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*The CAPA Board
and benefit sponsors
welcome you to the
46th Annual Fall Benefit*

When Politics Fail: Conscience As Resistance



A panel discussion with
Dennis Kosuth and Rabbi Brant Rosen

Honoring
**Sawsan Abubaker
and Andrew Ginsberg**

Moderated by
Geraldine Gorman

with the Cleland -Tholin Pursuit of Peace Award

Welcome from the Board

Once more, we approach the evening of the Chicago Area Peace Action annual fall benefit, yet for many of us this year feels more difficult. We see the painstaking work of generations seemingly negated in only a few months. We observe the specter of authoritarian goon squads, losses in health benefits, and workers' crippled leverage to negotiate wages. While our exact experiences will vary based on our different levels of privilege, the speed of the assault and the immense suffering already inflicted in the U.S. and around the globe are designed to make us feel discouraged. The renowned historian Howard Zinn, writing in "A Power Governments Cannot Suppress," shared reassuring insight for this sort of moment:

The struggle for justice should never be abandoned because of the apparent overwhelming power of those who have the guns and the money and who seem invincible in their determination to hold on to it. That apparent power has, again and again, proved vulnerable to human qualities less measurable than bombs and dollars: moral fervor, determination, unity, organization, sacrifice, wit, ingenuity, courage, patience...

These human qualities are what shake dictators, whether their actions afflict us from Day one or on a slower, more unrelenting trajectory. Looking ahead to the coming years, let us reflect on our strengths, and then, in vigorous renewal, convey our talent and effort to the fore. We do this by listening, helping, healing, loving, teaching, learning, challenging, disobeying.

As we work to build relationships of justice on a livable planet, we ground ourselves in conscience. We pledge to resist and thwart systems of oppression and destruction. We act with a deep commitment to human dignity.

Enormous gratitude is owed to everyone who supports Chicago Area Peace Action. Without your efforts, time, and financial donations, there could be no CAPA projects to address the suffering of people in Gaza, to challenge the U.S. arms industry, or to meaningfully contend with climate change and nuclear proliferation. With your support we can continue, in conscientious solidarity, to live the creed expressed by Robert F. Kennedy nearly 60 years ago:

Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.

With deep gratitude for your partnership,

The CAPA Board

A Sketch of the Evening

Guests Arrive - Conversations Ensure

All

Opening Song Music

music by David Conrad
accompanied by Buddy Bell

Buffet Stations Open - Enjoy!

All

Welcome

David Borris

What's new at CAPA

New Staff and Student Engagement
Membership Forums

Charles Johnson
Erin Bosack

Cleland-Tholin "Pursuit of Peace Award"

intro. David Borris

Honoree: Sawsan Abubaker

intro. Catherine Buntin

Honoree: Andrew Ginsberg

intro. Marcia Bernstein

Panel Discussion: **"When Politics Fail: Conscience As Resistance"**

Panelists:

Dennis Kosuth and Rabbi Brant Rosen

Moderator

Geraldine Gorman

Audience Q & A

All

Spoken Word Poem and Closing

Orion Meadows

"Ask any Mexican, any Puerto Rican, any black man, any poor person - ask the wretched how they fare in the halls of justice, and then you will know, not whether or not your country is just, but whether or not it has any love of justice or any concept of it.

It is certain, in any case, that ignorance, allied with power, is the most ferocious enemy justice can have."

James Baldwin - "No Name in the Street"

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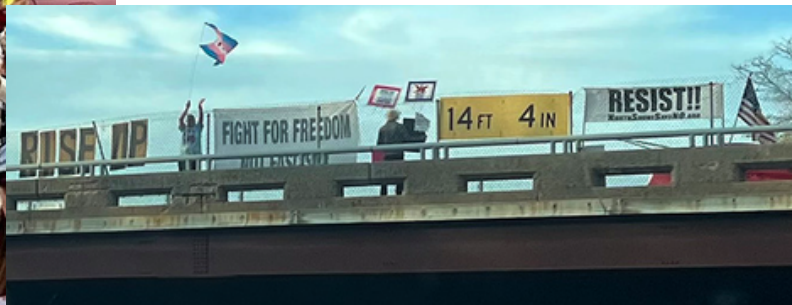
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Peace is Justice Made Public

– Cornell West

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Panelists and Moderator

Dennis Kosuth is a longtime activist for social justice, is active in his unions, and works as a registered nurse in public schools and at a hospital. He's been involved in organizing efforts to end the genocide in Palestine through multiple organizations, and has collaborated with antiwar veterans groups working to counter deployment of troops to Chicago.



Rabbi Brant Rosen serves Tzedek Chicago, a synagogue he helped found in 2015. Brant is the co-founder of the Jewish Voice for Peace Rabbinical Council and the Jewish Fast for Gaza. He blogs regularly at the Jewish social justice blog, Shalom Rav, and is the author of the book *Wrestling in the Daylight: A Rabbi's Path to Palestinian Solidarity*.



Geraldine Gorman is the Kathleen M. Irwin Endowed Chair in Outstanding Clinical Practice at UIC College of Nursing. She is a CAPA Board member and practices with Unity Hospice in Chicago.



Spoken Word Performer

Orion Meadows is a National Spoken Word Award winner and Carruthers Center for Inner City Studies Slam Champion. He uses his poetry to bring awareness about issues such as poverty, mass incarceration and the violence in our society. He teaches Dr. King's philosophy of nonviolence at The Institute For Nonviolence Chicago and is the Media Manager for Adler University's Illinois Coalition For Higher Education in Prisons.



Cleland-Tholin *Pursuit of Peace* Award

The peace and justice movement in Chicagoland lost two giants during the last decade, when Robert Cleland died in April 2010 and Richard Tholin in March 2019. Neither man ever shied away from speaking out on matters of peace and social justice, no matter their popularity or political expedience. They lived lives embodied in the creed articulated by Martin Luther King Jr. in his Feb. 6, 1968 speech, “A proper sense of Priorities”: *“On some positions, Cowardice asks the question, ‘Is it safe?’ Expediency asks the question, ‘Is it politic?’ And Vanity comes along and asks the question, ‘Is it popular?’ But Conscience asks the question, ‘Is it right?’ And there comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular but he must do it because Conscience tells him it is right.”*

This was not an intellectual exercise for Bob Cleland, who devoted his entire adult life to peace activism. He demonstrated on the streets, wrote letters to legislators, penned essays for newspapers, ran for Congress, and along with others founded in 1979 the Sane Freeze Movement, which eventually became Chicago Area Peace Action (CAPA).

For this reason, CAPA created the Robert A. Cleland *Pursuit of Peace* Award in 2015 to honor those who exhibit this high level of moral clarity and live with a sense of selfless service in the fight for peace and justice, both here and abroad.

CAPA leaders decided this year to add Richard Tholin’s name to the award because of Dick’s powerful impact on the Chicago peace movement. A professor of social ethics and academic dean at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston, he led our organization for many years with grace, humor, and intelligence beyond compare. He was an unassuming leader who brought out the best in each of us.

Both men devoted their lives to giving voice to the voiceless, shining lights on injustice, and bringing attention to issues ignored in the mainstream as too unpopular, too contentious, or simply not “easy enough to talk about.” They were the peace movement builders of their day. They handed the baton to us!

“You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.”- Jane Goodall

2025 Pursuit of Peace Award Honorees

Sawsan Abubaker is a co-founder of Advocates for Justice, a grassroots collective that empowers communities to confront injustice through education and awareness—dismantling stereotypes, animosity, and racism designed to keep humanity divided.



Andrew Ginsberg has devoted his adult life to the struggle for equality and justice. Before spending ten years as a history teacher at Evanston Township High School, he taught in the Chicago Public schools and gave fifteen years to community and union organizing with ACORN and SEIU.

This year he became a public figure by resisting peacefully and persistently when ETHS censored him twice for displaying artwork supporting the idea that Judaism encourages dissent.



CAPA Highlights 2024-2025

November 14, 2024: Salt of the Earth: A Conversation Between a Palestinian and an Israeli Peace Activist. In a discussion hosted by Combatants for Peace, Osama Iliwat and Rotem Levin explored why military force could never guarantee safety for Palestinians or Israelis.

January 14, 2025: Public Square Conversation #1: “Share Your Ideas on the Public’s Role in a New Political Era.” The inaugural session of CAPA’s Public Square Conversations held space for participants to connect with community, engage in dialogue, and generate ideas for action.

January 25, 2025: People’s March for Justice. A coalition of nearly 60 organizations rallied and marched in downtown Chicago to demonstrate our united “people power” as a new U.S. administration enters office.

January 28, 2025: Saving Jerusalem as a City of Three Faiths: the Armenian Land Case vs Israeli Settlers. Armenian activists based in East Jerusalem shared about resisting settler violence and fighting to save Jerusalem as a city for all.

February 12, 2025-present: Wilmette Protests for Democracy. Community members occupy a street corner, holding signs and engaging passersby in messages including: pro-democracy, rule of law, anti-authoritarian, hands off social security, and more.

February 15, 2025: Legalizing BDS in Illinois, and Getting Back to NEUTRAL. Evanston Ceasefire provided information to a large audience about Illinois’ anti-BDS measures, and the tangible actions being taken to overturn them and get Illinois back to neutral.

February 20, 2025: Experiencing Palestine-Israel: Reflections, Realities, and Paths to Solidarity. Chris Inserra and Craig B. Mousin shared their experiences from their recent trip to Palestine-Israel meeting with Christian, Muslim, and Jewish community members and groups.

March 9, 2025: Reception for Korean Hibakusha. They were here in preparation for the “Int’l People’s Tribunal” (2026) which seeks to ensure redress for harm experienced by 70,000 Korean nationals who were in Nagasaki at the time to provide forced labor for the Japanese.

March 20, 2025: “Holy Redemption” Film Showing and Panel. In this documentary film, attendees learned from key figures’ perspectives about the military and ideological structures driving the expansion and occupation of Palestine.

March 27, 2025: Public Square Conversations #2 : “Pillars of Democracy.” Participants discussed the societal upheaval which has left many individuals and communities wondering what they can do to uphold the pillars of our democracy.

April 24, 2025: “No Other Land” Film Showing and Panel. Attendees watched this Academy Award-winning documentary by Basel Adra, a Palestinian activist, as his community of Masafer Yatta is destroyed by Israel and he builds an unlikely alliance with an Israeli journalist.

April 26, 2025: Earth Day Event at Ladd Arboretum. Our climate group hosted a table informing attendees with signs, books, snacks, buttons, a petition for our Illinois legislators, and actions to stop the Pipeline 5 project in the Great Lakes.

May 20, 2025: Public Square Conversation #3: “Personal Power and Collective Action.”

Participants explored how civil resistance has prevented the backslide of democracy around the world—and how it remains our best shot at stopping the rise of authoritarianism at home.

June 5, 2025: “The Encampments” Film Showing and Panel with local university activists.

Attendees watched this documentary featuring detained activist Mahmoud Khalil, professors, whistleblowers, and organizers, capturing the stakes of this moment for Palestinian liberation.

June 13, 2025: Emergency Protest – No War with Iran! Multiple Chicago area peace groups rise in protest as Israel expands its regional wars, bombing Iran, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, while escalating its genocide and destruction of Palestine.

June 22-23, 2025: Anti-U.S.-Iran War Protests. Dozens of antiwar groups protest in Federal Plaza to call out the U.S. for launching strikes on Iran, a serious escalation that could lead to a multi-national conflict likely to spin out of control.

June 26, 2025: “The Night Won’t End” Film Showing and Q+A. Attendees watched this documentary by journalists who profile three families trying to survive the war, and investigate the widespread killings of civilians by Israel with U.S. weapons and diplomatic cover.

July 10, 2025: Resisting Project Esther. Hosted by IfNotNow Chicago, this teach-in informed attendees about the Heritage Foundation’s “Project Esther,” a comprehensive plan to suppress rights and destroy civil society, starting with the Palestinian human rights movement.

July 13, 2025: Evanston Ceasefire Presents: The Past and Future Fight for Palestine. Activists, teachers, students, and legislators shared personal stories about the suppression of voices calling for Palestinian rights, from Evanston City Council, to school districts, to universities - and what attendees could do to help.

July 27, 2025: “MY NAME IS RACHEL CORRIE.” This one-woman, audience-interactive play was edited from the journals and emails of Rachel Corrie, a 23-year old activist killed in 2003 while defending the homes and livelihoods of the Palestinian people in Gaza.

August 9, 2025: Nuclear Roulette – 80 Years on the Brink. Since its horrific detonation of atomic bombs on Japanese civilians, the U.S. has raced onward to develop even more lethal weapons, and gambled at the roulette table of global annihilation. In this commemoration and warning, speakers discussed the daunting task of charting a path to full disarmament.

August 14, 2025: Public Square Conversation #3: “Whose Speech is Free?” With U.S. leaders ramping up intimidation, retribution and violence to silence dissent, participants examined three case studies of free speech being either suppressed or defended, and discussed what these examples could teach us for taking effective action in the present moment.

September 12, 2025-present: North Shore Says NO! Overpass Banner Displays. Community members display banners on multiple overpasses to raise awareness about ICE and troops being deployed to Chicago, in RESISTANCE to the militarization of our communities.

September 21, 2025: Sun Day Solar Fest. On a global day of action to celebrate the unstoppable rise of clean energy, we joined dozens of groups in live (solar-powered) music and sing-alongs, picnicking, storytelling, arts and crafts, science demonstrations, and informational tables.

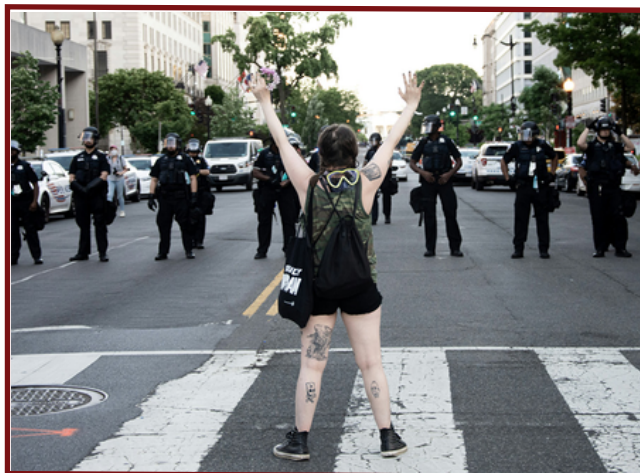
CAPA Working Groups

CAPA Climate Group - Highlights of the Year

The CAPA Climate Group had a busy year. We met with two of our Illinois legislators, Rep. Robyn Gabel and Sen. Laura Fine, to urge their continued leadership in Springfield on major climate legislation, particularly transportation and the grid. We provided CAPA members and friends with petitions on climate-related legislation. In April for Earth Day, we tabled in Evanston with educational materials. We participated in Sun Day Solar Fest in September, Chicago's contribution to the global Sun Day celebration of renewable energy, where our banners and informational handouts highlighted the dangerous fossil fuel pipeline on the lakebed in the Straits of Mackinac between Lake Michigan and Lake Huron.

We meet monthly, in person and over zoom, the third Wednesday of the month at 7p.m. A recent gathering downtown at the wonderful Climate Action Museum included a tour followed by lunch. Our group enjoys discussing what we're reading and watching on climate topics. If you're concerned about our Earth's future and dedicated to climate issues, we would love to have you join our fight!

"It is contrary to my nature . . . to believe that any nation on earth is incapable of redemption. . . . My non-cooperation has its root not in hatred, but in love." - Mahatma Ghandi



“You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face.”- Eleanor Roosevelt

Foreign Policy Working Group - Highlights of the Year

The Foreign Policy Working Group (FPWG) kicked off organizing in 2025 by joining in “The People’s March for Justice” in downtown Chicago with 50 plus organizations to oppose the new immigration and Israel/Palestine policies as the new administration came into office. It was the first of many displays of “the Power of the People” in which we participated or initiated the displays — such as collaborating to quickly create the “North Shore Says NO!” bannering campaign when the administration, in addition to ICE’s aggressive and needlessly violent “Midway Blitz”, threatened to put National Guard troops on streets in Chicagoland.

Educating about the plight in Palestine and raising up the voices of the people of Palestine has also been a major focus. We co-sponsored over 10 programs throughout the year, frequently in collaboration with Lake Street Church-P&J committee — film showings and discussions; teach-ins on the anti-BDS bill in Illinois and the suppression of voices calling for Palestinian rights and an end to the genocide; and lobbied our members of Congress in support of Delia Ramirez’s Bill (HR3565), the Block the Bomb Act - to ban the sale of offensive weapons to Israel. We never lose sight of our roots with the Sane-Freeze movement. We hosted a reception with Korean Hibakusha who were in the U.S. in preparation for the International People’s Tribunal (2026). We also held our yearly commemoration of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The commemoration included a program that emphasized the danger of a nuclear conflict and the need for policies to prevent a nuclear war from becoming a reality.

We meet monthly, most frequently via zoom, the last Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m. Our group discusses, often spiritedly, the challenging state of world affairs. Faced by an administration that has no coherent or consistent “foreign policy,” we discuss “what is next?": stopping the U.S. from sending weapons to Israel and ending the genocide in Palestine, opposing the Trump administration’s threatening moves toward Venezuela, and supporting policies to prevent a possible nuclear conflict—to name a few. We grapple each month both to understand what the latest actions mean and to come up with our own programs that will move legislators and public opinion toward more peaceful and cooperative policies. **Join us to promote a more just world - free of the devastation caused by war, racism, and the threat of nuclear weapons.**

One more thing before you leave tonight...

This past year we created **Public Square Conversations** to engage our members and the community in dialogue; we loved how these discussions helped attendees understand diverse perspectives and practice communicating about the issues of our day.

We plan to build on that model in 2026 by hosting **Member Forums** three times a year. These events will provide a place for you to share ideas, collaborate with fellow members, and help shape CAPA's program priorities.

Since these tough times may last a few more years, it will be important that we come together regularly to organize for collective resistance. We will gain strength in this collaboration.

In order to grow CAPA, we also plan to hold a membership drive in the early spring. *Stay tuned to learn more about these opportunities to advance CAPA's work in support of our shared values.*

CAPA Staff

Organizing Director
Charles Johnson

Organizing Assistant
Rachel Nelson

Special Thanks and Recognition

Curt's Cafe for our food, Andy Thayer for filming the Panel, The Copy Room for all our printing, Trader Joe's for help with the flowers, Joseph Leigh Design for arranging the linens, and Irish American Heritage Center, our hosts.



Chicago Area Peace Action

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