

Women Against Military Madness

Newsletter

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Women Against Military Madness

The Latin America of the 21st century is not so easily controlled by gunboat and dollar diplomacy. In spite of dire media reports about Venezuela, U.S. power is on the decline while cooperation between Latin American states is increasing.

Venezuela and the New Latin America

by Anne Winkler-Morey

Venezuela moved to the front page as a theater of protest and violent state repression this spring. We saw pictures of young people, fists raised, facing Venezuela National Guards, cars burning, and reports of growing body counts. Actors at the Academy Awards sought points by lamenting state violence in Venezuela. U.S. Secretary of State Kerry called the Venezuelan forces “terrorists.” Venezuela accused the U.S. embassy of coordinating and supporting protests, and ousted three diplomats. The U.S. followed suit and began talking about economic sanctions. Today as I write, the death toll has reached 40. Venezuelan President Maduro has asked the Pope to mediate between his government and the opposition. The story is developing daily.

One aspect of this story that deserves more notice is the role of Latin American nations in the conflict signaling a profound change in the power of the United States in the region.

Historians will note that from his first election in 1998, Hugo Chavez advocated regional sustainability, economic diversity, and solidarity in Latin America as a way to loosen the domination of the United States and other “First World” or Global North powers. He wasn’t the first leader to do so.

Fidel Castro, in his role as a leader of the nonaligned movement during the Cold War, championed South-South inter-cooperation even while remaining economically dependent on the Soviet Union. In a similar vein, Jamaican leader Michael Manley pushed for Caribbean inter-cooperation, countering Reagan’s South-North oriented Caribbean Basin Initiative. These past efforts faltered due to the overwhelming economic power of the U.S. during those periods.

By the 21st century, however, U.S. power in Latin America was on the decline. A decade of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the rise of other global powers, most notably China and the EU, made it easier for Latin American states to diversify products and trading partners, as well as to pursue inter-Latin American trade and cooperation. The free trade agreements beginning with NAFTA can be seen as an effort by the United States to codify old relations and counter Latin American steps to break centuries of dependency.

The same year NAFTA became law (1994), Brazil and Argentina initiated a regional trade organization, MERCUSOR. It now incorporates most South American states. Venezuela became a full member in 2006, and due to Chavez’s leadership the trade group established the Bank of the South, a bold antidote to the IMF. Instead of increasing indebtedness and First World control of the Global South, this new bank supports redistribution and inter-American economic cooperation.

In addition, Chavez took unilateral action, using Venezuela’s seemingly inexhaustible oil resources to engage in its own inter-American oil diplomacy, providing grants, barter, and no-interest loans to Caribbean and Central American nations and NGOs, even providing grants to low-income communities in the United States. In Minnesota, the Red Lake and Fond du Lac reservations received winter fuel

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Mural on the side of a building in Caracas commemorating Simón Bolívar, the father of Latin America’s struggle to free itself from colonial rule. Created by Guerrilla Comunicacional.

WAMM Newsletter

The statements and opinions reflected in this newsletter are the views of the author and not necessarily official positions of WAMM. We encourage a diversity of opinion to represent the range of perspectives that coexist under the banner of WAMM's mission statement.

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Women Against Military Madness is a nonviolent, feminist organization that works in solidarity with others to create a system of social equality, self-determination and justice through education, action and the empowerment of women. WAMM's purpose is to dismantle systems of militarism, economic exploitation and global oppression.


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PM Idyllic Iceland

by Polly Mann

I became interested in Iceland during World War II when the husband of a close friend was stationed at a military base near Reykjavik. (The U.S. maintained a military base and naval station in Iceland until 2006.) No American soldier could go into Reykjavik without written authority from his commanding officer. The Icelandic government was very protective of young Icelandic women who might have been attracted to the soldiers and kept the men isolated.

My next connection to Iceland was the arrival of some Icelandic women in the Twin Cities— all belonging to Kvinnalista, a women's political party. One was also a member of the parliament. They gave me a beautiful white and lavender nylon scarf with the word "Kvinnalista" on it in large letters. Iceland's population then was 250,000; today it's 320,000, a little better than half that of the state of Wyoming (a manageable size).

So it was with interest that I read recently that violent crime is extremely rare in Iceland. According to the 2011 Global Study on Homicide by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Iceland's homicide rate from 1999 to 2009 never went above 1.8 per 100,000 in any given year. The U.S. had homicide rates between 5.0 and 5.8 per 100,000 during that same stretch. In 2009 Brazil had 43,909 homicides; Denmark had 47 homicides; the United Kingdom had 724 homicides; and the U.S. had 15,241. A question that follows is "how come?" How come Iceland has so few homicides?

A U.S. law student from Eveleth, Minnesota, did research on the issue which was published in *The Moral Atheist* of March-April 2014. He interviewed government officials, lawyers, journalists and random citizens. His conclusion, in short was "there is virtually no difference among upper, upper middle and

lower classes in Iceland. And with that, tension between economic classes is non-existent." A study done by a University of Missouri student found that only 1.1% of Icelanders identified themselves as upper class, while 1.5% identified as lower class. The remaining 97% identified themselves as upper-middle class, lower-middle class, or working class.

Crimes in Iceland usually do not involve guns though there are approximately 90,000 guns in the country. However, owning a gun requires a medical examination and a written test. Police are unarmed. There is no standing army.* The usage of hard drugs is low.

In terms of health, life expectancy at birth in Iceland is 82 years, two years higher than the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) average of 80 years. Life expectancy for women is 84 years, compared with 81 for men. Voter turnout, a measure of public trust in government and of citizens' participation in the political process, was 85% during recent elections; among the highest polled by the OECD where the average is 72%. In general, Icelanders are more satisfied with their lives than the OECD average, with 87% of people saying they have more positive experiences in an average day (feelings of rest, pride in accomplishment, enjoyment, etc) than negative ones (pain, worry, sadness, boredom, etc). Does all this explain the low crime rate? I would think so.

*Iceland joined NATO in 1949 with the understanding that it would not establish a standing army and it still doesn't have one.

The Icelandic Coast Guard and Air Defense under it maintain mainly protection and rescue for its fishing industry. NATO, "Members and Accession," nato.org; Landhelgisgæsla Íslands, "Iceland Coast Guard," www.lhg.is/english

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



Photo at left: National Geographic Iceland's Blue Lagoon. Water from the ground near a lava flow is used to run turbines that generate electricity for consumption. After passing through the turbines, the steam and hot water is then used to provide heat for a municipal water-heating system. The mineral-rich water is subsequently fed into a man-made lagoon for recreational and medicinal users to bathe in.

Heaven Can't Wait

Information Paradise

I was leading when the investigation into the causes of the Icelandic financial crisis . . . and I was very impressed by the work of WikiLeaks. We wondered how the big bankers were able to lead the country to ruin and no one has seen anything. Julian Assange then arrived with the idea to make Iceland a place where journalists could not be pursued, a kind of information paradise. This concept has had a huge impact and led to the Icelandic Modern Media Initiative project, to which I belong and which is still ongoing.

—*Eva Joly, anti-corruption investigating judge, French member of the European Parliament. Rise Up Times/Paris Match, April 18, 2014*

Blessed with 100% Renewable

A perfect storm of climate and geology—the “Fire and Ice” of volcanic heat and glacial rivers has blessed the island with natural energy resources. Together with political will and contemporary technology, it has shed its former dependence on fossil fuels so that presently hydro- and geothermal resources supply almost 100% of Iceland’s consumption of electricity and heating, the highest percent of renewable energy in the world. Due to the fact that Iceland is not dependent on fossil fuels, its residents pay very little for energy, which enhances their ability to maintain a comfortable standard of living. Its power plants have been called “spotless” with some even acting as “stunning examples of modern industrial architecture,” and it has nearly eliminated global warming gases.

—*Orkustofnun, National Energy Authority of Iceland, nea.is; ASKJA Energy, askjaenergy.org; Renewable Economy, reneweconomy.com*



Photo: Creative Commons
Birgitta Jónsdóttir, member of the Icelandic parliament and an antiwar, transparency and internet activist. She produced the documentary, “Collateral Murder,” with Julian Assange, and works with the Icelandic Modern Media Initiative and in defense of whistleblowers.

Eternal Sunshine of the Optimist’s Mind

I’m a chronic optimist. Whenever something goes wrong I see opportunities. I don’t know how many times I speak to people in the States and they’re all, “We can’t change anything.” As soon as we allow ourselves to believe that things are fixed then they’re unchangeable. But there is absolutely nothing fixed. . . . Everybody needs to understand—I don’t care who it is, that is receiving this message—if you live in a democracy I got news for you: It is work. It is work, and it’s a lot of work, and particularly if your democracy is all wrong like most of our democracies. We need to recreate new systems. We’ve been fed these constant lies about that there are no alternatives. But they’re everywhere. We just need to find like-minded people, and they’re everywhere, too. We’re not alone.

—*Birgitta Jónsdóttir, interview: “Icelandic Activist Birgitta Jónsdóttir Reveals How WikiLeaks Changed Her Country Forever,” from the series, “Eyes Wide Open,” October 17, 2013, takeapart.com*

WAMM THANKS

- Polly Mann in memory of Marilyn Rector Jones, an early WAMM member
- Mary Beaudoin in memory of Ava-Dale Johnson, Carol Walker’s nephew and mother, Pepperwolf’s mother, Sarah Martin’s mother
- Therese Stanton and Rosemary Holman in honor of Margaret Casey’s 70th Birthday
- Sharon O’Brien Link in memory of Brien Link
- Sarah Martin in memory of Carol Walker’s mother
- Marie Goblirsch in honor of Darlene White in memory of Darlene’s brother, Roger Mohrbacher
- WAMM Newsletter Committee in honor of Bob Jones’s birthday

Change in WAMM Newsletter Publication Schedule

WAMM Newsletter now follows the seasons, rather than months. The WAMM newsletter will continue publication eight times per year, but twice a season beginning with this issue, which is called Spring II, 2014. (The previous issue was March/April 2014).

The issue after Spring II will be Summer I, followed by Summer II, Fall I, Fall II, Winter I, Winter II and Spring I, etc.

Revolting

The National Endowment for Democracy “NED” and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) have channeled multi-million dollar funding to Lopez’s political parties Primero Justicia and Voluntad Popular, and Machado’s NGO Sumate and her electoral campaigns. These Washington agencies have also filtered more than \$14 million to opposition groups in Venezuela between 2013 and 2014, including funding for their political campaigns in 2013 and for the current anti-government protests in 2014 . . . More than \$300,000 was directed towards efforts to develop a new generation of youth leaders to oppose Maduro’s government politically . . . Another significant part of NED funds in Venezuela from 2013-2014 was given to groups and initiatives that work in media and run the campaign to discredit the government of President Maduro.

—investigative journalist *Eva Golinger*, “Agents of Destabilization: The Dirty Hand of the National Endowment for Democracy in Venezuela,” *Postcards from the Revolution*, *chavezcode.com*, April 23, 2014

SOA Watch Victory

On June 28th, 2013 SOA Watch and allies held a protest in front of the World Bank’s Washington, D.C. headquarters. We staged a street theater die-in, reading off the names of Hondurans murdered by Dinant’s private security guards [Honduran corporation Grupo Dinant]. Since then, the external pressure has yielded significant results! The second half of Dinant’s \$30 million loan is on hold.

—*Owen Silverman Andrews*, *SOA Watch*, Feb. 14, 2014

*Map: U.S. Army Combined Arms Center
The U.S. places Central, South America, the Caribbean under its military’s South Command.*

Venezuela,
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through Venezuelan-owned CITGO.

The economic crisis in Venezuela and the protests.

Ironically and unfortunately, while championing economic diversity in the region, Venezuela remained dependent on one product and one partner. The decades-old dependence between the United States and Venezuela continued after 1998, creating a strange undercurrent to the open hostility between the two countries. For all the bellicose rhetoric (and political and military aggression on the part of the United States), neither nation has wanted to interrupt their oil trade. Within Venezuela these oil revenues are plowed into clinics, schools, food and housing subsidies as they never have before—leading to steady decline in the poverty rate, but like all single-product economies, such dependence leaves one vulnerable to the vagaries of global capital.

The dramatic increase in oil exploration in the United States in the last few years – much of it using fracking technology – has decreased U.S. dependency on Venezuelan oil. It is one reason for the recent fall of oil prices, which led to Venezuela’s current economic downturn and threatened its ability to bring its redistributive policies to full fruition. Still, poverty levels have continued to fall: at 55 percent in 2004, they were down to 25 percent in 2012. (We don’t have any figures for the last 16 months.



It is quite possible these figures will go in the wrong direction as rising prices cut into working-class budgets.)

As of this writing there is still a race and class divide between the protestors (whiter and wealthier) and Maduro’s supporters, even though the problems the protestors purport to address—shortages, rising prices, and increasing violence—affect poor Venezuelans most acutely. Many see the protests themselves exacerbating these problems. Meanwhile both the opposition and the government forces are splintered—a situation that is fed by and, in turn, intensifies the economic crisis. The continued dependence on oil is only one aspect of the current economic crisis. Inflation is a long-standing problem that predates both Presidents Maduro and Chavez. Maduro’s recent efforts to crack down on the black market hurt middle-class operators dependent on this illegal trade in goods and dollars, and that is one of the issues fueling the protests. The black market doesn’t have a one-state solution, as it involves profiteers transferring funds out of the country and selling goods across borders.

Therein lies the potential of inter-Latin American cooperation. I don’t mean to say that these state actors do not have serious disagreements – or that they are inherently progressive. Indeed, Colombia is a key and uncooperative player. But the more the region is economically liberated from the United States, the more non-state actors involved in land reclamation, indigenous rights, Afro Latin American liberation, local peasant autonomy, labor unions, women’s rights, and coalitions opposed to neo-liberal trade policies can demand action to redistribute wealth and increase democracy.

Role of the mainstream and social media.

So, for us in the United States the task remains to insist that our country let Latin America be. This means demanding that our media inform us about the extent of U.S. involvement and—at least—not act as a mouthpiece for the State Department.

Though most mainstream media sources now admit the protests of March and early April represent wealthy segments and elite districts, early images and messages linger. False characterizations of the situation in the press and social media have the potential to create harm even when retracted, and make them

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Venezuela,

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come true. The overblown coverage of the protests must have helped them grow.

The *New York Times* misreported the rate of Venezuela's inflation, claiming it was 300 percent. The false graph on the front page had a much greater impact than the delayed and buried correction: 57 percent. Such falsehoods, economist Mark Weisbrodt notes, can become a self-fulfilling prophecy by creating panic and hyperinflation. Weisbrodt's point reminds me of Henry Kissinger pledging to "make the Chilean economy scream" after the election of Socialist Salvador Allende in 1970. The hyperinflation that ensued in Chile paved the way for the U.S.-sponsored coup that installed military dictator Augusto Pinochet.

While social media provide an essential platform for reports from observers on the ground in Venezuela, they can also be the source of detrimental fabrications. A fake tweet calling for Maduro's ouster and attributed to Chilean President Michelle Bachelet still comes up first in Google if one searches for Bachelet and Maduro—obscuring the nearly universal support from Latin American leaders for Maduro, including the Chilean president. It is not clear who sent the fake tweet.

The diminished power of the United States in Latin America.

Though I think it is an oversimplification to say the protests in Venezuela are U.S.-inspired, I am convinced the United States seeks to destabilize Venezuela with tactics it used in Chile, Cuba, and dozens of other places throughout the 20th century. But Washington does not have the power it once had in the region. Compare today to half a century ago:

In 1962 the United States brought a resolution to the Organization of American States (OAS) calling for the ouster of Cuba from the hemispheric body. The vote passed with 14 yeas and six abstentions. Not one Latin American nation dared to vote against the United States, though it cost them popular support. The economic and political costs of confronting the United States were too high in 1962.

Trade within the Americas still moved south to north. Latin American states competed with each other for a bigger piece of the U.S. market. Their economies were dependent on a few products. The exchange of their bananas, coffee, and tin for the United States' finished goods was inherently unequal, hampering all internal efforts at development.



One of the murals created by Cuban satirists declaring "War against war" mocking U.S. aggression, as well as in support of one of Cuban Five, also a satirical cartoonist. Drawntripping.com

The Latin America of the 21st century is not so easily controlled by gunboat and dollar diplomacy.

When the U.S. supported the coup regime in Honduras in 2009, the Latin American states gathered in Venezuela and formed a regional political organization, CELAC—which includes the Caribbean nations—to protest U.S. interference in Honduras. CELAC excluded the United States, Canada, and the illegitimate government of Honduras. South American nations also formed UNASUR, a political coalition. UNASUR representatives gathered in Caracas to try to broker a peace between the Honduran government and opposition forces.

On March 7, 2014, the U.S. brought a resolution to the OAS sanctioning Venezuela and supporting antigovernment protesters. The effort backfired. Only Panama and Canada supported the U.S. resolution. A counter-resolution, passed by the remaining 29 states, declared: "Appreciation, full support, and encouragement for the initiatives and the efforts of the democratically elected Government of Venezuela."

This year CELAC met in Havana, with 32 Latin American governments represented. UN Secretary Ban Ki Moon was invited. The U.S. was not. The agenda? Overcoming poverty and inequality. To achieve those essential goals will require the flowering of social movements, governments that represent the interests of those most impoverished, inter-Latin American cooperation, and—our job as U.S. citizens—reining in the United States.

Anne Winkler-Morey, Ph.D., teaches Latin American history at Metropolitan State University.

RESOURCES

Venezuela Analysis

- independent website: news, analysis, background info about the current political situation in Venezuela. Project of Venezuela Analysis, Inc., registered as a non-profit organization in New York State and the Fundación para la Justicia Económica Global, a foundation registered in Caracas.
- venezuelanalysis.com

Postcards from the Revolution

- From the perspective of the socially-focused, grassroots Bolivarian Revolution government which began in 1998 with Hugo Chavez's presidency, asserting Venezuela's independence from the imperial domination of the North. Blog of investigative reporter, news analyst Eva Golinger, a former New Yorker with a law degree, who is a naturalized citizen of Venezuela, and adept at obtaining FOIA documents.
- thechavezcode.com



Axis of Logic

- Latin America, including Venezuela. News, commentary often ignored or whitewashed by western corporate media.
- Text of the Venezuela constitution here. Editors reside in Venezuela, U.S., Canada, columnists from a variety of countries. Axisoflogic.com

La Prensa

- News agency covering Latin America. Six language translations including English.
- plenglish.com

SOA Watch

- Works to shut down the School of Americas and change oppressive U.S. foreign policy regarding Latin America.
- soaw.org

Rise of the Paramilitary Police

by Andrew J. Henderson

Communities United Against Police Brutality (CUAPB):

In Minneapolis: legislative and political action, victim and community advocacy, public education, media challenge, Know Your Rights training, Copwatch, 24-hour hotline: 612-874-STOP (612-874-7867)

The Watch:

reported opinion blog by Radley Balko, on civil liberties and criminal justice. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-watch/>

Rise of the Warrior Cop

Book by Radley Balko (Public Affairs, 2013). Nixon's War on Drugs, Reagan's War on Poverty, Clinton's COPS program, the post-9/11 security state under Bush and Obama: by degrees, each of these innovations expanded, empowered police forces at the expense of civil liberties. Balko examines the militarization of local law enforcement up through the present.

There is no doubt that military culture has an undue influence on our daily lives. We see it in TV programs, billboard advertisements, and even the toys our children play with. One place where it is especially prominently displayed is at our local police departments.

Since the 1980s, police departments across America have been steadily building their arsenals with weapons and vehicles acquired from military surplus. Many of these acquisitions come from the Department of Defense Excess Property Program, better known as the 1033 Program. Equipment provided to police departments though this program includes grenade launchers, helicopters, assault rifles, vehicles, boats, body armor, and camouflage clothing. In 2011, the Department of Defense gave nearly \$500 million worth of surplus to police agencies, more than doubling the \$212 million given in 2010.

Police officers appear to believe that they are fighting a war, whether it is on crime, drugs, or terrorism. Officers are now being trained to develop a "warrior mindset" and the perception that their lives are at risk with every citizen encounter, despite the fact that policing is a safer occupation than truck driving, farming, or construction work. In fact, about half of all officer deaths are due to traffic accidents and most of those have not occurred while in pursuit of a suspect or on the way to a crime scene.¹

One way we can especially see the militarization of the American police force is in the implementation, growth, and frequent use of the SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics) paramilitary teams.

In 1967 the first official SWAT team was created in Los Angeles. By 1975 that number had grown to around 500 teams across the United States.² Today there are thousands of these units operating across the nation. Peter Kraska, a criminologist at Eastern Kentucky University, estimates that over 80% of cities and towns with populations between 25,000 and 50,000 people have SWAT teams and that over 90% of cities with populations over 50,000 have at least one paramilitary police unit.³

Often wearing fatigues and body armor while donning military-style assault weapons, these teams conduct over 150 raids every day. In 1980, there were around 3,000 SWAT team raids in the United States. In 2001, that number had inflated to 45,000 and has since expanded to over 80,000 raids per year.⁴ SWAT teams have also become increasingly aggressive in recent years. Here are just a few examples.

- The use of SWAT team operations for minor law violations has steadily risen. During a routine raid in March of 2008 over a low-level non-violent drug charge, a Columbia, Missouri SWAT team violently entered the home of Jonathan March late at night by breaking down the door. Five concussion grenades were detonated around the dwelling, one of which exploded near the feet of a visitor sitting on a couch. As the team searched the residence, two dogs were shot in their backs while the animals were retreating. Only a small amount of marijuana was recovered from this paramilitary operation.
- During a January 2008 evening raid, a Lima, Ohio SWAT team bashed down the door

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Photo: Nigel Parry/nigelparry.com

\$50 million in federal money was spent equipping Minnesotan police before the 2008 Republican National Convention, "which left us facing what many people called 'Robocops' in full body armor and clearly brand new equipment," wrote activist-journalist Nigel Parry in "Rage Against the Machine, RNC Diary Part 3." Equipment was left behind with police after the convention was over.



Paramilitary Police,

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of the rented home of 26-year-old mother Tarika Wilson in search of her companion on suspicion of minor drug charges. With guns drawn the team entered the house and within moments opened fire, killing Tarika, and wounding her one-year-old son who was shot in the left shoulder and hand and lost his index finger from a police bullet.

- In May 2010, a Detroit, Michigan SWAT team conducted a late night raid on an apartment through which they had gained entry by kicking down an unlocked door. After deploying a flash-bang grenade, the lead officer in this raid entered the apartment and shot sleeping seven-year-old Aisha Jones in the head, killing her instantly. To make this tragedy even worse, the SWAT team conducted the raid on the wrong apartment.
- In March of 2013, two SWAT teams shut down a residential neighborhood in Ft. Collins, Colorado, to search for a man suspected of stealing a bicycle and other merchandise from a local Wal-Mart. The suspect was never apprehended.

Recently, police departments are acquiring military vehicles such as the Mine Resistance Ambush Protected (MRAP) and the BearCat through the 1033 Program. MRAP's are 14-ton armored fighting vehicles designed to survive an improvised explosive device (IED) and have been used frequently in the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan. The BearCat is an acronym for a Ballistic Engineered Armored Response Counter Attack Truck, and according to the law enforcement website of its manufacturer, Lenco, can be equipped with an M60 machine gun, a 204B machine gun, or a mark 19 grenade launcher.

BearCats are used for police and SWAT operations including counter-terrorism efforts. At a cost of around \$400,000, these vehicles are designed to be bulletproof, blast proof, and include features such as a C.S. gas (tear gas) deployment nozzle. Over 5,000 of these vehicles have been produced, and are in use by military and law enforcement in over 40 countries worldwide.

Since the summer of 2013, 165 MRAP vehicles had been acquired by police and sheriff departments throughout the U.S., many by rural police with few officers and little crime. Recently the City of Washington, Iowa, with 11 police officers and a population of 7,000, acquired an MRAP from this program.



Photo: Nigel Parry/nigelparry.com

Police, armed and in riot gear and masks, in the streets of St. Paul during the 2008 unarmed citizen protests against war and poverty.

731 more MRAP's have been requested for domestic use, and 780 law enforcement agencies are on waiting lists to receive one.

Influenced by this militarization, our police department employees have gone from "peace officers" to "law enforcement officers" and from "protect and serve" to "enforce and incarcerate," and this has contributed to the U.S. having the highest per capita rate of incarceration in the world.

Andrew J. Henderson is active with Communities United Against Police Brutality. In February of this year, he won a challenge in the Ramsey County Court for the right to videotape law enforcement. The ACLU of Minnesota, who assisted in his defense, declared the verdict a First Amendment victory.

Endnotes

- 1 <http://www.npr.org/2010/12/29/132441719/Traffic-Accidents-Leading-Cause-Of-Police-Deaths>
- 2 http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/03/06/aclu-police-militarization-swat_n_2813334.html
- 3 <http://www.forbes.com/sites/erikkain/2011/09/12/police-militarization-in-the-decade-following-911/>
- 4 https://www.rutherford.org/publications_resources/john_whiteheads_commentary/are_police_in_america_now_a_military_occupying_force



WORD UP!

Move Against Mission Creepy

- Something potentially sinister is happening across America, and we should stop and take notice before it changes the character of our country forever.
- County, city and small-town police departments across the country are now acquiring free military-grade weapons that could possibly be used against the very citizens and taxpayers that not only fund their departments but who the police are charged with protecting . . .
- In fact, in the last several months, the following towns around the country, many of them small, have acquired free MRAPs from U.S. war zones:
- Texas's McLennan and Dallas Counties
- Idaho's Boise and Nampa
- Indiana's West Lafayette, Merrillville, and Madison
- Minnesota's St. Cloud and Dakota County
- New York's Warren and Jefferson Counties
- South Carolina's North Augusta and Columbia
- Tennessee's Murfreesboro
- Arizona's Yuma
- Illinois's Kankakee County
- and Alabama's Calhoun County.
- This is why Rep. Johnson plans to introduce legislation to reform the 1033 program before America's main streets and civilian police militarize further.
- —Rep. Hank Johnson, Georgia, member of the U.S. House Armed Services and Judiciary Committee and Michael Shank, Friends Committee on National Legislation. "Small Town America Shouldn't Resemble War Zone," column, USA Today, March 10, 2014

Photo: northfield.patch.com
The sheriff's office of Minnesota's Dakota County possesses a 40,000-pound armor-plated, mine-resistant, ambush-protection vehicle (MRAP) of the type used in Iraq and Afghanistan.

• Humanity at the Border

by BethAnne Nelson

Dignity, Not Detention Vigil:

Every first Sunday, 2:30 to 3:00 p.m. at 425 Grove Street, St. Paul (Ramsey County Law Enforcement Center). Vigil for civil immigrant detainees in jail. Sponsored by Interfaith Coalition for Immigration and Advocates for Human Rights. More info: email interfaith-onimmigration@gmail.com

No More Deaths

Organization with mission to end death, suffering on the U.S./Mexico border through civil initiative: people of conscience work openly and in community to uphold fundamental human rights. Humanitarian assistance, witnessing, responding, consciousness raising, global movement building, encouraging humane immigration policy nomoredeaths.org

Photo: Joe Italiano

The writer joins other aid workers, crawling under barbed wire on cattle-grazing land near the Mexican border, to bring water to immigrants in need.

• Nothing but experience can really capture the truth of the desert. It swallows people whole in its sands, under the relentless heat of the sun overhead. Clothes, photographs, bags of belongings are abandoned behind stones. • Even when you seem alone in the vastness, you are surrounded by people. The echoes of those who have passed through, the spirits of those who never left, and the heartbeats of all those just out of sight hoping that we are not border patrol on the hunt. Some are returning to the only country they have ever known, having lived in the U.S. from infancy only to be deported in adulthood. Some are escaping the violence fueled by the drug cartels, or the poverty brought on by free trade. Whatever their reasons, these are our brothers and sisters, trying to find dignity and a fulfilled life in a country that is waging a war against their right to humanity.

• It is an act of peace, a necessary act of justice, for us to provide care to them when they are in need. Experiencing the desert firsthand indelibly demonstrates to one on a hike, the intensity and desperation of one day for those who struggle under its conditions. A week's walk, a month's walk, or more tears at every part of the body of a person who has already suffered social and economic injustices below the border.

• Immigration reform is a term that has been bandied about in U.S. politics, without movement towards any sort of resolution, let alone progress. Poll numbers and talking points often reduce all human beings into hypothetical and moveable pieces of data. New legislation seeks to "humanize" the immigration process by offering a path to citizenship over a period of 13 years, during which time applicants must pay for, but cannot access any government

services.¹ Registered Provisional Immigrants (RPIs) would be required to pay full price for health insurance under the Affordable Care Act, without access to any of the tax credits or cost reductions. Female applicants may receive a reduction in their waiting period through the VAWA (the Violence Against Women Act), if they have been assaulted by a U.S. citizen and are willing to endlessly recount and relive their experience on applications and in front of deciding bodies.²

And while immigrants to the U.S. come from many places across our vast globe, and even though the total migration from Mexico over the border reached net zero in 2012³, just as many people leave the US thru the border as enter it. The dialogue has been vitriolic in dehumanizing people of Latino/Latina heritage. The current legislation, in order to pacify those who blame and fear migrants crossing in from Mexico, and to help sustain the military-industrial complex, will radically and unnecessarily militarize the U.S. border and increase the already excessive presence of law enforcement and border patrol.

During my time this past summer volunteering with the humanitarian aid group, No More Deaths, on the Arizona and Mexico border, these realities were part of our daily fabric. Many miles inside the U.S. border, checkpoints have been established to question any vehicle or person who passes through. The U.S. Customs & Border Patrol (CBP) has authority within 100 miles of the U.S. border (both land and sea), in a way that may limit any person's Fourth Amendment rights under the Constitution.⁴ Border patrol vehicles were a continuous presence throughout the town of Arivaca, AZ near our base. Anybody can be asked, and often are, her or his citizenship status, whether they are at a checkpoint or just going about their day. Additionally, a collection of research by No More Deaths, demonstrated that when people are taken into custody by CBP, the conditions are inhumane, abusive, dangerous, and that "many of them plainly meet the definition of torture under international law."⁵

While in Arizona, most of my time was spent in the Sonoran Desert, providing food, water, and medical aid to those in need in the desert. However, even as dirt filled our shoes and we retrieved water bottles slashed and emptied of their life-saving water (hidden cameras have captured CBP agents destroying water bottles, although other people such as ranchers and vigilantes are also suspected), it was clear that

continued on page 11



Humanity at the Border,

continued from page 8

a large part of the work for justice remained in the buildings of corporate and political powers. The prison industrial complex is greatly profiting from the current system of arrest, detention, and deportation. Groups such as the Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) and The Geo Group (GEO), posts annual revenue of over \$1 billion, each. These private prison corporations are hired by states to handle the prison population; a population that increases under the influence of these groups that profit from incarceration. In a 2011 article from the Justice Policy Institute, it was found that “the prison industry has invested over \$6 million in campaign contributions to state candidates since 2000 and at least \$1 million annually in lobbying efforts since 2003.”⁶ Humans become bed fillers and profitable pocket liners for private corporations.

While we were witnessing a day in court under “Operation Streamline”, an initiative of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, it was evident that these policies created to enable private profit were in full force. Since its institution in 2005, Operation Streamline has altered immigration prosecution from a civil deportation matter to an instigation of criminal records and prison sentencing. I, personally, witnessed over 70 defendants being tried in a single afternoon, with every person who could understand English or Spanish (those who cannot understand the interpretation of the legal proceedings are handled separately), receiving a prison sentence of at least 30 days, but more commonly upwards of 120 to 180 days. Many of those who were sentenced, were charged with “Illegal Re-Entry”, meaning they were found in the U.S. again having previously been deported. While Operation Streamline is purported to deter entry, this is clearly not the case, and it is being used as a money-making enterprise by those profiting.

Immigration is a peace and justice issue. Immigration is a feminist issue. The border is not just in Arizona or Texas, the border is everywhere. It is present in the collective consciousness of our entire population. The actions on the border, both by humanitarian aid workers and the border patrol, law enacted by politicians, and profit schemes by corporations, affect everyone throughout our country. Legislation utilizing our tax

Photo: Joe Italiano

Carrying life-saving water bottles.

money is rending families, communities, and our continent apart, while supporting those who profit from injustice. Different forces, histories, and motivations bring us all into the desert. We, migrants, aid workers, support volunteers, local citizens, feel the wind on our faces, the cholla spikes against our skin, the sun at our backs, and precious water fill our veins with life. We experience all these things together, because we are human together, and are entitled to be cherished and supported as a human community. Work must be done to allow us all to walk forward, from wherever our journey began, together with families, and together as one human family.

BethAnne Nelson participated in work with No More Deaths on the U.S.-Mexican border. She is a board of Women Against Military Madness.

Endnotes

- 1 Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
- 2 Speech by Nubia Willman, NOW Conference, Chicago, Illinois, July 6, 2013
- 3 Pew Hispanic Center April 23, 2012
- 4 ACLU “Know Your Rights: Border Patrol Authority Within 100 Miles of the U.S. Border,” pamphlet
- 5 No More Deaths, “Fact Sheet: ‘A Culture of Cruelty’”
- 6 Justice Policy Institute, “Gaming the System,” 2011



WORD UP!

Northwest Exposure

A 56-day detainee hunger strike at the Northwest Detention Center, Tacoma, Washington: “Among the strike’s most important victories was an end to the silence surrounding the conditions of detention and deportation. . . . The campaign to marginalize us carried out by a cruel and unscrupulous bureaucracy that represents immoral and indecent interests cannot contain a just struggle that uses peaceful methods to make itself heard.”

— Statement from the Hunger Strikers, *prisoner-hungerstrikesolidarity.wordpress.com*, May 5, 2014

Watch and Walk in Georgia

Stewart Detention Center, the largest, privately owned, for-profit, immigrant prison in the United States, located in Lumpkin, Georgia: “Peace Walkers held a vigil outside the gates of Stewart to make the connections between the root causes of migration and the criminalization and shameful discrimination of migrants in the US, part of a broader system of the US policy of militarism.”

— SOA Watch and Georgia Peace and Justice on a 120-mile walk to call attention to the SOA (School of Americas, Ft. Benning, Georgia), drone warfare and the persecution of immigrants, April 26-May 3, 2014

RESOURCES

Migration Policy Institute

Independent, nonpartisan, non-profit think tank in Washington, D.C., dedicated to analysis of the movement of people worldwide. Provides development, evaluation of migration, refugee policies at local, national, international levels.
migrationpolicy.org

Border Action Network

Updates on border actions, news, and fundraisers. On Facebook.

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 War

Every Wednesday, Note Time Change as of April 1 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on the Lake Street/Marshall Avenue Bridge spanning the Mississippi River between Minneapolis and St. Paul. FFI: Call 612-522-1861 or WAMM 612-827-5364.

Vigil to End the Occupation of Palestine Temporarily suspended till further notice. FFI: Call WAMM office 612-827-5364.

Peace Vigil Every Tuesday, 5:00 to 6:00 p.m. on the Eastside of the Franklin Avenue Bridge, Minneapolis. Sponsored by: Prospect Hill Neighbors for Peace. FFI: 612-379-7398

Grandmothers for Peace Vigils 50th St. and Halifax (1 block w. of France) 4:45 p.m. to 5:45 p.m. FFI: Marian Wright, 612-927-7607

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

Ongoing WAMM Committee Meetings

Board Meeting Third Tuesday of each month, 6:00 p.m. at WAMM, 4200 Cedar Avenue South, Minneapolis. FFI: Call WAMM, 612-827-5364.

The WAMM Book Club Saturday, May 17, 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. Afro Deli, 1939 S 5th Street, Minneapolis. Third Saturday of the month. FFI: Call 612-827-5364.

End War Committee Acting Against War and the Threats of War. First Monday of each month, 5:30 p.m. FFI: Call Marie 612-827-5364

Ground All Drones Committee First Thursdays of every month, 4:30 to 6:00 p.m., 4200 Cedar

Ave. South, Minneapolis. FFI: 612-827-5364

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

Middle East Committee Second Monday of each month, 10:00 a.m. at WAMM, 4200 Cedar Avenue South, Suite 3, Minneapolis. FFI: Call WAMM 612-827-5364

WAMM Occupy FFI: Call WAMM, 612-827-5364.

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 Wednesday of each month, 10:00 a.m. at 4200 Cedar Avenue, Minneapolis.

Ongoing Events

Committee to Stop FBI Repression 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 African Development Center, Riverside and 20th Avenues South. A resource and support group for those concerned about peace with justice from a faith perspective. FFI: www.justviewpoint.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

Pax Salons Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. 943 West Seventh St. (St. Paul Gallery), St. Paul. Please come. Topics vary. Call for details. Small donations accepted. FFI: 227-3228 or justcomm.org/pax-salon

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 second or third Saturday. Refreshments 9:30 a.m., Program 10:00 a.m. Location may vary. FFI: mepn.org

Dignity, Not Detention Vigil Every first Sunday, 2:30 to 3:00 p.m. at 425 Grove Street (Ramsey County Law Enforcement Center). Vigil for civil immigrant detainees in jail. Sponsored by: Interfaith Coalition for Immigration, Advocates for Human Rights. FFI: Email interfaithonimmigration@gmail.com

Special Events

Global Day of Action to Close Guantanamo and End Indefinite Detention Friday, May 23. Demonstrations, fasts, vigils nationwide. In Minneapolis: 1:00 p.m. Federal Courthouse, 4th Ave. & 4th St. We'll bring orange jumpsuits, black hoods. Tackling Torture at the Top (T3), Amnesty Int'l. FFI: witnessstorture.org, 612-827-5364.

Veterans for Peace Memorial Day Service Monday, May 26, Minnesota VietNam Wall, John Ireland Blvd., in front of State Capitol. Voices for Peace choir to sing. FFI: Barry Riesch, 651-641-1087, or VFP office 612-821-9141.

On the Road to Ground the Drones! June 3-14 Protest walk 165-miles from Boeing Corp. headquarters, Chicago to Michigan Air National Guard Base in Battle Creek, calling attention to new drone war operations center, where predator and reaper drones can be remotely controlled and their hellfire missiles launched. Get involved: walk, provide food or sleeping accommodations, organize speaking events, help with outreach. FFI: Voices for Creative Nonviolence vcnv.org or phone: 773-878-3815

WAMM Walk Against Weapons Saturday, June 7. Rain or shine. 10:30 a.m. check-in. Perkins Restaurant parking lot. Riverside Ave. and I-94, Minneapolis. 11:00 a.m. Walk begins. 11:45 a.m. Short rally on campus, walk returns to Perkins. Can't walk? Sponsor a walker. See back of this newsletter.

2014 Peacestock July 12, Colvill Park, Red Wing, MN. Advance sale tickets \$30 include supper. Available at MayDay bookstore 301 Cedar Ave., Minneapolis. Day of event \$35. FFI:peacestockvfp.org

80th Anniversary of the 1934 Minneapolis Truckers Strike Commemorate the strike that made Minneapolis a Union Town. One of the most important strikes in labor history.

- Thursday, July 17, 6:30 p.m., Minneapolis Central Library, 300 Nicolette Ave., Minneapolis. Book: Canadian labor historian Brian Palmer book talk, *Revolutionary Teamsters*. Street Festival (performers, entertainers, short speeches)
- Saturday, July 19, 3:00 p.m.-10 p.m., Third Street North and 6th Ave. North, Minneapolis
- Sunday, July 20 Family Picnic, Waubon Picnic area, Minnehaha Park, 12:00 noon-4:00 p.m. (food, beverages, historic displays, speeches, childrens' games).

Sponsored by the Remember 1934 Committee FFI: 612-802-1482, remember1934mpls@gmail.com, or Facebook: Remember1934 Sponsored by the Remember 1934 Committee FFI: 612-802-1482, remember1934mpls@gmail.com, or Facebook: Remember1934

Additional events listed at WomenAgainstMilitaryMadness.org or call the WAMM office: 612-827-5364. For Minnesota Alliance of Peacemaker events, see: mapm.org

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)

This is a new membership. This is a membership renewal This is a gift membership

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Contributions are tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

Make checks payable to WAMM, 4200 Cedar Avenue South, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55407

Pledge for Peace

(WAMM will send a coupon book)

\$ _____ Monthly

\$ _____ Quarterly

I want to volunteer for WAMM

WAMM Committees

Issues Committees:

- Book Club
- Counter Recruitment
- End War Committee: Acting Against War and the Threats of War
- Immigration
- Media
- Middle East
- St. Joan of Arc/WAMM Peacemakers
- Ground All Drones Committee
- Tackling Torture at the Top
- WAMM Occupy

Administrative and Other Committees:

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

WAMM Board

- Meredith Aby
- Marie Braun, Treasurer
- Diane Haugesag
- Sally Kundert, Co-chair
- Vanessa Lawrow
- Polly Mann
- Sarah Martin
- Sue Ann Martinson
- JoAnn Maus
- Brigid McDonald
- BethAnne Nelson
- Coleen Rowley
- Margaret Sarfehjooy
- Lucia Wilkes Smith Secretary
- Sharon Rice Vaughan Co-Chair
- Carol Walker

“We are Protectors, not Protesters”

The Native-led organization, Honor the Earth, established by Winona LaDuke and friends to address environmental issues, reframes the description of activists on their own terms—something we can all resonate with. When we say “No,” we are protecting humanity against war crimes; war, itself; erosion of civil liberties; and environmental destruction.



Photos from top:

Fight Back News

Anti-war activists confront University of Minnesota Law School killer-drone proponents.

Popular Resistance SDS, other activists defend against war, war crimes when Condoleezza Rice appeared at the University of Minnesota.

Censured News Faith Spotted Eagle of the Yanton Dakota, and women of other tribes, declare readiness to protect their land from Keystone XL pipeline.



Correction:

- With deepest apologies:
- March/April 2014 WAMM newsletter, Under Resources,
- “Your women are oppressed, but ours are awesome.
- Kristof and ‘Half the Sky’ use women against each other” (racialious.com),
- the correct spelling of the writer’s name is Sayantani
- DasGupta.



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**No one's daughter
No one's son
Should be the victim
Of a drone, bomb, or gun.
GROUND THE DRONES!**

7th Annual WAMM Walk Against Weapons Saturday, June 7

10:30 a.m. Walker check in

Perkins Restaurant parking lot, Riverside Ave. & I-94, Minneapolis

11:00 a.m. Walk to the University of Minnesota, West Bank

Short rally on campus. Then walk returns to Perkins (Walk and return: 3 miles total)

The UAV Research Group, Department of Aerospace Engineering and Mechanics (AEM), at the University of Minnesota is developing & implementing a low-cost, open-source, small Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV), aka drone, flight-research facility. WAMM opposes this and all wars, and calls for banning weapons of war, including weaponized drones.

This walk is a fundraiser for WAMM. Participants are encouraged to collect pledges.

Sponsored by: Women Against Military Madness. FFI: 612-827-5364
or download form online at womenagainstmilitarymadness.org

