

# Mass Dissent

Massachusetts Chapter

National Lawyers Guild

14 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02108

February-March 2016

www.nlgmass.org

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## The World Around Us & Our Work In It

This issue of *Mass Dissent* has an international focus. I invited authors who have been doing great work in support of those abroad engaged in fighting oppression. The articles are necessarily short, and can only give you a quick synopsis. But I hope they spark your interest and contribute to your experience of this ever-shrinking world we share with one another.

NLG members share an informed understanding of how law has been used to oppress people and how it can be used to help end oppression. In our daily lives as lawyers, legal workers, activists, students, and especially our prisoner members, we confront legal obstacles head on and feel the contradictions full force. But activism comes in many shapes and sizes. The authors of the pieces in this issue are all involved in excellent work, “aiding and abetting” the creation of a world where “human rights are more valued than property rights.”

As Donald Trump contin-

ues to buy seemingly endless media coverage in his bellicose campaign to “Make America Great Again,” our neighbors to the south also have election worries. **Judy Somberg’s** piece answers the question, “What does the NLG International Committee Do?” by sharing some of the highlights of their work abroad in the past year in Bolivia, Venezuela and Cuba.

**Al Leisinger** has been working in solidarity with teachers in Haiti for years and gives us his snapshot update of conditions there.

**Robert Ross** shares some insights on the second anniversary of the Bangladeshi sweatshop disaster at Rana Plaza.

And **Anoush TerTaulian** shares some of her reflections with me in a short interview about her fifty years of art and activism. She graciously provided a poem to close the issue.

With gratitude for all the good work you all are doing and in solidarity.

- Beverly B. Chorbajian -

## BOARD MEETING

**February 16, 6:00 pm**

14 Beacon St., 1st Fl.  
Boston

**NATIONAL LAWYERS GUILD  
Massachusetts Chapter, Inc.**

14 Beacon St., Suite 407  
Boston, MA 02108  
tel.: 617-227-7335 • fax: 617-227-5495  
nlgmass@igc.org • nlgmass-director@igc.org  
www.nlgmass.org

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## Join a Guild Committee

**Street Law Clinic Project:** The Street Law Clinic project provides workshops for Massachusetts organizations that address legal needs of various communities. Legal education workshops on 4th Amendment Rights (Stop & Search), Landlord/Tenant Disputes, Workers' Rights, Civil Disobedience Defense, Bankruptcy Law, Foreclosure Prevention Law, and Immigration Law are held at community organizations, youth centers, labor unions, shelters, and pre-release centers. If you are a Guild attorney, law student, or legal worker interested in leading a workshop, please contact the project at 617-723-4330 or nlgmass-slc@igc.org.

**Lawyer Referral Service Panel (LRS):** Members of the panel provide legal services at reasonable rates. Referral Service Committee members: Benjamin Dowling, Sebastian Korth, Douglas Lovenberg, and Jonathan Messinger. For more information, contact the LRS Coordinator at 617-227-7008 or nlgmass-lrs@igc.org.

**Foreclosure Prevention Task Force:** Created in June 2008, the Task Force's goal is threefold: (1) advocate for policies that address issues facing homeowners and tenants of foreclosed houses, (2) provide legal assistance to these homeowners and tenants, *and* (3) conduct legal clinics for them. If you are interested in working with the Task Force, please call the office at 617-227-7335.

**Mass Defense Committee:** Consists of two sub-committees: (1) "Legal Observers" (students, lawyers, activists) who are trained to serve as legal observers at political demonstrations *and* (2) "Mass Defense Team" (criminal defense attorneys) who represent activists arrested for political activism. To get involved, please contact the office at 617-227-7335.

**Litigation Committee:** Established in 2010, the Committee brings civil lawsuits against large institutions (such as government agencies, law enforcement, banks, financial institutions, and/or large corporations) that engage in repressive or predatory actions that affect large numbers of people and that serve to perpetuate social, racial and/or economic injustice or inequality. To get involved, please contact the Guild office.

**NLG National Immigration Project:** Works to defend and extend the human and civil rights of all immigrants, both documented and undocumented. The Committee works in coalitions with community groups to organize support for immigrant rights in the face of right-wing political attacks. For more information contact the NLG National Immigration Project at 617-227-9727.

**NLG Military Law Task Force:** Provides legal advice and assistance to those in the military and to others, especially members of the GIRights Hotline, who are counseling military personnel on their rights. It also provides legal support and helps to find local legal referrals when needed. For advice and information, GI's can call 877-447-4487. To get involved, please contact Neil Berman (njberman2@juno.com) or Marguerite Helen (mugsam@mindspring.com).

# GUILD NEWS

## NLG HAPPY HOUR

You are invited to the “NLG Presents - Think & Drink” Happy Hour - an event held quarterly on the **2nd Wednesday of January, April, September, and November**. A report from the most recent Happy Hour is on page 4. If you have ideas for a presentation or would like to be a speaker, please call the NLG office at 617-227-7335.

## NLG ANNUAL MEETING

NLG members are invited to the **Annual Meeting on Wednesday, March 16 (14 Beacon St., Conference Room, 1st Fl., Boston)**. We will start at 5:30pm with a wine & cheese reception, and then continue with short reports from NLG committees and elections of Chapter Officers and members of the Board of Directors. NLG Mass Chapter members are encouraged to run in the

Board election. If you are interested in running, please call the office at 617-227-7335.

## NLG ANNUAL DINNER

This year’s NLG Dinner will be on **Friday, May 13**, at the **Dante Alighieri Cultural Center in Cambridge**. We are thrilled to announce the 2016 NLG Honorees: **Miriam Conrad** and **Judge Raymond Dougan** (Lawyer Award), **Jeff Petrucelly** (Lifetime Achievement), **Andrea James** and **Youth Against Mass Incarceration** (Legal Worker), and **Tasha Marshall** and **Trevor Maloney** (Law Student). This year’s honorees are an inspiration for all of us, and we hope you will join us on May 13th to celebrate their achievements. Dinner invitations will be mailed in a month. Please contact the NLG office if you have any questions (617-227-7335).

## Street Law Clinic Report

*Since the last issue of Mass Dissent, the following clinics and trainings have been conducted for community organizations and agencies in our area:*

**October 27, 2015:** *Legal Observing* at the re-installment of a Black Lives Matter banner at Arlington’s First Parish Church, by **Barb Dougan**.

**November 18:** *Legal Observing* at a protest organized by Black Lives Matter students at Tufts and Harvard, by **Emma Brenner-Bryant, Hannah Freedman, James Gordon, Molly Schulman, and Alison Sikowitz**.

**November 24:** *Legal Observing* at an action organized by Black Lives Matter at Harvard, by **Gabriel Arkles, Genevieve Butler, Trevor Maloney** (Northeastern), **Eric Martin**, and **Courtney Paterson** (Harvard).

**December 2:** *Legal Observing* at a protest against

police brutality organized by Mass Action Against Police Brutality, by **Nadia Ben-Youssef** and **Ben Brooks** (Northeastern), **Genevieve Butler**, and **Margaret Laffan**.

**December 11:** *Direct Action* training for Mass Senior Action Council in Dorchester, by **kt crossman** and **Jeff Feuer**.

**December 12:** *Legal Observing* at a protest against the Roxbury pipeline, by **Alexis Erkert** and **Mariel Hooper**.

**December 14:** *Legal Observing* at a protest against MBTA cutbacks organized by Mass Senior Action Council, by **Trevor Maloney**.

**January 3, 2016:** *Direct Action* training for Black Lives Matter in Cambridge, by **Oren Nimni**.

**January 4:** *Legal Observing* at a protest against Donald Trump in Lowell, by **Makis Antzoulatos**.

## ARTICLES FOR MASS DISSENT

The April issue of *Mass Dissent* will focus on women’s rights.

If you are interested in submitting an article, essay, analysis, or art work (cartoons, pictures) related to the topic, please e-mail your work to [nlgmass-director@igc.org](mailto:nlgmass-director@igc.org).

**The deadline for articles is March 15, 2016.**



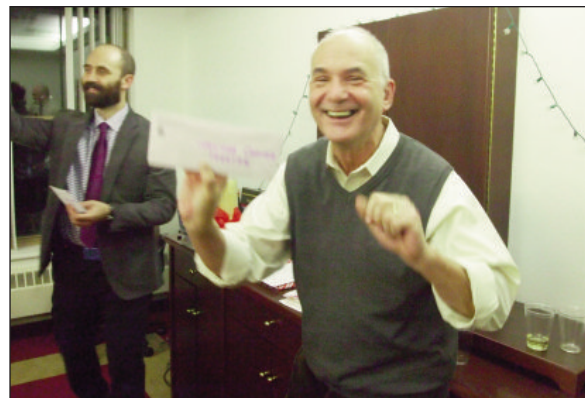
## NLG 2015 Holiday Party in Pictures



NLG members and friends enjoyed a lovely evening with comrades, amazing food, and great cheap wine.

Little Raffle Helpers, Arie & Lucy (*left*) worked diligently to make sure that many attendees won great raffle prizes.

We congratulated Jeff Petrucelly (*above left*) on his recent retirement and thanked him for over 20 years of his service to the NLG as a co-treasurer of our Chapter.  
(*Photos by Trevor Meloney*)



Rhonda Roselli (*left*) and David Kelston (*above*) proudly show their raffle prizes they won. Josh Raisler Cohn (*above left*) skillfully delivers prizes to the raffle winners.

## What Does the NLG International Committee Do?

by Judy Somberg

**F**or a virtually all-volunteer committee, the NLG International Committee does a phenomenal amount of work each year. We organize delegations; write reports, fact sheets and articles; hold seminars and webinars; make films; participate in international conferences; and participate in and promote advocacy campaigns; all with the aim of educating our members, others in the Guild, and the general public, and ultimately influencing U.S. foreign policy.

We seek to change U.S. foreign policy that threatens, rather than engages, or is based on a model of domination rather than respect. The Guild provides assistance and solidarity to movements in the United States and abroad that work for social justice in this increasingly interconnected world. In formulating our positions and in carrying out our work, we look to partner with people and organizations in their own countries who share our

non-interventionist perspectives. Here are some of the highlights of our work from the past year:

**Haiti:** Through the Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti, we sent observers to the elections in Haiti and wrote a **report** (available online) detailing the irregularities in the process. The report was cited in major news media in the U.S.

**Venezuela:** We sent observers to the legislative elections in December and played a major role in the very small movement in the U.S. to support the gains of the Bolivarian Project and to call out constant U.S. interference in the political process in Venezuela.

**Honduras:** A delegation traveled to Honduras to produce the film "ZEDEs: Neocolonialism and Land Grabbing in Honduras," which documents the looming threat of the first semi-autonomous zones, known as Zones for Economic Development and Employment

(ZEDEs), where control is ceded to foreign investors.

**Philippines:** The NLG was a co-convenor of the International Peoples' Tribunal on Crimes Against the Filipino People by President Benigno S. Aquino and the U.S. Government, held in Washington, DC, in July.

**Cuba:** After many years of hard work, we celebrated the release of the Cuban Five and the opening up of relations between the U.S. and Cuba.

**Mexico:** We co-sponsored the International Tribunal of Conscience on the Human Rights Crisis in Mexico, held in New York City in September.

Beyond the work described above, our currently active subcommittees are: International Labor Justice Working Group, Indigenous Rights Subcommittee, Palestine Subcommittee, Africa Subcommittee, Iran Subcommittee, Human Rights

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Members of the joint NLG and Marin Interfaith Task Force delegation in front of the National Assembly in Venezuela in July 2015.



## *The Horror of Rana Plaza: What Happens When Government Doesn't Enforce Labor & Health Laws*

by Robert J.S. Ross

### **Backdrop of the Rana Plaza Disaster**

On April 24, 2013 an eight-story building housing five garment factories collapsed in Savar, Bangladesh killing at least 1,138 workers – perhaps the worst manufacturing disaster in history. In its aftermath Bangladeshi labor unions, international union federations and allied NGOs from Europe and the U.S. pressed the major Brands and Retailers to address the impunity with which local garment factory owners and the government had ignored safety issues and general working conditions.

The Rana Plaza building was designed as commercial space for four stories. The "permit" was given only after the local mayor, impatient with the review of what was, after all, a wetland building site, cut off the process and gave the go ahead. The owner, described by Dhaka newspapers as a thug who did enforcer errands for a local political boss, then built the structure to eight stories and made only two commercial and the rest industrial -- beyond the design loads.

The Bangladeshi Government has not enforced either its building code or its labor laws. Thirty Bangladeshi parliamentarians own garment factories (10% of the members) and many more have family members who do. And a new report by the ILRF presents testimony by scores of workers who are trapped in what the report calls "the social relations of intimidation" which include beatings by thugs and connivance by police in sup-

pressing any attempts to form unions.

In the last two decades, a boom in Bangladesh garment making has spawned over 4,000 factories, employing up to four million workers; over 80% of the nation's export earnings, and almost none have proper building permits. Workers report they are forced (contrary to local law) to work overtime without pay if they fall below quota and that quotas get arbitrarily increased either as punishment for union activity or when minimum wages are increased.

### **Parallel Responses by Government and Private Sector**

Two years after the Rana Plaza disaster, in April 2015, I traveled to Bangladesh as part of an International Labor Rights Forum (ILRF) delegation to honor the dead and to investigate the reforms that followed. The passing of the second anniversary of the collapse of Rana Plaza had witnessed incremental improvements in factory and worker safety and the realistic promise of more accomplishments in the next two years. These improvements have been obtained through three separate but overlapping initiatives: the buyer membership Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh ["the Accord"], the Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety ["the Alliance"] and the government's National Tripartite Plan of Action ["Tripartite Plan"].

The Accord is a legally binding agreement between the Western Brands and Retailers ("Buyers"), local labor unions, the IndustriALL Global Union, and U.S. and European NGO witness-

es. It requires disclosure of factory utilization, detailed inspection and publication of results, and a protocol for Corrective Action Plans. Led by over 200 European brand signatories, in particular H&M, it contains only a handful of U.S. companies signed on. Because of its legally binding nature and provision for worker voice in its governance, the Accord is both the main project of the labor movement and may be a template for progressive work in other countries.

The Alliance is led by the American giants Wal-Mart and GAP. These buyers were not willing to be legally bound and do not include worker voice in their governance. They follow the same inspection protocol as the Accord and have inspected many factories and imposed Corrective Action Plans on the owners. Together, these two private plans have inspected about two-thirds of the factories engaged in export for Western Brands.

Notably, the remaining one-third of the Bangladeshi garment factories have been inspected by the Bangladeshi government's Tri-Partite National Action Plan inspectors, newly energized after the Rana Plaza disaster. In other words, two-thirds of the inspections are accomplished by the private corporations and one-third by the government. Bangladesh (with multinational corporate complicity) has condoned a regime of factory impunity where labor and safety laws are enforced with the same frequency as traffic laws in Dhaka's notorious monster jams – that is: never.

One context these workers exist in is the cruel constraints

*Continued on page 8*

## *The Current Crisis of Class Conflict in Haiti*

by Al Leisinger

The main conflict in Haiti today is between the impoverished working class, on the one hand, and the local bourgeoisie, supported fully by the US government. The USA invaded Haiti 13 times in the last 100 years, and routinely interferes with Haitian elections: promoting the removal of Aristide, placing current president Martely into power, and now, announcing that this month's electoral farce is actually a "free and fair" election. Martely, an admitted former drug dealer, is a close friend to former members of the Duvalier government's hated killers, the Tontons Macoutes.

Haiti has 85% unemployment, a minimum wage of US\$2.00 per day, hundreds of thousands still homeless after the January 10, 2010 earthquake, no good source of potable water, and an occupation army of UN "peacekeepers" called "MINUSTAH", who have committed wholesale rape, terror, robbery and theft, attacks on peaceful demonstrations with live ammunition, and many cases of outright murder. Still the Haitian population struggles to survive.

### **Cholera epidemic, caused by the UN occupying force**

Cholera, absent from Haiti for the last 100 years, was brought to Haiti by Nepalese soldiers in the UN "peacekeeping" force when their leaky toilets put cholera into the Artibonite river, Haiti's main water supply. A tenth of the population has been infected, and 10,000 have died from this epidemic.

### **The legal response**

Legal claims filed in November

2011 demanded that the UN:

- Install a national water and sanitation system that will control the epidemic; [Estimated cost: US\$2 billion]
- Compensate individual victims of cholera for their losses; and
- Issue a public apology for its wrongful acts.

But 14 months later, the UN, and Ban Ki-Moon himself, denied these claims as "not receivable."

Next, a lawsuit (see <http://www.ijdh.org/cholera/cholera-litigation/>) was filed by the Boston-based Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti in US Federal District Court contending:

- Evidence for UN responsibility for cholera in Haiti is overwhelming.
- "MINUSTAH's operations in Haiti are governed by a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), which (protects) MINUSTAH from actions in Haitian courts. To balance this immunity, the SOFA requires the establishment of an independent Standing Claims Commission to hear claims and compensate victims ... injured by UN activities. Despite this requirement, no commission has been established during MINUSTAH's mandate in Haiti. In fact, no Standing Claims Commission has been established in over 60 years of UN peacekeeping anywhere, even though most SOFAs require one." (from the above website).
- Therefore the UN stands responsible for these claims. The US Government (and Obama administration) opposes this lawsuit and filed a Statement of Interest opposing the lawsuit.

### **Dominican Republic engages in grievous deportations of its own citizens**

In 2015, the Dominican Republic promulgated a viciously racist policy of deporting people born in the DR but who are of Haitian ancestry. This is being carried out now (based on September 2013 legislation in DR). A recent article describes conditions for deportees including pregnant women, unaccompanied children under the age of 4, with no change of clothes or food, children whose parents were left behind (<http://lagosehaiti.com/a-la-une/la-fondation-zanmi-timoun-denonce-laugmentation-des-enfants-rapatries/>). The Haitian and U.S. governments minimize such conditions.

### **Haitian working class fights back**

The militant teachers' union UNNOH has called for a national teachers' strike vs. unfulfilled governmental promises to improve teachers' working conditions and student learning. The group *Bataye Ouvriye* ("workers' struggle") is organizing factory workers in the "free trade zones" where even the minimal labor rights guaranteed by Haitian labor law have no force. School headmasters protested at year end because Haitian government failed to pay them, thus they haven't been able to pay teachers for many months. Even 300 employees of MINUSTAH protested because they are cheated on their pension payments.

*Al Leisinger is a Boston-area activist and friend of Haiti. He works at the Department of Mathematics at UMass Boston.*

## The Horror of Rana Plaza

*Continued from page 6*

posed by the Race to the Bottom and what has been called South-South competition. Low-income countries – their employers and their governments – compete with each other to keep labor and regulatory costs low. Accord administrators' demands that factories producing for the Accord's Buyers (i.e., all the big European Brands and retailers) meet humane standards have been met with faux nationalist complaints about "violation of sovereignty".

These conditions and this context provide very narrow channels through which Bangladeshi workers or workers in many of the competing jurisdictions (Pakistan, India, Vietnam, Myanmar /Burma, Cambodia) can succeed in protecting themselves.

The Accord required hiring scores of inspectors, inspecting 1600 (out of about 4000) factories, creating Corrective Plans for about 1400 factories. It requires organizing mandatory elected worker safety committees in each of the 1660 covered factories, in effect, a shadow Labor/OSHA Ministry. But Private. Not responsible to the elected gov-

ernment (thankfully?).

As of 2015, the Accord appears to be the more significant of these initiatives, and certainly the one most influenced by the local labour movement, its international labour movement allies, and the international NGOs associated with the anti-sweatshop campaigns of the last two decades.

American labor history teaches us that decent conditions for workers rest on three pillars: (1) worker self-defense and organization; (2) alliance with allies across industries and class; and (3) together with allies, achieving public policies that protect both procedural rights (to join unions and bargain collectively) and substantive ones (minimum wage and maximum hours; health and safety). If government cannot or will not enforce the labor laws, the first two pillars can still support some change. But not all that is needed, and not in the face of state-inspired violence.

With Bangladeshi government inaction, but fearful of their reputational risk in an environment where repeated disasters have been laid at their doors, the Brands have become Strange Allies in a wrestling match with local factory owners. The

Brands don't want to pay more for the clothes from safe factories. But they don't want scores of workers dying in places from which they can be found to have had their clothes made. And they don't want to pay more to capitalize the necessary changes.

In 1942 Dooley Wilson unforgettably sang *As Time Goes By* in *Casablanca*. But the film version leaves out two stanzas from the 1931 original composition, which includes a reference to Einstein, and these lines:

*And no matter what the  
progress  
Or what may yet be proved  
The simple facts of life are  
such  
They cannot be removed.*

Removing the *simple facts* of impunity and danger remains the task of Bangladeshi workers and their real allies.

*Robert Ross, the Research Professor of Sociology at The Mosakowski Institute for Public Enterprise at Clark University, is the author of "Slaves to Fashion" about sweatshops. He can be reached at [rjross@clarku.edu](mailto:rjross@clarku.edu).*

## International

*Continued from page 5*

Framework Project, Environmental Human Rights Subcommittee, Puerto Rico Subcommittee, MENA Action Committee, and the Task Force on the Americas.

It's a great bunch of people who work with the International

Committee, but like most volunteer organizations with members spread out across the country, it can be a little hard for someone new to figure out how to get involved. But don't be shy! We welcome lawyers, students, and legal workers. First, take a look at our website (<http://www.nlginternational.org/>), then consider joining -- instructions are on the website. In any event, consider coming to our upcoming National

Lawyers Guild International Weekend (url upcoming once it's posted on the website) in Washington, DC, from February 19 to 21. There is no charge! And feel free to contact me if you want more information: [judy\\_somberg@igc.org](mailto:judy_somberg@igc.org).

*Judy Somberg, a member of the Mass Chapter of the Guild, is a solo practitioner in Cambridge.*



## Conversation with Anoush TerTaulian

*Anoush TerTaulian is an activist and political artist. She lives in New York City.*

**Beverly Chorbajian:** Tell me about how you got started? When did it start for you?

**Anoush TerTaulian:** I was raised in an assimilated household. My mother was an Armenian from India and she never talked about who we were. I only learned about the genocide when I went to college at UCLA. But it happened fast. I discovered books with pictures of the genocide and I realized what had happened and how it had been kept quiet – how nobody knew about it or talked about it. My first action was at an Armenian Students Association event. We built an exhibit, put up all these pictures about the genocide. Immediately, the Turkish Consulate contacted the University and threatened to sue them. The University officials were scared – they forced us to take the exhibit down. That was the beginning for me. I decided I needed to keep doing this. Next I printed a thousand flyers and was posting them all over town.

**BC:** So was it a genocide recognition thing?

**AT:** No, it was bigger. It was always bigger for me. It was a women thing and a people of color thing. This was the 70's in Berkeley. There was a lot of discussion about people of color. I was doing all kinds of work in solidarity with people of color, especially women of color. They were saying there were Africans, Asians, Latinas and Native Americans. That's it. And I said

no, there are also Near Eastern women – Middle Eastern women. I knew my people did not engage in slavery or genocide or imperialism like Europeans. I knew I wasn't European. They said no you're European. It was crazy. Nobody knew their geography. They thought Armenia was in Europe.

**BC:** Has your art always been political?

**AT:** I did a lot of different things. I sold my car and went to Nairobi for the International Conference on the Status of Women. When I started putting out information on the genocide, the Turks tried to shut me down again. The women from Papua New Guinea actually protected me and allowed me to work in their area. From there I went to Kenya and taught there for a while. Everywhere I go, I am interested in making connections. Cultural connections. I got very involved with all these other cultures and learning their music and dance. I put together a proposal to teach art to women prisoners at a federal penitentiary in northern California. The warden was very progressive. They let me come in with goat skins and we made drums. We had mock trials, fashion shows, expressive dancing, painting, poetry. Every week I would show up with six duffle bags of equipment. They never even looked at it.

**BC:** You couldn't do that today.

**AT:** Yes it was the 70's. I did that for eight years. Barry Goldwater was forcing the Navajo off their land and arresting grandmothers. We took up the slack and watched their sheep

for them in solidarity. It was around that time, spending a lot of time on issues of indigenous people that I realized Armenians were indigenous people. I started attending indigenous peoples' conferences, and meetings at the UN, arguing for the recognition of Artsakh (a.k.a. Nagorno-Karabagh).

**BC:** How did you become a soldier?

**AT:** In 1988, I was attending the hearings of indigenous people at the UN. Then the Armenian earthquake happened. I realized I needed to go and try to help. When I got there I met Monte Melkonian (U.S. born commander of independence army) at a hostel. He told me the soldiers needed boots and supplies. He told me I should go and make videos to bring back to show people who might donate to help the freedom fighters. So I went. I had never been in a war zone and suddenly I was seeing headless bodies every day. I ended up staying with the liberation forces for eight years doing all kinds of things helping the fighters – men and women. I went back later and filmed the women and children of Artsakh.

**BC:** Did you suffer any injuries there?

**AT:** I didn't really know it at the time, but because I was in the front lines, in 1992 they were bombing constantly. I was exposed to grad missiles every day. Now they have found cadmium, arsenic, mercury, all these heavy metals in me. I ingested it – the air and the water. I have trouble walking now. I have metal

*Continued on page 11*

## I Am Sailing On A Raft Of My Bones

*I read this poem at The Tribute To Our Ancestors Of The Middle Passage which annually takes place in Coney Island as a memorial to all the Africans that died during the slave trade in the Atlantic, which is the largest graveyard in the world.*

*by Anoush TerTaulian*

Quivering fingers are a sign  
 Quivering fingers are a sign of life  
 Stretching up through the concrete coffins  
 Pressing on my breasts  
 Come closer  
 Breathe your caring into me  
 So that I can inhale the sunrise

It is so hard for us to breathe  
 Mother Earth is also suffocating under  
 millions of tons of real estate developers rape concrete  
 We are cracking, exploding, tumbling  
 Releasing into each other becoming  
 Scattered parts of an infinite universe

Inside my eyelids oceans roar  
 I am sailing on a raft of my bones  
 In the choppy sea I can see 250,000 Haitian bone rafts  
 Guided by the luminous skeleton parts  
 Sunk deep in the Atlantic, of the 100 million  
 Africans killed in the Middle Passage  
 Our bones fuse together, the yearning, returning  
 Crashing on the shores of the motherland  
 While the daily unnatural disasters Caused by  
 Conquerors - Genocide, Slavery, Poverty continue

In an instant your life can change for the worse  
 In an instant your life can change for the better  
 Ayibobo Ayiti, Hail to the Spirits  
 Successful slave rebellion, Voodoo Queen, 1st Black Republic  
 Ayibobo Ayiti shackled to corrupt governments  
 Backed by US imperialism, but Ayiti you are still fragrant  
 With the spirit of justice and resistance  
 Ayibobo Ayiti Hail to the Spirits  
 Hail to the Spirits

## NLG Massachusetts Chapter Sustainers

In the spring of 2003, the Massachusetts Chapter of the NLG initiated the Chapter Sustainer Program. Since its inception, the Program has been very successful and has been enthusiastically joined by the following Guild members:

**2 Anonymous • Mary Lu Bilek • Steve Buckley • Patricia Cantor • J.W. Carney • Howard Cooper • Caroline Darman • Barb Dougan • Melinda Drew & Jeff Feuer • Carolyn Federoff • Roger Geller & Marjorie Suisman • Lee Goldstein • Benjie Hiller • Steven Hrones • Andrei Joseph & Bonnie Tenneriello • Martin Kantrovitz • Nancy Kelly & John Willshire-Carrera • David Kelston • John Mannheim • Jonathan Messinger • Petrucelly, Nadler & Norris • Hank Phillippi Ryan & Jonathan Shapiro • Allan Rodgers • Martin Rosenthal • Mark Stern • Anne Sills & Howard Silverman • Judy Somberg • Shapiro, Weissberg & Garin**

The Sustainer Program is one of the most important Chapter initiatives to secure its future existence. Please consider joining the Program.

### YES, INCLUDE MY NAME AMONG NLG MASSACHUSETTS CHAPTER SUSTAINERS!

I, \_\_\_\_\_, am making a commitment to support the Massachusetts Chapter of the Guild with an annual contribution of:

\_\_\_\_\_ \$500 (not including my membership dues)

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ (other amount above \$500)

#### As a sustainer I will receive:

- special listing in the Dinner Program;
- 1/8 page ad in the Dinner Program;
- acknowledgement in every issue of *Mass Dissent*;
- two (2) free raffle tickets for a Holiday Party raffle;
- invitation to special events.

#### Three ways to become a sustainer:

- contribute \$500 or more a year (in addition to dues)
- pair up with another person and pay \$250 each, or
- join the "Guild Circle" and pay \$50/month minimum.

By mail: NLG, Massachusetts Chapter  
14 Beacon St., Suite 407, Boston, MA 02108

Online: [www.nlgmass.org/donate](http://www.nlgmass.org/donate)

## Anoush TerTaulian

*Continued from page 9*

poisoning. But nobody knew then it was happening all around us. I wanted to take those pictures. I wanted to document these courageous people defending their homeland. My homeland. But I am very independent and outspoken. It was time to move on...

**BC:** How did you get involved with Occupy?

**AT:** How could you not? Occupy Wall Street -- It was activist heaven. I set up a table and every day there were reporters listening to what everybody was saying. It was so great. Then I was there when a thousand cops came and tore it all down.

**BC:** How old are you now?

**AT:** I'm 66. It's hard. But it's

my destiny to put this information out there. If it saves one Armenian who doesn't know who they are its worth it. You know when I got back from Artsakh, I saw a U.S. soldier on the street here. He had an Armenian name tag. I asked him why is going off killing innocent people, he should be fighting in Artsakh for Armenians. He didn't know where Armenia was. Never heard of it. Schools don't teach it.

**BC:** Why do you do it?

**AT:** For me, as an activist and an artist, my paintings, poetry, speeches, any way I can get the message out I will. People need to learn about each others struggles to overcome imperialism and racism, all this shit we live with. We are all one. We need to respect one another and learn

about each other. I'll keep at it. I was invited to speak again this year at the New Left Forum. You should go.

**BC:** How did the "Raft of Bones" poem come about?

**AT:** After the 2010 Haitian earthquake, I thought of a friend who was under the rubble for three days before she was rescued during the 1988 Armenian Earthquake in Spitak. In solidarity with the Haitian earthquake victims, I wrote this poem "I Am Sailing On A Raft Of My Bones". I have read it on Haitian radio and at Haitian events, and at The Tribute To Our Ancestors Of The Middle Passage which annually takes place in Coney Island as a memorial to all the Africans that died during the slave trade in the Atlantic, which is the largest graveyard in the world.



# Mass Dissent

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## The National Lawyers Guild is...



" ... an association dedicated to the need for basic change in the structure of our political and economic system. We seek to unite the lawyers, law students, legal workers and jailhouse lawyers of America in an organization which shall function as an effective political and social force in the service of people, to the end that human rights shall be regarded as more sacred than property interests."

*Preamble to the Constitution of the National Lawyers Guild*

### Donate to Support the Guild!

The Massachusetts Chapter of the National Lawyers Guild's **Mass Defense Committee** provides legal representation and assistance to activists from all progressive political movements.

#### We need your support.

Please help us by donating to the Mass Chapter. Mail this form and your check to **14 Beacon St., Suite 407, Boston, MA 02108** or visiting [www.nlgmass.org/donate](http://www.nlgmass.org/donate).

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (name), am donating \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to the NLG  
Mass Chapter to help support the Mass Defense Committee and its work,

Fill out and send to:

**National Lawyers Guild, Massachusetts Chapter**  
14 Beacon St., Suite 407, Boston, MA 02108

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Circle one:

☐ Lawyer ☐ Legal Worker ☐ Law Student ☐ Jailhouse Lawyer

Alumna/Alumnus of \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

Dues (from schedule): \_\_\_\_\_

**I am interested in working on the following projects:**

- ☐ Lawyer Referral Service
- ☐ Street Law Clinic
- ☐ Mass Defense Committee
- ☐ Litigation Committee
- ☐ *Mass Dissent* (monthly publication)
- ☐ National Immigration Project

## Please Join Us!

Dues are calculated on a calendar year basis  
(Jan.1-Dec.31) according to your income\*:

Jailhouse Lawyers	Free
Law Students	\$25
up to \$15,000	\$40
over \$15,000 to \$20,000	\$50
over \$20,000 to \$25,000	\$75
over \$25,000 to \$30,000	\$100
over \$30,000 to \$40,000	\$150
over \$40,000 to \$50,000	\$200
over \$50,000 to \$60,000	\$250
over \$60,000 to \$70,000	\$300
over \$70,000 to \$80,000	\$350
over \$80,000 to \$90,000	\$400
over \$100,000	\$500

\* Any **new** member who joins after September 1 will be carried over to the following year. Dues may be paid in full or in quarterly installments. Dues of \$80 cover the basic membership costs, which include publication and mailing of *Mass Dissent* (the Chapter's monthly newsletter), national and regional dues, and the office and staff.