

the Socialist

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DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM AND THE TWISTED LOGIC OF AMERICAN MILITARISM



There are the caskets returning home on military transport planes to grieving loved ones. The other the unnamed victims of the violent assaults made in the name of America. There are the trillions of dollars spent each year to ensure that the killing machine is well oiled, that the fat captains of industry get even fatter and that the options for social programs at home are even slimmer. There is the “projection of power,” “collateral damage,” and “drone wars” that produce flooding rivers of hate-filled blowback. These are all the consequences the American military industrial complex creates for people all across the globe each day. And now it has to end.

A small phrase in the Socialist Party USA’s Statement of Principles provides a concise rationale for why we must struggle to disable and dismantle the American military machine. Democratic socialism, the section reads, entails the establishment of a radical democracy, “that places people’s lives under their own control.” A strong argument can be made that no part of American society is more out of the control of regular people than the Military Industrial

Complex. A few examples will illustrate the urgency of confronting and eliminating American militarism.

The desire on the part of the beneficiaries of the Military Industrial Complex to maintain its operation has spilled over into the everyday lives of Americans. The massive surveillance state constructed in the years following the terrorist attacks of 9-11, has been utilized to intrude on our daily lives. A 2011 investigative report conducted by the Washington Post found that more than 800,000 people are now employed in the tasks of surveillance and, if a recent job recruitment advertising campaign by Homeland Security is any indication, this number will grow. These workers spend their time collecting and sifting through nearly 1 million emails a day in order to mine information for an endless parade of security reports. In the process, the government is shredding any notion of privacy and free speech in order to squelch dissent and put more public funds to work inside of the Military Industrial Complex.

And the public funds made available for military spending has surged to

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Statement of Principles

THE SOCIALIST PARTY strives to establish a radical democracy that places people’s lives under their own control - a non-racist, classless, feminist socialist society... where working people own and control the means of production and distribution through democratically-controlled public agencies; where full employment is realized for everyone who wants to work; where workers have the right to form unions freely, and to strike and engage in other forms of job actions; and where the production of society is used for the benefit of all humanity, not for the private profit of a few. We believe socialism and democracy are one and indivisible. The working class is in a key and central position to fight back against the ruling capitalist class and its power. The working class is the major force worldwide that can lead the way to a socialist future - to a real radical democracy from below. The Socialist Party fights for progressive changes compatible with a socialist future. We support militant working class struggles and electoral action, independent of the capitalist controlled two-party system, to present socialist alternatives. We strive for democratic revolutions - radical and fundamental changes in the structure and quality of economic, political, and personal relations - to abolish the power now exercised by the few who control great wealth and the government. The Socialist Party is a democratic, multi-tendency organization, with structure and practices visible and accessible to all members.

THE COST OF WAR

BY SCOTT TUCKER

The horrors of war begin even before the first soldier or civilian dies in any armed conflict, and return to haunt us in daily life. On the last day of 2011, President Obama signed the National Defense Authorization Act, and simultaneously signed away habeas corpus. “Indefinite detention” of American citizens without charge or trial will now remain one of the signature events of Obama’s political career. Obama has nothing left to learn from the old method of Clintonian triangulation, since he both instructed colleagues in Congress not to strip this provision out of the bill, and then later voiced the view that he disagreed with the same provision. All that finessing does not change the brute fact that Obama, a former Ivy League teacher of constitutional law, did sign the damn bill.

An acquaintance of mine keeps a kind of private shrine with a gilded idol of FDR, and he knows by heart all the liturgical elements of the New Deal and the Popular Front. But that shrine exists in a realm of nostalgia and ideological incense, while his vote goes by rote to any Democrat competing to win the White House. When I asked him if Obama’s last legislative act of 2011 gave him any qualms, he suggested that the consequences would be “managed eventually” by other members of the Democratic Party. Well, yes, but that can mean that the period “in the meantime” grows very mean indeed. And so here we are, witnessing a partisan division of labor in which the Commander-in-Chief, having campaigned with promises of “hope and change,” is now outflanked on his “left” by party hacks such as Dianne Feinstein, who suggested that habeas corpus still has some constitutional value. Under a regime of casino capitalism, even the constitution can be played like marked cards and poker chips.

Even the best efforts to account for the real cost of war— in human life and sorrow, in destruction of nature and culture, in erosion of civil liberties— can only be approximate. Who will give a truly magisterial account of history? Even Zeus on Mount Olympus was distracted by love affairs with Leda and Ganymede, while the Bronze Age warriors conducted fabled wars. But by the mid-nineteenth century, the technological improvements in weaponry already point the way to mechanized slaughter. The Gatling gun was not truly an automatic weapon, since it required a human hand to crank six cylinders round a central shaft, and it was not yet decisive in the American Civil War. But with some tinkering and marketing, the Gatling gun gained wide use in the expansion of European colonial empires, and in the last half of the 19th century was turned upon non-industrialized peoples such as

the Bedouins, the Matabele, and the Zulu. Imperial Russia turned 400 Gatling guns upon Turkmen cavalry and central Asian nomads. In 1882, the Royal Navy used these guns against the Egyptians at Alexandria. In 1898, Lt. John “Gatling Gun” Parker used these guns in the Spanish-American War, and they played a part in the Battle of San Juan Hill.

Over the course of the Spanish-American war, the Gatling gun was superseded by the Colt-Browning machine gun. But the story in the Philippine – American War (1899 to 1913) proved different: some commanders still preferred the Gatling gun. To use the word “war” in this case is almost a historical misnomer: it was an imperial use of overwhelming power. An estimated 250,000 to 600,000 civilians died in that period, many from disease and famine in so-called “reconcentration camps.” President Theodore Roosevelt is now enshrined in national memory as an early environmentalist, and his imperial record is largely forgotten. Indeed, he treated the news reports of atrocities in the Philippines primarily as a problem in public relations and partisan campaigning.

For a time the rotary mechanism of the Gatling gun went the way of gaslights and carrier pigeons, until it was found useful again for anti-aircraft weapons at the end of World War Two. Thus the M61 Vulcan, a Gatling-style rotary cannon, was first produced by General Electric and then by General Dynamics. The Vulcan was used against Soviet-designed MiG fighter planes during the Vietnam War (which the Vietnamese prefer to call the American War). Modified versions were used to suppress ground fire, and were even mounted on armored vehicles by the U.S. and Israeli militaries. The whole inventive arc of this rotary style weapon was driven by the desire to deliver ever more bullets at ever-faster speeds. If a bullet is scaled upwards into a missile and given greater explosive power, then we really enter the era of full-scale missile warfare and indeed of modern nuclear weapons.

The widespread use of chemical weapons during World War One resulted in over 90,000 battlefield deaths but a much higher number of lasting injuries. This innovation provoked revulsion and condemnation. The condemnation did not prevent the continued use of chemical weapons by the British forces in the Russian Civil War of 1919, by Spanish forces in Morocco in the 1920s, by Italian forces in Libya in 1930, by Soviet troops in Xinjiang in 1934, and by Italian forces in Ethiopia from 1935 to

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BRADLEY MANNING

BY LAWENCE ROCKWOOD

On January 12, the Article 32 hearing officer in the case PFC Bradley Manning released his recommendation that Manning be court martialled on all 22 criminal charges and to include the count of aiding the enemy. Although the government could seek the death penalty on this count, prosecutors have denied their intent to do so. During the hearing, hundreds of supporters, many bused in from Occupy Wall Street, rallied and marched between the gates of Fort Meade. The Article 32 hearing, the military equivalent of a grand jury, was held from December 16 to 23 at Fort Meade, Maryland.

PFC Bradley Manning is the Army intelligence analyst accusing of releasing classified information to WikiLeaks. It has been over a year and a half since Defense Secretary Robert Gates and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen held a press conference in July 2010 and proclaimed that those associated with WikiLeaks “had blood on their hands.” There has not been one example of the lives of US military personnel and low level Afghan human intelligence assets have been in placed in jeopardy as a result of WikiLeaks. However, not all US officials have suffered from such bureaucratic thick headedness. One year ago, P.J. Crowley, a State Department spokesman, resigned after calling the treatment of Manning, an alleged WikiLeaks source, “ridiculous and counterproductive and stupid.”

Ironically, on the same day the charges against Manning were forwarded for court martial, a “home movie” of four US Marines urinating of a corpse in Afghanistan went viral on the internet. Some of the same media outlets demanding Manning’s head put up equivocations of the significance of these images. But there is nothing equivocal about the fact that this image is certain to be used to recruit fighters to kill Americans and their allies. The indifference to this act holding in which international humanitarian law was held in contempt and its exploitability by America’s enemies makes the exaggerated threat to Americans relating to Manning’s release of low level intelligence indicating official criminal behavior is laughable.

As I attended the OWS demonstrations in support Manning, representing SPUSA, I felt the issues concerning military professionalism in the Manning case had been turned on their head and I was not alone. Among the demonstrators who stood out among the others at the gate in defense of Manning were three career military professionals, three “lifers.” These were a retired Navy Lieutenant Commander, a retired Air Force Non-Commissioned Officer, and myself, a former Army Counterintelligence officer with 23 years of uniformed service who was also court martialled for exposing human rights violations being hidden by America official secrecy.

We understood that “IF” this soldier was guilty of the charges against him, he was justified in his conduct, not as an anti-war gesture, not the act of LGBT personal integrity, nor even as a pro-democracy activist, but as a military professional. We were aware that in the German city of Nuremberg after World War II the American military led an effort to try senior German officers for obeying, not violating, their country’s national security laws. We understood it is a soldier’s duty to disobey such laws

when they conflict with moral law or natural or “higher” law. We remembered that our own military executed officers and soldiers for failing to make choice that PFC Manning made when faced with low-level classified documents revealing the highest levels of criminality imaginable.

In the case of Nuremberg, the defenders were under the illusion that the usual following of orders under “good order and discipline” trumped the affirmative just war obligation for soldiers to prevent war crimes to include torture and genocide. In the case of PFC Manning, the prosecutors are under the illusion that the security classification of rather low-level secret material trumps the affirmative just war obligation to expose war crimes. We, as life-long military professionals, understood Manning’s prosecution was nothing other than the historical inversion of the Nuremberg Precedent.

Some had other motivations in their support of this soldier. Of the many speeches that were broadcasted at this event. Former Army Lieutenant Dan Choi, the gay activist who was

discharged from the military for revealing his sexual orientation, honored “Breanna” Manning as a gay soldier who shared the integrity all the those who openly challenged the Army’s former “Don’t Ask / Don’t Tell” policy, the integrity of revealing the truth whatever the cost. Veterans like lifelong activist John Penley who also faced imprisonment and extended solitary confinement for his anti-war stance during his enlistment in the Navy during the Vietnam War, spoke of Manning as being emblematic of the greater anti-war movement. A member of Manning’s defense committee called Manning one of the central inspirations of the Occupy Wall Street movement and the Arab Spring where thousands have turned their arrests into opportunities to place their own counties

on trial for the failure to hold to democratic values.

Two miles within Fort Meade, PFC Manning’s attorney, David Coombs, was utilizing all the usual legal maneuvers associated with any high visibility trial. However, in addition, while crowds at the gate continued to hail him as a hero who released classified information as a whistleblower exposing war crimes, Coombs in his closing arguments on Wednesday described PFC Manning in a very different light than his defenders at the gates. As a disturbed soldier, who was psychologically troubled and disaffected by military policy, he argued that the Army had no right exposing Manning to classified information in the first place.

Nothing demonstrated the stress created by this internal institutional contradiction than an incident on Monday in which Former Army Lieutenant Dan Choi, a Manning supporter, was thrown out of the hearing for wearing his dress uniform and had his rank symbolically torn from his uniform in an act of severe disrespect. Soon after, famed Pentagon Papers whistleblower Daniel Ellsberg was thrown out of the courthouse for introducing himself to Manning. These actions are without historical precedence and contrary to the experience of this author at his own court martial. However, they are consistent with the torturous treatment that Manning has received at the hands of his captors. Even the war criminal Lieutenant William Calley

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I (KINDA) LIKE IKE

BY STEPHON BOATWRIGHT

The Left often likes to embark on missions to “demystify” concepts and institutions, getting rid of the mystery behind things by shedding a critical light on the situation. Yet, when it comes to the murky collusion between government and the arms industry, no one does it quite like Ike. Dwight Eisenhower’s now famous farewell address has always been viewed more as a warning than a heartfelt goodbye. However, over a half century later, the speech is more properly viewed as a ominously accurate prophecy.

By its nature, capitalism necessarily must expand and constantly reproduce the conditions necessary for its existence. When this logic meets modern warfare, the country is left in a curious position: combat is necessary to sustain profits, GDP, employment, etc., thus the military-industrial-complex is born. Like all profit-driven industries, the defense industry must have a market in order to survive. This may be why president Eisenhower remarked, “You begin to see this thing isn’t wholly about defense of the country, but only more money for some who are already fat cats.”

Eisenhower’s inadvertently Marxist insights would have him ejected from the Republican Party if he were among them today, where the defense industry and the banks that finance it are the leading contributors to the GOP. Of course no refuge may be found in the Democratic party either, where president Obama assures us that defense spending will be even higher than it was during the Bush years, even after operations in Iraq and Afghanistan (supposedly) come to a close.

Obama’s promise of continued astronomical spending on warfare comes on the heels of what may be described as the world’s first corporate war. From infrastructure, to combat operations, the private sector has never played such an integral role in American military operations as in “Operation Iraqi Freedom”. The tragedies that have resulted from the transition to for-profit warfare have been characterized by the tax-payer paying for billions of dollars overcharges by unaccountable corporations, and regular human rights abuses committed with impunity by private mercenaries. The reason is simple: the objective of capitalism is maximizing profit at minimal expense, putting everything from the welfare of our soldiers (let alone foreign civilians), to reconstruction efforts behind the importance of the stock price; we know the system puts profit before people, but the military-industrial-complex takes it to a literal extreme.

Beyond the multi-billion dollar contracts is a dizzying constellation of public and private actors maneuvering and trading cash for votes, for contracts, for arms, for more cash. Furthermore, the system is self-perpetuating so business can “engineer” their control over the government. Defense contractors are always sure to manufacture the individual parts of their weapon systems over large geographic areas to build a base of public support for the project. For instance, components of Lockheed Martin’s F-22

stealth fighter are produced in almost every state of the union (particularly swing states), so if any move to close the project is proposed, workers in every major congressional district will raise an objection, making it instant political suicide. It has been said that the American way of war is a business, not an art. It should be added that like many businesses, it’s an anti-democratic one.

What could be the most disturbing element of all of this



is the need to maintain a constant sense of emergency in order to create the atmosphere for a roaring arms market; we see this play out at all levels. To be proper, the MIC is more appropriately the military-industrial-congressional-think-tank-complex. No, it’s not nearly as catchy as MIC, but far more illuminating. With congressional members held hostage to their shareholders, the war drum is always booming on the floors of the House and Senate. To support both Democratic and Republican calls for increased or sustained military spending is an array of K Street institutions manufacturing all the “facts” and reports needed to justify hundreds of military bases, new forms of armament, and the most aggressive foreign policy as possible. We see their specialists on all major news networks, ginning up fear of the other, exalting violence as possessing a type of purifying effect, which will rid the world of the non-believers of capitalist-democracy. The hypothetical plans for every potential foreign conflict are already drawn up, with overwhelming military force, spearheaded of course by Halliburton and Xe (formally known as Blackwater), as the only acceptable tactics. The cultural effect that this creates could not be anymore terrifying; increasingly everyday citizens expect war as the first means of foreign policy.

In the end, the MIC is operating on cold-blooded arithmetic: if warfare is profitable, there should be more preparation and execution of it. Even the liberals of the Democratic Party have fallen into the trap of never ending war spending and defense contracts. With over 6 million Americans employed between the Defense Department and the private defense industry, stripping billions of dollars from our

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ALEXANDER/MEDOZA 2012:

FOREIGN POLICY

A Socialist Presidential position on Foreign Policy will be guided by the words of the brilliant scientist, and fellow democratic socialist, Albert Einstein. Einstein once wrote that, "Peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be achieved by understanding." The goal of the Socialist Party USA's presidential ticket of Stewart Alexander and Alex Mendoza is to dismantle the Military Industrial Complex that has been built up by Democrats and Republicans and has been the cause of so much suffering in the world. Doing so will allow us to transform the US into a country that encourages the peaceful coexistence of all people through non-violent dialogue and a shared commitment to justice.

We think that it is particularly important to immediately enact the following measures:

•Dismantle the War Machine

- Cut the amount of Federal funds going to the military by 50%
- End all foreign military interventions in the Middle East / Central Asia by removing remaining troops from Iraq and Afghanistan and ending the secret war in Pakistan by ending drone attacks and clandestine (black) operations throughout the region
- Close all US military bases throughout the world and demilitarize US embassies around the world
- End the US membership and participation in NATO.
- Dismantle the Central Intelligence Agency, end all clandestine (black) operations, and all other covert operations that contravene international law and the domestic laws of nations
- Criminally prosecute military and civilian officials responsible for involving the United States in undeclared, unconstitutional, or illegal wars and prosecute those officials who planned for the utilization of torture and the creation of illegal confinement facilities to include Guantanamo Bay.
- Prosecute all American military, civilian, and contract personal who ordered, executed, or covered-up offenses under International Humanitarian and Human Rights law.
- Prosecute commanders who tolerated a criminally permissive command climate that engendered contempt for humanitarian standards.
- Abolish all private armies by cancellation of all private contractors providing armed military, police, and security services abroad.
- Immediately end all international military, police, and security assistance and training programs, especially funding to Israel, Egypt and Colombia

We believe that these immediate changes will stem the rising tide of the Military Industrial Complex. This will free up vital tax dollars for social services while also making it possible to combat the culture of militarism that has grown strong in the US. Pairing these initial changes with a new culture of international accountability through democracy will allow for the emergence of new voices for peace to emerge from all over the world.

We would therefore support the following long-term anti-militarist initiatives:

•Democratize the United Nations

- The US will pay off all of its debts to the UN
- End US veto power on the UN
- End permanent membership to the UN Security Council

•Restore Democracy to the US

- End all war-power provisions not explicitly delineated in the Constitution.
- Support for a Constitutional Amendment requiring a binding vote of the people on all issues of war or military interventio



•Provide Federal funding for the cleaning up of environmental damage at military bases (domestic and abroad) and funds to retrofit these areas into productive enterprises

•Sponsor an International Movement to Ban Weapons of Mass Destruction

•Safely dispose of the US stockpile of nuclear weapons and encourage other nations to follow our example
•Join an international ban on the use of weapons with depleted uranium and ratify and enforce the Land Mine Ban and Cluster Munitions conventions.

•Restore International Human Rights Credibility to the US

•Join the international community in recognizing that social and economic human rights are as binding as political rights by ratifying and enforcing International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).
•Strictly enforce the Geneva Convention and ratify and enforce the Rome Treaty establishing the International Criminal Court (ICC) along with the Additional Geneva Protocols protecting civilians in conflict.
•Ratify and enforce other international human rights conventions, which the US shamefully remains one of the few non-ratifiers to include those ensuring the rights of the disabled, rights of children, and elimination of discrimination against women.

Defeating the stranglehold of the US military on the world goes hand in hand with ending the multinational corporations' domination of the resources of the world. Any attempt to create an international system guided by eco-socialist values depends on an end to militarism. Any hope for a just system to deal with global migration depends on demilitarizing borders. In addition, ending the violent reign of the US military is a key part of any desire for the development of global solidarity between the people of world.

As socialist candidates for President and Vice President, the Alexander/Mendoza campaign hopes to play a positive role in ushering in a new era of peaceful coexistence throughout the world. The proposals we make on the campaign trail are important. However, we need not wait until a socialist occupies the White House to create a society based on peace instead of war. Targeting the Military Industrial Complex with campaigns that practice non-violent civil disobedience is every bit as essential. We will support such a movement on the campaign, long after the votes have been counted. Voting Socialist this year means more than just making a protest against the role of the military in our society. It means learning a lesson from Albert Einstein by recognizing that people all over the world share a hope for an end to the violence of American empire. Socialist values of peace, solidarity and justice can get us there.

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In Memorial
Richard Gottlieb
February 28, 1935 - February 15, 2012



In memory of my political comrade and birthday partner Richard Gottlieb. We were fellow candidates for the Liberty Union Party of Vermont, members of SP-USA and both born on February 28, 1935, we celebrated together for a quarter century.

-Mal Herbert

FROM WAR TO PEACE: A SOCIALIST VISION

BY DAN LA BOTZ

How can we move from an arms-and-war economy to a peace-and-plenty economy? The challenges are many, but the only answer lies in a revolutionary transformation of our country's notion of development and progress.

Today, military spending, particularly weapons production, stands very near the center of the U.S. economy. The production of arms—planes, drones, rockets, ships, tanks, artillery, transportation and communication equipment—accounts for hundreds of billions of dollars of the U.S. budget. (The total U.S. budget, including the troops' salaries and benefits, is at least \$700 billion, some say \$950 billion.) (1) Not only is the absolute amount of money spent on arms production enormous, but it forms a huge proportion of the gross domestic product, reaching almost 5 percent. (This compares to between 1.5 and 2.5 for most other major capitalist economies.) (2)

Lockheed Martin, the largest military contractor, had \$35.9 billion in U.S. government contracts in 2010, almost all of it military. Nine other companies with over \$5 billion per year in U.S. contracts constitute the top ten corporations that, according to CNBC, “make billions from the U.S. government.” (3) (Not surprisingly, military corporations are large contributors to political campaigns, having contributed \$24 million to the 2008 campaign, evenly split between Republicans and Democrats.) (4)

Military is High Tech

Equally important from an economic point of view, the military is high tech. The manufacture of weapons is completely integrated into the most advanced sectors of the American economy: aerospace, computers, telecommunications, satellites, atomic energy, bacteriology, and chemistry. Military organization, which parallels corporate organization, has also played a significant role in the development of logistics, the movement of people, equipment and supplies around the world. Without a doubt, for decades the most important factor in research and development in the United States has been played by the military-industrial complex.

Dozens of American cities and towns depend upon the military—Navy, Army or Air Force—as one of the mainstays of the local economy. Some cities, such as San Diego, California, where I grew up, depend on both military bases and military production. (5) The military budget provides approximately five million jobs both in the military and in related civilian industries, a very significant percentage of a total workforce of 125 million. Many of those civil service and civilian jobs are unionized, and defense workers often earn higher wages and have better benefits than other workers in our society. (6) Clearly, the military stands near the center of our economy in terms of its budget, its role in technological innovation, the jobs it provides, and its impact nationally, regionally and in many localities.

Public Consciousness about the Military

The ideology of national security stands at the center of American self-identity and of our politics just as the arms industry stands near the center of American industry. For over 70 years, Americans have been taught by government, politicians and the media to fear

a dangerous foreign power that threatened what was called “the American way of life.” At one time, we were to fear Nazism and Fascism, then Communism, and more recently Muslim extremism. Fear of war, death, conquest and subjugation has formed the fundamental basis for the belief in doctrines of national security and, in turn, for our huge arms budgets. This fear is buttressed by arguments that the arms industry brings technological innovation and employment in high-wage jobs.

Fear was not the only factor leading to support for the military; so was fortune. While leftists have often been loath to acknowledge it, for more than a century many American workers accepted and approved of the arms industry, the military and U.S. imperialism, because they understood that their relatively higher wages and better conditions derived in part from U.S. military power abroad. Many American workers had served in the U.S. Army, Navy or Marines, had traveled abroad and well understood the brute power that put their nation above others.

During my life, I have heard from working people the more benign form of this nationalist ethos, “We are smarter, worked harder, and we have a better system which we should carry to other nations. We deserve the power we have in the world, and the wealth it bestows upon us.” And I have heard from them too the more malignant version, “We need their oil, and we’ll take it. Nuke them all and let God sort them out later.” We have a responsibility to challenge both versions of this argument.

Challenging Pro-Military Attitudes

We will not be able to transform our country's economy without challenging the pro-military consciousness. To dismantle the arms industry, we have to dismantle the military establishment, and we have to contest the continuing support for U.S. imperialism whether in the liberal version that argues for spreading American democratic values or in the more conservative version that argues for American power and if possible dominance in a hostile world. We will have to win the ideological contest between a pro-war and a pro-peace consciousness.

Taking on the role of military production in the U.S. economy is no easy task. According to a recent Gallup poll, the military is the U.S. institution held in highest esteem by the American people, approved of by 76% of Americans, as opposed to 20% approval for labor, 19% for business and a mere 11% for Congress. While the military still holds a strong position in American hearts and minds, things are changing. Two-thirds of the American public no longer supports the war in Afghanistan according to a recent CNN/ORC poll. Even a third of U.S. war veterans believe the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were not worth fighting.

Most important for this discussion, in March of last year, just over half of those polled said they would prefer military budget cuts to cuts in health and public pensions. While these numbers show important and progressive changes in the consciousness of the American people, they are only the beginning of a process that must go far deeper. Most Americans support cuts in the military budget to improve the social well being of our citizens. Yet, simply cutting the military budget is not enough.

OF ECONOMIC CONVERSION

Cutting the Military Budget is Not Enough

While we as Socialists support reducing the military budget, cuts alone cannot bring about the changes that we need to make to transform our society from an arms-and-war economy to a peace-and-plenty economy. The Obama neo-liberals also want to cut the military budget, preferring a sleeker but equally effective military.

We are not simply talking about economic conversion from wartime to peacetime production, such as has happened after major wars, though that would be a good start. We are talking about reconfiguring the economy, fundamentally transforming it, to put production for human needs rather than for profits at the center of our society's vision of the future. If we are going to do that, we have to extricate our economy from the military industrial complex, while simultaneously creating a new force for economic innovation and progress (not necessarily sheer growth) at its center.

Today, the military economy represents a powerful factor, one that leads to publicly-funded research and thus to innovation in arms technology, and to by-products in the civilian economy: hardware and software, gadgets and toys, and Apple-this-or-that and i-whatevers for American consumers—and leads to enormous profits. It was private industry working with the U.S. Army, for example, that developed the integrated circuit or computer chip, the basis for our entire computer electronics industry. Similarly, radio telephony was developed by the military during the Second World War, and then taken up by private industry, eventually evolving into the cell phone. The quasi-military space program produced the first satellites, leading eventually to commercial satellites for private communications companies. We can hardly deny that the military research has produced the cutting edge of American technology.

What Do We Put in its Place?

With what, we must ask ourselves, will we replace this crucial military factor in innovation and production and how would that change our economy? The conversion of individual plants from arms to peaceful production on a plant-by-plant basis will not work because of the root of the problem is the complex of modern capitalism with military-technological-industrial relations near its center. Even the broader concept of reindustrialization, the wholesale transformation of industry from military to peaceful production fails to provide an underlying motor of transformation.

Fear of the foreigner, fear of war, is not the only way to motivate human beings. Fear of hunger and starvation drove human beings, after the discovery of the grains, to develop agriculture and sedentary societies, the very basis of modern civilization. Similarly fear of disease with its frighteningly democratic character, epidemics threatening all with death regardless of sex, race, or class, led to enormous advances in human health through sanitation and medicine once we had discovered the germ theory of disease. We need to put a new set of fears and desires at the center of our ethos, and we can do so.

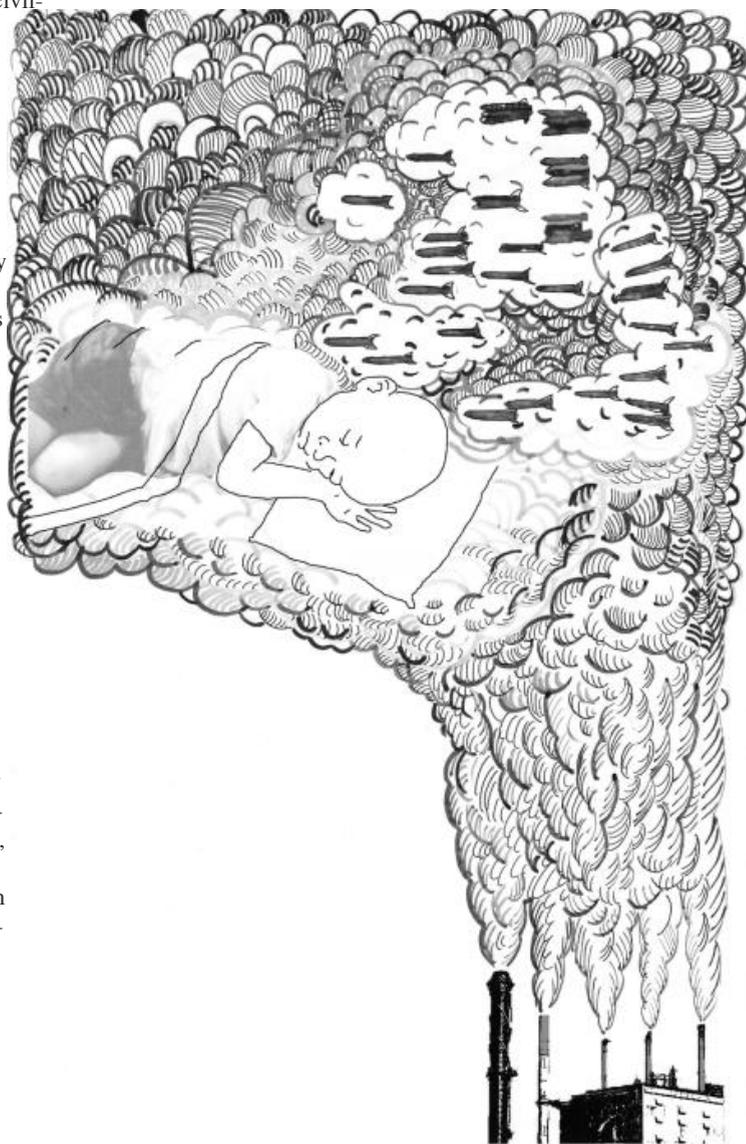
The Environmental Alternative

Perhaps fear of death—or put another way, love of life—is

the great motivator of all human innovation. If so, then we must replace the fear of death of our social order through war, conquest and subjugation, with the recognition that the death of the human race now appears likely to come through environmental catastrophe. The driving force of technological innovation and of production must come from the understanding that we face annihilation not principally from foreign powers, but from our own irrational system of industrial production which is destroying our air, water and soil, indeed our whole planetary ecology, and threatening the extinction of every species including our own.

Our fear of extinction through environmental catastrophe, or put more positively, our love of Mother Earth, of all of life, and of the human race should be the motor of a new political economy. We must put at the center of that political economy the preservation of the environment and the enhancement of life for all human beings. Environmentalism so broadly conceived, may be seen as

Continued on p14



MASSACRE IN AFGHANISTAN - TIME TO END THE OCCUPATION

STATEMENT BY THE SOCIALIST PARTY USA, NATIONAL ACTION COMMITTEE

March 13, 2012

The bloody US occupation of Afghanistan reached a new low as a 38 year old US Army Staff Sergeant embarked on a killing spree that resulted in 16 civilian deaths. Most of the victims were children, all were unarmed and many were not only shot and stabbed, but burned alive. The soldier had already done three tours in Iraq and had suffered a traumatic brain injury. Despite this, the US military certified him as a sniper and shipped him out to join the occupying forces in Afghanistan - another tool in their killing machine. So while Pentagon spinsters play off the attack as the action of one "troubled individual" with "family problems," Afghan civilians see it for what it is - another illustration of the violence of an occupying army.

The killings come on the heels of mass protests in the capital of Kabul and other cities over the burning of the Koran by the US military. This, along with the videos of American soldiers urinating on dead Afghans has fueled the mass anger that was released in street protests and increased insurgent activity. Afghan civilians have now spent more than a decade living under the military occupation of NATO forces led by the US government. This means restrictions on civil rights, death by drone bombing and a seemingly endless series of military offensives by NATO forces.

American elections have provided no relief to them as Barack Obama has proved to be every bit the war President that George W. Bush was. Scandals about private mercenaries have done little to relieve the oppression. And even the massive financial crisis that has gripped the Western world has done nothing to weaken the will of the global militarists to rule over Afghanistan. Deeply politically entrenched military weapons makers and military service company lobbyists have made common cause with war hawks in the Pentagon to ensure that the military occupations continue despite budget cutbacks elsewhere.

Only a globally coordinated anti-war movement that connects people in NATO countries with Afghan civilian groups can drive out the occupiers. This movement will not be made by governments or NGOs or by social media outlets. It can only come to life as a result of the determined resistance of everyday people who are willing to put their bodies on the line in the name of peace.

Instead of such a movement, Afghans have faced a series of betrayals by the West. Under the guise of supporting democracy in Afghanistan, the US installed Hamid Karzai as the puppet President of the country. Not surprisingly, the Karzai government has proven to be a deeply corrupt and oppressive regime that aims at securing privileges for a close circle of friends while obeying the orders of the occupiers. This has resulted in mass discontent in the population and the resurgence of support for Taliban resistance forces.

It is a cruel twist for Afghan civilians that Western Occupation has provided a new future for Taliban fundamentalism.

The recent acts of the Occupiers, especially the Koran burnings and the massacre of innocent civilians, demonstrate that this bloody occupation must end immediately. Americans have a global responsibility to participate in a movement to remove US troops immediately. This is a desperate short-term goal for the global anti-war movement that has resonated throughout the various Occupy Wall Street movements. In the longer term though, we need more than this. Our movement needs a sustained push to put an end to the Military Industrial Complex.

Many people ask Socialist Party USA members why we are running a candidate for President this year. The killings in Afghanistan provided a clear answer to this question. Stewart Alexander and Alex Mendoza carry a clear message of anti-militarism with them on the campaign trail. The peace initiative they propose is one that can resonate throughout the globe. An immediate 50%



cut to the military budget, the removal of US occupying troops, the elimination of all foreign military bases and the responsible elimination of weapons of mass destruction set the Socialist Party USA apart from the Democrat and Republican parties of war.

This is not about a “disturbed” 38 year staff sergeant or about building democracy in Afghanistan or about weakening the grip of the Taliban. Democratic Socialism is about building a peaceful world that puts an end to one of the greatest threats to human security in the 21st century – the US military. Our democratic revolution is built upon the hopes and aspirations of millions of people throughout the world to live a life based on peace, solidarity and freedom. The immediate removal of US troops from Afghanistan and a moratorium on drone bombings are small steps in that direction. Only democratic pressure from below can make this happen.

CHARLOTTE BLEISTEIN

BY MAL HERBERT



Meeting Charlotte Bleistein and sharing her home in Greendale, Wisconsin was the highlight of my visit to Milwaukee during the summer of 2004, while I was the SP-USA candidate for Vice President of the US. She was 90 then, still practicing law, driving to her office every day and often filling her van with fellow socialists to attend local and statewide events. We became fast friends and she has been an inspiration to me ever since.

Staying in Greendale, one of three towns built by the WPA during the depression was an eye-opening experience. Unemployed workers built the original housing units following a plan encouraged by Eleanor Roosevelt. The rows of houses faced a green park and the streets ran behind them. Other buildings included a school, town hall, a mall and even a statue dedicated to the workers who would live there.

Charlotte says that it is a privilege to be a member of the Socialist Party-USA in this conservative era. It is so different from the fairness of the New Deal and the years of economic fairness that followed. She was born into a socialist family and has remained one all her life.

Her maternal grandfather, Richard Eisner, emigrated from Silesia to Milwaukee in 1880 at the age of 24. He worked as a laborer at first, but was able to study law, enter the bar and eventually become a highly respected judge. His experience of the exploitation of workers and emigrants made him an advocate for socialism. Throughout his life, he wrote articles and letters in both German and English to Milwaukee newspapers calling for an end to capitalism. His obituary in the Milwaukee Leader in 1938 included this paragraph: “He was saddened by the ignorance of the masses and the way in which they allow themselves to be duped by the capitalist press. He accurately characterized the capitalist papers as virulent mental poison and he deplored the fact that so many work-

ing men will deliberately pay for their own poisoning.”

Charlotte grew up in St Louis but spent summers with her grandparents. She was a bit of a misfit in her nuclear family because both her parents and her brother were gifted classical musicians and she seemed to lack any aptitude for music. While growing up Charlotte became aware of the tension between her equally talented parents because her father insisted that his wife should be totally responsible for running the household at the expense of her career.

By becoming a lawyer, Charlotte was following her grandmother Eisner’s advice that women were needed in the legal profession because troubled women would feel more at ease talking with them about their problems. Soon after she graduated from law school, she began working for the Labor Relations Board as one of the agency’s first women lawyers. When her marriage to a fellow university student ended in the late 1940’s, she returned with her young daughter to Milwaukee to set up a private law practice.

She moved to Greendale in 1952 when building lots were being sold on the outskirts of the WPA village. A good friend and her architect husband bought a lot adjoining hers and together they designed and built their homes. Charlotte’s included an office because she felt that Greendale residents could benefit from her legal services.

Her first move was to get an insurance license. She went door to door to introduce herself as the resident lawyer and to sell them insurance. She jokes that her practice changed as life in Greendale did. During the rebellious 1960’s, she spent a lot of time in juvenile court defending resident teenagers. There were divorces, property disputes, wills and other legal issues through the years. In 1984, the Reagan administration decided that the federal government shouldn’t be a landlord and low-income housing projects were sold. She got her real estate license and handled the sales in Greendale. By 2004, her practice was dominated by elder law. She often drove to her client’s homes because they were housebound and continued her practice for the next five years.

Now that she is 97, Charlotte is still in her home. Her daughter has returned from living abroad to run the household and do the driving to appointments and the cultural events they both enjoy. Her voice is still strong and her mind as clear as ever when we telephone each other. She’s hoping to have a few more years to go through the papers in her home office and to write her autobiography. I’m hoping for a few more years to talk things over with her and enjoy her company.

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WAGING PEACE IN CHARLOTTESVILLE

BY BRANDON COLLINS

My hometown of Charlottesville, Va. has been in the national media a lot lately. Hunger striking for a living wage, confronting domestic violence, and opposing militarism, wars and specifically war with Iran keep us busy. Rest assured the Socialist Party of Central Virginia has been at the forefront of these important issues, actively organizing, and showing up.

While on the campaign trail for City Council, I had the opportunity to repeatedly make the case that peace, or more importantly, actually opposing war, is a local issue. The effects of war spending have sapped the resources of all communities everywhere. We have a housing crisis in Charlottesville. The enormous funds spent on wars have a crushing impact on our ability to create better neighborhoods and affordable housing. This is because cuts to the Community Development Block Grant are the preferred way for the federal government to acquire funds to kill people worldwide and expand markets for global capitalism.

A great event happened here during the campaign, along with friend and fellow activist David Swanson, the Charlottesville Center for Peace and Justice, the Socialist Party of Central Virginia, and many others, sponsored a national conference on the Military Industrial Complex at age 50. The opening address by then mayor Dave Norris, who had recently been the first to sign the mayors for peace pledge, called on all council candidates and council members in attendance to pass an anti-war resolution calling to bring our war dollars home. Throughout the conference, weekend workshops were held on the effects of war and the military industrial complex on localities. Crafting local approaches to the problem were vast, interactive, and inspiring.

I failed to win a seat on council, but I did gain some credibility with newly elected councilors, and previously seated ones, particularly on issues of war, peace, and the effects on the economy. Charlottesville has experienced a great blossoming of peace activities in the last year and as Occupy Cville waned those of us active with this issue crafted a plan. We nailed the new council at their first meeting with not only a request for an updated peace resolution, but also with a full on “peace agenda” that included other, more effective steps that council could take to resist and limit our participation in wars, occupations, and the military industrial complex. I met with a majority of councilors beforehand. None of them cared to take concrete steps on the rest of the peace agenda like removing military contractors from our job fairs, removing recruiters from the schools etc. They did support a draft resolution modeled on the Mayors Association proclamation, calling to bring the troops home from Afghanistan and Iraq, and for bringing our war dollars home. We presented the material and the council expressed a desire to craft a resolution. Our former mayor, still seated, brought up the issue of Iran. Something we would have included but didn’t think our liberal government officials would have the audacity to include. We were thrilled.

It seemed like a sure thing. Reports of the request were in the news. Radio interviews poured in. At this time, the rhetoric about war with Iran was intensifying in extreme ways. It seemed as though we were reliving the beginning stages of the Iraq War when the propaganda machine went into full effect with its marketing campaign for that disastrous war. However, other people wanted a

hand in it, and they wanted things spun just so. The UN Association presented a draft including language that bolstered the UN as a peacekeeping force rather than a military extension of US imperialism, and supporting Obama’s bait and switch “reductions” in spending.

Days before the vote was to be taken one councilor had offered changes to the resolution included “support the troops” type language, defining the military as force for good, and excluding the language about Iran. We were fortunate to have councilors relying on us for information and guidance and spent the next two days ensuring that we still had a solid majority in favor of our strong resolution. We mobilized, one thing that helped this to happen was



an e-mail list crafted over 7 months of campaigning for council. The other was the network of waning Occupy Cville who desperately needed something to do. We had internationally recognized speakers at the council meeting, including David Swanson and Helena Cobban. We packed the meeting, and we won 4 in favor with one abstention. We were the first in the nation to publicly oppose imminent war with Iran (or at least the most current “imminent war” with Iran). Not bad, but not enough.

A resolution can be an easy thing to pass. We had absolutely no public opposition to our resolution compared to a similar resolution in 2003. This suggests that our city could do quite a bit more. I have been yammering about this to the city council for years. When Obama and then Rep. Perriello were elected, council was hesitant to do anything meaningful to resist war. A constant theme of mine was to remind them of the 2003 resolution, and then the Mayor’s proclamation- and urging them to take action, not just pass resolutions. In typical liberal Democratic Party fashion they refrain, they do not want to go against their party, and in other ways, they simply do not want to buck the status quo. Convincing them to remove military contractors and recruiters from jobs fairs, creating a commission to convert those industries locally to peacetime use will be hard. It would require them to step outside of our economic system based on war and empire, a hidden system in most towns

small and large, but the main drivers of every local economy. What is possible is to fall back on this latest resolution and on the peace agenda to get some more concrete things going.

The rhetoric on Iran has toned down. The lies promoted by the press dismissed. I have no doubt that our resolution contributed to this. We heard from all over the globe, Paris, England, California, even from Iran. We saw similar resolutions attempted and passed in cities nationwide. The propaganda machine was confronted not just by the same old voices nationally but by a groundswell from the bottom up. We were all on the radio, often, talking about this, thousands visited anti-war websites to learn more, the information was made available.

We changed the meme from one of hatred and dishonesty to one of sanity and truthful introspection, and I am proud to have been a part of that. There are no great fanfares when wars are avoided. When the peace movement has a victory trumpets do not sound, proclamations by the war machine don't announce that war has been averted. We quietly gain a victory, one that will need to be gained over and over again. This victory and the political situation in Charlottesville should remind us all that there is more we can do. We can do more through local government. If we rely on the military industrial complex for jobs, to drive our economies, then we will need to dismantle the war economy by replacing it with a peace economy. We will need to replace global capitalism with democratic socialism to eventually overcome imperialism permanently. Until then, we will be fighting drone strikes, mass murder, and empire building over and over again with some quiet victories, but also likely with some horrific defeats.

obscene levels. US tax dollars *Editorial: Continued from p2*
account for about 50% of the

\$1.8 trillion spent globally on direct military expenditures. When payments for past wars – including healthcare costs for injured soldiers and debt service payments – are considered the amount eats into about 50% of the annual Federal budget. While social programs face the cruel axe of austerity, more than 1.2 million private contractors feed off of the Department of Defense budget. Billions of dollars are poured into the latest research for nuclear submarines, the latest aircraft that reigns death from above and the latest Army vehicle that can better resist a crude Improvised Explosive Device.

This is perhaps the cruelest part of militarism in America. Namely that the great technologies and great scientific minds of our society are put to work to figure out how to kill people more efficiently. George Orwell noted this during the German bombing of London in World War II when he wrote that, "As I write, highly civilized human beings are flying overhead, trying to kill me." The high point of American civilization is put on display each day in Pakistan and Afghanistan in the form of a drone bombing that kills a child, or a crazed soldier who massacres a village. This is the twisted logic of militarism married to capitalist production – that science of death should become an enterprise of profit all in the name of an empire that enslaves the globe.

Military enslavement is not confined to the grim war zones of Afghanistan and Iraq. It is the most evident signpost of the end of democracy in the United States. A key, but not often recognized, trigger of the current Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement came from the spontaneous mass anti-war movement that sprung up in 2003 in response to Iraq war drive. That movement tried to play by the accepted rules of a functional democracy – protests were permitted, petitions were collected and politicians were lobbied. Despite the voices of millions in the streets, the militarists proceeded with the invasion. No wonder then that OWS correctly refuses to play by the rules of "acceptable" protest forms. Militarism, working with the 1% accumulators in capitalism, killed democracy long ago. Those that enslave expect nothing less than obedience from their

slaves. From their perspective, decisions about whether to go to war or not should be moved far away from the input of the average person – safely cloistered in the machinery of representative democracy.

No wonder then that the socialist notion that democracy places people's lives under "their own control" seems so very radical. The notion is a direct assault on those who annihilated our civil liberties, those who have terrorized people all over the globe, those who have looted public treasuries, those who twisted science and those who have shredded the last vestiges of democracy. The next best chance at establishing democracy in America can come from a combined effort to put an end to militarism and to create a democratically run socialist society where human needs are placed before the desire to accumulate profits. Militarists have no place in such a society that will aim to reconnect humanity beyond the restrictions of national borders and the limitations of the barrel of a gun.

NO WHITE FLAG!

BY KIMBERLY ORTIZ



I speak from a place of "I live this"
For your safety 'round here mind "your" business
I see anger, hurt and violent desperation
They die, We die and then dies aspiration

I speak with a voice of a mom of 2 boys
given an obstacle, i adopted some ploys
Autism rocked our poor house to the core
I'm beaming with pride, persistence and love, is how Their dreams
soar

I fought and I fought and made sure we had services
Because trust me, around here, if you're "hush" no one notices

I speak from my ghetto, where what's NORMAL, alarms!
Screams of despair, Guns go off, there's no harm?
I speak from my ghetto, where the title that's highest
Not doctor, nor lawyer. But all mighty street pharmacist !!!
"Yeah i tried to apply, But it's 7.25 an hour!
I got kids to feed, no degree, so sell powder"

I speak as the scrapper who FIGHTS for the obvious
Knowing the Truth... when Con Ed comes, it's serious!
knowing Exactly what no thanksgiving dinner is
Having to work and yet still slaving for businesses
Opening the fridge, in hopes of a snack
Food stamps didn't come, not a THING on the rack.
Paychecks gone to pay rent or buy clothes
One or the other, some winters I froze

I speak as the activist, at rallies and protests
I will gladly get cuffed if for once WE'RE your focus
Do you see? Can you hear us? Not asking for charity
For once the whole WORLD sees! maybe now there's some clarity!!
Blatant unbalance, In a world Black and White
Occupy EVERYTHING! we're the 99% and we FIGHT

1940. Japanese forces used chemical weapons against Chinese soldiers and civilians during the Sino-Japanese War (1937 – 45). Egyptian forces, intervening in the civil war in Yemen during the 1980s, also used chemical weapons. Soviet forces used such weapons against mujahideen rebels during the Afghan War (1978 – 92). The most extensive use of chemical weapons after World War Two was by the regime of Saddam Hussein during the Iran – Iraq War (1980 – 1988), and against the Kurds in Halabjah in 1988.

The use of nuclear weapons was an innovation of World War Two. Hiroshima was bombed on August 6, 1945, and Nagasaki was bombed three days later. The combined acute effects (including the immediate blast and radiation poisoning) killed between 90,000 to over 160,000 people in Hiroshima, and between 60,000 to 80,000 people in Nagasaki. Roughly half the deaths in each city occurred on the first day. Most of the dead were civilians, though Hiroshima had a fairly large military garrison. On the day Nagasaki was bombed, President Truman said, “I realize the tragic significance of the atomic bomb... It is an awful responsibility which has come to us... We thank God it has come to us, instead of to our enemies; and we pray that He may guide us to use it in His ways and for His purposes.”

Did any of the crew members on those missions ever have second thoughts? Only one, to my knowledge, had a later crisis of conscience, and his story is told in the book *Burning Conscience: The Case of the Hiroshima Pilot Claude Etherly, Told In His Letters to Gunther Anders*. (Anders was the first husband of Hannah Arendt, and one of the founders of the anti-nuclear movement of Europe in the 1950s.) In the blinding light and long shadow of such horrors, relatively few people remember the firebombing of Tokyo and of Dresden, in which civilian casualties were also very high. Indeed, the real purpose of the nuclear bombings and the firebombings in World War Two was not a “surgical strike” against military targets, with some allowance made for civilian casualties. The scale of devastation was deliberate, and must therefore be counted among the definite acts of state terrorism.

What of the costs of war in Iraq and Afghanistan? I have spent the past week delving into books and online sources, but we are still too close to these unfolding events to begin drawing up a summary of the dead, the wounded, the poisoned landscapes, the economic catastrophe, and the political aftermath. The official count of the U.S. military usually does not include subcontracted forces (or mercenaries). A recent report by Susan G. Chesser prepared for the Congressional Research Service is more thorough: “Afghanistan Casualties: Military Forces and Civilians”, dated January 18, 2012.

Two websites with similar names are distinct sources and addresses: The Costs of War at costsofwar.org, and The Cost of War at costofwar.com. The latter site opens to a running economic cost of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and offers a data conversion program to attempt an accounting of what we have lost in housing, education and health care through military spending on this scale. Each passing day now brings new reports of escalating conflict with the regime in Iran. Anyone who has seen a map of the world dotted by American military bases will find a heavy concentration of those bases ringed around Iran. One of the biggest military bases in that region is, of course, the so-called American Embassy in the Green Zone of Baghdad. As for the ongoing drone war in Pakistan, the American public is largely in the dark about the nature of our “allies” in the Pakistani regime. The Obama administration prefers to change the subject.

In 1913, Rosa Luxemburg wrote *The Accumulation of Capital*, a great work, which deserves to be read in earnest by a new generation of socialists. She knew a storm was on the horizon, yet she remained both sober and steady when looking into what she

once called “the Plutonic depths of the economy.” Any fool can point out that her work is “dated.” Yes, but a patient reader will discover how her best insights are abidingly useful. The last chapter of her book is titled “Militarism as A Province of Accumulation,” and though she took care to analyze the penetration of capital into non-capitalist sectors of the globe, she made this special point as well: “In addition, militarism has yet another important function. From the purely economic point of view, it is a pre-eminent means for the realization of surplus value; it is in itself a province of accumulation.” The full implications of that view would come into full view in open war, but even before the storm broke, Luxemburg wrote: “Force, fraud, oppression, looting are openly displayed without any attempt at concealment, and it requires an effort to discover within this tangle of political violence and contests of power the stern laws of the economic process.”

Here I will give the final word to her close comrade and fellow fighter against war and militarism, Karl Liebknecht, and I quote from the Dover edition of his book *Militarism and Anti-Militarism*, first published in Germany in 1907, and in a later English edition by the Socialist Labour Press in 1917:

“The costliness of militarism is the only thing which keeps it within bounds of any sort, at least in so far as the cost has to be borne by the bourgeoisie itself... The capitalist classes, like the ruling classes of other social systems, make use of their coercive domination based upon the exploitation of the proletariat for the following purpose: the oppressed and exploited are not only compelled to make their own chains, but even to pay for them as far as possible. It does not suffice that the sons of the people are turned into the torturers of the people, but even the pay of these torturers is, as much as possible, wrung from the sweat and blood of the people. And even if the provoking action of this bloody stroke of chicanery is perceived here and there, capitalism remains true unto death to its faith— the faith in the golden calf.”

simply another *From War to Peace: Continued from p9* name for humanism, the historic values that form the basis of all progressive human thought and experience. Such a society must be based upon the democratic control of the government and the economy by all of the people. We must, that is, create a democratic socialist society.

Practical Matters

With such a humanistic, environmental approach, we are still left with practical matters. How do we argue and fight for such a transformation. First, the United States government has for its entire history given enormous resources to the arms industry, providing land, buildings, equipment and vast amounts of money. We the people have every right to claim back our original investment and everything that has flowed from it over decades. We should call for the expropriation of the great corporations that used our tax money to profit from wars aimed at the corporate control of the world resources.

While making that argument, we must appeal to labor unions and workers to break from the corporate nationalism and for-profit patriotism of the arms industry. Of course, this forms part of the larger project of convincing unions and their members to understand that capitalism is not in their best interest, not in their long-range interest. Workers are entitled to labor unions and to jobs at good wages, but those things do not depend upon the arms industry. Conversion through reindustrialization, based on putting the environment and human need at the core of our thinking and our economy is a real alternative. We will only achieve it through

education and struggle against capitalism and militarism.

- The War Resisters League puts the annual military budget at \$965 million. See: <http://www.warresisters.org/pages/piechart.htm>

- "Defense Costs," The Economist, <http://www.economist.com/blogs/daily-chart/2011/06/military-spending>; see also, "Military Ranking," The Economist, http://www.economist.com/blogs/dailychart/2011/03/defence_budgets

- "Companies that Make Billions from the U.S. Government," CNBC, at, http://www.cnbc.com/id/42494839/10_Companies_That_Make_Billions_From_The_U_S_Government?slide=10 A list of the top 100 defense contractors taken from DOD documents, can be found on Wikipedia at, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_United_States_defense_contractors

- "Defense," Open Secrets, at, <http://www.opensecrets.org/industries/indus.php?Ind=D>

who murdered **Bradley Manning: Continued from p4**
hundreds of

civilians at My Lai in Vietnam in 1968 was allowed to greet supporters during breaks in his court martial.

As a former Special Security Officer with responsibility for five Special Compartmentalized Information Facilities (SCIFs) responsible for safeguarding America's and NATO's highest level secrets, I am very aware of the long history of the "political prostitution of intelligence" (PPI). PPI usually occurs as a release of classified information to gullible journalists like New York Times reporter Judith Miller. Its purpose is to sway public opinion toward partisan political ends. These include invading sovereign countries based on 15-year-old false intelligence or compromising intelligence officials like Valerie Plame by such serial releasers of military intelligence as conservative journalist Robert Novak. Manning's crime is not that he compromised substantial classified information or that this action compromised anyone. He is a criminal because he did not do so at the behest of Dick Cheney. His crime is not related to any violated security agreement, but that he valued human rights more than bigoted nationalistic right-wing chauvinism.

One of the most important aspects of the Manning affair is what it tells us about the greatest con ever perpetrated on the American people, the trillion dollar secrecy industry. Although this con was exposed by the 1994/1995 Moynihan Commission on Government Secrecy, whose findings have been completely ignored by our government for politically partisan reasons. While there are legitimate needs for secrecy in national security, our government has abused this privilege for so long and so severely it is simply no longer credible.

As revolutionary democratic socialists, we are committed to the rule of law as a foundation of social justice, but only as that law is based upon moral law. Natural law theorists from St. Augustine in the 4th century to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. have argued that an unjust law is not a law the needs to be obeyed. That is the significance of the court martial of PFC Bradley Manning. Manning's attorney, in his closing argument, alluded to this truth when he said "in the end, history will be the judge of my client."

Manning's court martial is expected to start later in the spring. OWS and SPUSA will continue to be a part of the coalition in support of this brave soldier, LGBT and peace activist, human rights whistleblower, and comrade as he faces up to a life in prison for his ethical decisions.

*Captain Lawrence P. Rockwood PhD., US Army (Dismissed)
OWS Protester and Arrestee
Chair NYS Socialist Party*

staggering
military

I (Kinda) Like Ike: Continued from p5

budget would undoubtedly throw millions into the unemployment line, circumventing any concerted effort to dramatically downsize the budget. Here, we find yet another limit of the Democratic Party and reform.

There is a logical narrative that tells us private war profiteering conforms with our free-market values, that only markets should deliver services, so why not with the military? This line of thinking points to the general problem: the free-market itself. Of course, there is no such thing as a free market, but one highly manipulated by banks, corporations, and the politicians they elect, and in the post-Citizens United world we can only expect to see greater and grander marriages between corporations and state. Yet, the internal dynamics of capitalism suggest that a profit component must be attached to institutions to give them efficacy. This is the Genesis of the MIC, market-colonization, the encroachment of the profit-motive on all aspects of social existence.

The only means to defeat the MIC is to eliminate the market's logic that strangles our humanistic instincts. Reform and oversight simply won't do, it will leave the defense industry with the means and incentive to undo regulations when the opportunity presents itself. Only a wholesale structural adjustment will finally pay out our peace dividend. A socialist society would not be based on never ending expansion of firms, nor would firms possess the power to treat politicians as commodities to be bought, sold, and traded on market. Instead, business would be democratically owned and managed by their workers, with the intent of fulfilling social needs and wants, not maximizing market share while attempting to undermine basic democratic processes. Furthermore, without the incessant provocation to war by the defense industry and its various appendages, military spending could finally be dramatically reduced, redirecting the hundreds of billions of dollars currently spent on war material to various infrastructure, education, and healthcare projects, creating a demand for jobs so great that any unemployment created through military downsizing would be a distant afterthought.

Most importantly though is the shift in attitude towards warfare in general; greatness can no longer be synonymous with the power to destroy. Capitalism must always find a new market in order to maintain economic hegemony; Latin America and the Middle East still bleed from the endless coups and interventions sponsored by American business. In the post-capitalist world, the drive to find new arenas of exploitation will die along with the never-ending expansionary drive of capital. Camaraderie will be more than a catch phrase, but something to actually be strived for between workers of different lands in the absence of the nationalistic tensions, which only serve capitalist competition. If we are to truly defeat the military-industrial-complex and the barbarity that comes with it, let us never forget that there is no war worth fighting, but the class war.

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Chicago, IL 60661-8124

Indiana

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Kentucky

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Socialist Party of Massachusetts

www.spmassachusetts.org

Socialist Party of Boston

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New Jersey

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PO Box 457
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www.njsocialistparty.org

Northern New Jersey Socialist Party

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www.njsocialistparty.org/northnj

Socialist Party of Greater Monmouth and Ocean Counties

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New York State Socialist Party
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Socialist Party of New York City

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Vermont

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