



OFFICE OF THE AMERICAS

FOCUS: Peace Now!

OfficeOfTheAmericas.com

Office of the Americas is a nonprofit organization dedicated to furthering the cause of justice and peace through broadbased educational programs.

Never did we imagine that the justice and peace movement would have such dramatic and rapid growth. We are now called, "The Other Super-Power." We did not stop the on-going wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. But tens of millions of people have generated the largest grass roots community of resistance in world history. We are beginning to achieve what Albert Einstein wanted, a change in our way of thinking. The victory we seek is to abolish the war system forever and to establish a functional peace system.

The Gentle of the Earth

The people of this movement are the gentle of the earth, at the same time they are among the most radical and the most conscious of the foolishness of conventional wisdom.

Voices in the Wilderness

Some of these gentle people are called Voices in the Wilderness. This group was initiated by Kathy Kelly and her companions. I met these amazing people in Baghdad in 1991 when they were called the Iraq Peace Team. They have continued their witness and remained in Iraq during the long killer sanctions as well as during the recent invasion and massacre.

Riverside Ploughshares

Another such group is called Riverside Ploughshares. Yes, these too are gentle and radical people. They shall possess the land. On Sunday, May 25 at about 4:00 PM the Riverside Ploughshares group went aboard the warship USS Philippine Sea, poured their blood on the missile hatches and hammered a message of protest on these containers of Tomahawk Cruise Missiles. As they knelt on top of the hatches, Mark Colville held up pictures of Iraqi children who had been injured and maimed by U.S. weapons. Mark read their statement and Brian Buckley unfurled their banner which read, "Riverside

Ploughshares: Disarm and Choose Life." Sister Susan Clarkson and Joan Gregory were together with Mark and Brian in this vanguard protest. It was a message from the Prophet Isaiah, "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks."

Friends, not everyone is going to join these radically gentle people who represent the vanguard of the peace movement. But we can and must support them as they face severe charges in their acts of civil disobedience (see below). In 2003 their protests are as important as the very patriotic acts of those who gave us the Boston Tea Party. We should also mention the Dominican Sisters in Colorado who were arrested for breaking into a Minuteman III missile silo on Colorado's northeastern plains swinging hammers and painting these weapons with crosses in their own blood. These are Sister Platte 66, Sister Jackie Hudson, 68 and Sister Carol Gilbert 55. These are the gentle of the earth. These are the vanguard. Their only ideology is love and the conviction that perfect love casts out fear. They are facing up to thirty years in prison.

International Solidarity Movement

Then there is the International Solidarity Movement in Palestine, a group strongly supported by the Israeli peace movement. Yes, there are casualties in the peace movement just as Dr. King said there would be. Rachel Corrie was crushed to death by an Israeli bulldozer. Brian Avery was shot in the face in Jenin. Tom Hurndall was shot in the head. Nazeah Darwazeh, an Associated Press journalist was assassinated in Nablus. James Miller was shot dead. Innocent people are being killed on both sides of this no win situation. However the side with the tanks, the planes and one of the world's most powerful armies has the greater responsibility. The United States has provided most of the military equipment for

Israel and bears much of the responsibility for its behavior.

We want to identify this international vanguard of peacemakers and give them the recognition they deserve. We must speak of their historic role even as the commercial media ignores them. We can join them in civil disobedience or in legal protest. The greatest single myth in our culture is that of powerlessness. We are not powerless. We are powerful. If we lead the government will follow.

Arundhati Roy

Arundhati Roy was speaking at UCLA a few days ago. A member of the audience questioned why she had paid a fine rather than going to jail. Perhaps the questioner was implying that Arundhati would have been a better person if she had gone to jail. But we must not tell others what they should be doing. We do not want to fall into the trap of moralizing. But everyone can do something. Observe the plethora of peace and justice organizations operating with great harmony. Join with like minded people. We consider people who volunteer for the quiet work in the background as essential to the work as those who put themselves in harm's way. You are welcome to become part of the Other Super-Power.

Fifty states are bankrupt. The national deficit is projected at 44 trillion dollars. We live in a morally bankrupt polity. But there are millions of people who are truly alive. Let us show the leadership that our government lacks.

1. ELIMINATE WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION FROM THE FACE OF THE EARTH. THIS INCLUDES OUR OWN WEAPONS WHICH MAKE UP THE WORLD'S LARGEST STOCKPILE.
2. SUPPORT THE ENVIRONMENTAL ACCORDS OF KYOTO.
3. SUPPORT THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT.

4. OPPOSE ALL EFFORTS TO DESIGN AND BUILD NEW NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

5. ABOLISH PATRIOT ACTS ONE AND TWO

6. SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL LAW AND THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS.

7. BEGIN IMPEACHMENT HEARINGS FOR THE HIGH CRIME OF LYING TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES WHILE SENDING OUR TROOPS TO THEIR DEATH AND DESTROYING INNOCENT LIVES IN IRAQ.

Please realize that the nation state as the terminus of sovereignty is as outdated as the city states of old. There is but one race on the planet, the human race. God Bless the whole world, no exceptions. The war system is a slave system. We must abolish that slave system.

Be sure to check our website <officeoftheameric-as.org> to observe a variety of possibilities in the service of justice and peace. For information on the Riverside Ploughshares: <www.warresisters.org/riversideplowshares.htm> <kplny1@aol.com> The Non-violent Peaceforce <www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org> <peaceworkers@igc.org>

THE PRISON-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

KKK members were allegedly volunteers. In place of the KKK today we have well paid members of the judiciary together with a prison industrial system that has done more harm to people of color than all of the years of the KKK combined.

One of every 32 persons in the United States is incarcerated, on probation or parole. 3,692 people are awaiting execution. Two million people are in U.S. prisons which now make up 25% of the prisoners of the world but we have less than 5% of the world's people. In short we have more prisons, more people in solitary confinement, longer sentences and more executions than most other nations.

South of the Mason-Dixon line incarceration rates are 12% higher than in the rest of the country. Poor African Americans and Latinos have suffered the most from this system of class justice. Poor trial representation leads to overcrowded death rows and excessive sentences. It is incumbent on judges to refuse to be rubber stamp functionaries for mandatory minimums and demand the right to judge the case.

The most serious part of this problem is political. Our judges and legislators know that "tough on crime" is a great slogan. Executing people gives our public a false sense of security just as bombing Iraq and Afghanistan have given us a false sense of security.

Our archaic death penalty continues in a country that leads the world in homicide. Capital punishment is as much a failure as our ballistic foreign policy.

The average sentence for a first time, non-violent drug offender is longer than the average sentence for rape, child molestation, bank robbery or manslaughter. Just as in the case of the arms business during the Cold War and the eternal Bush Wars, corporate profits are the driving forces for the prison industrial complex, which Eric Schlosser defines as:

"a set of bureaucratic, political, and economic interests that encourage increased spending on imprisonment, regardless of the actual need."

In short, the more prisoners there are, the higher the profits. Since 1983 we even have private, for profit prisons. The bill for the false security of prisons and the war system is paid by our deteriorating education and health programs. Mandatory sentences, primarily

for drug related offenses, have filled prisons with people who 20 years ago would not have served any time at all. A mean spirited society is a failed society.

Critical Resistance: Beyond the Prison Industrial Complex drew more than 2,000 critics to its national conference in the Tremé neighborhood of New Orleans. The goal of Critical Resistance is to end the prison industrial complex. Speakers urged those present to make the connection between protesting the prison industrial complex and fighting against both the U.S. War mania and the Patriot Act.

Let's not have profit making corporations do what is illegal for the KKK to do. Don't let incompetent legislators get your vote for false and deceptive profit making approaches to foreign or domestic security. The website for Critical Resistance is just that: criticalresistance.org.

OOA IN ACTION

This was a period of near daily demonstrations; many of them were graced by OOA speakers. We are very proud to be part of an internationally coordinated movement for justice and peace, which includes tens of millions of people around the globe.

Office of the Americas was instrumental in mobilizing thousands of people as we took to the streets protesting the Bush Administration's war on Iraq creating one of the largest protest movements in US history. Although we were not successful in stopping the war and subsequent occupation, we continue to organize and build our local peace and justice movement. Working with the Coalition for World Peace, ANSWER, Interfaith Communities United for Justice and Peace, The Center for the Advancement of Nonviolence and others we have organized to move beyond the streets.

Be the Change

Occidental College was the location of the Be The Change: Building Peace and Democracy Through Nonviolent Action conference where over 500 people came together to deepen their skills, gain inspiration, train in the discipline and proven strategies of nonviolent action, and be part of the next step in strategic planning and cooperative action. Call 323 731 5400 or www.non-violenceworks.com.

OOA and the Coalition for World Peace, under the banners "Healthcare not Warfare," and "Human Needs not War and Greed," worked with the Service Employees and International Union (SEIU) to stop the closure of Rancho Los Amigos, the only rehabilitation center in the Southern California Region. We continue to work to stop other life-threatening cutbacks in the LA County Healthcare system.

Smart Kids Not Smart Bombs

Under the banner, "Smart Kids not Smart Bombs," CFWP has organized teach-ins and outreach programs at various LAUSD high schools and middle schools. Friends can join the CFWP at our weekly video outreach program at the Santa Monica Promenade on 3rd Street in Santa Monica, screening a variety of documentaries and videos and dialoging with the community about war and its repercussions here at home.

Interfaith Communities United for Justice and Peace

OOA serves on the steering committee of the Interfaith Communities United for Justice and Peace, a broad spectrum of people of faith representing most of the world's great religions. We continue to meet every Friday morning at 7:00 am, where discussions cover civil

disobedience, faithful witness, pilgrimages to El Salvador, diversity in belief and practice, and ways to come together to create the "beloved community." ICUJP has become a model to many national groups, one of the few interfaith peace and justice groups that continue to flourish following the events of September 11, 2001. ICUJP serves the community in many ways including a monthly Monday night educational forum bringing topics such as **STOLEN DOLLARS: How the War Economy Short Changes the Quality of Our Lives**, **The Assault on Civil Liberties: PATRIOT Act, PATRIOT Act II, Homeland Security Act, WHAT'S NEXT? Beyond Violence? Reflections of a Hopeful Realist.** Call 626 683 9004 or www.icujp.org for further information.

WORLD FOCUS: Lisa Smithline produced the following interviews for our radio and television programs.

Dennis Kucinich, Presidential Candidate.

Barbara Trent, Academy Award for Best Documentary, *The Panama Deception*.

Dr. James Warf, internationally known expert on nuclear war.

James Gath, founder of a new publication, PYNG.

Jonathan Parfrey, Executive Director of Physicians for Social Responsibility.

Joel Andreas, author of best selling book, *Addicted to War*.

David Hartsough, The Nonviolent Peaceforce <nonviolentpeaceforce.org>

Carol Sobel, National Lawyers Guild and ACLU.

Nancy Lessin and **Charlie Richardson** of Military Families Speak Out

Kathy Kelly, Founder of Voices in the Wilderness.

Ariana Huffington, author of *Pigs at the Trough*.

Reese Erlich, coauthor with Norman Solomon of *Target Iraq*.

Huwaida Arraf, International Solidarity Movement.

Norman Solomon, coauthor with Reese Erlich of *Target Iraq*.

Eisha Mason, Executive Director of the Center for the Advancement of Nonviolence.

Danielle Babineau, California Peace Action.

Preston Wood, Organizer for ANSWER COALITION.

Scott Ritter, Former Chief Weapons Inspector in Iraq.

Eric Gustafson, Executive Director, EPIC.

Charles Clements, M.D., author of *Witness to War*.

Leonard Weinglass, Attorney for the Cuban Five.

Medea Benjamin, Executive Director of Global Exchange.

Daniel Ellsberg, The Pentagon Papers.

John Bonifaz, Executive director of National Voting Rights Institute and attorney for a case against George Bush.

Chalmers Johnson, author of *Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire*

Ron Kovic, author of "Born on the Fourth of July."

Father Roy Bourgeois, School of the Americas Watch

Greg Palast, author of *The Best Democracy Money Can Buy*.

Robert Greenwald, Film Producer and cofounder of Artists United to Win Without War.

Kent Wong of the UCLA Labor Center

Maria Elena Durazo, President of Local 11

Reverend James Lawson

Sister Ardeth Platte of the Sacred Earth and Space Plowshares II

Sister Carol Gilbert of the Sacred Earth and Space Plowshares II

Jonathan Schell, author of *The Unconquerable World*

Torrill Eide, International Human Rights March in Palestine/Israel

Kelly Hays Raitt from Baghdad

OOA speaking engagements

We have had over forty speaking engagements in this period, including:

- Hosting two local presentations by Noam Chomsky
- UCLA School of Medicine for Doctors and Students
- Mt. St. Mary's College
- California State University Northridge
- Claremont School of Theology
- Antioch University
- The Peninsula Symposium Benefit in San Mateo with Scott Ritter

What is the Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride?

Office of the Americas is proud to have joined the steering committee of the Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride, an exciting new national mobilization focusing public attention on immigrant rights and the injustices of current immigration policies. It will take place September 20-October 4, 2003 with many wonderful events building up to these dates.

Inspired by the Freedom Rides of the Civil Rights Movement, buses filled with immigrant workers and their community allies will set out from nine major US cities including Los Angeles.

As the new Freedom Riders cross the United States they will stop in dozens of towns and cities to rally support for immigration reform.

After converging in Washington, DC, where they will meet with Members of Congress, the new Freedom Riders will head to Liberty State Park in New Jersey for a rally on Friday,

October 3rd, then to New York City for a mass rally for immigrant rights on Saturday, October 4th.

The goal of the IWFR is to demonstrate a broad national constituency for meaningful reform of immigration laws, while also encouraging civic participation by new and future citizens. The Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride is being planned and carried out by a National Sponsoring Committee including the AFL-CIO, major international unions, national immigrant and civil rights groups, religious institutions, student and community organizations, prominent elected officials, and others.

Join us in supporting this historic project. As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "**where there is injustice for one, there is injustice for all.**"

For more information: call Sylvia Carranza at 213 738 8180 or check www.iwfr.org.

From the Left Coast

OOA member and generous supporter, Robert Greenwald, has initiated yet another wonderful project in service to the progressive community. We wonder when, or if, he ever sleeps!

From The Left Coast's Voices for Democracy is a WorldLinkTV series that brings the most provocative, interesting, and challenging thinkers, writers, and

**Be sure to check our website:
www.officeoftheamericas.org**

activists to millions of viewers. These "voices" come to the "left coast" to talk about a wide range of topics including: war, peace, social justice, health care, the death penalty, and civil liberties. In celebration and appreciation of these writers, thinkers, and activists, local Southern California organizations, including Office of the Americas, Americans for Democratic Action, Death Penalty Focus, and others have provided them with venues and much deserved awards. Look for Professor Noam Chomsky's inspiring speeches given during his recent visit to OOA in Los Angeles.

In memoriam

Louise Bauers, Bessie Cooper, Sue Nelson, Charles Sassoon, and Betty Rottger.

We remember our longtime supporters and friends who have passed recently and thank them for their legacies to the Office of the Americas.

OOA Boardmembers:

- Edward Asner
- Theresa Bonpane
- Blase Bonpane, Ph.D.
- *Rev. Roy Bourgeois
- *Rev. Gregory Boyle
- *Bruce Chalett
- *Noam Chomsky
- *Lois Davis
- *William J. Davis
- *Fionnula Flanagan
- *Nancy Hollander, Ph.D.
- *James Lafferty
- *Fernando Moreno
- *Joyce Norman
- *Garrett O'Connor, M.D.
- *Alice Powell, Ph.D.
- *Ramona Ripston
- *Angela Sanbrano
- Martin Sheen
- *Studs Terkel
- *Patrice Wagonhurst, M.A.,M.P.H.
- Haskell Wexler
- *Don White
- *Howard Zinn, Ph.D.
- Lisa Smithline; Executive Assistant

Plug In

Save the Date

20th Anniversary celebration of OOA
November 1, 2003

Monthly Salons on the last Wednesday of every month
7:30 PM at Warszawa Restaurant 1414 Lincoln Blvd in Santa Monica

Check our website for upcoming programs:
officeoftheamericas.org

Cursos de Verano de 2003: El Poder, La Violencia, La Paz.
July 12-13; 19-20; 26-27 (All programs in Spanish)
Mt. St. Mary's College
10 Chester Place
Los Angeles, CA 90007

"To announce that there must be no criticism of the president, or that we are to stand by the president right or wrong, is not only unpatriotic and servile, but is morally treasonable to the American public."

— Theodore Roosevelt



Become an Office of the Americas Sustainer or Member

All contributions are tax-deductible

OFFICE OF THE AMERICAS

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

Sustainers

I pledge: \$_____ each month quarter year other_____ for OOA's work.

Members

Enclosed is my membership contribution:

- Founder \$1,000 Patron \$500 Sponsor \$500 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.
- I would like to join the OOA e-mail list.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

FAX: _____ E-mail: _____

Enclosed is my first contribution of \$_____ Please charge my first contribution of \$_____ to my

Visa Mastercard amex Number _____ Expiration Date ___/___/___

Note: FAX and e-mail addresses are assurances that you will receive more notices of special events.