OMNI UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS DAY NEWSLETTER #5, THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AT 66. DECEMBER 10, 2013. For a CULTURE OF PEACE, Compiled by Dick Bennett. (#1 12-10-08; #2 12-10-09; #3 12-10-11; #4 December 10, 2012).

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http://jamesrichardbennett.blogspot.com/
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"As we commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, let us intensify our efforts to fulfill our collective responsibility to promote and protect the rights and dignity of all people everywhere."

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

The UN General Assembly proclaimed 10 December as Human Rights Day in 1950, to bring to the attention ‘of the peoples of the world’ the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as the common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations.

In 2013, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights marks 20 years since its establishment.

The United Nations General Assembly created the mandate of High Commissioner for the promotion and protection of all human rights in December 1993. The General Assembly was
acting on a recommendation from delegates to the World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna earlier the same year.

The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by the World Conference, marked the beginning of a renewed effort in the protection and promotion of human rights and is regarded as one of the most significant human rights documents of the past quarter century.

TWO ABOUT WOMEN

December 10, 2013

Dear Dick,

After three years of horrendous fighting, a death toll now exceeding 100,000 and more than seven million Syrians forced to leave their homes, Syrian peace talks will finally take place at the United Nations in Montreux, Switzerland on January 22, 2014.

We are excited to announce that CODEPINK and a coalition of women’s groups have launched Women Lead to Peace, a global alliance of women’s organizations calling for an immediate ceasefire in Syria, humanitarian aid for the refugees, and the full participation of women at the peace negotiations. We will be mobilizing a physical presence of hundreds of women from all over the world to meet in Switzerland from January 20-22. Will you make a donation to help send women who can affect peace to the talks?

Women will arrive in Montreux by January 20, 2014 to plan and learn from each other. On January 21, we will hold a Summit with testimonies from Syrian women and humanitarian aid workers, testimonies from women from countries that made the transition from war to peace (such as Liberia, Ireland, Bosnia, Rwanda) and testimonies from Arab women who have been leaders in non-violent struggles in countries such as Egypt and Tunisia. The summit will end by modeling what the next day could and should look like. On January 22, the day of the official peace talks, participants will be inside and out with creative, beautiful and exciting protests.

This invitation is open to all peace-loving people. If you want to endorse as an organization or an individual, email Perrine. This is our opportunity to amplify the voices of women from all over the world, especially from conflict zones. You can make it happen, by donating today to help us reach our goal.

With courage to make women’s voices heard,
Alli, Kelleen, Janet, Jeremy, Jodie, Linda, Lisa, Medea, Nancy K, Nancy M, Noor, Roqayah, Sergei, and Tighe

P.S.: Today on International Human Rights Day, we celebrate the legacy of Nelson Mandela and recall his struggle and imprisonment for justice & equality. Today, we also celebrate the truth-telling of Pvt. Manning as she serves a 35-year prison sentence. She turns 26 on Dec. 17! Post or send us a Happy Birthday Chelsea Manning photo or message of support! We’ll make sure she receives it!
Hamilton Fish on Cynthia Brown,

May 22, 2013 This appeared in The Nation June 10-17, 2013.

REMEMBERING CYNTHIA BROWN: Cynthia Brown died peacefully in her Manhattan apartment on May 12, following a fierce two-year battle with cancer. She wrote her first story for The Nation in 1979, when as a brilliant 26-year-old journalist covering Latin America she reported on the irreparable damage done to Nicaragua by the Somoza regime.

Cynthia led the way for a generation of independent journalists and filmmakers—including Susan Meiselas, Anne Nelson, Julia Preston and Pamela Yates, among others—who approached the coverage of events in this hemisphere through the lens of human rights. Their reporting departed strikingly from the normative framing of the Cold War years, in which the inability to see past the threat of communism—as well as to recognize the legitimate aspirations of regional populations to self-determination and democracy—repeatedly led the United States into ill-advised alliances with military dictatorships and politically repressive regimes.

Cynthia and her contemporaries reframed our understanding of these issues and our role in the hemisphere, and their reporting inspired efforts in Congress to blunt the interventionist doctrine of the Reagan era. In the pages of The Nation, Cynthia documented the ravages of US-supported dictatorships in El Salvador, Guatemala, Uruguay and especially Chile, the country that claimed her heart.

She worked for seventeen years at Human Rights Watch, first as a researcher for Americas Watch, later as the Americas Watch representative in Chile, and then as the organization’s first program director. Principled and uncompromising, committed to the facts and to analytical rigor, she placed her distinctive mark on the emerging human rights standards by which the performance of governments throughout the world came to be measured.

Cynthia died way too young, but not before making a huge difference in the times in which she lived. HAMILTON FISH

Read more: http://www.thenation.com/article/174498/noted#ixzz2VGWcj4jb

Veterans For Peace!

December 2013: Celebrating Accomplishments and Looking Forward
November was an eventful month for Veterans For Peace! Thank you to everyone who participated in the Armistice Day Actions across the country surrounding November 11th. During the weekend of November 22nd, members traveled across the nation to attend the School of Americas Watch event at Fort Benning, GA (view pictures from the vigil). With VFP’s official Thanksgiving Statement, we are positioned to discuss peace and justice topics throughout this holiday season, perhaps with those outside our typical audience.

As 2013 comes to an end, we continue our work of raising awareness of the Costs of War and promoting a Culture of Peace in our communities. As always, the national office offers you opportunities to take action this month. If you do, please let us know so that we can help publicize your local work. Send photos, videos, and reports to Casey at casey@veteransforpeace.org.

December 10th: United Nations Human Rights Day

Human Rights Day is observed by the international community every year on December 10th. It commemorates the day in 1948 that the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Many of our current national projects revolve around human rights issues. Drone warfare has been largely discussed as a violation of human rights. (Check out the article). The treatment of prisoners in Guantanamo Bay has also sparked human rights debates (Read more here). We can use this day to spread the VFP message and speak out against war and violence, which by nature, is a violation of human rights.

“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.”
—Article 1, United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Spread the Message:

• Write An Op-Ed or Letter to the Editor discussing "Human Rights From a Veteran Perspective" or discussing any current projects of VFP related to human rights issues.
• Show a Movie: Invisible Wars and Dirty Wars are two examples. You can also request a copy of Targeting Iran, a film by Andy Norris from the national office for your chapter’s use.
• Educate yourself and spread the message: Amnesty International, United For Human Rights, Human Rights Watch, Human Rights First.

Holiday Fundraiser for Chapters: Sell 2014 Calendars

You've probably seen the beautiful 12 page, 14 "x 11" wall calendar produced each year by the Syracuse Cultural Workers. This year, calendars are available as an educational and fundraising tool for chapters. You can purchase calendars at a discounted rate of $7.50 and sell them at local events for $15 or $20 donations. Contact dik@syracuseculturalworkers.com for information.

Christmas Truce of 1914

This December 25 we begin to remember and celebrate the centenary
of Christmas Truce of 1914. On Christmas Eve of 1914, ordinary soldiers made temporary peace with their enemies, causing the Western Front to fall silent. The holiday season is a good time to enjoy the music of the soldiers who laid down their weapons and celebrated Christmas together in the trenches of World War I, and to consider how we can bring this story of hope and humanity to others throughout the coming year. December 2014, with the marking of 100 years since this momentous occasion, is an opportunity to pay homage to the peacemakers of 1914. You can get more information about these efforts at info@veteranspeacecouncil.org.

In the spirit of the Christmas Truce, VFP members have often reached out to out former “enemies.” For example, a few years ago there was a gathering of Viet Nam Veterans in Alaska that included NVA and NLF fighters, along with members of Veterans For Peace. Also, on an ongoing basis, members of the Viet Nam Chapter #160, Suel Jones & Chuck Palazzo work with the Viet Namese people in a variety of healing projects. Woody Powell of St. Louis Chapter #61 has co-authored a book with a Chinese soldier who fought against his unit in Korea. Most recently, former Board Members Ken Mayers and Ellen Barfield and current Board Member Tarak Kauff have met with former Combatants in Israel.

Looking Forward to 2014

In addition to taking action this month, we can look forward at the upcoming year. What are your chapter projects and local initiatives? What are your short and long term goals? How can you achieve these goals? How can national office support your work? In the January e-mail, a short survey will be available to members to provide feedback about the monthly mailers, the calendar, and future plans.

At a national level, we are focused on the strategic plan and building a framework to implement our goals of building peace, seeking justice, and educating the public about the true costs of war. We are also focused on providing support to local chapters and promoting the work of our members. In 2014, action ideas will be sent out to the entire membership nearly one full month in advance. For example, February action ideas will be e-mailed to the entire membership by the first Monday of January. If you have any questions about the calendar, e-mail Casey at casey@veteransforpeace.org.
Don’t tell anyone you’re an atheist if you live in Afghanistan, Iran, Maldives, Mauritania, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia or Sudan! Story via Reuters:

Atheists and other religious skeptics suffer persecution or discrimination in many parts of the world and in at least seven nations can be executed if their beliefs become known, according to a report issued on Monday.

The study, from the International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU), showed that “unbelievers” in Islamic countries face the most severe – sometimes brutal – treatment at the hands of the state and adherents of the official religion.

But it also points to policies in some European countries and the United States which favor the religious and their organizations and treat atheists and humanists as outsiders.

The report, “Freedom of Thought 2012”, said “there are laws that deny atheists’ right to exist, curtail their freedom of belief and expression, revoke their right to citizenship, restrict their right to marry.”

Other laws “obstruct their access to public education, prohibit them from holding public office, prevent them from working for the state, criminalize their criticism of religion, and execute them for leaving the religion of their parents.”

Jack Donnelly, HUMAN RIGHTS SCHOLAR

I received my PhD in Political Science from the University of California at Berkeley in 1982. As a student at Berkeley, I studied political theory (principally with Hanna Pitkin) and international relations (with Ernie Haas and Ken Waltz) and did my dissertation on the
development of the concept of human rights -- a good way to combine my fields in an interesting substantive area of obvious policy relevance. Human rights has remained my principal scholarly interest ever since.

Most of my writings have been in the broad, multidisciplinary field of human rights. They include three books -- The Concept of Human Rights, Universal Human Rights in Theory and Practice (second edition, 2003), and International Human Rights (third edition, 2006) -- and over fifty articles and book chapters, which have been translated into nine languages. I am perhaps best known for a series of articles on human rights and cultural relativism, which advance a strong argument for a relatively universalistic approach to implementing internationally recognized human rights. I have also written on the theory of human rights, the development and functioning of international human rights regimes, human rights and development, group rights, humanitarian intervention, and democracy and human rights. If you want to see a sampling of my work, the second edition of my best known book, Universal Human Rights, is probably the place to look. My current human rights work focuses on a book-length project comparing conceptions of human dignity, with extended case studies of the West and China from "ancient" to "modern" eras.
Jack Donnelly

Jack Donnelly is Andrew Mellon Professor and John Evans Professor at the Josef Korbel School of International Studies at the University of Denver. His other books include *International Human Rights* and *Realism in International Relations*. 

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International Human Rights

4th Edition

Jack Donnelly (Author)

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Dilemmas in World Politics

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Description

*International Human Rights* studies the **ways in which states and other international actors have addressed human rights since the end of World War II**. This unique textbook features substantial attention to the domestic politics of human rights, as well as an extensive emphasis on theory.

The fourth edition is substantially rewritten and reorganized to enhance usability, and new material is added to bring the text up to date. Most notably, the sections covering multilateral, bilateral, and transnational action have been broken into seven short chapters, which encourage comparisons within and across types of action and historical cases. New case studies provide context and points of comparison, including a new examination of the contemporary international reactions to human rights violations in China now that the country has become a great power. Additionally, nine “Problems” have been added to the text, which along with the chapter-ending discussion questions, frame alternative interpretations, highlight controversies, and ultimately aim to provoke further thought and discussion amongst readers.

*International Human Rights*, Fourth Edition, is the most current and comprehensive text available that will allow readers to understand how and why human rights are violated, what international action can do to address these violations, and why human rights remain such a small part of international relations.

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Dick Bennett

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National/International Days

MY NEW EMAIL ADDRESS
j.dick.bennett@gmail.com
(479) 442-4600
2582 Jimmie Ave.
Fayetteville, AR 72703