



PEACENOTES

A PUBLICATION OF THE PEACE EDUCATION CENTER



PEACEEDCENTER.ORG



EDITOR: TOM OSWALD
DESIGNER: SAMANTHA DILLON

MSU OCCUPATION MOVEMENT

BY LAURA SAGER

As the Spring semester drew to a close in April, Michigan State University students and allies erected tents on campus near the International Center, occupying what is known as “People’s Park.” In doing so, they joined the anti-war movement calling for a ceasefire and divestment from the State of Israel that is still sweeping universities around the globe.

The April 2024 MSU Occupation Movement, initiated by Hurriya, a coalition of over 20 campus organizations, was a non-violent grassroots movement in solidarity with the people of Palestine, who are still suffering genocidal violence, forced displacement, intentional starvation, and a military blockade of adequate humanitarian aid, medical care, without the right of displaced families to return to their homes. The Movement aimed to expose MSU’s failure to uphold the international rule of law, respect the human rights of Palestinians, and respond to public demands for divestment.

Many university and community organizations, including the Greater Lansing Peace Education Center and MSU alumni, faculty,

and staff, supported the encampment. The outpouring of support included food from area restaurants, monetary donations, supplies, shelters, and participation in demonstrations outside graduation venues.

As Hurriya has been noting for months, MSU profits directly from the U.S./Israeli war-and-surveillance machine through its direct investments in Israel as well as millions of dollars in indirect investments and programs contributing to the machinery of war abroad and oppression at home. Hurriya points out that every university in Gaza has been destroyed by Israeli military action in a strategy that has been branded “educide.” Scores of academics and thousands of students have been killed, while MSU’s Board of Trustees do nothing to end their complicity with Israel.

The April 2024 MSU Occupation Movement:

- **Denounces** MSU’s profiting in weaponry and the ongoing genocide in Gaza; and
- **Denounces** the U.S. provision of military weapons, funding, and aid propping up the brutal, ongoing colonial occupation of Palestine.
- **Calls on MSU** to divest from all businesses and projects related in any way

to the State of Israel and, further, and

- **Calls on MSU** to divest from the U.S. war-and-surveillance machine that makes the ongoing war crimes and genocide in Gaza possible.

In addition, the MSU Movement joined thousands of other students in calling on the Biden administration to:

- Demand a permanent ceasefire
- Provide immediate and sufficient humanitarian aid to meet the desperate needs of Gazans
- Ensure Israel guarantees the right of return for Palestinians so they can rebuild their homes and their communities
- End the illegal occupation of Palestine

The students are drawing on the heritage of movements for decolonization, such as the anti-war movements (Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan), the successful fight for divestment from apartheid South Africa, the Women’s March, and the legacy of the George Floyd rebellions, as well as ongoing efforts to educate the public that MSU is sited on stolen land.

To date, the university has ignored repeated calls by campus student governments, faculty, and community organizations to divest from Israel and to end the militarization of

campus. “We are deeply grateful for the outpouring of support we have received from campus and community individuals, organizations, and businesses,” said Hurriya Spokesperson Jesse Estrada White. “We were heartened by the hundreds of messages from people who were with us in spirit but unable to join the encampment.

“MSU’s semester ended much earlier than many of the other schools with encampments,” added Estrada-White. That’s why Hurriya planned the encampment as a short-term action to send a strong message to the Board of Trustees, as a way to generate community support for the people of Palestine, and to bring the broader community and student attention to our movement’s key goals. All of these goals were met. Among other victories, the MSU encampment successfully amplified its message by ensuring mainstream media outlets were kept informed about students’ actions

and aims and providing reporters with factual answers to tough questions, which helped generate support for Palestinian rights by a broader public.

“Our occupation also amplified our demands for divestment from the right-wing ethnostate of Israel and the U.S./Israel war machine,” said Estrada-White.

“We have demonstrated that students, faculty, staff, and community are willing to stand in solidarity with Palestinians and push this university to change. We have made the board’s complicity in genocide an issue they can no longer ignore.”

“Our message of solidarity with the people of Palestine suffering under the brutal Israeli-led and U.S.-supported ethnic cleansing and genocidal war crimes have been heard internationally, and we were strengthened by messages of support from Palestinians, who brave annihilation for telling the truth about the merciless assaults and the conse-

quences.

“We reminded the university community of the many Palestinian students of all ages who were not able to graduate this year, who in fact – from infants to youth – continue to die daily from the genocidal attacks on civilians.”

Estrada-White also noted that “for years MSU has failed students, faculty, and the Michigan community with its complicity with the State of Israel. Now it is failing the entire world by investing in the death and destruction at the bloody hands of the U.S./Israel war machine. They have repeatedly refused to come to the table to negotiate with us on our demands.”

As soon as the encampment ended, students and allies began traveling to the University of Michigan and other “hot spots” where encampments are still facing brutal police tactics, arrests, and sanctions from their universities.

EROSION OF DEMOCRACY

“A UN independent human rights expert recently warned that the recent increase in student protest attacks across campuses in the United States indicates an “erosion of intellectual freedom and democratic principles within educational settings.

“I am deeply troubled by the violent crackdown on peaceful demonstrators, arrests, detentions, police violence, surveillance and disciplinary measures and sanctions against members of the educational community exercising their right to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression,” UN Special Rapporteur on the right to education, Farida Shaheed, said in a **statement** at the end of an

official visit to the US.

The **UN Human Rights Council**-appointed expert said she is particularly concerned by the way protesters are unfairly treated based on their political viewpoint – specifically pro-Palestinian protestors.

In early May, Hurriya and community allies joined MSU Alumni for Palestine in a protest demanding divestment. More actions are in the planning stage. Hurriya will welcome students back in the fall with opportunities to get involved.

“We promise the MSU Trustees that we will be back, in force, as we continue to build our movement,” emphasized Estrada-White. “Student protesters are unlikely to be deterred by arrests and police violence, especially as the devastating brutality of the State of Israel’s attack on people sheltering in Rafah continues to escalate.”

THE GOOD SHEPHERD COLLECTIVE REPORTS ON THE HORRORS IN RAFAH

Israel’s U.S.-backed genocide war continues to escalate the already dire humanitarian crisis in Gaza with multiple bombings of so-called “safe zones” across Rafah. These areas were indicated to those told to flee other areas of Gaza with the understanding they would, by design, be safe. In reality, they have been critical tools for the Israeli military to consolidate the Palestinian population into ethnic encampments for bombings.

Israel’s missile strikes across the makeshift

tent encampments in al-Mawasi, near Rafah, resulted in significant casualties among displaced families. Palestinian medical officials and the official Palestinian news agency reported that at least 21 people were killed, including 12 women. Additionally, 64 people were wounded, with 10 in critical condition.

There are no hospitals in Rafah, and injured individuals have been transferred to the International Medical Corps field hospital. There are no longer any hospitals



in Gaza that specialize in treating burns caused by some of these horrific attacks. The shortage of ambulances exacerbates the situation.

This incident follows another deadly attack on a camp in Tel as-Sultan, near Rafah, which killed 45 Palestinians. A resulting fire rapidly destroyed the encampment, with families burned alive and bodies ripped apart by shrapnel. Videos of fathers holding their limp, headless children quickly circulated across social media.

As has been the case, the Israeli military spokesman quickly spread lies so that their argument that munitions alone could

not have caused such a blaze would enter into the mainstream conversation. Israeli hasbara has a long, clear, documented history of quickly fabricating lies to muddy the conversation and create confusion for those unfamiliar with the state's pattern of violence.

In response to these attacks, Hamas has called on the international community and the United Nations to take immediate action to protect civilians.

The situation in Rafah is particularly dire, with most of the 1.5 million forcibly displaced Palestinians taking shelter there now displaced once more, struggling to avoid Israeli air raids and ground offensives. The blockade on humanitarian supplies, including essential fuel and medicine, has led to the closure of several hospitals, including the Kuwait Specialty Hospital, leaving only one hospital operational in the city. Aid agencies and the UN warn that the continued offensive is worsening the humanitarian crisis, making it increasingly difficult to distribute aid to those in desperate need.

A perspective on the national student anti-war movement



“What an inspiration the student movement in solidarity with Palestine has been. For three weeks students in American universities have organized peaceful demonstrations in support of Palestine, established encampments, and occupied buildings in the biggest movement of its kind in decades. **The movement has been national in scope, in 45 of our 50 states, involving 140 campuses, and well over 2,000 arrests.**

This large, diverse, decentralized, and non-violent movement has been driven by young people’s horror at the genocidal war that has been carried out by Israel against Palestinians in Gaza . . . Many university administrators, politicians, and the media – pressured by the Zionist lobby – lied about the students and their activities calling them pro-Hamas, and anti-Semitic, and even characterizing them as terrorists . . . to justify violent police

attacks that injured and, in some cases, hospitalized students and professors. Not since the National Guard massacres at Kent State (four killed) and police murders at Jackson State (two killed) both in 1970, have we seen such violence against student protestors.

What altruism we have seen. Some students have jeopardized their college education, their graduation, and their student visas if they are immigrants, and risked their health and safety in the face of violent attacks by Zionists, right-wing organizations, and the police. The student protests, sometimes led by Students for Justice in Palestine and Jewish Voice for Peace, were passionately opposed to Israel’s war, but were not anti-Semitic.”

Copyright © International Viewpoint - online socialist magazine - All rights reserved



Not since the National Guard massacres at Kent State (four killed) and police murders at Jackson State (two killed) both in 1970, have we seen such violence against student protestors.





PEC'S STATEMENT

OPPOSING EFFORTS TO PUNISH & DEMONIZE CRITICS OF ISRAEL'S WAR CRIMES IN GAZA

JUNE 7, 2024

WRITTEN BY NELSON BROWN, PEC CO-CHAIR

As the world in real-time horror watches Israel's campaign of genocide and attempted ethnic cleansing in Gaza, protests on U.S. campuses, like at Michigan State University, have raised voices and acted in protest. Along with others in the Lansing area, the Lansing Area Peace Education Center (PEC) has called for Israel and the United States to support a ceasefire and denounced the United States' complicity in Israel's brutal bombardment of helpless civilians in Gaza, an assault that the International Court of Justice (ICJ) has called a "plausible" violation of international law. Along with pro-Palestinian supporters, the ICJ has called for a ceasefire and for Israel to stop hindering the flow of humanitarian relief into Gaza to prevent starvation and destitution.

But as the cries for an end to the carnage in Gaza grow louder, many supporters of Israel are not calling on Israel to cease its war crimes but rather are mobilizing to stop the protests and to demonize and penalize those who protest. The PEC is expressing deep concern about several pieces of legislation and legislative actions that hinder or punish the exercise of freedom of speech around criticism of Israel's war crimes in Gaza or that hinder President Biden's ability to stop Israeli actions that violate human rights and are against American interests. These threats to our democracy cover several areas of attack on opposition to Israel's war on Gaza and possible United States' complicity in Israel's "plausible" war crimes.

The Anti-Semitism Awareness Act makes criticism of Israel antisemitic

The PEC asks legislators to oppose the Anti-Semitism Awareness Act (H.B. 6090, S. 4136). While the PEC strongly opposes antisemitism, the Awareness Act supports a definition of antisemitism that penalizes Americans' First Amendment right of free speech to criticize the policies and practices of the United States and of Israel. The bill's title is misleading, as it purports to raise awareness about antisemitism, but its true purpose is to

silence those who oppose Israel's assault on Gaza. By promoting a definition that conflates antisemitism with political dissent, the Awareness Act would empower those who seek to limit free speech and curtail the growing movement for Palestinian rights. It also prioritizes the interests of a foreign state over the fundamental rights of American citizens to express their views on matters of public importance.

This legislation hinders the exercise of First Amendment rights by adopting a definition of antisemitism set forth by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) for the enforcement of Federal antidiscrimination laws concerning education programs or activities. By promoting a definition that conflates antisemitism with political dissent about Israeli actions, H.R. 6090 would empower those who seek to limit free speech and curtail the growing movement for Palestinian rights. It also prioritizes the interests of a foreign state over the fundamental rights

The IHRA definition of antisemitism that HR 6090 adopts reads as follows:

"Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities." SOURCE

of American citizens.

Instead of the IHRA definition of antisemitism, a more impartial definition of antisemitism comes in the Jerusalem Declaration of Antisemitism (JDA). By adopting the IHRA definition of antisemitism, the law conflates antisemitism with criticism of Zionism or criticism of Israel's policies. This problematic definition would unjustly label criticism of Israel or support for

PEC STATEMENT CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

Palestinian rights as antisemitic, stifling legitimate political discourse and activism. It could also criminalize protests and advocacy aimed at ending Israel's control of occupied territory and advancing equal rights for Palestinians.

This IHRA definition of antisemitism has been contested by the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism (JDA) which offers a definition that is more straightforward and does not create a finding of antisemitism based on the wording of criticism of the government of Israel:

"Antisemitism is discrimination, prejudice, hostility or violence against Jews as Jews (or Jewish institutions as Jewish). SOURCE

The JDA's criticism of the IHRA definition strongly stresses its significant focus is preventing or limiting criticism of Israel:

"The IHRA Definition includes 11 "examples" of antisemitism, 7 of which focus on the State of Israel. While this puts undue emphasis on one arena, there is a widely felt need for clarity on the limits of legitimate political speech and action concerning Zionism, Israel, and Palestine. Our aim is twofold:

(1) to strengthen the fight against antisemitism by clarifying what it is and how it is manifested,

(2) to protect a space for an open debate about the vexed question of the future of Israel/Palestine. We do not all share the same political views and we are not seeking to promote a partisan political agenda.

Determining that a controversial view or action is not antisemitic implies neither that we endorse it nor that we do not." SOURCE

While the PEC criticizes the IHRA definition, it remains committed to opposing antisemitism whether it occurs domestically or internationally related to Israel, but weaponizing antisemitism for use offensively or defensively against people exercising free-speech rights to criticize Israeli betrays our First Amendment. The PEC urges legislators to oppose this bill from advancing in the Senate. If you believe some statement opposing antisemitism needs to be expressed as part of anti-discrimination law, the PEC urges you to adopt the JDA's definition.

Oppose penalizing non-profit corporations for supporting Palestinians rights

The PEC urges legislators to oppose the Termination of Tax-Exempt Status of Terrorist Supporting Organizations Act, S. 4136. This legislation is the Senate version of HR 6408, which would target a new category of non-governmental organizations, particularly those who engage with Palestinians or on Palestinian issues. It would also enable attacks on nonprofits working in any sector on any issue. It is intended to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to terminate the tax-exempt

status of terrorist-supporting organizations. Under current law, an organization's tax-exempt status is suspended if the State Department designates it as a terrorist organization. H.R. 6408 would extend that designation to any organization identified as having provided "material support" or resources to a terrorist-supporting organization within the past three years.

H.R. 6408 defines support as the term 'terrorist supporting organization' any organization which is designated by the Secretary as having provided, during the 3-year period ending on the date of such designation, material support or resources (within the meaning of section 2339B of title 18, United States Code) to an organization described in paragraph (2) (determined after the application of this paragraph to such organization) in excess of a de minimis amount. The bill gives the U.S. Department of Treasury the right to remove the tax-exempt status of organizations based solely on an accusation of wrongdoing. If it were to become law, any presidential administration could use it as a tool to stifle free speech, target political opponents and punish disfavored groups or those seen as a political threat.

Oppose pro-Israeli witch-hunting investigations of pro-Palestinian supporters

The Republican-controlled House of Representatives is preparing to conduct a McCarthy-Era-style Witch Hunt into 20 groups it claims are behind the campus protests against U.S. support for Israel's war in Gaza smearing them as antisemitic and pro-Hamas. The Committee on Oversight and Accountability and the Committee on Education sent a letter to Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen requesting "All Suspicious Activity Reports (SARs) generated in connection to the following organizations, or any known officer or employee thereof."

The list of 20 groups includes Students for Justice in Palestine, Jewish Voice for Peace, IfNotNow, Open Society Foundations, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and People's Forum. Some of the organizations are Jewish led. The letter says the Committee is investigating "the sources of funding and financing for groups who are organizing, leading, and participating in pro-Hamas, antisemitic, anti-Israel, and anti-American protests with illegal encampments on American college campuses." It continues, "This investigation relates both to malign influence on college campuses and to the national security implications of such influence on faculty and student organizations."

The protest movement across college campuses has carried an overwhelming pro-Palestinian message. The students' main demands have been a call for a ceasefire, an end to US arms shipments to Tel Aviv, and that their institutions divest from Israel. Still, the authors of the letter claim there are more nefarious forces at work. "It's no coincidence that the day after the October 7 Hamas terrorist attack, antisemitic mobs began springing up at college campuses across the country," Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC) said. "These protests have been coordinated and well organized, indicating that outside groups or influences may be at play. American education is under attack." In fact, the

CONTINUE READING



PEACE EDUCATION CENTER'S

ANNUAL MEETING

POTLUCK | BOARD ELECTION | SPECIAL AWARDS

JUNE 23 @ 4PM
1120 S HARRISON
EAST LANSING



BY TOM OSWALD | Peace and justice advocates will gather at the University United Methodist Church on June 23 to take part in the Lansing Area Peace Education Center's annual meeting.

The event, dedicated to promoting local peace work and recognizing outstanding individuals in our community, will include electing at-large board members and honoring community leaders and high school student awardees of the Tom Schneider Peacemaker Award.

In addition, PEC members will provide an overview of the work accomplished by the center over the past year and share its vision for the future. The event will include a potluck dinner, and everyone is invited to bring a dish to share.

PEACEMAKER AWARDS

Earning this year's Tom Schneider Peacemaker Awards are Blake Beckhorn, a senior at Williamston High School, and Zachary Barker, a senior from Okemos High School. (SEE PAGE 10).

Earning Peacemaker of the Year Awards will be Thasin Sardar, who represents the Islamic Center of East Lansing on the PEC Board, who has worked tirelessly to promote awareness of the horrors that are being inflicted on the people of Gaza; as well as Michigan State University students Ateeyah Abdul-Wasi, Jesse Estrada-White and Saba Saed, who have led pro-Palestinian protests on the MSU campus and elsewhere.



ATEEYAH ABDUL-WASI
PEACEMAKER OF THE YEAR



JESSE ESTRADA-WHITE
PEACEMAKER OF THE YEAR



SABA SAED
PEACEMAKER OF THE YEAR

Receiving the PEC's Lifetime Achievement Award will be Chris Root. Chris has spent her life working for peace and justice, beginning at age 18 when she registered as a lobbyist and began working on anti-apartheid issues.

In 2021, she was named a member of East Lansing's Study Committee on an Independent Police Oversight Commission by the East Lansing City Council. Chris has provided staff support for the Democratic caucus of the Michigan House of Representatives on a bill to divest state public employee pension funds from companies operating in South Africa. Chris continues her focus on this movement by helping to build the Africa Activist Archive Project

ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday, June 23 | 4 - 7 PM

1120 S Harrison Rd,
East Lansing

POTLUCK- bring a dish!



THASIN SARDAR,
PEACEMAKER OF THE YEAR



CHRIS ROOT,
LIFETIME PEACEMAKER

GUNS NOW BEING COMPLETELY DESTROYED FROM GUN BUYBACK PROGRAMS IN MICHIGAN

BY BEVERLY LEAF, *Spirit of Peace Church of the Brethren*

Plant Justice Grow Peace (PJGP) of the Spirit of Peace Church of the Brethren (COB) continues to advocate for Gun Violence Awareness. We hold Gun Violence Awareness Vigils on Fridays at noon on Capitol Avenue in downtown Lansing in front of the Michigan State Capitol.

We continue to look for ways to spread the news that Gun Violence is the number one killer of children in the United States and gun violence is now a health crisis in the USA.

We financially supported the Gun Buyback Program of St. Michael's Episcopal Church after learning about this from Marcia Tyriver, deacon of that church and advocate to end gun violence. The Gun Buyback was held at their church on Oct. 7, 2023, with the Lansing Police Department and Ingham County Sheriff Department securing the weapons. The Buy Back purchased 106 weapons to the tune of over \$14,000. Guns were transferred to Michigan State Police for complete destruction, or so we thought.

On Dec. 10, 2023, the New York Times published an article by Mike McIntire exposing the "open lie" that the Michigan State Police was not destroying the guns in a responsible way. They gave the guns to GunBusters in Missouri to be melted down. However, GunBusters only melted down the frame of the gun that contained the identifying serial number on it. The remaining parts of the guns were assembled into gun kits and sold online. Ghost guns could result from the purchase of these kits.

The public was outraged at this news and Gun Buy Back programs were especially sickened and angry about this news. PJGP joined hundreds of others in letter-writing campaigns to our governor, attorney general, and state representatives and senators, U.S. Senators and U.S. Representatives and to Colonel James F. Grady II, Director, Michigan State Police begging them to stop this practice. The office of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) employees seemed unaware of this practice even though the ATF supposedly had a contract with GunBusters.

On Jan. 10, Michigan State Police announced they were halting the contract with GunBusters to destroy the weapons.

On Jan. 16, PJGP initiated a legislative meeting with State Rep. Kara Hope. There were 15 of us present from Spirit of Peace COB, St. Michael's Episcopal Church, and a local downtown pastor learning about new legislation being written to stop this practice. Rep. Hope also stated that she had an upcoming appointment with Col. James F. Grady II at the State Police to discuss the problem at hand.

March 12 brought good news as MSP issued a statement saying they were changing vendors where the entire weapon will be completely destroyed. The chain of custody of the weapons will be secured by the State Police, having staff taking the weapons to the foundry in Jackson and making sure they are completely destroyed. The foundry will not charge for this service but will be able to keep the metal.



On March 13, the New York Times did a follow-up article written once again by Mike McIntire stating "MSP will no longer allow guns marked for destruction to be sold online as parts."

After the New York Times expose, it seems we accomplished our goal ending this practice and pushing the State Police to find an alternative seeking destruction of these weapons. It was a combined effort with many groups working together and advocating for change. And together we did it!

St. Michael's Episcopal Church in Lansing can now go ahead with their Gun Buy Back Program on Saturday, Oct. 5, confidently knowing any weapons they purchased will be completely destroyed after being turned over to the State Police by the Lansing Police Department and the Ingham County Sheriff's Department.

END GUN VIOLENCE MI
SILENCE THE VIOLENCE

at the
East Lansing Public
Library

**SOUL BOX PROJECT
OPENING NIGHT!**

**JUNE
25TH**

There will be refreshments, speakers and snacks!
The entire exhibit will be open from June 25 - 29th.

6-8 PM

The Soul Box Project is an art-based, community-building tool anyone can use to raise awareness of the U.S. gun violence epidemic. Soul Boxes include folded paper origami to represent the incomprehensible number of gunfire deaths and injuries. They are counting victims in memorial exhibits, offering caring solace through art-making and connecting with other initiatives working for safer, healthier communities.



UKRAINE NEEDS TO SEEK A CEASEFIRE WITH RUSSIA AND NEGOTIATE A SETTLEMENT BEFORE UKRAINE IS DESTROYED...

BY NELSON BROWN

Despite a recent influx of \$61 billion in U.S. military aid, Ukraine's war with Russia is going poorly. Despite the undeniable courage and tenacity of the Ukrainian people and their battered armed forces, a sober review of the current situation suggests that Ukraine is likely to lose the war to Russia if the fighting continues. It is better to face up to this hard truth now rather than continue pointless bloodletting and destruction. The time for a ceasefire and negotiations has come. While the Biden administration and Zelensky haven't accepted these facts, they are not going away.

First and foremost, **Russia's overwhelming military superiority cannot be overstated.** After a poor start, the Russian Federation now possesses one of the largest and most well-equipped armies in the world. Its military capabilities, from conventional ground forces to advanced air defense systems, far surpass those of Ukraine. Despite significant Western aid, including sophisticated weaponry and training, Ukraine's military remains outmatched in terms of sheer numbers and technological sophistication. The recent intensification of Russian offensives, with devastating artillery barrages and missile

strikes, underscores this imbalance.

Moreover, **economic factors of this conflict heavily favor Russia.** While the sanctions imposed by Western nations have undoubtedly inflicted economic pain on Russia, they have not crippled its war effort. Russia's vast natural resources, particularly its energy exports, continue to provide a financial lifeline. In contrast, Ukraine's economy has been shattered by the war. Infrastructure destruction, displacement of millions of people, and disruption of agricultural production – one of Ukraine's economic pillars – have plunged the country into a dire economic crisis. The strain on Ukraine's resources severely limits its ability to sustain a prolonged military campaign.

Geopolitical dynamics also are working against Ukraine. While the West has shown remarkable solidarity in supporting Ukraine, this support has its limits. NATO and EU countries are fearful of escalating the conflict into a broader war with Russia, a nuclear-armed power. This caution manifests in the hesitance to provide certain advanced weaponry and the reluctance to commit troops directly to the conflict. Moreover, the global South, including major powers like China and India, has largely refrained from condemn-

ing Russia, instead advocating for negotiated settlements. This global ambivalence further weakens support for Ukraine on the international stage.

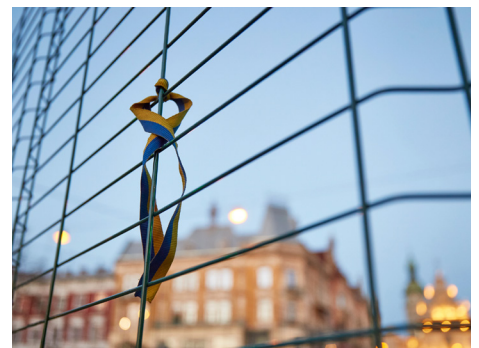
The **human cost of the war** also disproportionately affects Ukraine. The relentless bombardment and the resulting humanitarian crisis have inflicted profound psychological and physical damage on the Ukrainian population. The exodus of millions of refugees has not only strained neighboring countries but also depleted Ukraine's human capital. This demographic catastrophe weakens the nation's long-term recovery prospects and undermines morale on the home front.

Additionally, Russia's strategy of **attrition** is wearing down Ukrainian resistance over time. The inability of Ukraine to recruit new soldiers reflects Ukraine's inability to continue a long war. Attrition also involves targeting critical infrastructure, disrupting supply lines, and creating a state of perpetual instability. The recent capture of key territories by Russian forces demonstrates the efficacy of their methodical, if brutal, approach.

In conclusion, while most Americans sympathize with Ukraine's struggle against Russia, the stark realities of military imbalance, economic strain, geopolitical isolation, human suffering, and internal discord do not bode well. The U.S. and Ukraine must confront the likelihood that Ukraine, despite its efforts, may ultimately be unable to withstand the relentless pressure of a determined and ruthless adversary.

Better to seek a ceasefire and start negotiations before Ukraine's suffering, death, and destruction worsen.

It took the U.S. 20 years to face reality in Afghanistan; best to face reality in Ukraine now.



PEACE MOVEMENT FACES DILEMMA ABOUT PRIORITIES AS ELECTION LOOMS

BY NELSON BROWN



Progressives and pro-Palestinian supporters (collectively, peace movement) may face a difficult choice about whether to support President Biden in November as punishment for his unqualified support for Israel's war on the Palestinians. And the fate of our democracy may rest on how the peace movement responds.

Currently, many Biden supporters are either working to end the U.S.'s complicity in Israel's multiple war crimes in Gaza and on the West Bank or, at least, are sympathizing with those who are working for this. Unfortunately, people in the peace movement are probably the most concerned over the possible danger to our democracy that a second Donald Trump presidency could portend. What is to be done?

As anger over the horror in Gaza grows, many people in the peace movement are questioning whether they can support Biden when he runs against Trump in the fall. Should they support him, work for him, not vote, or support a third party? Because the election will be close in the key swing states, including Michigan, the peace movement's failure to actively support Biden could inflict a second Trump presidency on our country.

While this dilemma looms large now, it may dissipate by November if Biden stops supporting Israel's genocide. Regardless, the peace movement must consider how its actions will affect our country and the peace movement both domestically and internationally, especially for what best helps Palestinians in the long run.

In making any agonizing electoral choice, it is easy to forget that during his presidency Trump was more supportive of

Israel in his four years in office than Democrats had been. He crossed some bridges even Democrats would not cross in support of Israel.

For example, Democrats had not recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital, an act that ended the possibility of having East Jerusalem as the capital of a Palestinian state, Trump recognized it; Democrats had not recognized Israeli sovereignty over land seized from Syria in the Six Day War in 1967, Trump did; Democrats did not give official legitimacy of Israel's sovereignty over the West Bank, Trump has effectively done this by recognizing illegal Jewish settlements there. Trump also backed a supposed peace plan, the "deal of the century," by his son-in-law Jared Kushner that would have had previously hostile Arab countries develop diplomatic and economic relations with Israel without the realistic recognition of a Palestinian state in return.

And don't expect Trump to necessarily deviate from his extreme support for Israel's right-wing government if he is reelected. A Trump 47 presidency would probably be even more supportive of Israel's extreme right-wing government and its genocidal assault on Gaza. [LINK](#)

Moreover, he would not hesitate to abuse the Insurrection Act by calling up tanks and soldiers to crush protesters, no matter how peaceful. Dissenting media could be shut down this time next year by a POTUS who has openly declared the media as "the enemy of the people." He has pledged to bar refugees from Gaza; to expel immigrants sympathizing with Hamas; to revoke the visas of foreign students supporting Hamas or deemed

anti-American, and who knows what else he could do. So don't think punishing Biden will help the Palestinian cause or that Trump will be more susceptible to the peace movement's pressure. But then also consider the impact of a Trump presidency will have for our democracy and the peace movement.

Domestically, the policies of a second Trump presidency could rip our democracy apart. Trump is proposing fascist measures and is using fascist rhetoric: he calls people who oppose him "vermin;" he uses expressions like "dictator," "absolute immunity," and "vengeance;" he has proposed to assume direct control over the Justice Department so he can persecute his many enemies; he plans to replace thousands of civil servants with toadies who owe exclusive loyalty to him, not to the Constitution. The list could go on, but most in the peace movement already know these things.

The question now becomes how to rationally weigh the risk of a Trump presidency against the anger many feel justifying punishing Biden for his policy on Israel. Of course, all this may change by the fall. The current pressure the peace movement is bringing on Biden – for example, the uncommitted-presidential-primary-vote-movement and continual demonstrations and protests – may change Biden's policy for the better. We can hope. But most likely, people in the peace movement will have to search their consciences to find the right choice that supports the greatest good in the long run for Palestinians and our country.

PEC HONORS AREA STUDENTS WITH SCHNEIDER AWARDS

BY TOM OSWALD

Blake Beckhorn, a senior at Williamston High School, and Zachary Barker, a senior from Okemos High School, are the recipients of this year's Lansing Area Peace Education Center's Tom Schneider Peacemaker Award.

The award is an annual tribute to the memory of long-time volunteer and activist, Tom Schneider. Applicants are chosen by a committee of the PEC, based on student essays, along with letters of recommendation verifying the student's ongoing commitment to peace and justice.

Blake Beckhorn has worked to support all students, through relevant field trips, activities, educational materials, planning community outreach events and establishing a care closet to provide needed clothing and hygiene products for those in need.



Through his active engagement in advocacy and leadership, especially through the Gay Straight Alliance, Blake has had a direct and tangible impact on the culture and fabric of Williamston High School.

Blake hopes to work for the U.S. State Department, where he is committed to help negotiate peaceful resolutions to conflicts among people throughout the globe.

Zachary Barker has demonstrated a sincere commitment to peace and social justice through organizing and participating in actions in his school and community and beyond. Examples include volunteering with the Greater Lansing Food Bank, marching with Black Lives Matter, meeting with legislators, delivering water

to Flint, providing leadership within Jack and Jill of Greater Lansing, and volunteering during spring break with Miss Pearl at Good News Daycare, located in an impoverished area on the south side of Chicago.

Zachary also is committed to ending gun violence. In 2023 his leadership skills were on display twice – once during an active shooter hoax at Okemos High School and then when he was forced into lockdown while on the Michigan State University campus during the February 2023 mass shooting.

Blake and Zachary were honored during their respective schools' graduation ceremonies. They also will be honored during the PEC's annual meeting on June 23.



A RESTORATIVE INITIATIVE OF THE PEACE EDUCATION CENTER

Building Communities for Public Safety

Taproot is a group of advocates committed to criminal justice reform. We believe that real public safety cannot exist without strong, supportive communities that prioritize accountability over punishment.

Our first step towards this vision is to create a welcoming environment in Ingham County for citizens returning home after incarceration.

WELCOME HOME CIRCLES

Our monthly Welcome Home Circles are open gatherings for returning citizens, their families, and the community. These circles, inspired by restorative celebration traditions, acknowledge the significant milestone of reentry into society and provide crucial support for the journey ahead. We encourage participation from

everyone, including those who may not consider themselves directly impacted by incarceration, to foster a community of support and understanding.

JOIN US!

Join us for our first Welcome Home Circle on **Saturday, July 27, from 4-6 PM at The Fledge**, 1300 Eureka St, Lansing. This event is a chance to welcome returning citizens and show your commitment to breaking down barriers to reintegration. Whether you're sharing your experiences or simply lending your support, your involvement helps build a stronger, more inclusive community. For more information, contact us at taprootcircle@gmail.com.





FUNDRAISER BENEFITS GAZA RELIEF & PEC

BY TOM OSWALD

On May 10, nearly 100 people jammed into the Allen Street Neighborhood Center to listen to some great music and donate funds for two worthy causes – the Lansing Area Peace Education Center and the Palestinian American Medication Association (PAMA).

The event was the PEC's second annual Mother's Day gathering, which featured music by the local group The Dangling Particles and a presentation by Dr. Amer Afeneh, a critical care and trauma surgeon from Mercy St. Vincent Hospital in Toledo, who had recently returned from a two-week medical mission in Gaza.

Dr. Afeneh is affiliated with PAMA, an organization whose health care professionals

have spent much time in Gaza lately, providing much-needed care to the victims of Israeli attacks. PAMA is a humanitarian, nonprofit, nonpolitical, and charitable organization aiming to promote educational achievements and expertise of Palestinian health care professionals, with the goal of promoting health care in Palestine. palestinian-ama.org.

The PEC event was designed to remind us why the original Mother's Day came about. In fact, the original Mother's Day was initiated by Julia Ward Howe (who's best known for writing the lyrics to the "Battle Hymn of the Republic") around 1870, hoping it would be a day for mothers to campaign for an end to war following the carnage of the American Civil War.

The event brought in more than \$2,600 in donations, half of which benefited the PEC and the other half PAMA.

For more than 50 years, the Lansing Area Peace Education Center has worked for peace and justice, its roots taking hold in the late 1960s with opposition to the Vietnam War. Since then, it has protested wars around the globe; most recently the conflict in Gaza, calling for an immediate ceasefire as well as more humanitarian aid for the victims of this brutal war.

Incidentally, it was on May 9, 1914, that President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed the second Sunday in May as Mother's Day "as a public expression of love and reverence for the mothers of our country."

For more information on the history of Mother's Day, visit peacealliance.org/history-of-mothers-day-as-a-day-of-peace-julia-ward-howe.

MEMORIES FROM JUNE 6, 1944

BY BECKY PAYNE

Fifty years ago today, my dad was among thousands of soldiers who landed at Omaha Beach in France on the second day of the invasion to repel the Nazis and take back democratic control of Europe. My dad was an unlikely hero, the son of a farmer's widow in Surry County, North Carolina. His mother remarried suddenly; her new husband moved in and wanted those boys out of "his" house, so five of them enlisted and were sent to war – Garland, Alex, Charlie, Ray and my dad, Woody Payne.

On June 6, as they approached Omaha Beach, Dad stated that they could hear bullets hitting the front of the Higgins Boat, the craft that ferried the tightly packed soldiers to the shore. The front end of Higgins Boats were designed to be lowered like a drawbridge, allowing the soldiers to pour out into shallow water, wade to shore with rifles held over their heads, and begin fighting back. As they

heard the bullets pounding the boat, Dad and his companions begged that the front of the boat not be opened, but it was, and the bloodshed began. Dad survived by dragging another soldier's body in front of him to take the bullets as he left the boat.

Was that man dead or alive at the time? Was he a friend or stranger? I don't know. What I do know is that Dad spent the rest of his life wracked with grief. He drank. He fought. He cried. He cried enough that he left puddles on the floor in front of the sofa where he spent his last years – at least when he was not institutionalized in the VA Hospital's mental ward, where misguided doctors tried to cure him of his need to drink. They sent him home with Quaaludes, which, when added to the ever-present alcohol, left him so woozy that he would crash his car and repeatedly fall until he would be sent back to the hospital for more "help."

After Omaha Beach, Dad marched through Italy, France and Germany. Once, his company was given a tour through a just liberated concentration camp where he saw bodies of skeletal prisoners lining open trenches. General Eisenhower saw him leaning against a signpost, sound asleep and very disheveled

and gave him a billet for a new uniform. He was wounded a total of five times, each time he was patched up and sent back. Once, he was shot through the neck by an enemy soldier hiding in a tree – whom he then killed. "He was just a boy like me," he told my mom.

I never knew exactly what made my dad cry so much, but shooting that kid or using another soldier's body for a shield were enough to do it, I think. I do know that I finally learned about PTSD many years later and got a better handle on what made Dad so wounded. It wasn't the physical wounds, it was the torment of knowing what he had done. Dad was gone by then, leaving me with my own lifetime of regrets for treating him with so much disdain.

It was this that led me to my life's work of lobbying toward peace. Since Dad's death when I was 20, I have realized that it is the profit motive that leads to wars, rather than issues of righting moral wrongs. I have realized that sending young men to shoot at each other is a cheap and horrific way for governments to solve disputes, but all that sweat and glory brings out the patriotism. Regardless, the more I learn, the more certain I am that war is never the answer



Peace Education Center

1120 S Harrison Rd
East Lansing, MI 48823

NON-PROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE PAID
LANSING, MI
PERMIT # 105



JOIN THE PEACE EDUCATION CENTER!

Consider Donating Time, Talents and More to PEC!

CONNECT >>

- PeaceEdCenter@gmail.com
- PeaceEdCenter.org
- 1120 S Harrison Rd
East Lansing, MI 48823

FOLLOW >>

- -
 -
 -
- @peaceEdcenter

SUPPORT >>



www.peaceedcenter.org/donate

PEC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Becky Payne, *Co-Chair* Jim Detjen, *Secretary*
Nelson Brown, *Co-Chair* Rob Mack, *Treasurer*

PEC BOARD

Paul Brun Del Re	Casey Orr
Sarah Eubanks	Tom Oswald
Samantha Dillon	Shantel Rodriguez
Terry Link	Laura Sager
John Masterson	Thasin Sardar
John Metzler	

PEC COORDINATOR

Samantha Dillon

SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS

Edgewood United Church of Christ
Spirit of Peace Church of the Brethren
Red Cedar Friends Meeting
University United Methodist Church
Islamic Center of Greater Lansing
Mennonite Fellowship

AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS

End Gun Violence Michigan
Greater Lansing Network Against War & Injustice
Greater Lansing United Nations Association
Meta Peace Team

DONATIONS

Financial contributions are always welcome! Please consider a tax-deductible contribution to the PEC. Thank you for your support!

You can [DONATE ONLINE](http://www.peaceedcenter.org/donate) or mail donations to:

Peace Education Center
1120 S Harrison Rd
East Lansing MI 48823