blaming the poor, immigrants, Muslims, or Black people for poverty, unemployment, and crime. The PPC sees that "poverty and economic inequality cannot be understood apart from a society built on white supremacy." The six weeks of direct action across the country will serve to educate participants and the public and will build creative power within the ongoing movement.

The PPC's understanding that ending the US war economy is fundamental to achieving economic, racial, and environmental justice is welcome and energizing for peace activists.

A central tenet of the PPC is that those who are the most affected by the inequities of this society should lead the movement. The campaign is reaching out to those on the margins of society: single mothers struggling in poverty, low-income workers, young people blocked from an education or a job, people of color fighting discrimination and police violence, veterans denied benefits, immigrants facing deportation, and all those who suffer from an economy devoted to feeding a bloated military budget at the expense of meeting basic human needs. At the same time, the campaign seeks out and counts on allies in a wide range of organizations and constituencies. Some Peace Action members have been involved in supporting the campaign since December.

cont'd on page 11

Poor People's Campaign *cont'd from page 10*

Our executive director, Cole Harrison, stepped up to coordinate communications.

We in Mass. Peace Action are greatly encouraged by, and honored to be part of, a movement that recognizes the fundamental truth that no real social and economic equity is possible in a country that spends most of its money on war, and no muscular peace movement is possible without the participation of those most hurt by the war economy. Working for economic and racial justice and working for peace are inextricably linked.

Please contact us here at Mass. Peace Action to join the work of this serious and inspiring movement.

—Rosemary Kean is chair of the Racial Justice Working Group at Mass. Peace Action, an active member of Dorchester People for Peace, and co-chair of the Social Justice Committee of First Church Boston / Unitarian Universalists. Jacqueline King is editor of the Mass. Peace Action newsletter and a former writer and editor for Survival News.



Beyond Boston *by Carol Coakley*

The hardy members of the New England Peace Pagoda will begin, on March 16, their 17th Annual Walk for a New Spring from Leverett MA to Washington DC and back. They look forward to meeting with many peace groups along the way and we look forward to welcoming them back at the Shout Heard Round the World rally in Lexington/Hanscom on April 16.

The Resistance for Peace and Justice Center of Northampton held a celebration of MLK, Jr. Day on January 15, one of their first events since the AFSC Western Mass Project closed and the Resistance Center was created. Executive Director Jeff Napolitano built the new organization on the same principles as AFSC: addressing the culture of militarism, developing activists and collaborating with other organizations. On February 3rd the Resistance Center joined with Mass. Peace Action and other peace and justice groups in a statewide meeting of activists in Worcester. We look forward to more great work from the Resistance Center.

In Congressional District 3, a group has formed to engage in the 2018 election to replace retiring Rep. Niki Tsongas. MA3Grassroots is using voter-driven data collection to record candidate positions. This information will be widely disseminated for individuals and organizations to make informed voting decisions; it will also help hold our elected official accountable. The project is an exciting opportunity to promote change.

Walpole Peace and Justice held a vigil for MLK, Jr. Day; passed an article condemning bigotry in their town; and



Walpole Peace and Justice vigil for DREAMERS

held a vigil advocating for passage of a clean DREAM Act and extension of Temporary Protected Status.

Metrowest Peace Action, in partnership with Common Street Spiritual Center in Natick, restarted their Saturday vigil at the Natick Common and will be screening *Memory of Forgotten War* about Korea.

Watertown Citizens for Peace, Justice and the Environment hosted a screening of *National Bird*, a film about the secret drone program, on Sun. February 25th at the Watertown Free Public Library at 2 PM.

Dorchester People for Peace hosted *Memory of Forgotten War* in November and a showing of *Occupation of the American Mind* on February 26th at the Adams Street Branch Library. This hard-hitting film describes the Israeli lobby's manipulation of news about the Palestine Israel conflict.

—Carol Coakley is a MAPA volunteer and Board co-chair.



Peace Action Lobby Day: Ashley Squires, Cole Harrison, and Shelagh Foreman presented thousands of petitions on nuclear weapons, Korea, and Middle East wars to Sen. Elizabeth Warren on February 13. We also visited Sen. Markey and six members of the House of Representatives.

Mass. Peace Action Board of Directors: Rosalie Anders, James Babson, Carol Coakley (vice chair), Shelagh Foreman (chair), Bonnie Gorman, Rosemary Kean, Jonathan King, Jeff Klein, Maryellen Kurkulos, Valentine Moghadam, Eva Moseley, Guntram Mueller, Prasannan Parthasarathi, John Ratliff, Pat Salomon, Denise Simmons, Brenton Stoddart, Kimia Tabatabaei

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Newsletter Staff for this Issue: Jacqueline King (editor), Cole Harrison, Matthew Jourlait

Join us!

Massachusetts Peace Action (MAPA) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit membership organization working to develop the sustained political power to foster a more just and peaceful U.S. foreign policy.

We are an affiliate of Peace Action, the nation's largest grassroots peace and disarmament membership organization, with more than 18,000 members and 30 state affiliates across the country.

Our work is funded entirely by donations from our members. Membership levels (per calendar year):

\$65 Family

\$40 Individual

\$10 Limited income or student

Make tax-deductible donations in any amount to the Massachusetts Peace Action Education Fund. Mail check to 11 Garden St., Cambridge, MA 02138 or go to masspeaceaction.org/donate.

Thank you for your support!

What We Do

—Mobilize and educate our members to become active advocates for peace and justice issues with their elected officials and within their communities.

—Organize events to educate the public on issues of peace, war, disarmament, and military spending.

--Address specific issue areas in our working groups.

--Organize student chapters and support local peace groups.

--Make peace a priority in all elections at all levels by educating voters and candidates on just and peaceful foreign policy options.

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