

### SEVENTEENTH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF THE OFFICE OF THE AMERICAS SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2000

Celebrate our seventeenth year with us! We have so much to be grateful for.

The Office is stronger than ever. Our mission is clearer than ever. We believe that peace and justice can prevail on earth.

### HONOREES

**HASKELL WEXLER**, one of the world's most accomplished cinematographers. He has earned five Academy Award nominations and two Oscars for best cinematography. He has received the American Society of Cinematographers' Lifetime Achievement Award and he is the fourth cinematographer in history to be honored with a star on Hollywood Blvd. Walk of Fame. Haskell has been an active OOA Board Member since our earliest days. We cherish his achievement as Director of two great dramatic films, *MEDIUM COOL*, a groundbreaking film shot during the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago and *LATINO*, an accurate denunciation of the Contra War in Nicaragua. Haskell has directed over fifty documentary films of powerful political and social merit. He and Martin Sheen flew to Atlanta to interview and film Father Roy Bourgeois in a federal prison. We consider Haskell to be a great example for all filmmakers and everyone concerned about social justice and human rights.

**MADELINE JANIS-APARICIO**, is one of the founders and the executive director of the Los Angeles

Alliance for a New Economy. This crusading attorney refused to accept the fact that many people working full time in Los Angeles do not earn enough to pay their rent. Madeline is also director of the Living Wage Coalition. She helped to push through the Los Angeles living wage ordinance which requires companies doing business with the city or receiving subsidies from it, to pay their employees substantially more than the minimum wage. Contrary to complaints from the business world, Madeline has proven that distributive justice makes for a better economy. Los Angeles has one of the greatest income gaps of any city in the world. Madeline believes that basic human rights require a living wage for all. A recent study at Harvard University supports her claim that a living wage, in contrast to a below the poverty level minimum wage, leads to a higher quality of life for everyone.

**JIM HIGHTOWER** has been described as the rarest of species: "A visionary with horse sense and a leader with a sense of humor." Today, Jim Hightower is one of the most respected "outside Washington, D.C." leaders in the United States. Author, radio commentator and host, public speaker and political spark-plug, this Texan has spent more than two decades battling Washington and Wall Street on behalf of consumers, children, working families, environmentalists and small businesses. Jim's latest book, *If The Gods Had Meant Us To Vote, They Would Have Given Us Candidates*, is available in

#### What's Inside...

- ON THE DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY
- OFFICE OF THE AMERICAS IN ACTION

bookstores everywhere. Hightower's "Chat and Chew" airs on some 100 stations. For more information about Jim and his daily radio commentaries check his website:

[www.jimhightower.com](http://www.jimhightower.com)

Jim served as Texas Agriculture Commissioner from 1983-1991.

Celebrate the seventeenth anniversary of the Office of the Americas with us on

Saturday, November 11, 2000 at:

*HOLMAN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH*  
3320 West Adams Blvd.  
(between Crenshaw and Arlington)  
Los Angeles, California 90018

There will be a reception for the honorees and program participants in the church library prior to the public event. (Call 323/852-9808 for information regarding the reception or placing a message in our Anniversary Journal).

Public Event: 7:30 PM

### A CRITICAL MOMENT FOR LORI BERENSON

Lori's voice has finally been heard internationally for the first time in over four years.

The tape, made during our Office of the Americas visit to Lori at Socabaya prison in Arequipa Peru, was aired by delegation member Amy Goodman of Pacifica Radio's "Democracy Now."

Amy later appeared on Giraldo Rivera's television program and aired the tape again.

On August 28, 2000 the Supreme Military Court of Peru nullified Lori's life sentence, admitting that she was not guilty of the charges against her. But rather than send her home, Peru has decided to retry her in a civilian court on similar charges. This means Lori will be subjected to a "show trial" in Peru, presided over by a Fujimori appointed judge. And Fujimori has already declared that the new trial will result in at least a twenty year sentence for Lori.

In the midst of this critical moment for Lori, President Fujimori has called for new elections in Peru and states that he will not be a candidate. He has not set a timeline for elections or for stepping down. His "intelligence" chief and right hand man, Vlademiro Montesinos has succeeded in bringing the Fujimori administration to the brink of destruction by years of corruption and criminality. The president cannot claim lack of knowledge or non-involvement.

Lori Berenson has suffered the same injustices as the Peruvian people. Her arrest and trial were the result of the same corrupt system. Here is a sample letter for you to write to President Clinton:

*Dear Mr. President:*

*The corrupt government of Peruvian president Alberto Fujimori is crumbling. The level and extent of Fujimori's corruption is only now becoming public knowledge. He is resigning in disgrace as he should have done years ago.*

*This is the same Fujimori who called for the conviction and life sentence of Lori Berenson as a "terrorist leader," guilty of treason. The very military court which convicted her has recently overturned her conviction. And now the same criminally corrupt leader is calling for her to be*

*re-convicted in a blatant display of contempt for all fairness.*

*Lori Berenson is innocent. The time to demand her release is now. I call upon you to do this before the corrupt Peruvian judicial system again attempts to railroad her in this current show trial.*

*Thank you for your attention to this matter,*

*Your signature*

Lori is facing a hostile, pro-government media in Peru making it difficult, if not impossible, for anyone to hear her side of the story. The fight for Lori's freedom is extremely expensive. The Berenson family income and resources are becoming more and more limited. They have just hired a Peruvian lawyer to defend their daughter on a full time basis. Both Mark and Rhoda Berenson now find it necessary to be in Lima almost constantly to support Lori in this new judicial ordeal, and to get her story out to the press and the public. To accomplish this they will have huge travel and communication expenses.

To sustain this fight to free Lori, the Berensons are asking everyone concerned about justice and fairness for help. Please send what you can, as quickly as you can, to help them wage the fight of their lives to bring their daughter home. While any amount is appreciated, we ask anyone who can to match our gift of \$500.

## 1. DONATE ON LINE

The Committee to Free Lori Berenson is now able to accept donations made on line using credit cards, through PayPal. If you are not yet a user of PayPal, your donation goes even further, as PayPal will give \$5 for each new user who signs up through Lori's website.

For instructions regarding donating on line, you can go directly to: <http://www.freelori.org/donations.html>

## 2. SEND A DONATION BY MAIL

Please send your contribution directly to:

Committee to Free Lori Berenson  
110 Maryland Avenue, NE Suite 102  
Washington, D.C. 20002

If you wish to make a tax deductible donation (\$50 minimum) make your check payable to:

PROTEUS FUND: INTER-AMERICAN  
HUMAN RIGHTS PROJECT

If you wish to make a non-tax deductible donation make your check payable to:

FREE LORI BERENSON

Please include your name, address, telephone and email. Many thanks for doing this!

**Are you an Office of the Americas Member? If we have not heard from you in the past year, please renew your membership. See the form form on page 4.**

## ON THE DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY

Of course there is a place for destruction of property. Actions in opposition to holocausts such as Iraq (1990-2000), Vietnam (1954-1975) Central America (1954-2000) should have some measure of proportionality to the evil which is opposed. Such thinking is quite compatible with non-violence.

In the Temple, he found people selling cattle, sheep and pigeons, while moneychangers sat at their counters. Making a whip out of cords, Jesus drove them all out of the Temple---even the cattle and sheep---and overturned the tables of the moneychangers, scattering their coins." (John 2, 14-16).

Every child studies the revolutionaries who conducted the Boston Tea Party. In contemporary society we would expect every child to study the actions of the Catonsville Nine and a host of other such attacks on draft files and other documents which were burned to ask a question during the rape of Vietnam, "Is it

better to burn paper or people?"

What are the characteristics of such acts?

1. Unanimous acceptance by the participants of what they are about to do.
2. A clear understanding of the possible consequences.

Now consider the actions of the Black Bloc at our recent demonstrations during the Democratic National Convention. The Bloc attached itself to a mass of people who were over 99 and 44/100ths percent opposed to any violent actions at the Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles. The Black Bloc became adversaries to consensus, to democratic process and to solidarity. If police science were in force, it would have taken about a dozen law enforcement people to isolate this small group from the planned program. But in the absence of such science, those who cast the first stones were used as a rationale for literally thousands of police to attack all protesters unleashing their clubs, chemical warfare, rubber bullets and sheer terror on the whole group. If all of the Black Bloc members were police provocateurs, they could not have done a better job of diverting the attention from the issues which protesters had spent months planning.

On Thursday, August 17th, the Black Bloc appeared at the Immigrant March. They listened as the spokesperson for the musical group addressed the huge crowd. This is a summary of his words.

Please hear me out. If there are any violent actions at this gathering, the music will stop immediately. Just consider the fact that many of the immigrants with whom you have just marched are undocumented. They are liable to be picked up on serious charges. Some of the people in this crowd have two strikes on them. Charges brought against them now could lead to years in prison...even a life sentence. Please give this your serious consideration. Think of the consequences of your actions.

Leave the legacy of your commitment to your heirs: When drafting your will, please consider making a bequest to THE OFFICE OF THE AMERICAS. We are a 501-c-3 non-profit educational corporation. All contributions are tax deductible.

Shortly after this admonition, the Black Bloc approached the speakers stand. Organizer Suzie Goldberg listened to their request, conferred with the Organizing Collective and to the surprise of many she directed their spokesperson to the mike.

As some of the crowd cringed expecting the worst, the Black Bloc spokesperson expressed solidarity with the message that had just been given.

The value of dialogue had been proven once again. Many of us would not have been as trusting as Suzie Goldberg. But together with the leadership of the Organizing Collective she exemplifies the wisdom of the new generation of young people who have gone beyond methodologies of the 60's, 70's 80's or 90's. These people had planned every detail and contingency of the DNC demonstrations. They were ready to deal with opposition from whatever source. The initial behavior of the Black Bloc was completely out of sync with the program prepared by the Organizing Collective. But communication has begun thanks to the genius of organizers such as Suzie Goldberg, Don White and Leone Hankey.

## OFFICE OF THE AMERICAS IN ACTION

\*\* OOA was proud to take part in the training of an army of non-violent peacemakers in the Santa Monica Mountains prior to the Democratic Convention. We are thankful to share in one of the most effective peacemaking struggles of our time. These young people are more organized, more disciplined, more focused on their goals than any movement group we have yet seen. They give us much hope! Why was such a vast protest necessary? Because neither Republicans nor Democrats are dealing

with the following urgent issues:

1. The growing millions of homeless throughout the United States.
2. Our aggressive and illegal military policy; for example the endless bombing and genocidal embargo on Iraq. No discussion of limits on our military spending. No acknowledgement of the fact that our militarism is creating enemies throughout the world.
3. The inability of the State Department to practice diplomacy.
4. The blatantly racist and class oriented application of the death penalty. Failure to even discuss the abolition of this vengeful practice.
5. The internationally counterproductive "War on Drugs" which has become an excuse to war on people at home and overseas.
6. Plan for a massive war in Colombia in spite of the opposition of the academic community the Presidents of South America and thinking people internationally. Ignoring of peace talks which are underway between rebels and the Colombian government. Refusal to allow the United Nations to carry out its Charter as an international peace system.
7. No comment on the negative impact of the World Trade Organization and NAFTA.
8. Permitting a "minimum wage" which guarantees that full time workers are far below the poverty line, instead of working for a Living Wage.
9. No discussion of distributive justice which would not tolerate some people being paid more in one hour than others are paid in a year.
10. Tens of millions of citizens in the world's richest country with no medical care.

And these are just a few of the issues which are not being discussed by the two great parties.

Do you wonder why we took to the streets?

Visit OOA's website: [www.officeoftheamericas.org](http://www.officeoftheamericas.org)

## COLOMBIA

\*\* Office of the Americas has decided to collaborate with Witness for Peace to send one-hundred delegates to Colombia. Let us know if you wish to consider this opportunity to make a statement for peace in that war torn country. The delegation is planned for March 11-23, 2001. Plan Colombia designed by the Clinton Administration is just one more example of our isolation from the wishes of the world community. When the presidents of South American countries met in Brasilia recently, they unanimously denounced Clinton's plan. With all arrogance, Plan Colombia will continue in spite of their wishes.

\*\* We were pleased with the denunciation of Clinton's plan as expressed in one of the first Los Angeles demonstrations against the massive U.S. funding of the Colombian Military. Perhaps the most despicable part of the Colombian policy is the waiver which Mr. Clinton gave on human rights. Outrage is the only humane response to such callous disregard for human dignity. Prior to receiving the waiver, the Colombian Military had one of the world's worst human rights records. Mr. Clinton's policy now gives carte blanche to every and all military atrocities in Colombia.

\*\* OOA is serving on the agenda committee in preparation for a Latin America Solidarity Conference to be held in Chicago on March 17-18 of 2001. The objective of the conference is to determine how we can make the Latin American solidarity movement more unified and more effective. You are welcome to send us your thoughts on this subject.

\*\* A number of OOA Board Members and volunteers work with Theresa and the Living Wage Coalition to end the poverty level wages of hotel and restaurant workers. A major justice-for-workers battle is waging in Santa Monica. What happens in this vanguard city will have an impact on the Living Wage movement throughout the country. The good news is that hardly a day goes by without news coverage of the Living Wage and the substantial support we have in the community. The bad news is that the most posh hotels are putting up huge amounts of money to fight the Living Wage.

**Needed:** Computer volunteers to do word processing and data base entries.

### OOA Board Members

Edward Asner  
 Theresa Bonpane  
 Blase Bonpane, Ph.D.  
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 \*Rev. Gregory Boyle  
 \*Bruce Chalett  
 \*Noam Chomsky  
 \*Lois Davis  
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 \*Alice Powell, Ph.D.  
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 \*Patrice Wagonhurst, M.A., M.P.H.  
 Haskell Wexler  
 \*Don White  
 \*Howard Zinn, Ph.D.

\* Advisory Board

### THE CLOSET LIBERAL

Recycle For Peace: Support OOA's Programs For Peace and Justice

8124 West Third Street, Los Angeles, CA 90048  
 Donations Needed:

Clothing	Cystal & China	Small Furniture
Antiques	Jewelry	Art Objects
Linens	Photos, Paintings	Art Books

Volunteers needed at the Closet Liberal! Free training! We are also available for Estate Disposal and related needs.  
 Office of the Americas: (323) 852-9808

### Become an Office of the Americas Sustainer or Member

Members receive OOA's quarterly newsletter and the satisfaction of being part of an international movement for peace and justice. **Sustainers receive monthly mailings** of OOA issues, activities and special events.

I pledge: \$\_\_\_\_\_ each  month  quarter  year  other \_\_\_\_\_ for OOA's work.

Enclosed is my first pledge of: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (all contributions are tax-deductible).

Enclosed is my membership contribution:

Founder/\$1,000  Patron/\$500  Sponsor/\$250  Donor/\$200  Friend/\$100

Family/\$35  Individual/\$25  Limited income/\$10

Please send me information on your volunteer program.  Please remove me from your mailing list.

I would like an OOA speaker for a house / church / organization meeting.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

FAX: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** FAX and Email addresses are assurances that you will receive more notices of special events.