
The true purpose of the burgeoning penal system is now well-documented—it is the exploitation of inmate labor for the profit of private corporations, which include weapons manufacturers among other industries.

Working on the Chain Gang: Prison Labor in 21st Century U.S.

by Suzan Koch

Private prison lobbies, legislative laws, the judiciary, law enforcement, and racism work together to create a system that supplies nearly free labor for the profit of private corporations. And those profiting from this system include all the major weapons manufacturers. How did things get to this point?

To answer that question, it's important to look at the development of the prison system from its inception following the American Civil War. In reaction to the gains made by freed slaves during Reconstruction, a new system of de facto slavery was created through the quick passage of Southern state and local laws (black codes), ensnaring

the new freedmen into penal labor. This was the beginning, here in America, of the contracting out of mass prison labor to individuals or corporations by state and local governments. Subsequently, in 1936 the federal government passed a law allowing for products to be made in federal prisons by a federal entity now called UNICOR. With the establishment of UNICOR, the practice of using prison labor expanded to encompass federal and state prisons throughout the nation.

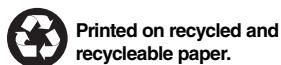
The modern-day use of prisoners to produce goods for private companies began in 1979 with the passage of the Prison Industries Enhancement Certification Program (PIE). The legislation was written by the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) that we have heard so much about lately. Members of ALEC also wrote the proposed—and then enacted—enhanced, antidrug crime laws and general felony sentencing guidelines that followed, in conjunction with the Reagan Administration's "War on Drugs." Included were mandatory minimums for nonviolent drug offenders, Three Strikes laws, and Truth in Sentencing laws. In 1995 alone, ALEC's Truth in Sentencing Act was signed into law in 25 states, thus guaranteeing a burgeoning prison population to be used as almost free labor (currently prisoners earn as little as 23 cents per hour to as much as \$1.15 per hour, depending on the skill needed for the job).

African Americans and Latino/Hispanic Americans have been the primary targets of profit-driven laws. By the year 2000, three-fourths of all prisoners were either black or Hispanic, according to Ken Silverstein in "U.S.: America's Private Gulag." This overwhelmingly unequal representation of people of color is in spite of the fact that they comprise a minority of the population



"Prison" by MW

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MINNESOTA

Chain Gang, from front cover

(28.9 percent according to the 2010 U.S. Census) and are a significantly smaller percentage found to be in possession of drugs, compared with whites who are stopped while driving. The deliberate profiling of blacks and Latinos stopped for very minor traffic violations, which would usually be ignored, accounts for the greater percentage prosecuted and imprisoned. Michele Alexander in her book *The New Jim Crow* (New Press, 2010) describes the institutionalization of this system, which reaches all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Systemic racial profiling, antidrug laws, and harsher sentences have led to a staggering number of prisoners held in U.S. prisons and jails. In fact, the U.S. is number one in the world in actual numbers of prisoners as well as percentage of population. In “Profiteers of Misery: The U.S. Private Prison Industrial Complex” (*Interpress News Service*, Aug 24, 2011), Kanya D’Almeida stated that “by the end of 2010, the United States was home to 25 percent of the world’s inmates, with roughly 2.4 million people behind bars and over seven million under “correctional supervision.”

Concurrently, there has been a large financial reward for many of those state legislators who helped pass bills allowing state private prisons to be built, as well as private corporation participation to increase in state and federal prisons. In “Follow the Prison Money Trail—Private Prison Companies Invest Millions in Elections,” Silja J.A. Talvi reported that “supposedly, states turn to private companies to cope better with chronic overcrowding and for low-cost management. However, a closer look suggests a different rationale.” (*In These Times*, September 4, 2006) The reality is that it is all about the money. The use of racism, profiling, and unfair and unequal sentencing guidelines continually increases the prison population to act as an available source of the cheapest labor possible, with prisoner laborers unprotected by any health and safety regulations



Photo credit: Ken Storch.

In Maricopa County, Arizona, women prisoners are shackled in chain gangs and bury the decaying bodies of unclaimed indigents under the blazing Arizona sun.

and few if any rights in practice that workers are supposed to have if they are employed outside the prison system.

From the start, the private prison industry has been heavily dependent on political connections and campaign contributions to secure the legislation and contracts necessary to “grow” their business. Lobbying by private prison corporations for laws favorable to a “growth industry” is ongoing, and reflects the huge profits that private prison corporations stand to gain from their investment in this expanding market. They are assisted in that growth by ALEC legislation.

One of ALEC’s latest legislative endeavors is Arizona’s SB 1070, which practically makes it mandatory for police to profile brown-skinned people as possible undocumented workers. It was brought to Arizona by ALEC member state Senator Russell Pearce, and serves as a proposed model for other states as well. In an October 28, 2010 *NPR* report entitled “Prison Economics Help Drive Arizona Immigration Law,” investigative correspondent Laura Sullivan describes how private prison corporations need new victims to exploit, and they have found them in the form of undocumented workers.

The latest news concerning the federal prison labor system, UNICOR, is actually old news—two decades old, but it was only recently uncovered and reported—and this by alternative media: Convict labor is used in the production of high-tech military weapons as well as equipment for soldiers, such as body armor. High-tech weapons parts manufacturing now involves at least 14 federal correctional facilities. The truth has been in plain sight, in the data published by UNICOR, but buried deep because it was divided into a variety of components, not labeled for specific weapons systems. Unless someone understood the



Prison labor began in the U.S. with black codes that ensnared freed slaves into a system of penal labor that included chain gangs.

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technical details of what they were looking for, they wouldn't realize the scope of high-tech weapons prison production.

Another aspect of inmate labor in relation to the military is that prisoners do the cleaning and repair of weapons and equipment, which are often contaminated with highly carcinogenic depleted uranium, and are provided no health and safety protections.

With these cost-cutting production methods, leading U.S. weapons contractors are making huge profits with prison labor. Details are exposed in William Hartung's book *Prophets of War* (Nation Books, 2010).

In his article "Why are Prisoners Being Used to Build Patriot Missiles?" Justin Rohrlich reveals just how extensive the use of prison labor by defense contractors really is: "Patriot [missile] assemblers Raytheon and Lockheed Martin aren't the only defense contractors relying on prison help, by any means . . . inmates also make cable assemblies for the McDonnell Douglas/Boeing F-15, the General Dynamics/Lockheed Martin F-16, Bell/Textron's Cobra helicopter, as well as electro-optical equipment for the BAE Systems Bradley Fighting Vehicle's laser rangefinder." (*Minnyanville.com*. March 7, 2011)

Further proof of the tremendous profit being made in the prison labor production of high-tech weapons is offered by Noah Shachtman in "Prisoners Help Build Patriot Missiles" (*Wired. Com-DangerRoom*. March 8, 2011). He points out that "the United Arab Emirates is expected to close a deal for \$7 billion dollars' worth of American arms. Nearly half of the cash will be spent on Patriot missiles which cost as much as \$5.9 million apiece" and that "some of the workers manufacturing parts for those Patriot missiles are prisoners, earning as little as 23 cents an hour."



Photo credit: unknown

Prison overcrowding is used as a rationale for private corporations to step in and build and manage more prisons. At the same time, they work to increase prison population.



Photo credit: Raytheon

Parts for weapons systems such as Patriot missiles have been made with prison labor, increasing profits for companies like Raytheon and Lockheed Martin.

The history of an ever expanding "prison-industrial complex" is one that shows a purposeful, ALEC-driven legislative effort to have private corporations take over as many aspects of the U.S. criminal-justice system as possible, from juvenile detention to maximum security federal prisons and prisons for undocumented workers. The urgent need for prisoners to learn job skills and be rehabilitated is used as a cover, while the true purpose of the penal labor system is now well documented—it is the exploitation of inmate labor for the profit of private prison corporations and weapons manufacturers, among other industries. In sum: Through the synergy of legislation, institutionalized police profiling, and the judiciary process, the major criminal and justice institutions of the federal government, as well as those of the 50 states, establish and maintain an ever expanding public and private prison system which provides cheap slave/prisoner labor; it is circumventing federal and state wage and hours laws, avoiding health and safety regulations to protect workers, and providing no real incentive on the part of either government-run or private prisons to rehabilitate and release anyone.

So this is where we are now in the United States. We have mass incarceration based on race and class, with private corporations taking over more and more of the penal justice system, from beginning to end. Corporations make billions off the use of prisoners in this 21st-century form of chain gang labor. In a country with a huge "defense" budget, there are especially big payoffs for the military weapons manufacturers. For anyone concerned about peace and justice, addressing this American gulag is vital.

Suzan Koch is a retired educator, WAMM member, and activist.

WORD UP!

Minnesota's Criminal Injustice

Compared with the national average, people of color in Minnesota are more than twice as likely to obtain a criminal conviction. It isn't that people of color in Minnesota are more dishonest than elsewhere in our country; rather, there is something fundamentally wrong with the way our criminal justice system works. . . . We, in Minnesota, have created an institutional underclass of people of color who are more likely to obtain a criminal record and less likely to get a job as a result. . . . There are some simple steps we can take. First, we should adopt a diversion program for some first-time offenders of minor crimes.

—Mel Dickstein,
Hennepin County District
Judge, Star Tribune,
Opinion, September 26, 2011

RESOURCES

Prophets of War

William Hartung's expose' of America's largest military contractor, Lockheed Martin, which receives \$29 billion per year and has produced: spy satellites, the highest-tech aircraft, personal data on U.S. citizens, interrogators for Guantanamo. How this arms industry giant has shaped U.S. foreign policy for decades. (Nation Books, New York, 2010) Available at MayDay Books, Minneapolis. Also at MayDay Books: *The New Jim Crow* (New Press, New York, 2010)

The Jail Project

Artist Ken Storch created a photographic art documentary of the Tent City fiefdom of notorious Maricopa County Sheriff Arapaco. Includes photos of women chain gangs working. Jailproject.com



20 corporations dominate our information and ideas. In spite of our nation's ever increasing diversity, all are headed by white males. — according to "Media Monopoly Revisited," by Patrick Morrison, October 2011 issue of "Extra!," the magazine of FAIR: Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting

RESOURCES

Fight for Better Media

Free Press is a national, non-partisan, nonprofit organization working to reform the media. Through education, organizing and advocacy, it promotes diverse and independent media ownership, strong public media, and universal access to communications. See: freepress.net

PM Synchronized News, Limited Views

by Polly Mann

They remind me of the little football figures lined up on the pinball machines—the individual companies that make up the corporate media—identical characters with synchronized movements. That's the way they're constructed. The lead article in the October issue of *Extra!*, the monthly magazine of Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting, carried a list of the 20 corporations that dominate the media, including names of many unknown to me, plus such well-known names as Walt Disney, NBC, CBS, *The New York Times*, Yahoo, Time Warner, and Hearst. Back in 1983, journalism educator Ben Bagdikian listed 50 such corporations in his classic investigation of media consolidation, *The Media Monopoly*. As the number of these companies has decreased, the advertising revenues of the existing ones have increased.

In 1989 the total circulation of daily newspapers was 63 million and 14 chains distributed over half these papers. In 2009 five corporations dominated. In 1982 the radio industry was dominated by ten corporations. Fifteen years later, the radio industry is the most consolidated of all media with two companies—Clear Channel and Sirius—dominating. According to the Pew Research Center, TV is the primary news source for 66 percent of Americans. Three companies took in over half the broadcast TV advertising revenue for 2009—CBS, News Corp (Fox) and Walt Disney (ABC). With the addition of NBC, four companies receive 70 percent of all broadcast TV ad revenue. The internet is the latest news phenomenon, and most people choose from only one or two internet service providers. As early as 2003, political scientist Matthew Hindman of Arizona State University found that internet news had gained greater popularity than traditional media, with interest waning in local news providers (*New York Times*, June 6, 2003). But corporate media is also ubiquitous

when the internet vehicles supply news, as does Yahoo.

When that media's first concern is to make a profit, it is questionable that the ethical, moral, or humane implications of an issue will receive adequate attention, or even any attention at all.

It is ignored or forgotten that U.S. Supreme Court Justice Black interpreted the First Amendment to the Constitution (freedom of religion, speech and the press, as well as the right to assemble and petition the government) in the case *Associated Press v. United States* in 1945, in the wake of World War II. He emphasized that "the widest possible dissemination of information from diverse and antagonistic sources is essential to the welfare of the public." However, diverse voices and opinions are being heard less and less today. Even as the country has become more accepting of diverse races, religions, and sexual preferences, the heads of all 20 news corporations are white males. This homogeneity is also prevalent in newsrooms and viewpoints. Minorities make up less than 13 percent of newsroom employees, less than 4 percent of television station ownership, and less than 8 percent of radio station ownership in a nation revealed by the 2010 census to be 36 percent minority.

Could there be a connection between the concentration of media and the public's growing dissatisfaction with it? A recent Gallup poll revealed that 57 percent of respondents "have little or no trust in the mass media to report the news fully, accurately, and fairly," and a recent Pew poll revealed that "negative opinions about the performance of news organizations now equal or surpass all-time highs on nine of twelve core measures." When Pew asked people about news organizations, 77 percent reported that they believe they "tend to favor one side." Even writer John Rash claimed, in a *Star Tribune* column of October 1, that "trust in the media is at a historic low."

The corporate-owned media, in general, reflects the corporate viewpoint, which, not incidentally, is the same as the White House viewpoint. Thus U.S. readers in search of any other views on foreign affairs have to work hard to seek out other sources, such as foreign news and websites and independent media. With so many lives and so much money (over half the U.S. yearly budget) in the balance, why isn't there more outrage?

Polly Mann is a co-founder of Women Against Military Madness and a regular contributor and columnist for the WAMM newsletter. She serves on the WAMM Newsletter Committee.



Photo credit: Julius Escordo

Eschewing corporate media that serves the agenda of the 1%, the Occupy movements are publishing their own newspapers.

Thanks to all of the businesses and individuals who contributed to WAMM's 2011 Silent Auction Benefit.

Al Vento	Emily's Lebanese Deli	Joe Selvaggio	Milkweed Editions	Schneider Drug
Al's Breakfast	EnterSpace Remodeling Specialists	Joe's Garage	Mill City Museum	Send In Maureen...
Alexis Bailly Winery	Erica Bouza	John Schmid	Minnesota Landscape Arboretum	Sheraton Minneapolis Midtown Hotel
Amici Pizza and Bistro	Erte and the Peacock Lounge	Joseph Palen	Minnesota Opera	Sister Sludge Coffee Café
Ann Bancroft	Esther Ouray	Kathy Hollander	Miss Teresa	Smart Women Company
Anodyne Coffeehouse	Everest on Grand	Kenwood Café, Terry Burke and Polly Mann	Mississippi Market	SoMi Tileworks
Avalon	Fat Lorenzo's	Key North	Mixed Blood Theatre	Southview Design
Babani's Kurdish Restaurant	Film Society of Minneapolis-St. Paul	Keys Cafe	Modern Café	Spill the Wine Restaurant
Balloon Bunch	Flying Cat Arthouse	Khyber Pass Café	Moose and Sadie's	Stages Theatre Company
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Beaujo's Wine Bar and Bistro	Friends of Coldwater	Le Monde Tailors	Nancy Nielsen	Summit Brewing Co.
Bell Museum of Natural History	Front Avenue Pottery and Tile Co.	Lee Ross	Neala Schleunig	Susan and Bob Giesen
Bibelot Shops	FruitShare	Lewis-McKay Partnership	New Moon Publishing	Susan Schirber
Bill Habedank	Fusion Restaurant	Linda Thomson	Nina Ross	Target
Birchbark Books	Galactic Pizza	Linden Hills Co-Op	Northern Sun Merchandising	Terrace Hair Design
Birchwood Café	Gandhi Mahal	Lisa and Keith Kupcho and Christine and David Horazdovsky	Paper Patisserie	Terry Burke and Andy Berman
Black Dog Café	Genevieve Doss	Llyn Bjorklund	Pat Kaluza Astrology Reading	Terry Lamb Robertson
Brigid McDonald	Ginger Hop	Lone Spur Grill and Bar	Pat Rouse	The 50th Street Café
Bryant-Lake Bowl	Golden Thyme Coffee Shop	Loring Pasta Bar	Patrick's Cabaret	The Covington Inn
Cafe Ena	Grand Cafe	Louise Eidsmoe and Susan Schriber	Paul Percal	The Craftsman Restaurant
Cafe Latte	Grandview Grille	Lynne Gildensoph	Pepperwolf	The Great Metropolitan Back Rub
Cahoots Coffee Bar	Gunn Sandik	mackmiller design+build	Phyllis Goldin and Wanda Brown	The Herkimer Pub and Brewery
Carol and Ken Masters	Guthrie Theater	Maggie Pastarr	Pop Wagner	The Local, An Irish Pub
Carol Walker	Gypsy Moon	Magus Books and Herbs	Pracna Historic Dining Saloon	The New Louisiana Café
Cathy Yamoor	Hampden Park Co-op	Margaret Klette	Practical Goods	The New Uptown Diner
Center for International Education	Harbor View Café	Marie Braun and Maxine McNamara	Punch Pizza	The New Woodbury Café
Charlie's Pots	Heights Theater	Marie, Rebecca and John Braun and Peter Goepfrich	Putumayo World Music	The Old Spaghetti Factory
Christo's Greek Restaurant	Hmong Handicrafts	Marilyn and Joe Schmit	Rachel Berman	Three Rivers Clinic, Inc.
Citizen Café	Homestead Pickin' Parlor	Marlys Barry	Rail Station Bar and Grill	Three Smooth Stones
Clare's Well	Hospitality Place	Mary Eide	Right Angle	Tom Dooley
Common Roots Café	Illusion Theater	Mary Eve Thomas	Rinata	Turtlecub Productions
Corazón	In Her Words	Mary Hinz	Rituals	Twisted Groove
Corner Store	In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre	Mary Weir	Robert Wright	Vic's
Creative Memories	It's Greek To Me	Maura Sullivan and Claire Auckenthaler	Ron Fraboni	Vina Vietnamese Restaurant
Crescent Moon Restaurant	Jakeeno's Pizza and Pasta	Maureen Lamey	Rose and Paul Grengs	Wellspring Health Center, PLLC
Cuppa Java	Jane and Jack Regan	Mayday Books	Rustica Bakery	Welna II Hardware
Curran's Family Restaurant	Jawaahir Dance Company	Meredith Aby	Saffron Restaurant and Lounge	Wet Paint
Daisy Nails and Tan	Jean Nelson	Merlins Rest	Salon Sa Bel	Wild River Outfitters
Diane and Jim Steinhagen	Jeanne Hynes	Midori's Floating World Cafe	Sanctuary Restaurant	Wilde Roast Café
Dick and Deb Bancroft	Jessa Walters	Midwest Mountaineering	Sarah Martin	Zelle Glass Studio
Dreamland Supper Club	Joan Meierotto		Sarah Martin and Mary Beaudoin	Zipp's Liquor Store
Dunn Bros Coffee	JoAnn Maus			
Ecopolitan				

November 2011 WAMM Calendar

Please note that WAMM's provision of information on other group's events is not meant to convey or endorse any action contrary to public policy that would be inconsistent with exempt purposes under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3) i.e., charitable purposes.

Ongoing WAMM Vigils for Peace

Vigil to End the War on Iraq:

Every Wednesday, 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. on the Lake Street/Marshall Avenue Bridge spanning the Mississippi River between Minneapolis and St. Paul. FFI: Call WAMM, 612-827-5364.

Vigil to End the Occupation of Palestine:

Every Friday, 4:15 to 5:30 p.m. at Summit and Snelling Avenues, St. Paul. FFI: Call WAMM, 612-827-5364.

For information on additional peace vigils in Minnesota and Wisconsin, call the WAMM office at 612-827-5364 or visit www.worldwidewamm.org.

Ongoing WAMM Committee Meetings

Board Meeting: Third Tuesday of each month, 6:00 p.m. at the Sabathani Community Center, 310 East 38th Street, Minneapolis. FFI: Call WAMM, 612-827-5364.

Book Club: Second Saturday of each month, 10:00 a.m. FFI and Location: Contact Suzy, 651-451-8627 or suzykoch@comcast.net.

Iraq Committee: First Monday of each month, 5:30 p.m. FFI: Call Marie, 612-522-1861.

Middle East Committee: Second Monday of each month, 9:30 a.m. at the Sabathani Community Center, 310 East 38th Street, Minneapolis. FFI: Call WAMM, 612-827-5364.

Media Committee: FFI: Email the committee, wammmmedia@gmail.com.

St. Joan of Arc/WAMM Peacemakers: Fourth Tuesday of each month, 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. at St. Joan of Arc Church, Parish Center, 4537 Third Avenue South, Minneapolis. FFI: Barbara, 612-722-4444

Tackling Torture at the Top (T3): Second and fourth Wednesdays of each month, 10:00 a.m. at Afro Deli and Coffee, 1939 5th Street South (Riverside and 20th Avenue), Minneapolis.

Ongoing Events

Committee to Stop FBI Repression.

Every other Thursday, 7:00 p.m. at Walker Church, 304 16th Ave. South, Minneapolis. Stand with the people subpoenaed in a witch hunt, defend civil liberties. Learn what you can do. All who stand up and act for justice and solidarity are welcome. FFI: See stopfbi.net and mnStopFBI.wordpress.com, or call (612) 379-3585.

People of Faith Peacemakers

Breakfast: Second and fourth Wednesdays, 8:00 to 9:30 a.m. at new location: African Development Center, Riverside and 20th Avenues. A resource and support group for those concerned about peace with justice from a faith perspective. FFI: www.justview-point.org or call 763-784-5177

Grandmothers for Peace:

First Wednesday 12:45 p.m. at Edina Public Library, 5280 Grandview Square, Edina. Program around justice issue that helps us to understand our role in changing unjust systems. FFI: 952-929-1566

Tea Time Conversational Salons:

Most Tuesdays, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Mad Hatter's Teahouse, 943 West Seventh St., St. Paul. Salons are open to all. Suggested donations \$3-\$5 include tea, treats. FFI: 651-227-2511 or 651-227-3228.

Third Thursday Global Issues

Forum: 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at Hennepin Ave. United Methodist Church, Groveland at Lyndale Ave., Minneapolis. FFI: globalsolutionsmn.org

Middle East Peace Now:

Usually 2nd or 3rd Saturdays, 9:30 a.m. Refreshments, 10:00 a.m. Program. Location may vary. FFI: Call 651-696-1642 or see www.mepn.org

MN 9/11 Truth: Second Tuesday of each month, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Rondo Community Outreach Library, 461 North Dale Street, St. Paul. Meets to educate and discuss the events of 9/11/2001. FFI: Visit www.mn911truth.org.

Active Nonviolence Training:

Interactive session (non-lecture and non-reading) in social change analysis, community-building and project planning to strengthen our group for action. FFI and to register, visit www.creatingacultureofpeace.org

Special Events

WAMM at Occupy Minnesota.

Every Friday, 4:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m. Join the WAMM presence at Hennepin County Government Center (the People's Plaza) at 300 South Sixth St., Minneapolis. Donate healthy and vegetarian prepared food and beverages. Staff table shared with Veterans for Peace at any time. Give out "Jobs, Not War" stickers and antiwar information. FFI: WAMM office, 612-827-5364

Grand Jury Indictment Emergency

Action: If the Federal Grand Jury indicts Sarah Martin, Ahn Pham or Tracy Molm, or if other activists are re-subpoenaed, there will be an emergency action held at 4:30 p.m. at the U.S. Federal Building, 4th St & 4th Ave, Downtown Minneapolis. Watch for action alerts. FFI: See stopfbi.net and mnStopFBI.wordpress.com, or call (612) 379-3585.

Global Day of Listening by Phone

and Skype-athons: Exciting opportunity to hear from and talk with ordinary people from Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine, Israel, Egypt, Yemen, and other countries. Listen to what it is like to live in war-torn countries and talk about the wish to live without wars. All people of good will invited, as individuals or groups. Inspired by the Afghan Youth Peace Volunteers, Afghans for Peace, and the Iraqi American Reconciliation Project. For specific times and dates, see: [Voices for Creative Nonviolence vcnm.org](http://VoicesforCreativeNonviolence.vcnm.org)

WAMM Night at Ten Thousand Villages. Friday, December 2, 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. 867 Grand Avenue, St. Paul. Do your holiday and other gift or personal use shopping now at this fair-trade retail store filled with beautiful, distinctive artisan-crafted home decor, personal accessories, gift items from across the globe. Artisans receive a fair price for their work. Help support WAMM and artisans at the same time. 20% of sales donated to WAMM. Make an evening of it: many restaurants located nearby. Sponsored by: Ten Thousand Villages and WAMM. FFI: www.stpaul.tenthousandvillages.com

Additional upcoming events are listed at www.worldwidewamm.org, or you may call the WAMM office for more information: 612-827-5364. Other peace and justice events can be found on Minnesota Alliance for Peacemakers at www.mapm.org.

CLASSIFIED ADS

Not a Nursing Home

Sheridan House provides 24-hour care for five elderly in a home setting. Private rooms, loveable dog, fellowship and community. Licensed. Operated by WAMM member Sally Kunderd. Dementia and general care. County funds or private. 612-866-4637.

Marla Kennedy, M.A., L.M.F.T.

Licensed marriage and family therapist, parent educator, speaker on parenting for peace and justice. Call 651-645-3303

The World Jubilee (TWJ) Market

will be held on Sat. Nov. 19, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Colonial Church, 6400 Colonial Way, Edina (Hwy. 62 Crosstown and Tracy). TWJ is a registered nonprofit organization for economically disadvantaged groups from around the world. Items for sale include: Pottery, Baskets, Jewelry, Textiles, Clothing, Rugs, Cards, Carvings. Visit the displays and learn more about the groups.

Text without Context: Corporate Media on the Middle East

by Polly Mann

In the photographs flashed around the world, his ears seem too large for his pale hollow-cheeked face, and his obviously new uniform seems too large for his frail body. This is the Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, recently released from a Palestinian prison after five years of imprisonment. Most of the U.S. and its allies in the world read accounts of the event, published by the mainstream corporate media, with their professions of “fairness and balance” in reporting the news. That media most often ignores the “underdog” position of much-abused and maligned Palestinians in the Middle East conflict as they report on Palestinian violence against Israel.

For example, the following was taken from a news service report and featured in the *Star Tribune* of Minneapolis and other media around the country: “He [referring to Gilad Shalit] clearly had been kept from sunshine for years” . . . “the wounds he suffered when he was captured in 2006 had been ‘incorrectly treated’ and he had been ‘prevented from exercise.’” What isn’t mentioned is the sad fact that it is a condition of almost all prison facilities, worldwide, that exercise is limited. Medical conditions of all Palestinians are and have been compromised by the Israeli strictures placed upon them, and many deaths have resulted from long-term neglect.

Among the printed Israeli comments regarding the event were those of Israelis decrying the exchange: It was a “grave mistake” to release “450 of the worst murderers the IDF ever went after,” they said, objecting to the “release of more than 1,000 [Palestinian] prisoners.” An account was given of Chicago-born Israeli Alan Bauer, who complained of two Palestinian female prisoners being released; the women had driven a man to a site where he detonated a suicide bomb that killed three people and wounded many, including Bauer and his son—i.e., “they are releasing murderers.”

On the other hand: All Palestinians released were pale and frail, and most were in extremely poor physical condition. This is what happened to just three of the 700,000 Palestinians who have been held at various times by Israel throughout the years: 1) Benan Oudeh, for example, accused of throwing stones during the first Intifada at the age of 15, was so badly beaten by the IDF (Israeli Defense Forces) that his testicles had to be surgically removed. 2) Luwaih Ashqar was so badly beaten during Israeli interrogations he can do longer stand on his feet and is confined to a wheelchair. He was “luckier,” however, than 3) Palestinian prisoner al-Samad Harizat, who died in an Israeli prison as the result of “violent shaking” which caused a subdural hemorrhage within his skull.

7,834 Palestinian Prisoners Remain

Israel is expected to release 550 more Palestinian prisoners in December, but at least 7,834 currently remain. Addamer, a Jerusalem-based Palestinian support and human rights organization, keeps track of arrests and detentions, provides prisoner profiles, updates, fact sheets, statistics and quarterly trends. It issues urgent appeals and conducts campaigns. addamer.org

Rabbi Michael Lerner wrote in *Tikkun* online (*Tikkun.org* October 19, 2011): “There are thousands [of Palestinians] still in prison in Israel. Few have received a trial by a jury of their peers. Many have been imprisoned for resisting the occupation army, not for acts of terrorism against civilians. They too deserve freedom. . . we know little about the thousands of Palestinians still being held in Israeli jails, or about most of those who have been released (except for the genuine terrorists amongst them who get the attention of the media.) . . . That Israeli prisoners [Palestinian prisoners in Israel] have been tortured has been established over and over again by international human rights organizations, as well as B’Tselem, the Israeli human rights organization.” Lerner sees this as a moment for Israel to end torture and open its own prisons to the observation of human rights organizations, and calls for fair trials or the release of detainees interrogated with torture.

In conclusion: Yes, technically some Palestinians must have been guilty of violence against Israelis. But the corporate media seldom mentions that Palestinians are repressed, humiliated, jailed, wounded, and killed on the land they and their ancestors have occupied for centuries. They are seldom ever offered a path to redress the wrongs done them. The amount of justice they receive in Israeli courts is debatable.

One thing is certain: The United States government does not give Palestine the billions of dollars



Photo: Unknown

Urgent Appeal: Release Palestinian Children

• The first prisoner exchange list, October 16, 2011, did not include any children.

• “According to the latest figures by the Israeli Prison Service and DCI-Palestine [Defence for Children International-Palestine section], at the end of September there were 164 Palestinian children (12-17 years) in Israeli detention facilities, including 35 young children between the ages of 12-15 years. Seventy-six of these children have been sentenced, whilst 88 are being held in pre-trial detention. . .

• “It is estimated that since the year 2000, around 7,500 Palestinian children have been detained and prosecuted in the system. Credible reports of torture and/or ill-treatment during the arrest, transfer and interrogation stages in the system have persisted for years. The majority of these children are charged with throwing stones.”—Defence for Children International-Palestine section See dci-palestine.org

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RESOURCES

The Minnesota Alternatives Spending Alternatives Project Draws on the National Priorities Project to reveal what Minnesota taxpayers pay for the wars on Iraq and Afghanistan and presents alternative actions that can be taken. See Mnasap.org

WORD UP!

The Power of the 99%
"Obama is suddenly letting students adjust loan payments. Bank of America cancelled its \$5 monthly fee. Credit Union deposits have increased 20% in the last 3 months. As Michael Moore said in Oakland, the 99% movement has killed despair in the U.S., killed apathy. And Occupy Minnesota has stopped a foreclosure on a woman's home just by threatening to take up her cause."
— WAMM member and Occupy Minnesota activist Polly Kellogg

WAMM THANKS

Sarah Martin in memory of Kathleen McCarthy.

Sarah Martin in memory of Kay Dean.

Lionel Davis in memory of his wife Edith Davis.

Good News in Taxing Times

by Carol Masters

The curious case of the Community of St. Martin. While most people are complaining about the price of gas, this community is actually taxing itself for driving. But why? Carol Masters explains this, and another effort her community is making with a focus on taxes and a belief that extraordinary times call for extraordinary efforts.—editor's note

Many of us miss St. Martin's Table, a bookstore and vegetarian restaurant, gathering place for many peace groups for over 25 years, that closed last December. It provided a community witness and served as an action center of the Community of St. Martin, an ecumenical Christian community committed to nonviolence and social justice. But there is good news: Although St. Martin's Table is gone, the Community of St. Martin's (CSM) remains and continues its work.

Grassroots Gas Tax: CSM is six months into a year's experiment with a voluntary gas tax, in an attempt to drive less, reduce carbon footprints, and support organizations that advocate for political change around climate change, global warming, and alternative transportation issues. Here's how it works: Families keep track of gallons purchased and each decides the amount per gallon they will "tax" themselves. First quarter's proceeds went to Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light, which began in 2004 as Congregations Caring for Creation. MNIPL gives guidance to Minnesota's faith communities, addressing climate change by promoting energy conservation, energy efficiency, and renewable energy sources. The second quarter's tax went to Transit for Livable Communities, which promotes a balanced transportation system that encourages transit, walking, bicycling, and thoughtful development. Gas taxes for July-September will go to 350.org

MNASAP: Minnesota Arms Spending Alternatives Project (MNASAP) is another new project of CSM. Drawing on the National Priorities Project for information, the grassroots project reveals that Minnesota taxpayers' share of U.S. support for the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq is \$8.4 billion for the two-year period that the state experienced a \$5 billion budget shortfall. Imagine what budget needs could be fulfilled with that money! The project's goal is to shift priorities away from military spending and toward funding human needs. Participants will work to introduce resolutions at every level of state government and civic life that calls for such changes. The group within CSM ministry that is developing MNASAP has hired an experienced organizer. Website: MNASAP.org

Carol Masters is a member of the Community of St. Martin.



Photo credit: Janet Dahlem

WAMM members Kaia Svien and Polly Kellogg bring the cost of war message to Occupy Minnesota, where WAMM maintains a presence. They call for elders to support younger people in the movement.

Congratulations to These Amazing WAMM Women!

WAMM co-founder **Polly Mann** is the recipient of *The 2011 Peacemaker of the Year Award* from the Minnesota Fellowship of Reconciliation, in honor of her many years of relentlessly acting on behalf of peace and justice issues. Polly continues to inspire with her creativity and insight and her continued activity on issues.

Marie Braun is the recipient of *The Courageous Woman Award* from the Friends of the Anne Pederson Women's Resource Center, Augsburg College, which recognizes women who courageously strive for social justice and peace on campus or in the wider community and whose efforts make a difference to women.

Though words cannot say enough to convey our deep appreciation, we congratulate both of these women on the well deserved recognition for their lives' dedication to the peace and justice struggles.

WAMM Membership

- \$15-39 Low Income/Student membership
 \$40-59 Annual membership
 \$60-199 Household membership
 \$200-349 Sustainer (amount above membership)
 \$350+ Major Donor (amount above membership)
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 This is a membership renewal
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I want to volunteer for WAMM

WAMM Committees

Issues Committees:

- Book Club
- Counter Recruitment
- Immigration
- Iraq
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- Middle East
- St. Joan of Arc/WAMM Peacemakers
- Tackling Torture at the Top

Administrative and

Other Committees:

- Coordinating
- Finance
- Fundraising
- New Member
- Newsletter
- Personnel
- Program/New Issues
- Silent Auction

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- Margaret Sarfehjooy
- Carol Walker
- Lucia Wilkes-Smith: Co-chair

Corporate Media, continued from page 7

in weapons that they do Israel. Unlike the Israelis, the Palestinians have no tanks, no airplanes, no troops. Is it any wonder that, in their miserably disadvantaged state, they are bitter and disillusioned, and that some have sought revenge?

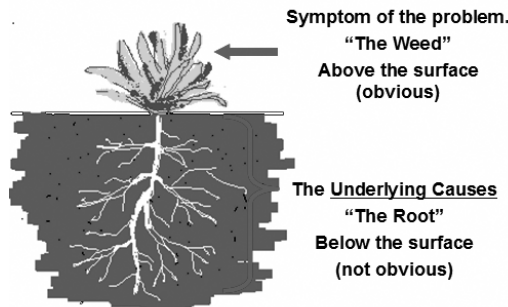
Polly Mann is a co-founder of Women Against Military Madness and a regular contributor and columnist for the WAMM newsletter. She serves on the WAMM Newsletter Committee.

Missed the 2011 WAMM Silent Auction?

Not to worry, there are still a few items left. Remaining items will be sold on a first-come, first-served basis, at or above the original minimum bid price.

To find out what items remain, please visit the WAMM website at www.worldwidewamm.org or call the office at 612-827-5364.

Root Cause Analysis Basics



The word root, in root cause analysis, refers to the underlying causes, not the one cause.

Diagram PPL.

Western media reports on Israel/Palestine don't address root causes of the issue which are: home demolitions, land grabs and the oppression, imprisonment, wounding and killing of Palestinians who resist—or simply try to exist.

Give Someone You Love the Gift of WAMM:

Do you know someone who could use more analysis of justice and peace issues than she/he is getting through the corporate media? Do you know someone who is troubled by the state of the world and is looking for ideas and inspiration for action? Give them a WAMM membership and the WAMM office will send a card to them announcing the gift. Mail in the form on this page or call the WAMM office at 612-827-5364.



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