



THE DECLARATION

February 2013

Upcoming Events in the Pioneer Valley

**Chiho Kaneko:
Back from Fukushima**

March 2, 2013 3:00 pm

First Church, 129 Main St.,
Northampton, MA

**Endless War, Radical Presidential Power, and a
Rotten Political System**

A Conversation with Glenn Greenwald

March 5th, 2013

5:15pm, FPH Main Lecture Hall,
Hampshire College

Pentagon Spending Exceeds \$750 million In Downtown

Northampton Alone

Over the past decade, the Department of Defense (DoD) has spent over three-quarters of a billion dollars in the zip code 01060 alone. Although renowned for its many restaurants, psychiatrist and attorney offices, as well as being a progressive college town, a large part of the economy (\$772,423,666) from 2000-2010 comes from large military contracts. The lion's share of this funding has gone to L3-KEO (formerly known as Kollmorgen), but other businesses, including several non-profits, have received a cut of this funding.

While the military contractor Kollmorgen (now L3-KEO) and its parent company Danaher received over 95% of the funding, the rest of the funding was received by local companies and four non-profit organizations. These organizations have provided an array of services and trainings for the Department of Defense.

The firm Architects Inc. received \$218,888 in contracts to provide services for the Pentagon. The logistics firm Militech received a whopping \$11 million over the same period of time, and Northampton Machine Company received \$1.2 million. Even small businesses received a piece of the action: Yes Computers was granted nearly \$10,000 for supplying computers.

The Center for Contemplative Minds, the "social awareness and higher education" training center off Main Street. The company was contracted by the Pentagon in June and October of 2008 and January of 2009 for caregiver resilience training, receiving a total of \$104,243 in military funds.

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Free Tibet
Radio Show
5 College Events

From Local Vigil to Global Intervention- “Free Tibet Now”

By Thao Lee

While millions were cheerfully making their new years resolutions for an exciting 2013, there is no doubt that Tibetans around the world have kept their wish the same: freedom for Tibet. A month before the New Year, in the effort of bringing the issue of Tibet to the community’s awareness, an 85-hour vigil was held outside of the Unitarian Church in Northampton from Nov 28th to Dec 1st. Although the event was sponsored by the Tibetan Community of Amherst and Northampton, its participants – aging from 4 to 80, and coming from all over the Pioneer Valley, were there on a completely voluntary basis. Several Tibetans at the vigil expressed that they felt privileged to enjoy the freedom that many living in Tibet under China’s rule did not possess. When prompted about the bitter weather accompanying the vigil, Nyima, exiled from Tibet when he was young and currently living in Hadley, responded: “When so many Tibetans set themselves on fire, being in the cold is nothing.”

Since February 2009, 95 Tibetans- monks and nuns, young and old, students and nomads - have self-immolated to protest China’s occupation of Tibet and demand justice. The goal of the vigil was to commemorate those who have burned themselves to death since 2009 and to highlight the causes of their sacrifices. Also, the vigil organizers and participants wish to gain more support for Tibet, on both individual and governmental levels. Over 3,000 signatures for the petitions to Secretary Clinton, Congressman Richard Neal and Congressman John Olver collected after 56 hours of the vigil must mean something. Yet global diplomatic intervention to find a peaceful resolution to the occupation of Tibet is still greatly needed.

For now, my thoughts remain similar to those of the supportive Northamptonian who shouted: “I wish the best for Tibet” as he left the event site after signing the petitions.

Five College Student Group Events

**Child Slavery in
America: Domestic
Minor Sex
Trafficking**

February 21st,
Mount Holyoke
7:30-9:30
Hooker Auditorium,
Clapp Hall
Free to public

**Five-College Queer
Gender and Sexuality
Conference**

March 1st & 2nd
Hampshire College

FPH, Free to public

**From Pity to
Empowerment:
Workshop**

February 12
Smith
4:30-7:30
Conference Center
Oak Room, College
Lane

AFSC Begins Radio Show

AFSC has launched a radio program in conjunction with our monthly newspaper, also titled "The Declaration."

Our program airs the first Thursday of every month, from 8-9pm on Valley Free Radio, station 103.3. The show will cover activism in Western Massachusetts, as well as national and international social justice issues. We will frequently feature interviews and guest appearances from local activists. Tune in to 103.3 on February 7th at 8pm to learn more.

If you would like to see your group’s event listed here for free, contact:

newspaper
@afscwm.org



Piercing the Cloak of Complexity, Seeing Gaza

By Dede Minter

For many, the escalation of airstrikes on Gaza in recent weeks has ignited questions as to how we view and comprehend the so-called Israeli-Palestinian conflict from an American vantage point. The New York Times told us that “Israel and Hamas brushed aside international calls for restraint on Thursday [November 15] and escalated their lethal conflict over Gaza.” NPR handed the mic over to Israeli Ambassador Michael Oren who calmly explained the “immense precautions” that Israel was taking to minimize civilian casualties in its military “response” to Hamas’ rocket fire. As missiles continued to rain down on Gaza and bodies piled up, nearly every mainstream U.S. news outlet took care to balance each sentence in their coverage. Israeli military attacks were tethered to Hamas’ “terrorism.”

As usual, the tit for tat portrayal of violence on “both sides” excluded the possibility of a thorough analysis of the politics of occupation and resistance, leaving Americans with a false but comforting sense of equivalence.

But even a cursory review of the numbers debunks the equivalence model. Throughout Israel’s “Pillar of Defense” from November 14th to the 20th, 105 Palestinians were killed. 38% of those killed are classified as civilians. Meanwhile, three Israelis were killed as a result of rocket fire from Gaza. Militants in Gaza shot off homemade Qassam rockets worth an estimated \$100 each while Israel used the most sophisticated US-made war planes and drones, and mobilized 30,000 army reserves in case of a full-scale ground operation.

With a more holistic review, we can see the context of the occupation and the political realities of Gaza. Gaza is one of poorest and most densely-populated places on earth, where 1.7 million people struggle daily for access to water, shelter and any shred of mental solace that one can access amidst constant Israeli surveillance and threat of attack. Through this recognition, we can see that attacks like “Pillar of Defense” are not wars, anomalies, or provoked instances of Israeli “self-defense,” but rather linked episodes in a systematic program of collective punishment that serves Israeli political agendas (fun fact: many studies have shown that Israeli offensives on Gaza consistently correlate with the lead-up to Israeli elections)[7] and attempts to police Palestinian civilians into submission while their land and resources are usurped.

Personally, as I struggled to decode the news coverage of Gaza last month and engage in conversations with fellow students, the words of radical Israeli architect Eyal Weizman continued to resonate: “Despite the complexity of the legal, territorial and built realities that sustain the occupation, the conflict over Palestine has been a relatively straightforward process of colonization, dispossession, resistance and suppression.” (Continued on page 4)

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Important Dates:

February 2, 1807
Foreign slave trade outlawed in the U.S.

February 15, 2003
10 million people in 800 cities protest invasion of Iraq (largest anti-war protest in history)

February 11, 1990
Amnesty announced for all political prisoners in South Africa

February 21, 1965
Malcolm X
Assassinated

February 23, 1903
Cuba leases Guantanamo Bay to the U.S. “in perpetuity”



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Call for Advertisers

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Historian Ilan Pappé has even termed this dynamic Israel's "cloak of complexity." Perhaps a mental exercise will help: do we require each other to intellectually master all of the complexity and detail of the histories of South African apartheid or American Jim Crow before declaring these systems immoral? Ultimately, my hope as we strain to understand the recent events in Gaza and the occupation of Palestine through the prism of U.S. media is this: as thinkers, let us all interrogate the factual bases of narratives of equivalence and those seemingly neutral "experts" trying to convince us that we cannot possibly understand this occupation for ourselves.

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Northampton taxpayers alone have subsidized the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq by more than \$148 million since 2001 and in the year 2012, taxpayers in the city of Northampton paid \$12.6 million for total Iraq and Afghanistan war spending. These costs do not include the city's contribution of \$56.7 million in that year to the remainder of the rest of the massive military budget.

The massive military spending would appear to be at odds with the population of the city. In November, Northampton voters overwhelmingly passed the *Budget for All* referendum. The ballot initiative instructed state representatives to direct Congress to move spending from the military budget towards human needs. Many residents of Northampton vocally articulate principles of non-violence and argue for a decreased military. While the popular sentiment in the city opposes the military industrial complex, the city is at the same time a massive beneficiary of that system.

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Declaration?**
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Letters to the Editor

"I am very excited to hear that The Declaration's inaugural issue is coming out. I think that this newspaper is going to fill a very important gap in the kinds of publications available in the Pioneer Valley. As a college student, my access to news about social justice can be somewhat sporadic. As I don't have a lot of time to be involved in social justice groups on campus anymore, I tend to find out about things that are going on in the area after the fact. I am looking forward to news of important political action and ongoing issues that need to be brought to the public's attention. Having a free, radical paper available will undoubtedly help to keep many people updated on things that matter. News has become increasingly filtered and censored through major media outlets. Most people self-censor the content that they access online or access things that are available through their social networks. Additionally, spreading news outside radical and activist circles is all-important to the success of any movement. Having alternatives available can only expand what people learn about. Hopefully, it can also be helpful in mobilizing groups such as students to participate in more ongoing actions and create meaningful change. Thank you for bringing this

newspaper to the Valley!"

Sincerely,

Steph Greenlaw

Smith College '13

To write to The Declaration, email
newspaper@afscwm.org or send mail to:
2 Conz St, Northampton, MA 01060