



Founded 1915

FORsooth

Volume 22, No. 4

A publication of the Louisville Chapter of the Fellowship of Reconciliation www.louisville-for.org

May 2011

BDS Protestors Pressure TIAA-CREFF

by Russ Greenleaf

The BDS movement is taking off in Louisville and across the nation. BDS means “Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions.” It is one of the most promising strategies for ending the illegal Israeli occupation of Palestinian land and bringing peace to the Middle East.

“I was delighted that so many people came to the BDS demonstration in front of the TIAA-CREF office in Lexington,” said Beverley Marmion, an FOR member who has a TIAA-CREF retirement plan through the University of Louisville.

Marmion is one of the many TIAA-CREF investors in Louisville, Lexington, and 22 other cities who participated in a nationwide BDS action organized by Jewish Voice for Peace on December 10, 2010, Human Rights Day. Investors, along with many friends and supporters, asked the giant retirement fund TIAA-CREF to divest its funds from Caterpillar and other companies that profit from Israel’s brutal military occupation of Palestinian land.

Investors had meetings and staged demonstrations at over one-third of all TIAA-CREF offices across the United States to raise awareness about the Israeli occupation. They told the company they do not want their retirement funds invested in companies like Caterpillar that actively profit from and enable the human rights abuses of the occupation.

Beverley said, “I am delighted that my participation in a TIAA-CREF retirement plan



Right to left: Mark Meade, Carla Wallace, Walter Tillow, Peter S. Fosl, Larry Hovekamp, Russ Greenleaf (Photo Sonja DeVries)

means that I can use that to participate in the BDS movement in a very personal way.”

The BDS action in Kentucky was organized by Louisville Jewish Voice for Peace and co-sponsored by the Fellowship of Reconciliation; the Louisville Committee for Peace in the Middle East; and the Louisville Committee for Israeli and Palestinian States.

BDS Divestment Targets

Jewish Voice for Peace is not asking retirement-plan investors like Marmion

to remove their assets from TIAA-CREF itself. Rather, they are asking them to use their status as investors to persuade TIAA-CREF to divest from companies that profit from and enable Israel’s illegal military occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem. Those companies include:

- Caterpillar (makes armored bulldozers that demolish Palestinian homes)

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Cutting Cost without Cutting People: A Personal Account of the Government Near-Shutdown

by George Morrison

I sweated out the vote for the Russian missile treaty ratified last year, the razor-thin defeat of Newt Gingrich’s reason for living, then the Balanced Budget Amendment, and every one’s most awful memory, the 2000 presidential election recount. I was a passionate activist in all the pitched policy battles of our time, but until April 8, 2011, I had never been in the issue itself.

I’m a federal worker, earning my living, and gratifying my policy-wonk desires to always be buried in data, by conducting surveys and classifying results for the U.S. Census Bureau in Jeffersonville, Ind.

“We do many more surveys than the census. We work throughout the decade,” I reply to people that constantly ask, isn’t the census over?

We were careful in early April not to comment to them about the grueling march toward a possible government shutdown, which would have put me on unemployment, saying simply that we didn’t know whether they could call us back in a week or two.

After clocking out, I had many things to say, right up until the bittersweet 11th

(continued on page 3)

Planning for a future without Planned Parenthood?

by Anne Gilbert

The attack on Planned Parenthood that this country has experienced seems to be at an all-time high. Rather than focusing on the wonderful things that Planned Parenthood provides, people are attacking Planned Parenthood for their services that are controversial - services that only make up about 3 percent of what Planned Parenthood provides, services that do not get government funding.

In an age where teen pregnancies are at a high, diseases rampant, and sexual education suffering (including a national lecturer and daughter of a vice presidential nominee promoting programs in place of Planned Parenthood after the same programs failed her), getting rid of a beacon of proper, unashamed sexual education and health care will be a severe detriment to this country.

Born to a family of proud, independent women and their supportive, strong men, I never learned how to ask for help. I was always taught to seek out information, and do things on my own. Sure, I went to whatever gynecologist my mother found for me on our insurance plan when I was in high school, but the moment I was on my own in college I went to the first place I associated with healthcare for my lady parts: Planned Parenthood.

I could tell you about the time I was raped in college and my student services failed me, after which I turned to Planned Parenthood for their rape crisis program. I could also tell you about the time I got pregnant after my birth control failed me, right after graduating college, and I went to Planned Parenthood after much soul-seeking for an abortion. I would rather focus on the regular services they have and continue to provide for me, and the many other women (and men) I know without health insurance.

Any location I went to, be it Washington, D.C. when I was in college, New York City when I was home, or Chicago now, I had to push my way through packs of people promoting violence, hatred, and anger about the place I was getting my pap smear and breast cancer exam. However the moment I entered those doors, after the unfortunately required walk through the metal detector, I felt I was in the right place. Inside every Planned Parenthood I have been to, no matter the neighborhood, felt like a safe-haven for women.

A gynecologist appointment is never a comfortable experience. You feel vulnerable from the moment you walk into the waiting room, anticipating the nakedness, the cold apparatuses, and in my anxiety-laden brain, the off chance you will hear news you were not hoping for.

While these feelings are universal no matter where you go, it’s the effort not to make the experience any worse than it needs to be that is important. The folks who work at Planned Parenthood never chastised me for my sexuality, my social status, and especially for my being a woman. I cannot say the same for other clinics, physicians, and hospitals I have visited. If there is ever a day when I can afford health insurance, I will still go to a Planned Parenthood for my annual exams, I can guarantee it. I just hope I will still be able to do so.



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Abandoning the Poor and Weak in Medicaid Debate

By Donovan A. Fornwalt

Almost 800,000 Kentuckians, impoverished children and adults, and people with profound physical, mental and developmental disabilities sacrificed on the altar of politics. Is this just hysteria and hyperbole? Am I just another breathless progressive painting in broad strokes and demonizing the power-brokers?

What just happened in Frankfort during the 2011 regular and special congressional session is a matter of public record. Please review that public record and pay special attention to the rhetoric from Kentucky’s most powerful politicians Governor Steve Beshear, Senate President David Williams and House Speaker Greg Stumbo. Doing so may also bring you to the conclusion that the poor, the disabled and the elderly were used as pawns in a shameful and bitter partisan dispute.

It is a story as old as government: politics and the relentless pursuit of power trump the moral imperative to help people. The roots of a bitter dispute between the Governor, a Lexington Democrat, and the Senate President, a Burkesville Republican, can be traced to the fact Sen. Williams wishes to unseat Gov. Beshear.

Sen. Williams has a penchant for shutting down the legislature and necessitating the call for a special session. Inevitably, we witnessed all legislative business grind to a halt. I believe we have had nine special sessions in 10 years. This continuing failure to get the job done (i.e. pass a budget) persists despite the vigorous advocacy by House and Senate leaders for a constitutional amendment that mandated annual sessions, premised upon the promise of fewer special sessions.

The Medicaid debacle can be described as a melodrama of frustrated ambitions. After pocketing millions of dollars in campaign contributions from the owners of casinos,

racetracks, and the scions of our thoroughbred industry, Gov. Beshear struggled to convince the legislature to authorize slot machines and other forms of “gaming” in this mostly rural, conservative, Protestant commonwealth. In two concurrent sessions, the legislature rebuffed his efforts.

In fact, the governor premised his 2010 budget on \$780 million in revenues from slots. He sold this plan as an opportunity to avoid cuts in education and Medicaid, while also spending \$587 million more to shore up human services. In 2009, the Senate president blocked the legislation.

In 2010, the governor’s own Democratic party scrapped his budget proposal and started from scratch. A year ago, it was apparently the policy of House Leadership not to premise a budget on the promise of potential revenue in future years.

In this 2011 session, the crux of the Medicaid debate hinged on whether or not it was appropriate to move money from the 2012 budget to strike balance in 2011 and plug the hole with unrealized, but potential savings from a series of yet to be negotiated managed care contracts. Even a political and economic novice would take pause and wonder at the convoluted logic.

In fairness, the Senate engaged in its own version of twisted logic and insincerity. Sen. Williams refused to honor the long standing policy of permitting governors to adjust expenditures during the interim (between sessions) in order to keep the general fund balanced.

The Kentucky constitution requires a balanced budget. Over eight budget cycles and three governors, the Medicaid program has suffered from perpetual deficits, some as high as \$800 million, others as low as \$139 million, which is the current deficit in dispute.

From 2008 to 2010, Kentucky Medicaid faced an enormous shortfall that threatened to top \$1 billion and without the influx of \$939

million in federal Medicaid Stimulus funds, I sincerely doubt that the governor would have managed his way out of that crisis.

To simplify a long and complicated story, this problem can be traced to three underlying political realities. First, the influence of the health care industry drives investments and limits substantive reforms. Second, the recession has forced many working class people into the Medicaid program. Lastly, the executive and legislative branches have failed to monitor and manage the program properly.

The result has been an explosion in the growth of people eligible for Medicaid, a legislature that refuses to curb the insatiable appetite of healthcare providers by biting the (lobbyist) hand that feeds it, and an anemic, often incompetent regulatory branch that leads us to a perpetual fiscal crisis.

While the governor and House speaker bicker with the Senate president about how best to approach the Medicaid problem, hundreds of bills languished in the Senate. Included among them are bills to protect the elderly and disabled from abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Aside from the funding issue, there are deeply disturbing humanitarian problems that threaten the integrity and original public purpose of the Medicaid program. Medicaid was created to protect people from harm and to improve their quality of life by countering the ravages of poverty, old age and disability. Despite Medicaid’s mission, today we have a \$6.5 billion industry in Kentucky that fails to protect the most vulnerable people from horrific abuse at the hands of people paid and empowered to take care of them.

A prime example is House Bill 101, which creates an Adult Abuse Registry which would list the names of employees with substantiated records of abuse, neglect or exploitation. Sadly, the state identifies about 3,500 such cases each year in our nursing homes and in agencies that serve people with

physical and developmental disabilities. Abusive caregivers are allowed to move from agency to agency, often sexually and physically abusing dozens of people before finally obtaining a criminal conviction. People with developmental disabilities are often the most attractive targets for abuse because they can be non-verbal and isolated from friends and family. To put it crudely, they make terrible witnesses. Even when horrific evidence of abuse is presented, prosecutors cannot obtain convictions.

Yet, the Senate president steadfastly refused to give House Bill 101 a hearing. He was too preoccupied with his ambition to sit in the governor’s mansion to be bothered with public policy. Despite very strong support from the public, the media, the House and Republican sponsor Sen. Denton, Williams killed the bill.

We face a Democratic House and governor that belch their principled stands about “not stealing lunch money from our schoolchildren,” whilst threatening to impose immediate 35-percent cuts to programs serving our poorest children, elderly and the disabled. Our Senate Republicans so desperately want the Tea Party’s blessing that they are willing to let the state grind to a halt and willfully ignore people who are suffering from horrific abuse and neglect. True advocates and seasoned progressives, anyone who respects the truth and aspires for human dignity, must therefore put their faith elsewhere.

Our political officials’ pretense of taking principled stands while simultaneously holding the poor hostage, is akin to the show trial in the C.S. Lewis classic “Alice in Wonderland.” Remember, the Queen of Hearts’ proclamation, “Verdict first, trial after!”

The author is the Director of Governmental Affairs for the Council on Developmental Disabilities.

Imagine seeing this in color:



Louisville Chapter

Now imagine reading instantly updated news from the FOR.

You can do both at www.louisville-for.org

The Louisville FOR’s web site includes Action Alerts about issues of great concern to peace and justice people. It also lets you link to peace groups in many nations and look over every *FORsooth* going back to April 2002. And the pictures – starting with the July-August 2008 issue – are in color.

If you love blogging, contribute your thoughts and hopes to the US FOR’s blog www.forpeace.net. Keep up with the national organization’s unequalled activism for a world of nonviolence and justice at www.forusa.org.

As much as we know you love reading *FORsooth*, there’s no reason to wait till next month to be inspired and challenged by the FOR.

FOR’s Mission Statement

The Fellowship of Reconciliation seeks to replace violence, war, racism and economic injustice with nonviolence, peace and justice. We are an interfaith organization committed to active nonviolence as a transforming way of life and as a means of radical change. We educate, train, build coalitions, and engage in nonviolent and compassionate actions locally, nationally, and globally.



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FORsooth is published by the Louisville chapter of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. Send submissions for news stories or commentaries to Peter Fosl, 1918 Woodbourne Ave., Louisville, KY 40205, e-mail: <pfosl@me.com>.

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95 Years on Peace Frontiers

Since 1915, the Fellowship of Reconciliation in the United States has led campaigns to obtain legal rights for conscientious objectors, win civil rights for all Americans, end the Vietnam War, oppose U.S. intervention in the Third World, and reverse the superpowers’ arms race. An interfaith pacifist organization, the FOR has members from many religious and ethnic traditions. It is part of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, with affiliates in 40 countries.

In the development of its program FOR depends upon persons who seek to apply these principles to every area of life. If you are not already a member, we invite you to join us in this endeavor. Membership consists of signing the Statement of Purpose, indicating that you agree with FOR goals.

Cochairs: Pat Geier 609-7985
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Taking Away Collective Bargaining Rights Unfair

by Avery Kolers and Peter S. Fosl

Aaron Rodgers won the Super Bowl MVP award this year for the Green Bay Packers. He’s an amazing quarterback. He passed for over 300 yards. He exhibits a tenacity and grace in the pocket that sets him apart from nearly everyone else on the planet. And yet if Rodgers had gone out there on his own, as an individual, he would have been crushed. He would have had no offensive line, and no one to pass to. The fabled Steelers defense, working collectively, would have rolled to a shutout.

The lesson is: you can play one-on-one, or you can play teams. But team-against-one is no game at all.

Governors Scott Walker, Mitch Daniels, and John Kasich and allied legislators want workers to play team-against-one. They are trying to abolish collective bargaining for public sector unions—or at least the unions that didn’t support them in last year’s campaigns. Other conservative are watching closely.

Wisconsin’s public-sector unions compromised on every other issue. But on collective bargaining conservative officials refuse to budge. Why? There are broader economic arguments in favor of unions. The shared prosperity of 1950-1980 is exhibit A. But beyond the economic argument the essential justification of collective bargaining is ethical. It is a matter of equality.

Collective bargaining pools individuals’ bargaining power so that they can be equal to those with whom they bargain. That kind of equality is important in the private sector, where management is a collective, corporations are collectives, and industry groups are collectives of collectives. Equality is also important in the public sector, where the party in power is a collective, the executive branch is a collective, and the state represents its constituents (too often capital) collectively. In short, organized collective bargaining makes sense for workers because they must negotiate the terms of their employment

with organized collectives.

To strip workers alone of collective bargaining rights would not magically establish a “level playing field” of individual bargaining. But it would instead destroy the level playing field where collective teams play. Management would set wages and working conditions. Individuals, needing to eat but lacking a team to back them up, would have little choice but to accept the boss’s terms. Without collective bargaining there is no bargaining at all, only supplication.

It’s perfectly understandable why governors of states and CEOs of corporations would want to eliminate their employees’ collective bargaining rights. By the same token it is perfectly understandable why the Steelers would wish that the Packers’ offensive line had stayed home.

For who wouldn’t want such a ruthlessly effective structural advantage? The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that in 2010, lacking a union cost workers approximately \$200 a week (\$10,400 a year), compared to

those with unions. Indiana’s workers feel this burden firsthand. Since they lost their collective bargaining rights, The New York Times reports (2/27/11), they have seen “a pay freeze in 2009 and 2010, and higher health insurance payments.”

To be sure, Governors Walker, Daniels, and Kasich along with their allies deny that their stance on public-sector unions is a power play. The fact is, however, that to ban collective bargaining for only one side is to play team-against-one, and that is a matter of power. Governor Walker and his allies see political advantage for their party and economic payoff for their funders in erasing this right. But banning collective bargaining for public-sector workers is profoundly unfair. We must not allow it to happen.

The authors sit on the Board of Directors of the Kentucky Labor Institute and are professors of philosophy at Transylvania University and the University of Louisville.

TIAA-CREFF

- Northrop Grumman (parts for Apache Helicopters, F-16 fighter aircraft, and Hellfire missiles)
- Veolia (services to illegal settlements, operates buses on Jewish-only roads)
- Elbit (missile-firing drone aircraft responsible for horrific civilian casualties in the 2006 Lebanon War and the 2008-09 “Operation Cast Lead” in Gaza)
- Motorola (telecommunication equipment for the Israeli military; surveillance systems around settlements and checkpoints restricting the movement of Palestinians)

Describing the BDS action on December 10 in Lexington, KY, Marmion said, “I was especially moved by the courtesy of the two TIAA-CREF receptionists who greeted us outside the office door and listened to us with genuine interest. I was moved by the courage of these two women. After hearing us describe the human rights abuses inherent in the Israeli occupation, they invited us into the office and tried to find someone to meet with us, despite the fact that we had been denied an appointment by the TIAA-CREF management.”

Investors Speak Out in Support of BDS

Mark Meade, who has a TIAA-CREF retirement plan through Bellarmine University, also participated in the BDS action in Lexington. Mark explained, “TIAA-CREF manages my retirement investments. As a company that works with academics and educators, I expect them to be aware of issues involving human rights. After all, their slogan is, “Financial services for the greater good.”

“I invested in their ‘Social Choice’ fund, an option that claims to be socially responsible and which divests from many industries and companies involved in questionable activities from a moral outlook. Investments that support the illegal occupation of Palestinian lands, and contribute to violence against civilians, certainly violate the bounds of a socially responsible option.”

Mark continued, “I was pleased with the BDS action on December 10. The staff of the Lexington office of TIAA-CREF

(continued from page 1)

seemed reluctant to allow us dialogue at first. They seemed to know very little about the company’s policies of funding the Israeli occupation. But they were open to learning some new information. Those who spoke with us seemed to recognize the legitimacy of our stand on the issue. At the same time, nothing was formally agreed upon, and the company management seemed to avoid officially sanctioning a conversation with us.”

Russ Greenleaf, an activist with Louisville Jewish Voice for Peace, handed the TIAA-CREF representatives a petition signed by over 400 University of Louisville students and faculty urging TIAA-CREF to divest from the occupation. He explained, “Louisville Jewish Voice for Peace got together with Louisville Students for Justice in Palestine and set up a table on the U of L campus. We asked students to sign the petition. The result was phenomenal. We got over 400 signatures in about six hours. Students were signing at a rate of one per minute. Awareness of Israel’s human rights violations has grown dramatically in the past few years. People realize it’s time to divest, it’s time to send Israel’s government a clear message that it must end this immoral occupation of another people, so there can be peace.”

Peter Fosl, a TIAA-CREF investor and Professor of Philosophy at Transylvania University in Lexington, also participated in the December 10 meeting and demonstration at the TIAA-CREF office in Lexington.

After the action, Fosl said of the BDS movement, “I cut my teeth with divestment during the anti-apartheid movement when I was a university student in the ‘80s. Now that I’m a professor at a university, I’m happy to use that same instrument to resolve the injustices happening to the Palestinians. I hope other professors, and students as well, will make their voices heard on this important issue. Educators and students have been engaged with human rights issues for a long time, and it’s time for us to get behind this one.”

Russ Greenleaf is an activist with Louisville Jewish Voice for Peace. He is also a member of the Louisville Committee for Peace in the Middle East, and the Louisville Committee for Israeli and Palestinian States.

Cutting Cost

hour news that I’d be back in the office the next day.

Paraphrasing my Facebook post at 11 p.m. April 8: Well, I’m going to work tomorrow. Kind of would have enjoyed sitting on my arse drawing unemployment, instead of actually earning my money by producing data the nation greatly needs.

The Tea Party, who aren’t educated enough to know better, and the Libertarians, who most certainly are, would use the term “socialism” to describe the prospect of me working, but the term “freedom” to describe me in the lawn chair texting. They insist that laying off hundreds of thousands of us results in “less government,” therefore making the nation freer and cutting spending, but what of the extra spending for our unemployment benefits?

A flood of statistics followed purporting to show that so many tea partiers have college degrees etc., to which I tried to explain that “educated” means open-minded, emotionally intelligent and willing to engage in honest self-criticism.

I’m sorry, I posted, but those traits, by and large, don’t describe those folks, difficult to document though that is in this

(continued from page 1)

Tea Party, which is not an actual group, but a generalized movement.

House speaker John Boehner, bowing to the finding that we who work for the people are ourselves people, and not overpaid, as misleading data claimed in superficial news stories, explained the rationale for possibly laying us off as a matter of economic realities, not dogma:

“I don’t want anyone to lose their job, whether they’re a federal employee or not,” Boehner said, “but come on, we’re broke.”

Come on, we were broke when we invaded Iraq, and the human needs that our census data directly helps meet have been proven to exist, unlike Saddam’s weapons that launched Bush’s deadly snipe hunt.

And when you establish such a standard of truth and commitment to fiscal soundness as we did when Congress authorized and the administration carried out the Iraq War fiasco, you can kiss goodbye the air of legitimacy to your claims that you are motivated solely by a belief that we must live within our means.

The writer is the former editor of FORsooth.



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To Get Involved:

Please get involved and support the growing BDS movement. It’s something we all can do. Sign the petition now at: <http://jewishvoiceforpeace.org/tiaa-cref>

Find out what you can do by emailing louisvillejewish.voiceforpeace@gmail.com or call Russ at 256-525-5290

Find out about upcoming BDS actions and demonstrations by emailing: louisvillejewish.voiceforpeace@gmail.com

Do you have a TIAA-CREF Retirement Plan? Please Contact Us Today.

We need your help. You can easily make a big difference for peace. Email Jewish Voice for Peace today at: louisvillejewish.voiceforpeace@gmail.com or call Russ at 256-525-5290.

Rev. Flynn Honors Fallen Cold-War Salvadoran Heroes

by Ike M. Thacker

“It wasn’t enough,” said Reverend Jim Flynn at the Third Thursday Lunch on St. Patrick’s Day, two days before the eighth anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, for the military of El Salvador to kill some 75,000 Salvadorans out of a population of only about four million from the 1970s to the early 1990s. Instead, he explained in a presentation occasioned by the 31st anniversary of the martyring of Archbishop Oscar Romero at an altar while celebrating mass on March 24, 1980, the anti-communist obsession of the Salvadoran military even led one of 23 soldiers to murder eight more innocents nine years later.

Rev. Flynn’s powerful presentation, punctuated by heart-rending slides of massacres and memorials commemorating them, made clear the essential truth that a current-day mural calling El Salvador “a crucified people” portrays. It became clear why Flynn said that the people of El Salvador know, whatever the technical truth asserted by an essentially conservative Catholic Church may be, that Romero is actually “San Romero,” their saint.

Rev. Flynn noted that when Romero became archbishop, he was actually quite conservative. But Archbishop Romero was “converted by the poor” and by all the carnage he experienced. This conversion, said Rev. Flynn, began in 1977, when another Salvadoran priest was killed.

Archbishop Oscar Romero is not the only martyr whom Salvadorans honor, said Rev. Flynn. Even before 1980 had ended, four missionary nuns from the United States, who ministered to the many poor in El Salvador, were abducted by a death squad from a road near the airport, taken to an isolated rural road, and then tortured and killed.

On November 16, 1989, another eight innocent victims were martyred. This time the victims were six Jesuits and two women, including their housekeeper, who were pulled from their home at the Jesuit Jose Simeon Canas University of Central America in San Salvador by 23 soldiers, 18 of whom had just come from the School of the Americas (aka School of the Assassins) at Fort Benning, Georgia.

All of these martyrs are now honored as heroes in El Salvador, said Rev. Flynn, even though a now-not-so-conservative government, whose predecessor couldn’t even resist killing many people at Archbishop Romero’s funeral, would like the people to forget their fallen champions.

Much of Flynn’s presentation consisted of touching pictures of memorials to the martyrs, perhaps most notably the “Wall of Truth and Memory” in San Salvador, whose inscription reads: “If they kill me I will rise in the Salvadoran people.” These were Romero’s words, and his prediction has come true.

While most of what Rev. Flynn said March 17 was about El Salvador, he has taken some 20 trips to the Central American region since 1984. He reports that 200,000 Guatemalans were killed over several decades. In both countries, he said, working with the poor was viewed as subversive, meaning communist, and could often result in an authorized or unauthorized death sentence.

Back in the days of the Cold War, he admitted, there were powerful guerrilla movements in El Salvador and Guatemala, but it was the military backers of the rich who, according to a Salvadoran truth commission’s findings, were responsible for 85 to 90 percent of the killings. Guerillas were responsible for only 6 to 7 percent, he said, and nobody knows about the rest.



Ken Pyle owner of the Rudyard Kipling, Jean Edwards, Cathy Ford, Al Hibbard (assistant to Ken) and Mildred Mencu-Johnson at the 10th anniversary Fellowship of Reconciliation Third Thursday Luncheon at the Rudyard Kipling, 422 West Oak Street in Old Louisville. A big thank you to Owners Ken and Sheila Pyle. (photo John Hartmann)

During his presentation, Rev. Flynn said there has been some progress in El Salvador. Three years ago a left-leaning government defeated the conservative ARENA party. The U.S. was scared to death, but the new government has not been able to effect much change, largely because some 22 families own most of El Salvador. For the present, the descendants of the scores of thousands of people whom the military

killed will have to, like their forebears, rely on martyred souls like San Romero.

Video of the Flynn talk is available online at www.louisville-for.org/THIRDTWEDSDAY.htm.

Ike M. Thacker is an advocate for political, social, and economic democracy. He focuses especially on housing issues.

We Want to Hear from You

Dear FORsooth Reader,

You may have recently heard that *FORsooth* is now in its twenty-second year of publication. We’ve been reporting on local events and news stories of concern to Louisville’s social justice community since 1990. This community includes a wide range of people with varied concerns from eradicating hunger and poverty, to defending human rights, to protecting our environment.

We’ve discovered over the years that our readers are engaged in many different kinds of social actions - participating in walks and vigils, helping others though volunteer work, writing letters on public issues to public officials and the media, serving on committees, and speaking to audiences and assembled groups, to name only a few. Our mission is provide our readers with news and updates on topics of social justice, opportunities for direct action, and practical information.

We know that Louisville’s social justice community changes and grows year by year. Some of the older concerns are eventually resolved. New concerns arise. And our readers continually broaden their interests.

Today, we want to know more about our readers and their concerns. We ask that you consider giving us a little help in this effort by joining our readership focus group.

All you would need to do is send us you



Letters to FORsooth

e-mail address. In return, we would send you a very brief questionnaire each month to ask about your personal interest in the articles appearing in *FORsooth* that month. If you have a few moments of spare time, send us your input. If not, wait until the following month. By the way, you can read back issues of Forsooth at www.louisville-for.org.

Please be totally honest with us. The more we know about you and your concerns the better we will serve our readers.

Please send responses to Readership Editor, Tom Louderback at tlouderback@aol.com

An Invitation to Action in Palestine

The **Palestine Justice Network (PJN)**, which includes

14 groups ranging from Al-Rowwad Cultural and

Theatre Training Center to the Bi’lin Popular and

The Open Bethlehem Committee, invites

1000 internationals to travel to Palestine **July 8-19**

and join with 1000 Palestinians to demonstrate against the

Occupation, rebuild houses destroyed by the IDF,

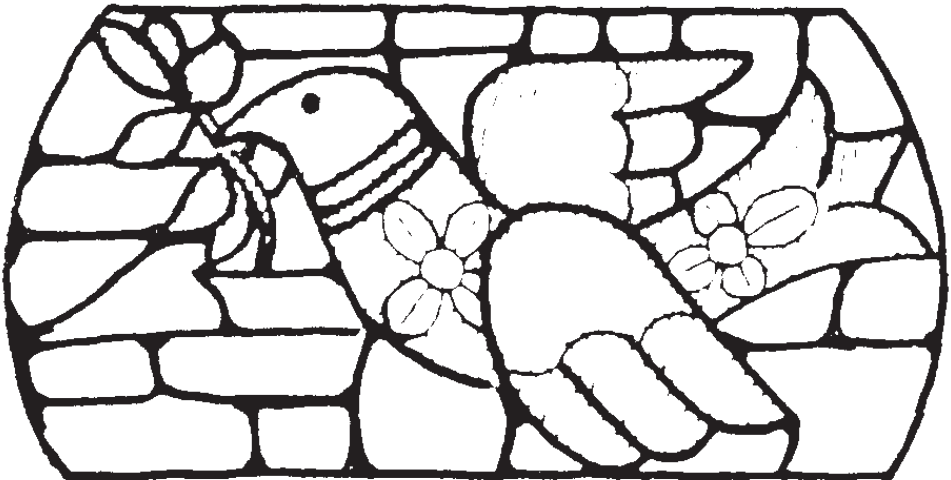
and engage in popular resistance activities.

Dr. Mazin Qumsiyeh, who spoke in Louisville in March,

is among the organizers. For further information,

please see the PJN website at www.palestinejn.org,

or e-mail Polly Johnson at phj5@insightbb.com.



The Louisville Committee for Peace in the Middle East has fair trade, organic olive oil for sale. 750-liter bottles are \$18.00.

To order some, please call Polly Johnson at (502) 473-8435.

Carbide Explosion Exposes Threats to Rubbertown

by Eboni Neal Cochran

Late in the day on Monday, March 21, 2011, an explosion rocked the Carbide Industries plant in the 4400 block of Bell’s Lane, killing 2 workers--Steve Nichols (59) and Jorge Medina (56). A warning system designed to alert residents of surrounding “Rubbertown” when chemical accidents occur failed to operate properly. Nearby Louisville neighborhoods include Chickasaw, Shively, Lake Dreamland, Parkland, Russell, California, and Cane Run.

In recent years there have been fires, chemical leaks from factories, chemicals leaking from railcars, and emissions from smoke stacks that have threatened the health, safety, and quality of life of these neighborhoods, as well as Greater Louisville.

For years, the late Reverend Louis Coleman and the Justice Resource Center brought many environmental injustices to light. In more recent years, REACT has tried its best to get decision makers and the community to take action to reduce our exposure to toxic chemicals coming from Rubbertown.

There were others before Rev. Coleman and others currently who take some sort of action in response to what is going on. By now you would think hundreds of people around this city would be engaged

in fighting for environmental justice. This just isn’t the case.

Over the years I have come to the conclusion that the chemical industry will do what it wants regardless of whom they are hurting as long as they can still make a profit. Decision makers will play it so safe that whatever statements or small actions they take will be almost meaningless. They are so scared of losing their position that they take the wait-and-see approach, hoping that someone else will tackle this issue with the courage they should be mustering up to help fix things.

City agencies charged with protecting the public, including the Louisville Metro Air Pollution Control District (APCD), the Louisville Metro Department of Public Health and Wellness (LMPHW), and the Louisville Metro Emergency Management Agency (EMA), operate without sufficient procedures in place for protecting the public. To some degree they mislead decision makers who are relieved that the agencies they rely on are telling them everything is okay.

Many of the “environmentalists” I have met (let me repeat, the ones I have met) are so disengaged from the total issue they cannot see beyond the trees and streams. These statements do not apply to all people in these groups but to many I have met.

If any of these statements have offended anyone . . . well, I don’t apologize, but I hope these words do not prevent you from doing the right thing in the future.

Now, let me get back to the residents living near these chemical plants, those people who are carrying much of the immediate burden from living near Rubbertown. While I understand that residents living in these neighborhoods are affected by many injustices (i.e., racism, poverty, etc.), I must say we have to do better environmentally.

If history has taught us anything, it should have taught us all by now that we can depend on no one but ourselves. Each and every one of us must take some sort of action as we can. We can no longer sit back and wait for another Rev. Louis Coleman to jump in and make demands of this city to protect us. He was one of a kind. Each one of us needs to lead by his example and continue to advocate on behalf of our communities and our households.

So, I’m asking everyone: What will it take? What will it take for the chemical industry to do what is right and explore alternative, safer chemicals? Will you ever support the common sense reform of the Toxic Substances Control Act of 1976? Decision makers who care about this issue, what will it take for you to feel confident

enough to put your foot down with these agencies that are not doing enough to protect your constituents? City agencies, what will it take for you to become more efficient at what you do and conduct more thorough investigations of Rubbertown chemical plants? “Environmentalists,” what will it take for you all to realize that joining the fight for environmental justice will result in a healthier environment for all?

This is not just a rant from someone who is judging everyone else but herself. I too must become more effective in fighting for environmental justice. Every day I ask myself what it will take to become a more effective member of REACT. Some days I rise to the challenge, and other days I don’t. While I have my ups and downs I can say that I will NEVER stop seeking justice for my community. I am hoping you do not stop either.

The author is Co-Director of REACT (Rubbertown Emergency ACTION), a grass-roots organization of residents living near or at the fence lines of a cluster of 11 chemical plants in Louisville commonly referred to as Rubbertown. The organization was established in April of 2003 as a campaign of the Justice Resource Center and became an independent organization later that year.

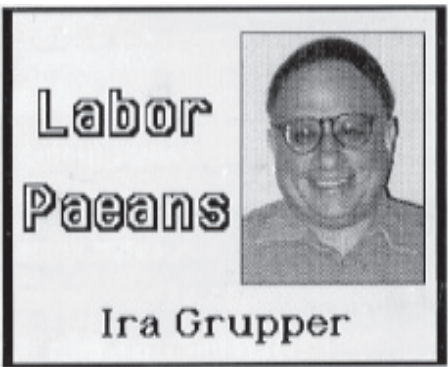
The Attempt to Crush Public Worker Unions

In the Great Depression of the 1930s there were countless people selling apples on the streets to survive, and there were population shifts as workers hustled to try to find work. The poor were getting poorer, and there was the hint of a permanent underclass. And, yes, the rich were getting richer.

Since then the profit system has learned to hide some of its disfigurements. We used to view reports from Vietnam, several decades ago, on television and in newspaper reports by journalists like Peter Arnett that helped the American people see the horror of our destruction of a largely unarmed people. But today—today reporters are “embedded,” meaning they sit in a tank, see only the inside, and then regurgitate the U.S. military propaganda. Nor do we see people selling apples in the streets.

Under conditions like these how do we who sell our labor power for a wage and still protect ourselves from the whiplash of corporate greed? We form unions—in the private sector, and in the public sector.

Come now the Republican corporate shills, governors and legislators in Wisconsin, Indiana and Ohio, and now many more states. They introduce bills to destroy public sector collective bargaining, and workers are again victimized. As Truthout reports: “We have seen this shameless suppression of workers before: when the US Army seized coal mines to bust up a post-



World-War II miner strike; when Reagan fired 12,000 PATCO workers, simply for striking; when the second Bush stuffed the ‘Labor Department’ full of corporate cronies and spent his first days in office tossing vital workplace regulations in the trash.”

The Fightback

On April 4 in Louisville, 125 workers and some government officials came out in the pouring rain to a “block party for public workers”. Many unions were represented.

Wanda Mitchell Smith (AFSCME) spoke eloquently about MLK’s assassination: “When Dr. King went to Memphis he left from Zion Baptist Church here in Louisville ... [This] is a time to be creative. We are one.”

Tia Edison, a (union) teacher at Knight Middle School here in Louisville, and a former member of the UAW, let us know that, “they want to blame all the teachers.... No Child Left Behind is a farce.”

“Come and go with me to that land” was sung with gusto. Originally a civil rights movement song, it now is put into a labor framework.

Organized labor, for too long dormant, is on the move. But we must never forget, and I know some labor leaders who read this column will get mad at me, that it was poor and working people who put the Republican governors and state representatives in office in Wisconsin, Indiana and Ohio.

Where were the organized education efforts to explain to these workers that if you sleep with a corporate prostitute you are liable to get the economic clap? Well, labor is now awake.

Under international law, claims Amnesty International, all workers have a human right to organize and to bargain collectively. “These rights ... are enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, as well as conventions adopted by the International Labour Organization (ILO).”

“As a state party to the ICCPR and a signatory to the ICESCR, the USA has an obligation to respect the human rights under these instruments and treaties.”

Part of our fightback must include support for the Full Employment & Training Act (H.R. 870), recently introduced by Congressman John Conyers (D-MI). As Paul Krugman wrote in the (NYT, 18 March), “It “can counteract massive unemployment and speculative profiteering that keeps widening the gap between the rich and the rest of us. . . . The law would make the Wall Street speculators behind the economic disaster pony up to create jobs: whether teaching children, making homes energy efficient, caring for the sick or rebuilding neighborhoods.”

Speaking of columnists, nationally known corporate shill, David Broder, recently died. Reports FAIR: “Despite [his] non-ideological reputation, he pushed political culture to the right.... The notion that Broder’s moderate ‘centrism’ was not an ideology in itself is a common view... and is totally mistaken. Broder expressed a strong point of view on a range of issues. The fact that such views are portrayed as an absence of ideology speaks volumes about the prevailing ideology of the mainstream media.”

Which brings us back to Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., assassinated on April 4, 1968, while rallying garbage workers on strike in Memphis, Tennessee. They were fighting for dignity and a living wage. Four decades later, workers in Wisconsin, Ohio and Indiana are fighting for dignity and a living wage. Who will be remembered in history: the greedy or the needy? It is in our hands.

Contact Ira Grupper at irag@iglou.com.



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Louisville Committee for Israeli/Palestinian States (502.451.5658) www.louisvillepeace.org/twostates.html

Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR)/Louisville Chapter (502.458.8056) www.louisville-for.org

American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)/Kentucky Chapter (502.893.9828) www.adckentucky.com

Arab Peoples Struggle to Shed Colonial Legacy

by Ibrahim Imam

When looking at the recent uprisings in the Middle East it is important to distinguish between their causes, their net result, and those who are their true beneficiaries. It is also important to examine the roll of the western governments, how they look at these events, and how they wish to manipulate them.

An examination of the U.S. and western policy in the Middle East reveals three guiding factors paramount. These are maintaining control over the oil supplies, control over the Suez Canal, and the supremacy of Israel. Regardless of how states articulate these factors, they have formed the basis of U.S. interference in the politics of the region long before it reinstated the Shah of Iran in 1953 in a subversive act against the Iranian people's revolt that brought Dr. Mohammad Mossadaq to power.

The geographic distance from Israel and the Suez canal is also a measure of how important these countries are to the U.S. in the region. And the shorter this distance the more to the detriment of the people of these countries. Accordingly, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon play the most important role, and these government are always in U.S. crosshairs. Next in line is Iraq, the rest of the Arabian peninsula and the remainder of North Africa.

The mystery is then why Tunisia of all places. Tunisia has always played an important role in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict since the first Tunisian president Habib Bourguiba was also the first Arab president to call on the Arabs to accept a two-state solution to the Palestinian problem. Doing so cost him political capital in the Arab world, but he then gained it back when he opened the door to the Palestinian leadership and fighters after they left Jordan and then Lebanon in the early 1980s.

Tunisia then became the target of an Israeli attack in October of 1985. This strained relations between Tunisia and the U.S., which signaled the need for a regime change in Tunisia. A coup d'etat led to Habib's ouster, and Zeinel Abedien Bin Ali came into power.

The power of Bin Ali grew day by day. The Arab street became very suspicious of his complicity and his cooperation with the Mossad and the CIA in the assassination of Palestinian leaders which now after his ouster have become known facts.

Tunisia, a country that managed to

secure a descent revenue from tourism and agriculture became the personal coffers for Ben Ali's family and more so his wife's family. Unemployment and poverty became rampant while a small group amassed billions of dollars in wealth.

On January 4, 2011, a well educated street vendor named Tarek al-Tayyib Muhammad Bouazizi set himself on fire and ended his life. His death started a popular uprising that echoed throughout the Arab world. Tunisia and its youth are still struggling to achieve the reforms that they have fought and are still fighting for. A tug of war between the established ruling class and the revolutionary forces is taking place with the western world observing from the sideline to determine if and when it becomes necessary to interfere as the U.S. did in Algeria in 1991 after parliamentary elections swept the Islamic Salvation Front into power.

Egyptian youth took courage from what took place in Tunisia. It became clear to them that though sacrifices may be necessary it is imperative that the people remove the tyrants and regain their self worth, pride, and freedom.

The people of Egypt since the defeat in the 1967 War and after the signing of the Camp David Accords felt humiliated and defeated. While unemployment festered and the cost of living rose, a small oligarchy pillaged not only the foreign aid from the U.S., but also huge military contracts and the war industry commissions. The revenue of the Suez Canal was diverted into private slush funds for the ruling class, and brutal security forces suppressed voices of dissent.

It was the perseverance of the people coupled the refusal of conscripted soldiers refused to support the ruling class that led to the ouster of the Mubarak family from power. The question remains, however, how much really has changed and did this popular uprising achieve what many of us envisioned its aims to be.

The military leadership trained in the U.S. remains in power. Unless the people are able to replace it with a civilian government, Egypt will remain subservient. It will keep the Suez Canal open, will keep the Sinai free of the Egyptian army. Egypt will sell its natural gas to Israel at below fair market prices, while Egyptians will still struggle to pay for their own gas. Gaza will remain under siege, and Palestinians will continue to suffer, while Israel is protected.

If the U.S. trained military leadership



FOR co-chair Peter S. Fosl met for breakfast to discuss Islamophobia with Muslim peace activist Malik Mujahid and local Muslim leaders at the downtown Marriott, March 26, 2011. From left: Peter S. Fosl, Malik Mujahid, and Maqsood S. Ahmed. (Photo Faraz Jeelani)

begins to face real danger and if people like the newly appointed foreign affairs minister Nabil Elaraby start to question openly the Camp David Accords or the latitude given to Israel in the region, then the U.S. attitude towards Egypt and its revolution will change, and the U.S. will improvise a way to directly or indirectly interfere.

Bahrain seems to be the odd one in the mix, but not really. Bahrain is a tiny archipelago of islands between the eastern Saudi shore and the Qatari shore. Its majority population of Shia Arabs is ruled by a Sunni minority with and a ruler who lately appointed himself king.

A revolt in Bahrain may lead to an increased Shia influence in the region and embolden the suppressed Shia minority in Saudi Arabia living in its eastern provinces. The situation there was not one that the Arab governments in the Arab peninsula and the U.S. could tolerate. So, Saudi soldiers under the pretext of protecting oil installations under the auspices of the Cooperative Council of the Arab States of the Gulf, entered Bahrain. Protesters were massacred, and Pearl Square was demolished.

Yemen is not much different from

Bahrain. It has a Shia population and Sunni government. Its tyrant, Ali Abdullah Saleh, ruled North Yemen initially and then unified Yemen since 1978. Unemployment, poverty, and the suppression of dissent led to the great unrest the country is experiencing now.

Saudi forces attempted to end the Yemeni revolt, but their forces were no match to the tough terrain and the native rebels. The Saudis returned home in defeat. This puts the U.S. in a tough spot. Yemen controls the eastern shore of Bab El Mandeb, which is the southern opening of the Red Sea. With Somalia effectively on the other side of this opening, it is important for the U.S. to keep a loyal government in Yemen.

To justify current and future military operations in Yemen the U.S. has ratcheted up the fear of Islamists and waited for the opportune moment to take a part in the struggle over power in Yemen.

Libya, we thought was very stable. As long as Muammar Gaddafi kept the oil flowing to our western oil companies, we did not care how fragmented the Libyan society became and where all the nation's wealth was going. After all we have a similar situation in Saudi Arabia. But Gaddafi was not as good as the Saudi monarchy in pacifying his people and the revolt erupted in the eastern part of the country in Benghazi, in the oil rich part of the country and far from the control of Gaddafi's army and mercenaries.

This time the tyrant decided to fight. U.S. and European intervention left many Arabs confused and conflicted. The western colonial powers now seemed to be acting as lifesavers against a tyrant that they found necessary to remove. The lesson seems to be that the U.N. has been stripped of its power as a true neutral peace keeping force. The U.N. should have been responsible for securing the safety of the civilian population, not NATO, which is nothing more than an instrument of western colonization.

Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon may be next. Arabs are now optimistic that a day will come when they shed the governments imposed on them by the West. They have broken grip of fear that constrained them. But they remain cautious, for they know that what the U.S. and the western world want for them is not necessarily their own good.

The author is an activist with the Louisville Committee for Peace in the Middle East.



Third Thursday Lunches

presented by the
**Fellowship of Reconciliation
& Interfaith Paths to Peace**

February to May 2011

May 19

Terry Taylor

Iran: Up Close and Personal. A report from Terry Taylor, Executive Director of Louisville's **Interfaith Paths to Peace**, about his trip to Iran in November of 2010 as part of a ten-person Citizen Diplomacy team sponsored by the national Fellowship of Reconciliation. Terry will present reflections on Iran's history, demography and geography that can help us better understand Iran (and Iranians). He will also offer suggestions about how the U.S. can more effectively negotiate with leaders of the Islamic Republic.

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Video of Third Thursday lunch presentations and other video is available at www.louisville-for.org/THIRDTHURSDAY.htm.

Manning’s Abuse Exemplifies Now Common Injustice

by *Jamie Miller*

From a speech delivered on April 28 at a rally in front of the Mazzoli Federal Building in Louisville in support of Army Pvt Bradley Manning, accused of leaking some 720,000 classified documents to Wikileaks and held for the last 9 months in solitary confinement at the Marine Corps brig at Quantico, Virginia.

I want to start by acknowledging an important fact: this world and this nation are filled with injustice. What is happening to Bradley Manning is not unique. There are men being given exactly the same treatment right now in Guantanamo Bay and in prisons both public and secret around the world. The United States is number one in the world when it comes to incarcerating its own citizens. So we are not here because Bradley Manning’s circumstances are special. We are here because of what Bradley Manning’s case symbolizes.

Let’s begin with the presumption of innocence, which is after all what the US legal system is supposedly founded upon. Even in the military’s legal system, where Bradley Manning is currently awaiting trial, there is a presumption of innocence. Let’s recognize the fact that Bradley Manning has not been demonstrated by a prosecutor or found by a judge to be guilty of any crime. So, let’s also offer him the benefit of the doubt and begin by assuming that he did not, in fact, leak any information to anyone. If that is true, then what is happening to him is even more monstrous. Let’s review

for a moment what exactly is happening to Bradley Manning, all of which has been confirmed by Quantico brig officials:

For 23 out of 24 hours he sits alone in his cell. He is not allowed to exercise during those 23 hours. He is not allowed to access any kind of news or information. He is forced to sleep naked and stand naked at attention every day in front of other prisoners and guards. He is provided with no blankets or pillows. He has been put on suicide watch for no reason, despite reports from brig psychologists that Manning is “respectful, courteous and well spoken” and “does not have any suicidal feelings at this time.”

In other words, he is being punished before his trial. He is being punished before any findings of fact. He is being punished while he is presumed innocent. Even the brig officials at Quantico admit that Manning is not disruptive, is not a suicide risk, is not somehow the kind of dangerous prisoner that requires naked solitary confinement. Even P. J. Crowley, a spokesperson for the U.S. State Department, criticized the treatment of Bradley Manning as “ridiculous, counterproductive and stupid.” Then, of course, Crowley was forced to resign.

But set all that aside. We’ve been assuming that Manning is innocent--as we should, and as the court system should, and as the news media should. But just as an intellectual or philosophical exercise, let’s pretend that he is, in fact, guilty of these crimes.

But guilty of what? Guilty of making the United States look bad? Guilty for releasing diplomatic cables which have led

to democratic uprisings and popular outrage in Tunisia, Egypt, India, Libya, and too many other nations to count? Guilty of releasing a video showing a U.S. Apache helicopter crew killing and injuring journalists and children? Guilty of whistleblowing? Guilty of pulling down the façades of “national interests” and “nation building” and “promoting democracy” which have been carefully built up as justifications for our foreign policy? For war—no, two wars—no, at least THREE wars in the Middle East? For pulling back the curtain on our failures in Iraq and Afghanistan?

So, let’s NOT say “if he’s guilty of these crimes.” The very word implies that something horrible has been done. Let’s say “if he’s responsible” — and there has been no evidence presented in a court of law that he is responsible — if he is responsible for these acts, then he is a hero.

He’s as much of a hero as Daniel Ellsberg, who revealed the failure of the war in Vietnam by leaking the Pentagon Papers. He’s as much of a hero as Katharine Gun, whose leak of top-secret government documents exposed illegal activities by the US government. He’s as much of a hero as Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, whose exposure of the corrupt Nixon administration led to the resignation of a President.

Manning is as much of a hero as Mordechai Vanunu, who revealed Israel’s secret nuclear weapons program to the British press. He’s as much of a hero as Karen Silkwood, who exposed violation of safety regulations at a nuclear power plant

in Oklahoma. He’s as much of a hero as Gary Webb, who blew the whistle on CIA covert activities in Nicaragua, including the use of cocaine profits to fuel the Contra war in that nation. He’s as much of a hero as Ambassador Joseph Wilson, who revealed that the Bush administration’s case for war with Iraq was fraudulent.

If Bradley Manning is responsible for these acts — and again, there has been no legal evidence showing that he is — then he ought to be lauded for his whistleblowing instead of punished.

But he hasn’t been proved responsible. He hasn’t been proved guilty in a court of law, military or civilian. And so the conditions in which he languishes at the Quantico military brig are unacceptable.

As I said at the beginning, Bradley Manning’s treatment is not unique. There are hundreds if not thousands of people in US prisons right now experiencing solitary confinement that is as bad or worse than Bradley Manning’s. But Bradley is a symbol, and that’s why we’re here. That’s why we’re going to contact elected and unelected officials and ask them to stop treating Bradley Manning this way. We’re going to say that they should presume his innocence and stop treating him like Hannibal Lecter. And we’re going to say that even if he is found to be guilty, he doesn’t deserve this treatment. He deserves freedom.

Jamie Miller is a teacher at Dupont Manual High School. He runs the blog exactchangeplease.org.

A Former Bully Reflects on the Anti-Bullying Bill

The Kentucky bill that would prohibit bullying because of a student’s sexual orientation, race, or religion is a political and personal issue for so many activists. It brings to mind not just philosophical tenets, but seventh-grade gym class.

House Bill 370 stalled this session in the state House of Representatives, but the legislation, along with other initiatives -- including an on-line study by the University of Louisville’s Office for LGBT Services of teenage experiences with homophobia -- have prompted many area people who work in human rights efforts to discuss their experiences with bullying.

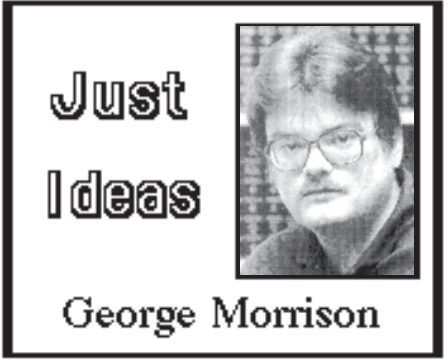
And while these recollections on social media and panel discussions almost always start with, “I was,” mine, I’m reluctant and yet relieved to say, must begin with “I did...”

Yes, I know we who oppose war, bigotry and taking food off the plates of the poor so GE can make \$14 billion in tax-free profits are supposed to have been solely the victims of the ostracism that includes bullying. I’m afraid, however, that I will never be able to let loose of a memory from junior high school of an afternoon when I ascended a stairwell with a classmate who for several weeks had been seeking my friendship.

I called him a homophobic slur. So, how does a McGovern-backing, anti-war debate team captain do this? The simple answer is that the sexual revolution had arrived for me, but the feminist revolution had not (don’t worry, it was coming; I joined N.O.W. in 1977 at age 19).

As a 14 year-old, my suddenly deeper voice and almost one-foot growth spurt made me highly vulnerable to the false message of entitlement that a guy named Hefner disseminated to our gender. Meanwhile, this classmate on the stairwell—while of unknown sexual orientation -- was short, bookish, wispy-haired and spoke with a Mr. Rogers-like tentative voice. A lack of outward masculinity was enough to make him the target of homophobia.

It wasn’t just that single word. My epithet characterized four years of mean-



spirited exclusion of this guy – I’ll call him Mike – who should by all standards have been an ideal friend.

We studied the same language. We were equal in literacy. He talked of his fondness for Life magazine and his sadness that it was to cease publishing in a few weeks. My sentiments exactly.

As I said, about a year after high school, I became a dues-paying feminist, and that was just the start. Decades of FORsooth editing, pro-gay rights fiction writing, and anti-war protests may have helped alter the world some, but I realized a few years back they hadn’t extinguished the memory from the stairwell.

So, after months of pre-Facebook era searching, I called Mike on a cold night about six years ago, but my intended apology simply never could roll off the tongue. The closest I came was broaching the subject of the sorry state of teenage behavior, a topic that without any more specifics about the stairwell incident, must have seemed to Mike a lame reason for a phone call after 33 years.

I had intended this to be a noble bid to rehabilitate someone I had trampled, but immediately – as Mike’s teenage son answered the phone -- it became unclear exactly who was the victim.

Yes, Mike was married, had a son, spoke with a dulcet, confident tone, lived in a large house featuring a room he had added to hold an extensive literature collection. He had paid for this by working as the sales manager of a legendarily prosperous

and stable retail business, a position he had landed with a degree from perhaps the nation’s most prestigious public university.

He also was a recognized chess competitor who had written an online article about the game I had found through a keyword search for him.

The completely unexpected polish of Mike’s life threw me off, and, unable to steer the conversation to my specific homophobic misdeeds, I was rambling. Soon, Mike asked: “Is this some sort of Amway thing?” The thought of me coming across like I had been thumbing through my old yearbook, impersonally calling whomever’s name was next, until I secured enough distributors to get that bass boat was just too much.

Fuzzy as the purpose of my call seemed to Mike, crystal clear to me was the fact that he was affected not one iota by the stairwell incident, or the wider bigotry and exclusion

I had practiced. No such thing could be said of the person on the other end of the line.

So, should the example of Mike the unscathed Renaissance man serve as evidence that we don’t need anti-bullying bills?

Not at all; research into social impairment has concluded that school bullying, while not believed to be generally the sole cause, is very often -- in combination with other traumas -- a cause of inability by adults to form relationships.

Whereas somehow it didn’t in the case of my remarkable classmate, damage from bullying lasts.

Beyond that, tell your legislators you know of a reformed bully who is certain that a law like House Bill 370 could have helped spare him as well a lifetime of scars.

George Morrison is the former editor of FORsooth. Contact him at klm86@att.net.

Empathy and Ethos

by *Tom Louderback*

This is the first of an occasional series of columns on our enduring search for goodness.

Many of us were raised on the traditional idea of a spiritual realm existing outside the universe which “transcends” the physical universe we see around us. As we grew up we recognized that the traditional idea does not relate very well with the discoveries of modern science. But, that doesn’t mean the concept of “transcendence” has lost its meaning.

If transcendence is not a journey outside our universe, maybe science suggests new concept. Cosmic theorists, like Joel Primack and Nancy Abrams of the University of California, reason that transcendence is what happens as the living and non-living things within the universe become more complex and complicated. New characteristics and abilities emerge as we step up the ladder of evolution.

For example, atomic particles do not perceive anything beyond their orbits. Human beings are imperceptible to them. Whether these particles reside inside humans, inside a rock, or moving through

space, is all the same to them.

Of course, we are fully aware, at our step of the ladder, that human beings transcend atoms and molecular cells. In the same way, the universe apparently transcends us and transcends our world. It seems reasonable to suppose that human beings are also playing roles that are far beyond what we see and understand.

Understood this way, transcendence would be our feeling of the exponentially increasing complexity that lies beyond us. Spirituality comes to mean the relationship between our conscious mind and the workings of our universe.

Science indicates that we are connected to each other mathematically, physically, and cosmically. Our interconnections may not be obvious. We look at ourselves and see finite packages of molecular cells and organs. What we see appears to be complete. We know better, however. Unlike the atoms and the cells, we consciously desire new experiences and new knowledge. We imagine that each choice we make during our lives adds something somewhere. So, our yearning to feel and know more eventually becomes our transcendence.

Jean’s Journal will not appear in this edition but will return next issue.

Calendar for peacemakers

April 25 (Mon) **F.O.R. STEERING COMMITTEE.** Presbyterian Seminary, Nelson Hall, Room 10, 1044 Alta Vista Road, Louisville. Every fourth Monday. Visitors encouraged. For more information, call Pat Geier at 502-456-6586 or Peter Fosl at 502-291-2506

May 1 (Sun) **BOOK LAUNCH.** You are cordially invited to join co-authors Mervin Aubespín, Kenneth Clay and J. Blaine Hudson to celebrate the publication and presentation to the community of their new book, ***TWO CENTURIES OF BLACK LOUISVILLE.*** Metro Hall, Fourth Floor, 527 W Jefferson, 4:00 - 600 PM. Reception and Book Signing to follow. (Note: Entrance is from Court Place at the rear of the building.)

May 1 (Sun) “**AIM HIGHER**” focusing on military counter-recruitment. Every 1st Sunday at 7 PM, 2236 Kaelin Avenue at the FOR office. This group welcomes invitations to speak about conscientious objection, military recruitment, and the possibility for high school students to “opt out” of having their names given to recruiters. Call Jim Johnson, 502-262-0148.

May 6 (Fri) **DEADLINE FOR THE JUNE ISSUE OF *FORsooth*.** Contact Peter Fosl pfofsl@me.com. Please email new or updated calendar listings to calendar.peace@gmail.com.

May 11 (Wed) **KITLAC** (Kentucky Interfaith Taskforce on Latin America and the Caribbean). Every second Wednesday at Louisville Presbyterian Seminary in the Winn Center.7:30 PM. For more information, call David Horvath at 502-479-9262 or Pat Geier at 502-456-6586.

May 12 (Thurs) **THE FDR/LINCOLN LEGACY CLUB.** Meets the second Thursday of the month, for those interested in learning about fair trade and the American system of economics of Hamilton and Clay. 6:30 PM, 1838 Frankfort Ave. For more information, contact John Miller at papajohn15@bellsouth.net.

May 12 (Thurs) **APPAF** (American Palestine Public Affairs Forum). Every second Thursday. 7 PM, Louisville Presbyterian Seminary, 1044 Alta Vista Road, Nelson Hall, Room 119. For more information, call Bashar Masri, 502-773-1836.

May 14 (Sat) **PEAK OIL.** Every 2nd Saturday, Main Library, 4th & York Streets, Louisville. Mezzanine, Board Room, 9 AM. Call George Perkins, 502-425-6645.

May 14 (Sat) **PEACE AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP FAIR.** On the campus of Bluegrass Community and Technical College (BCTC), just north of the University of Kentucky’s Commonwealth Stadium in Lexington, KY. Now in its 6th year, the fair is hosted by BCTC’s Students for Peace & Earth Justice, co-sponsored by the Central Kentucky Council for Peace and Justice (CKCPJ). Each year the fair is on the Saturday after Mother’s Day. 12pm - 6:30pm

May 14 (Sat) **MAY FRIENDSHIP DAY,** sponsored by Church Women United. “Living Our Friendship, Passing on the Key.” Lynhurst United Church of Christ, 4401 Taylor Blvd, Louisville. Registration at 10:00 AM, Worship at 10:30. Focus will be on how women make a difference. Light lunch and child care provided. Bring offering for Church World Service and CWS School Kit Items. For more information, call 368-8446.

May 15 (Sun) **VIGIL FOR PEACE.** Every second Sunday. The vigil is in remembrance of all those suffering from conflicts in the Middle East. Bring a sign. 5-6 PM, Bardstown Road at Douglass Blvd. Sponsored by LPAC (Louisville Peace Action Community). For more information, call Harold Trainer at 387-9490.

Mar 19 (Thurs) **KENTUCKY SINGLE PAYER HEALTH CARE.** First Unitarian Church, 809 South 4th Street, Louisville. Call Kay Tillow 502-636-1551. Every third Thursday, 5:30 PM.

May 19 (Thur) **THIRD THURSDAY LUNCH,** “Iran Up Close and Personal,” a report featuring Terry Taylor, Executive Director of Louisville’s Interfaith Paths to Peace, about his trip to Iran in November of 2010 as part of a ten-person Citizen Diplomacy team sponsored by the national Fellowship of Reconciliation. The Rudyard Kipling, 422 West Oak Street, Louisville. Buffet Lunch at 11:30. Presentation at Noon. \$6.00. For reservations, call Jean Edwards (502-458-8056), e-mail EdwardsFOR@bellsouth.net or Cathy Ford (502-458-1223), FordHoff@bellsouth.net.

May 21 (Sun) **LOUISVILLE COMMITTEE FOR ISRAELI/PALESTINIAN STATES.** Every third Sunday. First Unitarian Church, 4th & York Streets, Louisville, 3PM. Call Beverley Marmion, 502-451-5658.

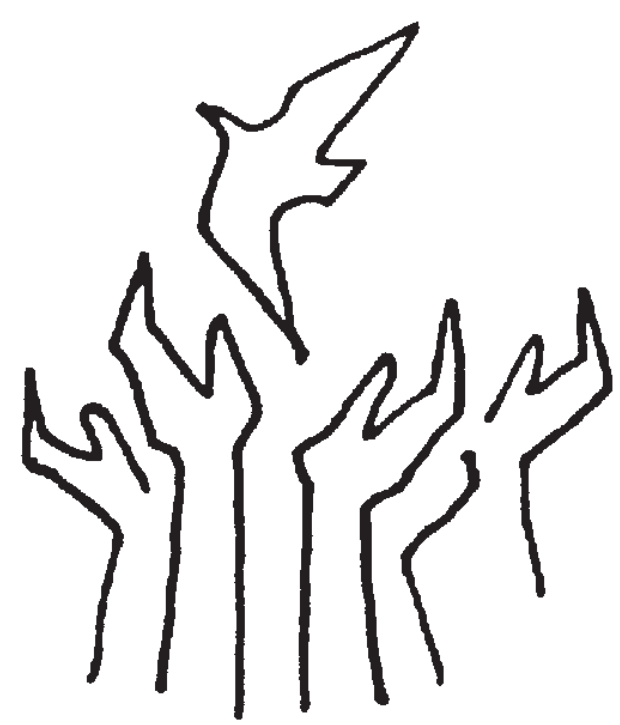
May 22 (Mon) **F.O.R. STEERING COMMITTEE.** Presbyterian Seminary, Nelson Hall, Room 10, 1044 Alta Vista Road, Louisville. Every fourth Monday. Visitors encouraged. For more information, call Pat Geier at 502-456-6586 or Peter Fosl at 502-291-2506.

May 26 (Thurs) **FORsooth LABELING.** Presbyterian Seminary, Administration Building, Room 10. 6:30 PM. **We need volunteers!** Many hands make light work, and the opposite is also true! So please join us if you can. Call 458-8056 for more information!

OUT OF TOWN EVENTS

June 6-24 **CANADIAN SCHOOL OF PEACEBUILDING.** Consider taking one or more 5-day courses at the annual Canadian School of Peacebuilding at Canadian Mennonite University in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Three 5-day sessions, each with three or four courses running concurrently, will be offered for academic credit or for professional training for practitioners. Check out the website for more information (<http://www.cmu.ca/csop>). Apply on-line today or download a pdf of our application (<http://www.cmu.ca/csop/online.html>). Note: F.O.R. is a cosponsor, bringing together national and international instructors from Ontario/BC, Iran, Philippines, and the USA.

June 24-26 (TFS) **NATIONAL CONFERENCE AT KENT STATE UNIVERSITY, OHIO,** calling for an alternative agenda--an agenda for jobs, peace and justice. Say “NO” to cutting Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, education, social services, and workers’ rights, at a time when workers and the community are under such duress. Come to the Conference and help build the movement. For more information, e-mail emergencylabor@aol.com or call 216-736-4715.



FINANCIAL REPORT			
March 2011			
BEGINNING BALANCE			
Donations & Honorariums		490.00	
TOTAL		\$14,508.31	
EXPENDITURES:			
FORsooth Editing		\$150.00	
FORsooth Layout		100.00	
FORsooth Printing		360.00	
FORsooth Mailing.....		200.00	
FOR National Dues		100.00	
Honorarium		1,000.00	
Office Expenses		68.59	
		\$1,978.59	<u>1,978.59</u>
ENDING BALANCE		\$12,529.72	
Please make your check payable to the Fellowship of Reconciliation. Your gift is tax deductible.			
PLEASE SEND CONTRIBUTIONS TO:			
Tim Scheldorf, Treasurer Fellowship of Reconciliation 2917 Beaumont Road Louisville, KY 40205			

Please recycle FORsooth to a friend, and please ask her or him to do the same.

Regular Meeting Times for Area Organizations

911 TRUTH LOUISVILLE (502-609-6020)
ADDICTION RECOVERY ADVOCATES OF KENTUCKIANA – 2nd Thursday (485-1248)
AIDS INTERFAITH MINISTRIES (AIM) OF KENTUCKIANA, INC. – 1st Tuesday (574-6085 or 574-6086)
AMERICA 2000 DEMOCRATIC CLUB – 4th Tuesday (459-0616)
AMERICANS UNITED FOR SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE – 3rd Thursday, every other month at noon (608-7517)
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL – 1st Saturday (637-8951)
APPAF [AMERICAN PALESTINE PUBLIC AFFAIRS FORUM] – 2nd Thursday (895-8155)
BREAD FOR THE WORLD – Last Monday (239-4317)
CAPA [CITIZENS AGAINST POLICE ABUSE] – 2nd Thursday (778-8130)
CART [COALITION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION] – 3rd Wednesday, Union Station, TARC Board Room (893-5172)
CLOUT [CITIZENS OF LOUISVILLE ORGANIZED AND WORKING TOGETHER] – (583-1267)
COMMITTEE FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST – 2nd Monday (456-6586)
COMMON CAUSE – Ad hoc discussions. Continuous engagement. (454-7797)
COMMUNIST PARTY USA – 1st & 3rd Sundays at 2:00 PM (384-3875)
COMMUNITY FARM ALLIANCE OF JEFFERSON COUNTY – 2nd Tuesday (775-4041)
CONVERSATION CAFE – Wednesday evenings (560-0085)
COUNTER RECRUITMENT, “Aim Higher” – Second Sunday (893-2334)
EARTH SAVE LOUISVILLE – 2nd Saturday (299-9520) www.LouisvilleEarthSave.org
FAIRNESS CAMPAIGN – Quarterly community dialogues and volunteer opportunities (893-0788)
FDR/LINCOLN LEGACY CLUB – 1st Thursday, papajohn15@bellsouth.net
FELLOWSHIP OF RECONCILIATION – 4th Monday (609-7985 or 291-2506)
FRIENDS FOR HOPE (Support Group for Adult Cancer Survivors) – 1st Thursday (451-9600)
FRIENDSHIP FORCE OF LOUISVILLE – 2nd Tuesday (893-8436)
GREATER LOUISVILLE SIERRA CLUB – 3rd Tuesday (897-3335)
HABITAT FOR HUMANITY – Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays & Saturdays (637-6265)
INTERFAITH PATHS TO PEACE – 1st Tuesday (214-7322)
IRFI [ISLAMIC RESEARCH FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL, INC.] – Sundays at 6:00 PM (502-423-1988)
JOBS WITH JUSTICE KENTUCKY (582-5454)
JURISDICTIONARY CLUB OF LOUISVILLE – Know the law and how to use it (500-8161)
JUSTICE RESOURCE CENTER – (345-5386)
KFTC [KENTUCKIANS FOR THE COMMONWEALTH] – 2nd Monday (589-3188)
KITOD [KENTUCKIANA INTERFAITH TASKFORCE ON DARFUR] – (553-6172)
KY ALLIANCE AGAINST RACIST & POLITICAL REPRESSION – 3rd Monday (778-8130)
KY COALITION TO ABOLISH THE DEATH PENALTY – (541-9998)
KITLAC [KY INTERFAITH TASKFORCE ON LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN] – 2nd Wednesday (479-9262)
LOUISVILLE COMMITTEE FOR ISRAELI/PALESTINIAN STATES – 3rd Sunday (451-5658)
LOUISVILLE PEAK OIL GROUP – 2nd Saturday (425-6645)
LPAC [LOUISVILLE PEACE ACTION COMMUNITY] – (456-6914)
LOUISVILLE WOMEN CHURCH – Meditation every Sunday (473-8435)
LOUISVILLE YOUTH GROUP – Friday nights (893-0788), www.louisvilleyouthgroup.org
LOUISVILLIANS IN FAVOR OF EQUALITY (LIFE) – 4th Sunday (384-3875)
METRO SWEEP FOR ACCESS – 3rd Tuesday (895-0866 or 899-9261)
METROPOLITAN HOUSING COALITION – 4th Wednesday (584-6858)
MIGHTY KINDNESS – mightykindness@gmail.com (235-0711)
MUHAMMAD ALI INSTITUTE FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE, at UL (852-6372)
NAACP [NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE] – 3rd Monday (776-7608)
NAMI [NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR THE MENTALLY ILL] – 2nd Monday (245-5287)
PARENTS, FAMILIES & FRIENDS OF LESBIANS AND GAYS (P-FLAG) – 3rd Sunday (329-0229)
PEACE & COMPASSION BUDDHA CIRCLE/CML – (451-2193, brozier@bellsouth.net)
RCRC [RELIGIOUS COALITION FOR REPRODUCTIVE CHOICE] – (866-606-0988)
RESULTS (a hunger lobby) – 2nd Saturday (451-4907)
SIERRA CLUB INNER CITY OUTINGS – 2nd Thursday, 7:30 PM (558-0073)
WOMEN IN TRANSITION (WIT) – every Wednesday, 6-8 PM (636-0160)

Note: If your group would like to be added to this list or if information needs to be updated, please let us know by calling 458-8056.

