

ACHIEVING PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST IS NOT A FOOTBALL GAME!

We gathered at San Francisco's Dolores Park at 11:00 AM on April 20th and by Noon we were marching to Civic Center. It was massive and peaceful. Hundreds of groups were present including the organizers from the International Action Center, the Office of the Americas, the Coalition for World Peace and the Interfaith Communities United for Justice and Peace. Of the many slogans and signs, some very few were bellicose or hateful. We cannot censor the signs of thirty-thousand people in a public place

A football game is a poor analogy for international conflicts. The ball games have a level playing field. There is no level playing field in such armed conflicts and there is no reason to root for the oppressor. It was a joy to see so many ethnicities including Arabs and Jews marching together. Mature people will root for justice and do not want to be a cheering section for their state as some form of idol worship. This truth has been clear in our history ever since the Boston Tea Party.

No matter how strong the rhetoric, the whole world can see that one side has tanks, one side has military bulldozers, one side has fighter planes, helicopters and heavy artillery.

One side has received hundreds of billions of our taxpayer's money.

To associate the quest for justice with anti-Semitism is an affront to millions of Jewish people who are demanding justice

from their government. It is an affront to Jewish people who are marching into Palestine with food and medicine.

Oppressed people will fight back saying, "Give me liberty or give me death!" Profound humiliation, disrespect and marginalization can lead peaceful people to deplorable acts of retaliation. "Those who make non-violent change impossible make violent change inevitable." John F. Kennedy.

On Saturday, March 30, 2002, Security Council resolution 1402 was approved calling for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Palestinian cities. The Security Council reaffirmed previous resolutions and expressed grave concern at the deteriorating situation including the suicide bombings in Israel as well as the attacks on the President of the Palestinian Authority. This new resolution calls upon both parties for an immediate cease-fire.

And now, the fifteen member Security Council of the United Nations, including the United States, holds an emergency meeting insisting on immediate implementation of resolutions demanding an Israeli-Palestinian cease fire and an Israeli withdrawal from Palestinian cities without delay. Stating that Israel's continued military action against Palestinians is both unacceptable and a violation of International Humanitarian Law, this decision was unanimous and binding.

We are either going to have

What's Inside...

- AN OOA VIEW
- Women in Black - Los Angeles
- OOA HONORS GARMENT WORKERS CENTER
- Stand Up & Speak Out, America!

compliance with International Law or non-existence.

The United States and Israel are aware of their responsibility to comply with these resolutions and are flouting international law at the expense of civilians in both Palestine and Israel.

The millions of Jews who oppose the Israeli government's policy of state terror are not anti-Semites. People who hate Arabs are anti-Semites. People who hate Jews are anti-Semites. We are proud to be among both Israelis and Palestinians who are working for a peaceful future.

Another world is possible.

OFFICE OF THE AMERICAS IN ACTION

We shared the podium with Witness for Peace at the University of Southern California to update students on the current situation in Colombia and inviting them to join a delegation planned for June 1-14.

Our friend of many years, Dr. Helen Caldicott, interviewed OOA on her program from KPFA, Berkeley; "The War on Terrorism."

The ACLU of San Pedro invited OOA to present; "The Legacy of Lewis Hill, the Founder of Pacifica Radio", with an emphasis on the reorganization of the network.

We participated in the Confer-

ence of the Associated Writing Program in New Orleans and signed copies of the new book, Guerrillas of Peace on the Air.

One of the year's largest demonstrations including a march through Westwood took place on March 30. We were impressed with the disciplined expressions demanding justice and peace for Palestine/Israel. It was disappointing to see zero coverage by the Los Angeles Times.

BBC interviewed us for its hemispheric coverage of the prisoners of war being held at Guantanamo in Cuba.

We joined the Interfaith Communities United for Justice and Peace at a demonstration demanding prisoner of war status in accord with the Geneva Convention for the Guantanamo detainees. In our presentation at this event we strongly recommended that the homeless of Los Angeles be given prisoner of war status entitling them to food, clothing, shelter and medical care.

We have asked Congressman Dennis Kucinich to use parts of his Prayer for America speech given at Americans for Democratic Action as the basis for a full page ad in the New York Times. He has agreed.

Our gratitude to Paul and Deborah Haggis for inviting their friends in the movie industry to OOA presentations including Reverend James Lawson and Congressman Dennis Kucinich.

After a four year "strike" from KPFK we are grateful to be back doing commentaries on a regular basis.

The leadership of the Coalition for World Peace, The Interfaith Communities for Justice and Peace and the International Action Committee met at length to discuss

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working together more closely.

Theresa spoke on "Building a Peace Movement" with the intent of furthering united actions through constant dialogue among many groups.

Mt. St. Mary's College Graduate Division invited OOA to give a short course on, "The Second Vatican Council and Liberation Theology in Central America." The course was entirely in Spanish and the students were from a host of Latin American countries.

On April 20 we completed the 30,000 person march in San Francisco in solidarity with the 100,000 person march in Washington, D.C. "tired but happy." Both marches were a victory for non-violent and disciplined demands for justice with peace.

We demonstrated with the Women and Men in Black in front of the Israeli Consulate in Los Angeles.

Our latest program on Adelpia Cable TV (produced by Lisa Smithline) is an interview with Yossi Khen, one of the founders of The Jewish Alliance for Justice and a member of the organizing committee of Men and Women in Black. The program will air on Adelpia Education Access channel on Monday, May 13th at 7:30 PM and on Adelpia Public Access channels on Monday May 27th at 7:30 PM.

Whatever we are able to do is sustained by our members!

AN OOA VIEW

OOA is grief stricken over the situation in the Middle East. We feel that the U.N. should be empowered immediately to stop the bloodshed. We deplore the increased occupation and killings by the Israeli Government and we deplore the suicide bombings that are increasing as a result.

We also call on the United

States to stop all military aid to Israel.

The terrible escalation of violence in Israel - Palestine over the last few weeks is a clear and bitter testimony to the utter failure of violence as a means to end violence.

Therefore:

1. We cherish all the efforts of peace-loving people in the Middle East who are struggling for a non-violent resolution to the conflict.

2. We affirm the two-State solution: the State of Israel alongside a viable Palestinian State, with secure borders for both.

3. We welcome the Saudi initiative that calls for Israeli withdrawal to pre-1967 borders and for all Arab States to normalize relations with Israel.

4. We support the deployment of an international peacekeeping force, under the command of the United Nations, to enhance security of both Israelis and Palestinians.

OOA refuses to give in to the despair that marks this relentless conflict. We insist on being among those who hope and pray and work for peace with justice. It would be a betrayal of everything we believe about the sacredness of humanity if we were to lose faith in the possibility that Israelis and Palestinians can find a way to live in peace. We are committed to being among those who strive to reduce the distrust, hopelessness and fear that block the way.

Women in Black - Los Angeles

The Office of the Americas is proud to have a close working relationship with Women (and Men) in Black - Los Angeles, one

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of the many groups working towards a peaceful resolution in Israel and Palestine. Women in Black - Los Angeles holds monthly vigils, and many OOA members expressed their support by standing with signs calling for an end to the occupation and a peaceful and just solution in front of the Israeli Consulate on Wilshire Blvd.

OOA HONORS GARMENT WORKERS CENTER

Last Fall, 19 garment workers from six factories who sewed for the popular women's clothing line Forever 21 announced an official boycott of the company. The workers are owed hundreds of thousands of dollars in back wages due to minimum wage and overtime pay violations. They worked long hours in unsafe and unsanitary conditions, and some workers were fired for speaking out against these conditions.

With estimated earnings of over \$400 million last year, Forever 21 stands at the top of the hierarchy of power in the garment industry and has the greatest ability to ensure the workers' wages and to improve conditions in the factories they do business with.

Workers originally attempted to negotiate directly with the management of Forever 21. However, Forever 21's refusal to negotiate, to offer a just settlement and to cooperate in the state investigation of the workers' claims prompted workers to step up the pressure and file a lawsuit in November of 2001 with the help of the Asian Pacific American Legal Center. The workers seek to be awarded unpaid wages, damages and penalties, in addition to an assurance that Forever 21 cease using sweatshop labor.

In addition the workers have organized weekly protests that take

place every Saturday afternoon outside of Forever 21 stores. Every week more and more people turn out for the actions and local student and community support has grown exponentially. Many workers have also joined Garment Worker Center and Sweatshop Watch staffers at university and high school functions in an effort to tell young people their stories.

Unfortunately, on March 4, Federal Judge Manuel Real granted a Forever 21 motion to dismiss parts of the workers' lawsuit. The workers are appealing the motion to dismiss and have remained united to appeal Judge Real's decision.

On March 6, in a shameless effort to squelch free speech and prevent the workers' stories from coming to light, Forever 21 filed a defamation lawsuit against the Garment Worker Center, Sweatshop Watch, CHIRLA and the workers.

Please lend your support to the workers battle for justice by participating in the boycott and calling Forever 21 to demand that they pay the garment workers what they are owed. Their number is (213)-747-2121. For more info go to www.sweatshopwatch.org.

Stand Up & Speak Out, America! Say "No" to Endless Wars Abroad & Erosion of Our Civil Lib- erties At Home! (A Mes- sage to Our Fellow Americans)

We Are Deeply Alarmed at the BushAdministration's Response to September 11th

Like decent human beings everywhere, we condemn the murderous attacks on September 11th, and we mourn the dead. But our grief must not be misused by our government to bring even more

grief to the rest of the world and, in the process, destroy our own civil liberties, which are the touchstones of this and every democracy.

Under the cover of our grief, the Bush Administration has already brought about the deaths of more innocent civilians abroad than died on September 11th in America, and has threatened war and other reprisals against an ever-growing list of other nations.

Under the cover of our grief the Administration has targeted thousands of immigrants from Arab and Muslim countries and held hundreds in jail without benefit of a trial, or the filing of any criminal charges, all in violation of the Fifth and Sixth Amendments.

Under the cover of our grief the Administration has dismembered long-standing civil liberties and opened the door to police spying and to neighbors spying on neighbors, all in violation of the Fourth Amendment.

Under the cover of our grief the Administration has attacked the patriotism of anyone who has dared to question the Administration's plans for an expanded and seemingly permanent war and permanent suspension of our Constitutional rights, all in violation of the First Amendment.

Congressman Dennis Kucinich, of Ohio, is Right

As Congressman Dennis Kucinich, of Ohio, has said, when Congress authorized the Bush Administration to respond to the September 11th attacks with force, it did not authorize an invasion of Iraq, or Iran, or North Korea, or the sending of US troops to the Philippines, or the repeal of the Bill of Rights. It did not, as the Congressman says, "authorize the administration to wage war anytime, anywhere, anyhow it pleases. We did not authorize war without end."

The Administrations' Response to September 11th Has Made Us Less Safe

The Bush Administration's response to September 11th has, sadly, only served to make the people of this country less safe, not more safe.

"Less safe," because its policy of ever-widening war and refusal to look at how U.S. foreign policy impacts much of the rest of the world, can only serve to replenish the pool of desperate people, willing to kill and die for their cause. "Less safe," because rather than reduce the poverty, inequity and hopelessness that breeds terrorism, its response to September 11th can only increase it. "Less safe," because its response domestically is destroying our freedoms and sowing prejudice and fear at home, thereby dividing us and making us weaker as a people.

What Would Make Us Safer

What this nation should do to enhance our safety is promote the strengthening of international institutions and commit itself to international cooperation; we should abandon our role as the world's number one exporter in military weapons; we should end our

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support for corrupt and repressive regimes; we should cease our covert operations that undermine the sovereignty of other nations; and we should decrease our dependency on foreign oil.

An Urgent Call to Speak Out Now!

Our nation is now on a dangerous path that can only lead to more war, more death and destruction, and a further erosion of our Constitutional rights. Therefore, now is the time when people in our nation who can see the danger, must stand up and be counted; must stand up and say, "no more war abroad, no more racial profiling and no more erosion of civil liberties at home."

Please Join This Appeal to Reason

To all who share our concern for our nation and for our world, we say, "please join us...please add your name to ours...together we can reverse the current tide of war and repression...together we can bring America back to its senses!"

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I would like to join the Urgent Action Network.

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