

I would call the wisdom of the ages. This is the wisdom that says, happy are you who work for peace, you shall be called the children of god. This is the wisdom of the ages:

Happy are you who hunger and thirst for justice, you shall be satisfied. Indeed this is the answer to what we can do. Junk the conventional wisdom which surrounds us and live with the wisdom of the ages.

INSTRUMENTS OF CHANGE

We must use new and sacred instruments of change in place of the clubs, guns, bombs and nukes of the past—the general strike, the boycott, mass mobilizations, non-cooperation with the war-making machine. These are non-violent instruments of change. And taxation without representation is still tyranny. There is not one thing to do; there are many things to do. As Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero said, “Everyone can do something.”

Yes, electoral politics is a legitimate place for our peacemaking efforts and so are the plethora of non-governmental organizations such as the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation and the Office of the Americas. We must make use of peace-making efforts in education and recall the mandate of Einstein that we concentrate on creativity and imagination. I fail to see creativity in standardized tests and I certainly don't want to see any standardized students.

War is made sacred by the very manner in which young students study our revolution and the endless wars that followed. As we change our way of thinking, we will continue to study the past, but we must make it clear that to repeat the past is to be unfaithful to the past. To be faith-

ful to the past, we must foster change in our static educational practices. The only question to ask after students study a war is, “now tell us how that war could have been avoided.”

MILITARISTIC NATIONALISM

We have become isolated by our militaristic nationalism, but at this time the nation state as the terminus of sovereignty is as outdated as the city states of old. We live on a small planet that is in extreme danger. Various religions have developed by way of anthropology and geography. Corrupt politicians have used and continue to use religion as a cloak for malice. But the ideals in religion are known as the fruits and gifts of the spirit. These are the qualities that will unite the planet as one family. Sectarian, dogmatic and fundamentalist approaches are counterproductive.

I am a Roman Catholic and served in Guatemala as a Maryknoll priest, but I would have more in common with an atheist working for peace than I would have with a fellow Catholic who happens to be a war monger. The name of our religion or non-religion is really not very meaningful. We are known by the fruits of our labors. Let us join together with like-minded people to create an international community of justice and peace.

Blase Bonpane is the recipient of the Recipient of the Nucopdear Age Peace Foundation's 2006 Distinguished Peace Leadership Award.

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INTERNATIONAL PEACE SURGE IS UNDERWAY

The Office of the Americas is proud to be part of a movement for justice and peace which is ever more united and more effective. In spite of the propaganda of commercial media and the misinformation of government, our quest is being accepted by a majority while the administration babbles on with its irrational and extremely dangerous drivel.

NUCLEAR WAR

Yes, we are in a constitutional crisis. The President has determined that 100 billion dollars be spent on an extremely dangerous “updating” of our nuclear arsenal. And he does this at a time when some of the nation's virulent hawks, Henry Kissinger, George Schultz, William Perry and Sam Nunn issue a statement calling for U.S. to lead the world in the abolition of nuclear weapons. See Wall Street Journal, January 4, 2007.

CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL WAR

Our universities are being turned into houses of prostitution as the Bush Administration pumps billions into academia to design new nukes together with new horrors of biological and chemical weapons in direct violation of both the Biological Weapons and Chemical Weapons conventions and U.S. domestic criminal law.

TROOP SURGE

And then there is the surge of troops in Iraq. In spite of what the poorly educated journalists or elected officials might say, there is a consensus of legal scholars that Congress has absolute power to block funding for any surge of troops in Baghdad.

SOMALIA

Oh, yes, Bush invades Somalia with a little help from Ethiopia and then tries to assassinate a few alleged

members of Al Qaeda. So he sends an AC-130 and a host of attack helicopters to southern Somalia. The AC-130 is a monstrosity designed to kill every man, woman, child within its orbit. And all of this is taking place while Israel and the United States bicker over which one will be the first to strike Iran.

OUR DEFENSE FROM GOVERNMENTAL CRIMINALITY

First. Impeachment: There are literally scores of charges that could lead to conviction. Second. The Twenty-Fifth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States: This Amendment is to be applied when the President is unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office. The president's behavior should make his inability self-evident. Now in both cases the Vice President is in line to take over. Clearly similar action should be taken immediately as the Vice President becomes President because many of the high crimes and misdemeanors of the current President are directly tied to policies created by the current Vice President. This action would elevate the Speaker of the House of Representatives to the position of President.

DIRECT ACTION

And as we petition these actions from the new Congress, the peace movement is more engaged than ever at the street level. We are joined by veterans and current members of the armed forces. And this is where history will be made. * Gold Star Mothers began a walk for Change through the halls of Congress insisting on the imple-

mentation of an immediate exit strategy from Iraq and a demand for Impeachment of the President. <www.gsfp.org>

* International Day to Shut Down Guantanamo conducted by Witness Against Torture in Washington, D.C. and combined with a march through Cuba to that nefarious U.S. facility. <www.witnesstor-ture.org>

* A massive march with a simple message, BRING THE TROOPS HOME NOW in Washington, D.C., January 27th. <www.unitedforpeace.org>

* February 5th, Voices for Creative Nonviolence begins the Occupation Project, a campaign of sustained civil disobedience to occupy the offices of legislators who continue to support the Iraq War. <www.vcnv.org>

* March 17th, The Answer Coalition invites people from all over the United States to

March on the Pentagon on the fourth anniversary of the criminal invasion and occupation of Iraq. <www.internationalanswer.org>

*The vanguard of the peace movement is our troops and our veterans. The Active Duty Military Project is a national call of service people to leave Iraq.

<www.appealforredress.org>

*Courage to Resist is supporting the troops who in conscience refuse to fight.

<www.CourageToResist.org>

* Arlington West Memorial. Each Sunday since February 15, 2004, a memorial is erected

in the sand just north of the pier at Santa Monica Beach by the local chapter of Veterans

for Peace to acknowledge the human cost and consequences of war. Similar memorials

are conducted at Santa Barbara and other sites.

There will be events in Los Angeles and many others cities in sync with the Washington D.C. actions.

We are proud of the great coa-

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The Peace Movement needs you,
OOA needs you.
Fill out the response on back and
become an OOA Volunteer today.**

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All contributions are tax-deductible.

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.

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

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I would like to join the OOA e-mail list to receive the weekly Peace Calendar.

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

Stay up to date on local Peace and Justice events, sign up for the OOA Peace Calendar today! Visit www.officeoftheamericas.org to sign up.

lescings of the peace movement, which began with the largest demonstrations in the history of the world following 9/11/01. And we are outraged by the performance of the Bush Administration and its failure to have regard for our troops, for the people of the United States, for the people of Iraq and Afghanistan, for existing international law and now to top it off with an insane 100 billion dollar effort to hasten an international holocaust by the "modernization" of nuclear terror.

For detailed information on peace actions in your immediate area go to <Americasaysno.org>

More complete information on these projects will be found on our website <www.officeoftheamericas.org> and on our weekly Peace Calendar.

OOA in Action

We are pleased to announce that we have had some of the world's most forward looking, academics, journalists and activists on our program WORLD FOCUS (10:00 AM Sundays on KPFK 90.7 Los Angeles, 98.7 Santa Barbara). These programs are pod cast and also available 24/7 as archived on <www.kpfk.org> where they can be heard internationally. You can also access these programs and our weekly commentaries on <www.officeoftheamericas.org> Our television program WORLD FOCUS airs on TIME WARNER (Public Access and Educational Channels 75 and 77) Call OOA for schedule (323-852-9808).

Street Demonstrations make the voice of the people heard. Our members have been out there:

August 12th: mass march and rally calling for an immediate ceasefire in Lebanon and Gaza in downtown Los Angeles. OOA also participated in regular vigils, marches and protests to end the violence in Lebanon, Gaza and Israel.

September 21st: On the International Day of Peace, OOA participated in Code Pink's "Give Peace a Vote" rally outside Senator Feinstein's Westwood office.

September 25th: OOA participated in the Declaration of Peace

vigil organized by AFSC and Catholic Worker outside of the military recruitment center on Hollywood Blvd.

September 28th: OOA participated in the March and Rally for Economic Justice for hotel workers, LAX Century Corridor. Was one of the largest acts of non-violent civil disobedience in the history of Los Angeles. Our associate director, Melinda Moran was arrested.

November 12th: OOA 23rd Anniversary Celebration

December 6th - 12th: OOA supported (through outreach) the seven-day water-only fast of Hotel workers in front of the Westin Airport Hotel that was organized by L.A.A.N.E.

January 11th: OOA participated in several of the city wide rallies to Say NO to the Surge and protest the increase of troops to Iraq.

January 27th The most important antiwar demonstration since a million people turned out to say No to War on February 15, 2003. Aside from Washington D.C. there are now over 90 cities participating including Los Angeles.

An ongoing series of demonstrations including non-violent civil disobedience and occupation of the offices of legislators who insist on supporting the occupation of Iraq will continue through February and March.

Salons and Lectures

September 17th, OOA Salon with Daniel Ellsberg

January 28th OOA Salon with Dennis Kucinich.

A series of OOA lectures on Latin America, Iraq and Vietnam have been given at UCLA.

We Are Not Powerless

By Blase Bonpane, October 28, 2006

My father, Judge Blase Bonpane of the Superior Court, died here in Santa Barbara in 1977. He arrived in the United States in 1898, probably without papers, and that is one reason why some people were called WOPS (without papers). Dad went to law school at Ohio Northern University in Ada, Ohio. On January 16, 1914, dad gave the winning oration at the Dr. Albert Edwin Smith Annual Oratorical Contest. The prize money of \$50.00 covered his room and board for almost six months.

The title of my father's oration was, "The Call of Our Age." World War I had begun in Europe. There was no League of Nations; there

was no United Nations, but the second Hague Conference had been held in the spring of 1907, giving the global hope of making war illegal. World War I crushed that hope. Here are some of dad's words that cold and snowy evening in Ada, Ohio.

WAR AS ORGANIZED MURDER

Public opinion has enacted a law against murder; so should international public opinion demand a law against war, which is merely organized murder. Shall we execute a man for taking a single life, and glorify nations for slaughtering its thousands? To curb crime, to protect justice, police powers are instituted in all realms. Why not go beyond the transitory interest of a nation and establish an international police power? Let the representatives of the world powers meet in one body! Let a world code be compiled! God made humanity one. But man is now divided against himself...through common interest, through common needs, the world must move towards the unity of all its peoples. Let internationalism be our watchword, our aim, our duty. Let us hear the call of our age! Then the "Golden Cestus of Peace" shall clothe all with celestial beauty; and serene, resplendent, on the summit of human achievement shall stand the miraculous spectacle, the congress of nations, with a common purpose of agreeing, not upon military plans, not to foster cruelty and incite other people to carnage, not to bow before the god of battles, but to announce the simple doctrine of peace and brotherhood—our only hope, our only reliance against which all powers of the earth shall not prevail.

So here we are, nearly a century after my dad's oration, living in a run-away war system. We are living in the midst of the greatest crisis in history. Our Constitution and Bill of Rights have been placed on hold. There is a plan in place to attack Iran. Actually there are many possible futures. The best of those futures depends on our response to the current crisis.

SEVENTY-SEVEN YEARS LATER

That was January 16, 1914. Dad's entire oration is found in my book, Common Sense for the Twenty-First Century. On that same date, January 16th, exactly 77 years later, I had just returned from Iraq, my wife Theresa, my son Blase Martin and I were handcuffed and on our bellies on the marble floor of the Los Angeles Federal Building because we blocked the doors of that edifice with scores of other protesters in a massive act of

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national civil disobedience. Later that day, from holding cells deep in the bowels of the Federal Building, we heard that the bombing of Iraq had begun. Eighty-eight thousand tons of bombs, very dumb bombs, represented the beginning of a war initiated by George Herbert Walker Bush, continued by Bill Clinton and still raging out of control with the current incumbent in the White House. Anyone igniting a one-pound bomb against innocents should be called a terrorist. Just what name do we have for an opening salvo of 88,000 tons of bombs on a civilian population?

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THE MYTH OF POWERLESSNESS

The greatest myth in our culture is that we are powerless. I hear that myth frequently, "we are so powerless!" But we are not powerless; we are powerful and every worthwhile change in our society has come from the base, not from the top down. What makes us feel so powerless? Mass commercial media has a large role in this. Television creates a sense of passivity—life going by as a river over which we have no control. But we can transcend that passivity.

As we hear of wars and rumors of wars we are inclined to ask: what can I do? I certainly will not attempt to tell you what to do, but I can tell you some things that are being done and some things that need to be done. Here in Santa Barbara, as well as in Santa Monica and many other locations, we have the amazing statement of Arlington West on the beach. Markers representing the troops who have died are placed on the beach every Sunday. Respect is shown for the Iraqi dead as well, but the Veterans cannot put up 650,000 markers every Sunday, so they express their respect for the Iraqi dead in a poster (that figure is only the dead from 2003; millions have died since 1991).

The Veterans are a vanguard of the peace movement. A parade of military people are coming forward and following their conscience. They are refusing to serve. Some

have exposed the rampant practice of torture, which now, to our shame, has been codified.

NO EXCEPTIONALISM

Let's not have any parlor games about saving the whole world by torturing someone into telling us where they hid their nuclear bomb. Torture is nothing else but a classic form of terrorism designed to get people to agree with the torturer and to frighten other members of the society into compliance. But justice does not permit exceptionalism. Our hypocrisy rattles the heavens as we chip away at others doing nuclear research, while we have planet-busting nukes ready to fire in all directions.

No exceptionalism in regard to weapons of mass destruction. No exceptionalism regarding torture. Our dogs and cats are protected. If we should torture one of them the way we torture our "suspected terrorists," we would be guilty of a felony.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

What is to be done? We need you to volunteer with these Veterans of Arlington West on your beach every Sunday. We need you to support them financially as well. I also want to mention a nuclear vanguard. Sister Ardeth Platte, Sister Carol Gilbert and Sister Jackie Hudson symbolically disarmed weapons of mass destruction by pouring their blood on a nuclear silo in Colorado. Forty-one months in prison for Ardeth Platte, 33 months in prison for Carol Gilbert and 30 months in prison for Jackie Marie Hudson. The vast majority of us may not imitate such acts of heroism by the nuns. But we can be in solidarity with them and so many others like them who are standing up in the face of evil. We can tell their story; the commercial media is certainly not telling it. The commercial media has new and meaningless stories to tell us about the rich and the famous.

What can we do? Imagination and creativity are required. We can ask the corporate sector to come out against our wars as many did during Vietnam. We can tell our political servants that they do not have a future in politics unless they demand an immediate end to the rape of Iraq. Surely the Congress must become more than a group of clappers who stand around and applaud the president as he fosters organized murder and mayhem.

Getting duplicate mailings? Misspelled name or address? Please let us know so we can update our records.

A SPIRITUAL QUEST

Ours is a spiritual quest. The struggle to end nuclearism and war forever is doable. We have the technology and legal structure to outlaw and destroy every nuclear weapon on the planet. We can have a functional peace system, and we have the basis for such a system in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

We must demand that our media cover the acts of peacemaking rather than attempting to marginalize or demonize them. Let us live each day as if it were our last; let us do now what we want to be said in our eulogy. If we are retired, let's get back to work for peace and justice.

WE ARE THE REALISTS

Please bear in mind that we who believe that an international peace system is possible are the realists of our time. On the contrary, it is the militarists, as the title of Bob Woodward's new book states, who are in a state of denial. These people are not realists. They are living in a fantasy land of unreality. The military of the world at peace is the biggest threat to the global environment. And should militarism and nuclearism prevail, there is no future for life on this planet. So it really makes no difference how much some may love war. They can't have war and also have the planet.

We are now in the fifteenth year of the Iraq disaster. We will never be able to count the dead or the myriad of ruined lives of Iraqis and of our young and trusting troops. We have yet to do protests that are proportional to the Holocausts we have created in Korea, Vietnam, Central America, Iraq and Afghanistan. None of our peace actions have been proportional to the evils committed in our name. Actually, war is the most prominent expression of conventional wisdom, and conventional wisdom is a waste of time.

There is another wisdom which

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www.officeoftheamericas.org
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www.blasesblog.blogspot.com**