

PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES RESPOND TO ELECTION FRAUD

As merchants of death take over the government, our people have taken to the streets. In many segments of the inaugural march there were more protesters than supporters of our purported President. Huge protests, including San Francisco and Los Angeles, were held throughout the United States on Inauguration Day. This is truly the best of times and the worst of times. It is the best because the protest is visible at the highest levels of government. Our Supreme Court is now split into two factions four to five. The minority-of-one-vote faction is in sync with Justice Stevens who correctly believes that the people have lost their trust in the highest court of the land. Leaks from the Supreme Court tell us that the two factions are not even on speaking terms.

Steve Biko said it so well, "The most powerful weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed." Our minds refuse to be oppressed by the mindlessness of our government. As we observe the clearly psychotic plan for Star Wars we are heartened by the response of the nation's doctors. In their letter to Mr. Bush, Physicians for Social Responsibility said, "We are 400 physicians and health professionals, representing thousands more, imploring you to recognize the potential public health catastrophe that may result from your proposed missile defense system. We speak for our patients and all Americans who will be placed in greater jeopardy if the system is deployed.

As physicians, dedicated to the care of patients, and pledged to "first do no harm," we oppose National Missile Defense because it will inevitably lead to renewal of the nuclear arms race, greatly increase the danger of nuclear catastrophe, and thereby threaten the health and security of all living beings."

And 554 Law professors made their statement by way of an ad in the New York Times:

- By stopping the vote count in Florida, the U.S. Supreme Court used its power to act as political partisans, not Judges of a Court of Law.
- It is not the job of the Federal Court to stop votes from being counted.
- By taking power from the voters, the Supreme Court has tarnished its own legitimacy. As teachers whose lives have been dedicated to the rule of law, we protest.

COLOMBIA

And in case Mr. Bush is reading this newsletter, here is some advice. President Eisenhower left a terrible mess in transition to the Kennedy Administration. It was called the Bay of Pigs. A flood of non-intelligence told the former General that Cuba and the Castro regime would fall like an overripe fruit if the CIA simply supported a group of Miami exiles in an invasion. Kennedy accepted the plan. The invasion of Cuba was a complete failure as Fidel Castro personally led the defense of the island.

And now, President Clinton left a similar mess for our new head of state. Plan Colombia, as it is called, has every error, every bit of malice and every piece of crass stupidity that was produced by the "best and the brightest" in the Indo-China holocaust. Peace negotiations are underway in Colombia. The United Nations is ready and willing to act as mediator in future accords. We must try every possible way to get this message through to the Ivory Tower of the White House. The military industrialists will surely pout. They are eager to have our tax money produce private profit for them as they contemptuously disregard the poten-

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tial bloodshed of our own young people and Colombians of all ages.

Can anything be more blatant? The class nature of our governing body is so clear that neither Republicans nor Democrats know what to do with a massive budget surplus.

WHAT SURPLUS?

Their current mindless option is to give the majority of the funds back to the rich who already are clearly living on welfare. Why do we say, "welfare"? Because people who have money receive money for having money. People who do not have money must pay money to get money. There remains governmental blindness to the scandal of homelessness, absence of health care delivery and failure to fund first class educational facilities.

PRIVATIZATION

We are dedicated to the restoration of the Public Sector. Yes, there is a conspiracy, not a conspiracy theory but a conspiracy, to privatize the world's wealth. Private greed has determined to take all funds dedicated to the common good and channel them into private profit. Any victim of California's Public Utilities Scam can see this. Billions of dollars of public funds are pouring into the private sector.

We insist on a lively Public Sector including: public utilities, public schools, public libraries, public parks, public health care facilities, public welfare including low cost housing, public transportation and public concern for all those who fall through the cracks of modern life. We would like to lead our blind government to see the light of these necessities. Add to the

huge surplus the endless waste of tax money on death making trash and we will see national and international prosperity and well-being.

OFFICE OF THE AMERICAS IN ACTION

Latin American Solidarity Conference

OOA has been working for several months on preparing the agenda for the Second Latin America Solidarity Conference to be held in Chicago on Saturday and Sunday, March 17 and 18, 2001. We have taken the responsibility of being the point organization for the workshops on Militarism. We have also arranged for Father Javier Giraldo, a major human rights leader from Colombia to be one of the keynote speakers at the conference. Father Giraldo is author of the book, *Colombia, Genocidal Democracy, Common Courage Press, 1995.*

For registration information call: 202/544-9355.

or contact: www.americas.org/LASC

Inauguration Day Protest

The Inauguration Day Protest in Los Angeles was a great success. OOA members were much in evidence. Follow-up meetings to deal with problems created by the new administration will be held at Holman United Methodist Church. Once again, we note with great enthusiasm, the participation of youth together with generational and ethnic diversity at these gatherings. Call OOA for details.

Presentations by OOA

- Loyola-Marymount University
- The Don and Carla Show (Web Radio for Peace)
- Media One Television
- Clark Magnet High School, Glendale.
- All Saints Church, Pasadena
- University of California at Riverside
- Los Angeles Harbor College
- Training Program for the Free Tibet Action Camp in the Santa Monica Mountains
- Meeting with Italian Green party members prior to their delegation to

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.

the Uwa indigenous people in Colombia.

- Adelphia Television interview by Bill Rosendahl.
- Luis Becerra's Exhibit at the Avenue 50 Studio included a musical presentation by Blase Bonpane, Jr. and a book signing by Blase, Sr. Luis Becerra is a political artist, muralist and sculptor whose work is being recognized nationally.

** Homies Unidos has asked Theresa and Patti Wagonhurst to serve on their Board of Directors to help them continue their difficult project of Gang Peace and Rehabilitation.

** Theresa has also accepted the privilege of being a Board Member of the Westside Gang Prevention and Community Building Organization.

** Volunteer Michelle Cohen will assist OOA in keeping its web site up-to-date together with other outreach commitments..

** We recommend: *Lori: My Daughter Wrongfully Imprisoned in Peru*, by Rhoda Berenson, Context Books, New York, 2000. Rhoda will be on a book tour in Los Angeles on March 1,2,3. OOA member Lisa Smithline is organizing the tour.

Guerrillas of Peace on the Air

Blase's new book is now available: *Guerrillas of Peace on the Air*, Pacifica Radio Commentaries, Reports and Other Works which Examine and Promote the Ideology of Peace, Red Hen Press, Los Angeles, 2000. Copies will be mailed to all of our members who sent in pre-paid orders.

Noam Chomsky says, "I opened the manuscript of Blase Bonpane's record of radio commentary and peace reports, intending to put it aside for later reading, but was immediately captivated and couldn't put it down. It is gripping and instructive, shining a bright light on painful and critical

problems of the day and introducing us to wonderful people whose struggles and sometimes grim fate should be seared in our memory: Sister Diana Ortiz and Lori Berenson, Rev. Lucius

Walker and Father Roy Bourgeois, and many others, not least the author, whose quiet modesty cannot conceal his remarkable and inspiring life and work, here partially revealed."

Howard Zinn says, "Blase Bonpane has for many years been a tireless fighter for human rights, in this country and all over the world. This volume is a treasure chest of his powerful radio commentaries on poverty, war, the CIA, the imprisonment of Lori Berenson, and many other topics. These are short, blunt and eloquent essays which should give heart to us all that, in the midst of state terrorism and economic injustice, there are honest voices among us, speaking out."

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.

** Bill Rosendahl of Adelphia TV has asked us to plan a new television program on issues related to the Americas. We are very fortunate to have the services of Lisa Smithline who will assist OOA in its media outreach.

** Theresa, Lois Davis and OOA Board President Alice Powell together with many of our volunteers helped to achieve a victory for SMART in the recent electoral battle over Proposition KK in Santa Monica. They are now moving on to demand a living wage for all workers.

** We were proud to participate in a panel moderated by Warren Olney at the Museum of Tolerance. The producers of, "A Force More Powerful: a Century of Non-Violent Conflict" were present. The segment which aired at this meeting gave long overdue recognition to the critically important role of the Reverend James Lawson in the work of Dr. Martin Luther King. We were honored to have Rev Lawson present on the panel together with Alex Sanchez, Director of Homies Unidos and Kent Wong, Director of the UCLA

Center for Labor Research and Education. The panel was arranged by The Center for the Advancement of Nonviolence.

** The Little Yellow School Bus for Peace is on its way to Chiapas. On route school supplies will be collected for the autonomous Zapatista schools. A Los Angeles press conference will be held in front of the Echo Park United Methodist Church.

Some memorial notes to those who have gone before us:

Carolyn Anagnos, who with her husband, Aris, founded the Los Angeles Peace Center and contributed untold funding, hours and energy to the causes we hold dear.

Dear Carolyn,

We will remember you on that sultry day in Nicaragua when we crowded into a much undersized vehicle to visit Shafik Handel from El Salvador. You were then and always such a good sport. Your concern for the people of Central America found you on the scene of the Contra War as well as taking the risks of travel in the war zones of El Salvador.

We were so grateful for your participation in our Anniversary Celebration this year and for all the years of your generous, loving participation in the Office of the Americas history. We will carry you in our hearts always.

Carolyn Anagnos
PRESENTE!
PRESENTE!
PRESENTE!

Steve Allen, that man for all seasons who made us think and laugh.

Dear Steve,

Your last letter to me was written on the day you died, October 30, 2000.

There you were lamenting my surgery and telling all of us how you would like to go to Colombia if your health permitted.

And now all of us feel the great absence of everything you are.

Your presence, your music, your charm, your humor and your philo-

sophical insights are with us and we are with you.

At this timely celebration of the Feast of All Saints we can hear you doing a few verses of "When the Saints Come Marching In."

We cannot take away the sadness that Jayne and your family must feel but neither can we suppress the joy of knowing you and celebrating your life and legacy.

Steve Allen
PRESENTE!
PRESENTE!
PRESENTE!

The El Salvador Quake

CISPES IS COLLECTING MEDICINE AND MONEY FOR IMMEDIATE USE IN EL SALVADOR. Contributions are tax deductible through the CISPES Education Fund. Please send checks payable to:

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Los Angeles, California 90057

To drop off medicine, call CISPES at 323/852-0721, email: lacispes@igc.org

On line credit card donations (visa/mastercard) can be made on the website: www.cispes.org

Rebuilding will require years of effort.

FREE TRADE AREA OF THE AMERICAS

The Proposed FTAA agreement expands NAFTA's policy of undermining workers, the environment and public health to thirty-four countries. This agreement will allow corporations to sue governments for compensation of profit losses due to public interest regulations. The agenda includes the privatization of education, public utilities and other public services. On Saturday, April 21, 2001 there will be an international protest at the meeting of the Free Trade Area of the Americas in Quebec City, Canada.

visit: www.tradewatch.org

A new compact disk of Gregorian Chants sung by Blase Bonpane and produced by Dillingham Sound Productions is now available (\$15. postage included). These chants were written between 700 AD and 1700 AD (English translations are included with the CD). CD orders can be requested by way of OOA.

Garment Worker Center in Los Angeles

by Michelle Cohen, OOA Volunteer

On January 20, 2001, the long-awaited Garment Worker Center officially opened with speakers, music, balloons, and food. Along with the very well attended "Counter Inauguration" protest happening simultaneously about a mile away, this opening represented something truly positive and hopeful on an otherwise dark day.

According to the Center's brochure, its "mission is to empower garment workers in the Greater Los Angeles area and to work in solidarity with other low wage immigrant workers and disenfranchised communities in the struggle for social, economic, and environmental justice."

One of the center's most important services is its hotline, which garment workers can call if they need help collecting wages or getting information about their rights. Messages can currently be left in Thai, Mandarin, Spanish, or English (Its multicultural focus is one of the GWC's most positive points: It exists to support all garment workers, regardless of language or ethnicity, and currently communicates in six languages). The Center also plans to offer a series of workshops to teach workers their legal rights in the workplace and what they can do to protect themselves from abuses. (Professor Edna Bonacich of U.C. Riverside attended the opening, and plans to develop a political education course for the workers). Another of the GWC's main goals is to simply provide a space for workers to meet and organize. The GWC was started in collabora-

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www.officeoftheamericas.org

ration with Sweatshop Watch (based in Oakland, CA), The Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA), Korean Immigrant Workers Advocate (KIWA), and the Asian Pacific American Legal Center (APALC). Other supporters include the Service Employees International Union and the Liberty Hill Foundation.

The Garment Worker Center is housed in two bright rooms in a building in the heart of the downtown Los Angeles garment district. Their wish list to fully equip their office includes the following items:

Folding chairs
 Desk chairs
 Butcher paper
 Tables
 Office supplies
 Translation equipment
 TV
 VCR
 Digital camera
 Video camera
 Laser printer

They also need volunteers and contributions!

Contact Kimi Lee
 213-748-5866
 1250 S. Los Angeles Street
 Los Angeles, CA 90015
 FAX: 213-748-5876

Email: klee@sweatshopwatch.org

On a Personal Note...

Dear OOA Supporters,

I send this note to answer the many inquiries as to "How is Blase doing?" As you probably know, Blase's health problem began with colon cancer surgery on October 20, 1999 followed by 7 months of chemo therapy. He is now in remission.

A kidney cancer, unrelated to the previous site, was diagnosed in September 2000 and was successfully treated with surgery. He has now been given a "clean bill of health." A CAT-scan every 3 months makes certain he stays that way.

Blase, with his usual indomitable spirit and seemingly endless ability to remain robust, teaches full time at Harbor College and, of course, continues fully as the OOA Director. He's optimistic and we OOA members should be elated as well.

Happy New Year.

Alice Powell
 President, OOA

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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.