



Peace Action Supports Groundbreaking Iran Deal

Ofelia Cohen-Odiaga, Arlington

On July 14, world leaders reached a groundbreaking agreement with Iran. Iran has promised to dramatically cut back its nuclear program, in exchange for the elimination of the sanctions placed on the country. Now it is up to Congress to approve or disapprove the deal by September 17. In case they vote no, Congress will vote again in early October on whether to override an expected veto by President Obama.

The deal will prevent the US and Israel from trying to stop Iran's nuclear development by force, which would lead to a disastrous war. On the contrary, the deal would guarantee that Iran's nuclear activities remain peaceful.

The deal will cap Iran's uranium stockpile at 300 kg for 15 years and eliminate 97 percent of its current stockpile of enriched uranium.

Moreover, the deal will put intrusive, advanced, high-tech monitoring and inspections in place so that Iran could not possibly build a nuclear weapon.

The Iran deal will benefit the US economy through trade with Iran. The deal will also open the way for possible cooperation between Iran, the US and other countries on other issues; for example, Iran opposes extremist groups such as ISIS and al-Qaeda, and can be helpful in negotiating an end to the Syrian civil war.

Iranian-Iranian Friendship Picnic in Watertown on June 14th. The picnic featured music, dancing, and Iranian food, bringing members of peace groups together with Iranian-Americans.

HOW DO YOU SEE IRAN?

Rashin Khosravibavandpouri, an Iranian-born journalist, M.S. student in international relations at Suffolk University, and member of Massachusetts Peace Action's Middle East Working Group, gave a talk on June 23 intended to dispel misconceptions about Iran.

In the U.S. media, Iran is often portrayed as a frightening, evil nation: terrorists, bent on Israel's destruction, the ones who are building a nuclear bomb sure to head our way. The Iran nuclear deal, the scare mongers tell us, is dangerous; how can we possibly trust the Iranians to keep their end of

the bargain (even if U.N. inspectors will be monitoring Iran more intensively than any nation on earth)? Rashin reminded us that the U.S. has been hostile to Iran for years.

Peaceful negotiations, no matter what the context, are always better than bombs. As our colleague, Mary Popeo, said: "I support the Iran Deal because it is one step closer to a nuclear-free future." Javad Zarif, the Foreign Minister of Iran, who negotiated the deal, said the same thing in a July 31 article (bit.ly/zarif-mideast-wmd-free). There's something to that.

Call Congress today and ask them to vote YES on the Iran nuclear deal. (202) 224-3121



The American-Iranian Friendship Picnic. (Photo: Michael Passarini)

Peace Action has been working intensively for diplomacy, not war, with Iran for over eight years and this agreement is a major victory for us. This summer, we circulated a petition with other organizations that had over 400,000 signatures as we go to press. Our members have called and visited Congress, urging a yes vote on the deal, and passed out thousands of flyers at subway stations and a Red Sox game. We also held two different events this summer relating to Iran.

A PICNIC FOR PEACE

As the final negotiations heated up, MAPA collaborated with the National Iranian-American Council (NIAC) and Watertown Citizens for Peace, Justice, and the Environment to stage an Amer-

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Interns' Corner



Abigail Strait
Brandeis Heller School

I came to MAPA's fundraising intern position this summer with previous grant writing experience in my back pocket, thinking I knew exactly what to expect. Of course - as with many situations you go into "knowing" what will happen - I was wrong.

My previous experiences were working in large fundraising departments full of grant-writers with years of institutional knowledge and pre-set procedures. This ended up being a very different setup than at MAPA; some grant-writing had already been done when I came on board, but it hadn't been the most energy-efficient method for MAPA's small staff to fundraise.

So I learned pretty quickly I was in a different situation than I was used to! And while adapting to those new circumstances was a challenge, it was also fun. I found myself getting my hands into some of those other fundraising methods, instead of just focusing on grant-writing as I had in the past. I got to start some of those grant systems myself and write new copy for grants from scratch. I learned a lot about peace issues - even in the areas I thought I'd known a lot about before - and loved learning about different parts of the peace movement and MAPA's work through the other interns, staff, and members who stopped by to visit.

It ended up being a much more educational time than I'd expected - and also much more interesting than the one I'd envisioned at the start of the summer!



Ofelia Cohen-Odiaga
Commonwealth School

I still remember the day I walked into the MAPA office for my interview. I was really nervous because this was my first interview ever -- and I knew very little about politics. I knew how to use Facebook and Twitter, how to do flyers and posters, how to write, but *politics*? That was what I didn't know. At all. I'm pleased to say that that has changed greatly. Since coming to MAPA, I've learned a lot about the current state of the world's affairs, from the Syrian attacks in Yemen using American resources to the sanctions on Iran, from the mismanagement of our money to the fact that we have thousands of nuclear missiles on our soil. My eyes have been opened in so many ways, and I can't possibly be more grateful.

But more than anything else, more than the Middle East or Israel and Palestine or nuclear weapons or our own foreign policy and budget, I've learned how I, Ofelia Cohen-Odiaga, can be a more conscious citizen of the earth. I saw this post online that really struck me. The original post was (with grammar corrected): **"A teenager? With political opinions? No, politics are for adults. This does not affect you. Go sit at the kids' table."** Then another person commented, **"(5 min later) This new generation of teenagers doesn't care about anything besides parties and the internet."**

Okay, a little snarky (and by the way, both posters were mocking the adults saying these things), but the point stands. Teenagers are stigmatized as shallow, as careless, as only thinking about their own little worlds which don't include anything of actual importance. But that's not all teenagers, and that's not all teenagers' fault, either. Teenagers aren't always given the opportunity to be conscious, active citizens because adults underestimate them. At MAPA, I was never underestimated, not once. I was treated the same as the adults were, and because of that, I was able to learn so

much about the world around me. Because of MAPA, I am a far more interesting human being. And I hope I can use this experience as a model to become an even more interesting human being in the future.



Sophie Maki
Tufts University

This summer, I have worked as the political and legislative intern for Massachusetts Peace Action. I was drawn to MAPA because of what it stood for: its values of supporting peace and working against militarization, imperialism, racism, and climate change were all in line with my own. Before starting my work with MAPA, I felt rather disheartened by the political system within the United States. I questioned how a system that seemed to be based more on money and power than on the "will of the people" would ever be able to support the values that are important to me. Because of these thoughts, I took my activism elsewhere. I looked to change the policies at my school, further support movements of rallies and boycotts, and to challenge the thinking of my peers.

Working with MAPA has been instrumental in developing my understanding of the power a collective group can have on a government. Phone calls, letters, and coalition building are all small steps that can have real impacts on the lives of people around the world because in large enough numbers, these actions have influence on politicians, perhaps even more than money and nepotism. My resolve to create a fundamentally different system of societal rule that represents the interests of even the least powerful and privileged in our society still exists. The restructuring of the system will hopefully happen eventually, but important legislative decisions are happening right now. Although working for peace may be an uphill battle in this political system, I believe that it is one worth fighting.

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Peace and the Presidential Race for 2016

John Ratliff, Cambridge

What are the prospects that the 2016 contest will advance the cause of peace and begin a shift from the failed policies of endless conflict? The answer to this question may depend on the energy that the peace activists put into the race. During presidential contests people pay attention to the issues of peace and war, so the election is an opportunity for peace activists to advance our issues. Some have organized efforts in early primary states to attend candidate forums and press the candidates on issues important to war and peace. Many think

there is a strong peace candidate in the Democratic field of candidates and are throwing all their energies into the Sanders "political revolution". Still other peace activists have engaged in efforts to shift the political culture away from the two party system to one of a number of third parties, most prominently the Greens. **All of these efforts will have an effect bending toward peace. It is critical that we each find our way to make an effort.** Below is some information on candidates. For more information, go to the Massachusetts Peace Action website.

Democratic Candidates

All the Democratic candidates except Sen. Webb of Virginia support the Iran nuclear deal. All of them except Sen. Sanders support spending at least as much on the military industrial complex.



Former Secretary of State and Senator **Hillary Clinton** touts her experience in foreign policy and her toughness. She advocates a hugely powerful military posted throughout the world. She voted for the Iraq war and supported attacking Libya in 2011. She declines to take a position on the TPP.



As a former mayor, congressman, and current U.S. Senator on the budget and Veterans' committee, **Bernie Sanders** is far better known for his domestic policy than for his foreign policy. He advocates drastically cutting the military, reducing foreign bases, and has voted against every foreign war. He is for taking wealth and power from the billionaires

and moving it to the people. He led the fight against the TPP.



Former Governor **Martin O'Malley** has not taken part in any previous votes on the wars but maintained a consistent vocal opposition to foreign adventures. He has not called for cutting the military budget but is a strong advocate of increased domestic spending. He opposes the TPP.



Former Governor, Senator, and Secretary of the Navy **Lincoln Chafee** became a Democrat in 2007. He was the only Republican Senator to vote against the Iraq war. He speaks of more reliance on the UN system, and a cooperative approach to Russia and China. He supports the TPP.



Former Senator **Jim Webb** had a military career, retiring as a Marine Colonel, and then served as Secretary of the Navy before running for Senate in 2006. He resigned as Secretary of the Navy rather than agree to reduce the navy to below 600 vessels. He opposed the Iraq war and the TPP.



Vice-president **Joe Biden** was chair of the Senate Foreign Policy Committee before being elected vice-president in 2008. He has not yet announced himself as a candidate but rumors abound that he may join the race if the front-runner lacks momentum. He strongly supports current policies and would continue supporting the policies he has helped shape in the administration.

Republican Candidates

There are now 17 Republican candidates. In their first debate, Aug. 6, they were all against the Iran deal and all pledged to be more hawkish than President Obama. **Sen. Rand Paul**, once considered more pro-peace, has become much more hawkish than in the past, joining his peers in supporting military spending and war efforts.

Green Party Options



Lexington physician **Jill Stein** is a declared candidate for the Green Party nomination, and **Cynthia McKinney** is also considered by some to be a potential Green candidate. The Green political platform is stridently pro peace, and many activists will attempt to utilize the Green Party, which received less than 1% of the vote in 2012 but was able to present the issues strongly, as a vehicle to advance the campaign for peace in the broader debate.

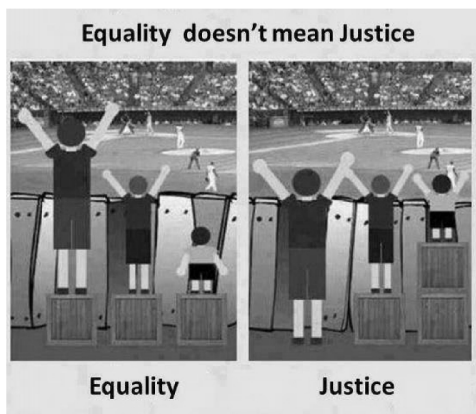
RaiseUp Massachusetts Calls for Wealthy to Pay Their “Fair Share”

Ofelia Cohen-Odiaga, Arlington

Massachusetts Peace Action is a member of RaiseUp Massachusetts, a coalition of labor, faith, and community groups that is building an economy that supports workers and their families. We helped RaiseUp win the highest state minimum wage in the nation in June 2014 and earned sick leave for Massachusetts workers in November 2014.

Now, RaiseUp is calling on millionaires to pay their fair share of taxes, in a state constitutional amendment that would raise more than \$1 billion a year, the money earmarked for public transportation and education.

Although the Massachusetts income tax is a flat 5% rate, the highest income residents pay the least in state and local taxes, thanks to sales and property taxes which fall most heavily on lower-income earners and to huge tax deductions that



go to the people with the highest incomes. The Fair Share Tax will require those earning over \$1 million income in Massachusetts to pay an additional 4% in taxes, which moves them closer to paying their fair share. For this we will need to amend the Commonwealth's constitution, which is an elaborate but doable process.

To move forward, the campaign plans to

gather 150,000 signatures this year in a campaign beginning in early September through mid November 2015.

Massachusetts Peace Action is doing its part! Join us for an educational and training session on the Fair Share Tax and the petitioning process on **Saturday, September 12 at 11am**. After this session, we will have 6 weeks to gather signatures for the campaign. Please contact the office if you can help circulate petitions, so we can get you your petition papers when they come out. After signatures are collected, the Fair Share Tax will continue with a 3-year campaign, having to secure at least 50 votes in the state Legislature in two special legislative sessions, called constitutional conventions, one in 2016 and one in 2017. The campaign will culminate in 2018 when the Fair Share Tax will be on the November ballot during the gubernatorial election.

Accounting for Gaza 2014: Balance and Bias

David Zackon, Wakefield

In June the US administration reacted with calculated scorn to the report of the Commission of Inquiry (COI) established by the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) to investigate last summer's attack on Gaza by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF).

"We're not going to have a readout of this.... We're not going to take it apart and do a point-by-point rebuttal," the State Department's John Kirby announced. Israel's "best friend" did not even attempt a refutation because of "our concerns about the mechanism of using the [COI] on this...; we challenge the very mechanism which created it."

Kirby cited "the bias against Israel that is imparted in that mechanism," and Israeli Ambassador Ron Prosor claimed that "the Human Rights Council serves as the soldiers of the Palestinians and Hamas.... The UN has been taken hostage by terrorist organizations."

Whenever the US wants to avoid confronting the serial crimes of the IDF, it posits "Bias." Last December, members of Congress (even including progressives Barbara Lee, Keith Ellison and Jim McGovern) sent Ban Ki-moon a complaint linking anti-Semitic violence in Europe to "biases present within the United Nations."

To dismiss a lengthy, carefully-produced report commissioned at the behest of governments around the world and led by Justice Mary McGowan-Davis, an American jurist of unchallenged credentials; to deem its contents – the substantial evidence and findings – irrelevant because of the "mechanism": *that* is overt bias.

The complete isolation of the US position was inescapable when the 47-member UNHCR voted 41-1 (with 5 abstentions) to endorse McGowan-Davis's recommendations. Compare that with the 2009 vote accepting Judge Goldstone's report on Israel's "violations of international

human rights and humanitarian law" in "Operation Cast Lead," an earlier assault on Gaza, when 5 European allies joined the US in dissent. In 2015, only the US voted no. Britain, France, Netherlands – who had opposed Goldstone – have now joined the majority.

The COI was blunt in decrying the "impunity" with which the IDF violates international humanitarian and human rights law. In an Israeli press interview following the release of her report, McGowan-Davis declared that "**it is not OK to drop a one-ton bomb in the middle of a neighborhood.**" Does that statement reflect "bias" or simple humanity?

US officials, especially those who take international humanitarian law seriously, surely understand that there are neither bias nor shaky "facts" or logic in the McGowan-Davis report. But in May, the State Department approved \$1.9 billion in arms to replenish the stock Israel expended in Gaza last summer.

This Web of Racism

Rosemary Kean, Dorchester

Video records of murders of unarmed black people by the police, the massacre of 9 black people at a church prayer meeting by an avowed white supremacist, and the arrest on video and subsequent death in jail of Sandra Bland following her failure to signal a lane change are some of the events of the past year that have demonstrated the brutality of racism in the United States.

Many of us are stunned by these events and many are organizing against institutional racism. The Black Lives Matter movement, born after the killing of 17 year old Trayvon Martin in 2013, is organizing with increasing effectiveness to demand human and civil rights for black people and recognition of their platform by presidential candidates.

At February's Annual Meeting, Massachusetts Peace Action members heard from Rev. Osagyefo Sekou about his work with young Black Lives Matter leaders and from Carl Williams, ACLU Staff Attorney, and Lizzie Jean Padgett, organizer with Deep Abiding Love, who led a workshop on institutional racism in our criminal justice system.

Since the Annual Meeting, interested members of Peace Action have formed a reading group, which is focusing on the topic "Racism and Peace." Readings have focused on the history of African American organization for peace, anti-racism, and white privilege. The group is reading *African Americans Against the Bomb*, by Vincent Intondi, has read an article by Michael McPhearson, Executive Director of Veterans for Peace, "Deepening Anti-racism Work in the Peace Movement," and two articles by Peggy McIntosh: "White People Facing Race," and "White Privilege, Color, and Crime: a Personal Account."

The use of racism to manipulate people around economic and political outcomes, including war, in North America stems from the establishment by law of white

privilege in the British colonies; this laid the foundation for white supremacist

about her 2015 book *Citizen*, which addresses interpersonal racism. It is a lyrical recounting of daily conversational microaggressions experienced by Rankine and other people of color. While not evidence of hatred or bigotry, such microaggressions thoughtlessly send demeaning messages to a person because of color. Rankine points out that anyone of any skin color can commit these verbal aggressions and she gives us the remedy: to apologize.

MAPA has set the goal of integrating racial justice work into its peace movement and of building a more diverse membership. Hopefully our Racism and Peace reading group is a step in developing a learning community in MAPA that will, in an ongoing way, address interpersonal, institutional, and structural racism and foster a flourishing, multi-racial, anti-racist peace movement.

Such a broad and vital foundation could help to build the power needed to restructure our political and economic system and to support a Foreign Policy for All and a Budget for All, so that peace is, indeed, possible.



The nine victims of the shooting at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina

thinking. Howard Zinn, in his piece "The Bombs of August", noted the "500 year assault on colored people of the world" by western powers including, among others, the British, King Leopold of Belgium, and the atomic bombings of the United States with its atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Peggy McIntosh, in examining evidence of white privilege, notes racism operating during WW 2 when Japanese Americans were forced into internment camps and German Americans were not.

"This web of racism" is a phrase used by black poet Claudia Rankine in talking

Hiroshima and Nagasaki: 70 Years – Never Again!

Over 500 people attended 19 different events held across Massachusetts during Hiroshima and Nagasaki Week, August 3 to 9, this year, diverse in form but with a common message: **No More Hiroshimas! No More Nagasakis! Abolish Nuclear Weapons Now!**

Led by Buddhist drummers, 150 people formed a procession through the Boston Public Garden, followed by a ceremony including Japanese dancers, music, and several speakers.

27 attended a sunrise ceremony in Martha's Vineyard. 60 joined the 70 Days 4 Peace vigil and a presentation about Nagasaki's *Hibaku Maria* statue at University Lutheran in Cambridge. Two new anti-nuclear films premiered.



*Activists walk through Boston on August 6th.
(Photo: Ofelia Cohen-Odiaga)*

Artists and musicians performed at a Boston concert and at a Cambridge youth poetry and performance event. Candle boats were floated in Watertown, Cambridge and Northampton. Activists held vigils in Amherst, Andover, Fall River, Walpole, Watertown, and Waltham.

Peace and Justice Calendar

Fall 2015

www.masspeaceaction.org/events

Mon Sep 7 12-5pm	Bread and Roses Festival – MAPA Outreach Table Campagnone Common, Lawrence
Tue Sept 8 7:00 pm	Why Is the Iran Nuclear Deal Important? – Stephen Kinzer; Jimmy Tingle MC. Location TBA.
Sat Sept 12 11:00 am	Fair Share Tax Amendment Training – John Ratliff Location TBA - RaiseUp Mass.
Sun Oct 11 12-5pm	HONK/Okttoberfest – MAPA Outreach Table Harvard Square, Cambridge
Sat Oct 17 7:30 pm	Music for Peace: Music of Schumann and Beethoven – James Buswell, Carol Ou, Mana Tokuno, Victor Rosenbaum. Harvard Epworth Church, 1555 Mass Ave., Cambridge.
Sat Nov 14 11:00 am	A New Day? Organizing to Change US Policy on Israel and Palestine – one day conference. Keynote: Rami Khouri, Palestinian journalist and Harvard Kennedy School Fellow.
Sat Nov 21 9:00 am	Rising to the Challenge: Building Sustainable Security for All of Us conference. Keynotes: Noam Chomsky; Michael McPhearson.
Date TBA	Forum: Increasing Federal Investment in Public Transit Keynote: Fred Salvucci. Budget for All

Mass. Peace Action board of directors: Rosalie Anders, James Babson, Carol Coakley (vice chair), Shelagh Foreman, Subrata Ghoshroy, Bonnie Gorman, So Yeon Jeong, Rosemary Kean, Jeff Klein, Maryellen Kurkulos, John Maher, Eva Moseley, Guntram Mueller (chair), Prasannan Parthasarathi, John Ratliff, Pat Salomon, Denise Simmons, Ken Yarbrough

Education Fund board: Rosalie Anders (chair), Christie Dennis, Shelagh Foreman, Gary Goldstein, Eva Moseley

Staff: Cole Harrison, **executive director;** Carol Coakley, **office coordinator;** Caitlin Forbes, **campus organizer;** Biram Seck, **asst. director;** Wafaa Arbash, **membership outreach.** **Interns:** Ofelia Cohen-Odiaga, Rashin Khosravibavandpouri, Sophie Maki, Serene Murad, Abigail Strait.

This Issue's Editors: Cole Harrison and Ofelia Cohen-Odiaga

Join us!

Massachusetts Peace Action, or MAPA, is a nonpartisan, nonprofit membership organization working to develop the sustained political power to foster a more just and peaceful U.S. foreign policy.

We are an affiliate of Peace Action, the nation's largest grassroots peace and disarmament membership organization, with more than 18,000 members and 30 state affiliates across the country.

Our work is funded entirely by donations from our members. Thank you for your support. Member levels:

- \$65 Family membership
- \$40 Individual membership
- \$10 Limited income or student

Make tax-deductible donations in any amount to the Massachusetts Peace Action Education Fund. Mail check to 11 Garden St, Cambridge, MA 02138 or go online to

masspeaceaction.org/donate

What We Do

- Mobilize and educate our members to become active advocates for peace and justice issues with their elected officials and within their communities.
- Organize events to educate the public on issues of peace and disarmament.
- Address specific issue areas in our working groups
- Make peace a priority in all elections at all levels by educating voters and candidates on just and peaceful foreign policy options.



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