

THE WORLD'S LARGEST PREEMPTIVE PEACE AND JUSTICE MOVEMENT CONFRONTS MILITARISM

As we presented the position of the Office of the Americas before some 500,000 people in Washington, D.C. it was clear that congratulations to the participants were in order. We stressed what we had learned in Latin America, that the struggle itself is the victory.

Speaking outdoors at some 10 degrees below freezing, it was necessary to keep things brief. Therefore I would like to expand on some of the points made there.

Militarism is destroying the United States of America.

To understand militarism in terms of 2003 we look to an article in the *New Political Science*, Volume 24, Number 1, 2002 by Chalmers Johnson, "American Militarism and Blowback: the Costs of Letting the Pentagon Dominate Foreign Policy."

By militarism, I mean the phenomenon in which a nation's armed services come to put their institutional preservation ahead of effectiveness in achieving national security or a commitment to the integrity of the governmental structure of which they are a part. Related to this internal transformation of the military is the enlargement and progressive displacement by the military of all other institutions within a government for the conduct of relations with other nations. A sign of the advent of militarism is a nation's relying on its armed forces for numerous tasks for which they are unqualified, indeed their particular capabilities almost guaranteeing to make a problematic situation worse. Classical tools of international relations, such as diplomacy, foreign aid, international education, and the making of one's country a model for international behavior, atrophy as the carrier task force and cruise missiles become the first choices as instruments to solve global problems. Militarism portends that the armed services have or are about to pass beyond effective political control and become the de facto or explicit governing class of a society.

Unless we act militarism will destroy the planet.

The military of the world at peace is the greatest single threat to the environment. The planet is not sustainable with the military at war.

The war system is a slave system.

How do you speak to a slave? "Keep your mouth shut, do what you are told and follow orders." And that is how the war system speaks to all of us who have been a part of it.

Therefore, the time has come to vigil and to protest in each and every city and town in the United States every day.

We will divide up that labor as we vigil and protest daily in our communities. Continue your victory over hate, your victory over greed, your victory over ignorance, your victory over presidential lies. Any incompetent can start a war. Let us abolish the war system and continue to build a peace system. Thy kingdom come. Thy

will be done on earth!

In the wake of the demonstrations in Washington, D.C. and San Francisco we are pained to hear the February 5, 2003, presentation of Secretary of State Colin Powell to the United Nations. His words are a reflection of what is described above as militarism. Powell was a major participant in events such as covering up our atrocities in the

Vietnam War, the Iran-Contra scandal, the Invasion of Panama, the Gulf War and the public relations battle during the Florida recount of 2000. Norman Solomon, executive director of the Institute for Public Accuracy says, "Contrary to popular belief, Powell has been a powerful asset for Washington policy makers committed to launching an all-out war on Iraq." We recommend Norman Solomon's latest book, "Target Iraq" www.context-books.com/newF.html.

In his U.N. speech Powell talks about terror while planning terror. He talks about a miniscule possibility of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq while he is prepared to unleash infinite weapons of mass destruction. Powell ignores the fact which all sober heads have upheld, our war in Iraq will gravely increase the level of international terror at home and abroad.

A REFLECTION ON NUREMBERG

These are the words of Supreme Court Justice Robert L. Jackson, Chief US Prosecutor at the Nuremberg Tribunal August 12, 1945: "We must make clear to the Germans that the wrong for which their fallen leaders are on trial is not that they lost the war, but that they started it. And we must not allow ourselves to be drawn into a trial of the causes of the war, for our position is that no grievances or policies will justify resort to aggressive war. It is utterly renounced and condemned as an instrument of policy."

And in support of Justice Jackson, Dr. Andreas Toupadakis, who served as a scientist at Los Alamos and Lawrence Livermore reminds us of the erroneous thinking that surrounds our contemporary war mania.

What is lately often heard are phrases like: "We would support a US-led unilateral strike on Iraq only with UN endorsement." Or, "We would support a unilateral invasion if clear evidence emerged that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction." Or, "There should not be a war with Iraq because there is no proof that Iraq was involved with the 9/11 terrorist attack." And the list goes on.

But all these people with good intention fail to see the lethal trap before their eyes. If the war machine has decided to wage another aggressive war against another nation, it will sooner or later find a reason to justify the war if people ask for one. At the end, if it does not find one, it will create one. And that will not be the first time. What if the United Nations Security Council says tomorrow that it is okay to go to war? What if the inspectors find some nuclear material? Would one gram of plutonium or a ton of it be enough to start the war? What if someone comes and says that there is a link between 9/11 and Iraq? (And of course that person most likely would be speaking "on condition of anonymity.") What then? Should the war start?

**Calling all activists! It
will take all of us to
stop this war! Join the
OOA volunteer crew.
WE NEED YOU!**

We need to realize that there is absolutely no justification for this war. This war not only risks global catastrophe because it involves the boiling region of the Middle East, an area perhaps more unstable than any other in the world, but it is also immoral and illegal. It is immoral because it punished millions of innocent civilians ten years ago, has been punishing them continually since that time, and will punish them again. ...It is illegal because Congress gave the illegal authority to the President of the United States to commit aggressive war. For this same kind of war, Nazi and Japanese leaders were held accountable at the Nuremberg and Tokyo trials following World War II. It is also illegal under international law because there is no evidence that Iraq plans to attack the United States.

Aggressive war is one of the most serious transgressions of international law. Nothing but organized non-violence can check the organized violence of the American government for now and in the future, if there is going to be a future.

Sometimes political speeches require translation. Here is a rough translation of the State of the Union Speech by George W. Bush.

ODE TO A SOMNOLENT CONGRESS

My fellow Americans.

Clap Clap Clap.

Help me to use weapons of mass destruction against Iraq

Clap Clap Clap.

Help me to make first use of nuclear weapons.

Clap Clap Clap.

Help me to start things off with 800 cruise missiles directed at civilians.

Clap Clap Clap.

Help me to destroy the Constitution of the United States

Clap Clap Clap.

Help me to ignore all International Law.

Clap Clap Clap.

Promise you will believe every lie I have told you.

Clap Clap Clap.

And if you accept these things I will give you a cookie.

Clap Clap Clap.

Clap Clap Clap.

Clap Clap Clap.

OFFICE OF THE AMERICAS IN ACTION

One of the most significant achievements has been working to pull together a Coalition of Coalitions for the January 11th demonstration in Los Angeles. The Coalition for World Peace, ANSWER, Not in Our Name and the Interfaith Communities United for Justice and Peace worked to create one of the largest gatherings in Los Angeles since the Vietnam War. This same Coalition of Coalitions is now building an even larger demonstration for February 15th.

Recent Media

Channel 36 which reaches some 700,000 homes in the Los Angeles area has begun using OOA programming. Our program WORLD FOCUS on ADELPHIA Cable has included interviews with poet Steve Connell, actor David Clennon and producer Robert Greenwald. Our program WORLD FOCUS on Pacifica (KPFK, Los Angeles, 90.7 FM) has included interviews with Rabbi Haim Dov Beliak, Producer Robert Greenwald, War hero, anti-war activist Ron Kovic, filmmakers Gerard Ungerman and Audry Brohy, historian Howard Zinn, Executive Director of Voices in the Wilderness, Kathy Kelly, Member of the Guatemalan Congress Alfonso Bauer Paiz, Coalition of World Peace representative Elke Heitmeyer, Director of Communications for the Muslim Public Affairs Council Sarah Eltantawi, Attorney Steven Rohde, Rev. Sandra Olewine, United Methodist Liaison in Jerusalem, Attorney Ann Fagan Ginger, Mario Hardy of the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors, Mark Weisbrot, Co-director of the Center for Economic and Policy Research in Washington, D.C., Chalmers Johnson, the author of Blowback, the Costs and Consequences of American Empire, Reverend James Lawson and Actor Edward Asner, Attorney Brian Conannon and organizer of the International Human Rights March in Palestine, Torill Eide.

Various Speaking Engagements

- San Diego Peace Coalition,
- Valley Magnet Alternative School for Veteran's Day
- UCLA., Welcome to Pastors for Peace Caravan in Los Angeles,
- Farmer's Kitchen in Westwood
- Midnight Special Bookstore in Santa Monica
- The Onion Church
- Washington D.C. Mass Mobilization of January 18, 2003
- Los Angeles Demonstration of January 11, 2003
- The Rector's Forum at All Saints Church in Pasadena,
- SGI Buddhist Center,
- Convention of California Teacher's Association,
- The Oasis Program, New Projects:
- Formation of a national Haiti Coalition.
- Interviews with Catholic Press regarding Liberation Theology
- Interview of OOA by WBAI in New York City.
- Interviews for new documentary film on the Junior ROTC.

TAKING IT TO THE STREETS

Lisa Smithline

In the month of January we saw thousands take to the streets, rejecting the myth that there is overwhelming support for the administration's plans to invade Iraq. While mainstream media continues to downplay the growing peace movement, we have become harder to ignore. January 11 was the largest peace rally

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.

in Los Angeles since the Vietnam War. The four major coalitions in Los Angeles, ANSWER, Coalition for World Peace, Interfaith Communities United for Justice and Peace, and Not in Our Name, have come together to build the largest Peace Movement in LA history. We marched 25,000 strong, a diverse group from all parts of the city, uniting to say, "No War on Iraq!" On January 18 we saw 200,000 in San Francisco and 500,000 in Washington DC, with numbers now too large to ignore. The media tides began to turn. On January 19 we saw front-page articles in the Washington Post, The New York Times, San Francisco Chronicle, and even USA today! And we continue to grow.

There is a place for everyone in this growing Peace Movement. We march in the streets. We fax and e-mail our senators, congress-people, and city council members. We sign petitions and write letters to the editor. Computer organizing has taken on a life of its own with groups like MoveOn.org and TrueMajority.com establishing a way to reach millions by a stroke on the keyboard. Office of the Americas' website offers valuable information, where to go, when, and why. Many others do the same. Check www.officeoftheamericas.org, www.coalitionforworldpeace.org, www.answerla.org, www.icujp.org, and www.unitedforpeace.org to learn of the many ways you can make a difference.

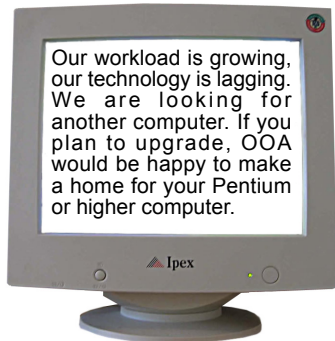
Over 60 cities nationwide have passed resolutions opposing a war on Iraq. Watch Los Angeles: hopefully we'll join this number soon! Civic and religious leaders, educators, peace activists, business leaders and individuals from all sectors are coming together across the country to say "no" to President Bush's call for war.

In the Los Angeles area alone there are over thirty regular peace vigils. The Coalition for World Peace had its first vigil the Sunday after 9/11/01 and soon after began regular weekly vigils. These afternoon and evening events have become a new way for neighborhoods to come together and be visible as they take to their streets. Neighbors for Peace and Justice started in the Silverlake area, and at last count they had nine affinity groups meeting on corners all over the city, from Hollywood to Studio City. Interfaith Communities United for Justice and Peace has three regular weekly vigils, on Fairfax and Third every Saturday, Friday afternoons in Pasadena, and in the West Valley every Sunday. Check www.icujp.org for a growing list of local vigils. Find one near you!

Full-page ads denouncing the War on Iraq and the Patriot Act have become regular occurrences. Office of the Americas, Americans Against the War With Iraq, (AAWWI) Not in Our Name, and many others have placed many creative ads in the Los Angeles Times and New York Times, getting our message out to millions.

Actors, writers, producers and directors have begun to lend their unique voice to the ever-growing numbers voicing dissent. Co-chairs Robert Greenwald and Mike Farrell have organized a new group, Artists United to Win Without War, dedicated to adding artist's voices to those who say, "There is no need for war." These brave artists have stood in front of television cameras, sent petitions, and spoken at demonstrations, reaching thousands of people with their dynamic voices.

**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 on page 4.**



Visit OOA's website:
www.officeoftheamericas.org

Each of us can make a difference. Alice Powell, member of the OOA Board of Directors, is an inspiration to us all. She has funded the production of 1000's of the "War is Not the Answer" bumper stickers and has built a campaign that is activating hundreds of people. See the enclosed flyer, perhaps you can join her or start your own action.

In times like these, it would be easy to become disheartened and depressed with the constant temptation to give up and bury our heads in the sand. But with so many accomplishments and opportunities, there is no time to get depressed, there is just way too much to do! Remember... "Don't Mourn, Organize!" "When people decide they want to be free... there is nothing that can stop them." Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

Colombia: A Country in Crisis

Gail Phares

"Peace is the result of justice." We were told by Ricardo Esquivia, an AfroColombian Mennonite pastor, as we began our visit to Colombia to assess the impact of the nearly \$2 billion dollars given to Colombia by the United States as part of Plan Colombia. "What the subsistence farmers need in southern Colombia are agronomists and support for alternative crops so they can improve their income."

Our Witness for Peace delegation to 26 arrived in Colombia just as US Special Forces from Ft. Bragg arrived to train Colombian troops to protest an oil pipeline. Our groups included environmental scientists, journalists, a physician, an attorney, pastors, labor and human rights activists. We would spend the next ten days speaking with labor, church, Colombian government officials, the US Embassy to assess the impact of US tax dollars on the people of Colombia.

When Congress first approved Plan Colombia back in 2000, we were told that it would accomplish a number of objectives. First it would reduce drug supply here in the US. We found that on the contrary drug cultivation in Colombia increased 25% last year despite the fumigation of over 200,000 acres of land, according to the US government's own statistics. US tax dollars had paid for the spraying of herbicides on the Amazon Basin. The aggressive aerial spraying on small subsistence farmer's homes, crops and water supply has destroyed fishponds, poultry farms, food crops and the natural medicines of the farmers and indigenous peoples. Bishop Fabian of Sibundoy and Macoa told us, "Fumigations are not the right way to eliminate drugs. The remedy is worse than the illness. Fumigation causes ecological destruction. If the money spent on aerial spraying were invested in economic alternatives, there would not be a drug problem."

The second goal of Plan Colombia was to curb violence. We found that since 2000, civilian deaths in Colombia have increased from 12 to 20 per day. The US State Department human rights report noted that in 2002 Colombia's human rights record "remained poor, government security forces continued to commit serious abuses, including extra judicial killings. Members of the Colombian security forces collaborated with the paramilitary groups." These groups committed 70% of the human rights abuses against civilians. According to the Colombian Educator's Union, favorite targets of Colombian paramilitaries are teachers. Of the 21 murders of trade unionists in November alone, 14 were teachers, some of who were killed in front of their students.

Another reason given for funding Plan Colombia was to restore the rule of law. Community leaders in the city of Medellin told us that brutal right-wing paramilitary groups, who regularly kill and threaten Colombian civilians, have grown by 540% since 1996. Just before we arrived in Colombia in January, paramilitary groups working closely with Colombian mili-

tary and police forces invaded a populous neighborhood on the edge of Medellin arresting 62 community leaders. The people live in fear. One Colombian government official in the human rights office told us, "The Uribe government is not interested in human rights." Ricardo Vargas, a drug policy expert told us, "The last thing Colombia needs is an authoritarian state which is what President Uribe is developing with strong support the United States government."

The fourth goal of Plan Colombia we were told is to strengthen democracy. Since the new hard-line government of President Uribe took power, he has cracked down on basic democratic civil rights, allowing arrests and searches without a warrant and limiting freedom of assembly and movement. This is what our tax dollars are supporting.

So as US Special Forces arrive in Colombia to train Colombian troops to protect Occidental Petroleum we ask is this a good use of US tax dollars? The United States is getting more and more involved in a decades old civil war. Occidental Petroleum spent years and lots of money lobbying to achieve first funding for Plan Colombia and then a proposal for \$98 million of taxpayer money and arm Colombian battalions to protect its pipeline in Arauca. This amounts to a subsidy of \$3 per barrel for Oxy's oil. This policy will put more money in the hands of Colombian military which has one of the worst human rights records in the hemisphere.

Are we US citizens to train and equip army battalions to protect the assets of every US company doing business in a dangerous foreign country? US support for a negotiated end the conflict, and real pressure on the Colombian government to break ties with the paramilitaries, will do much more to protect civilians than an escalated war. Alternative development programs to help farmers transition from growing drug crops and expanded treatment programs for drug addicts in the US will do more to reduce the violence that surrounds drug production and drug abuse. Support for judicial reforms encourages the rule of law and combats corruption.

Ricardo Esquivia told us, "The people of the United States pay taxes. You can change US policy towards Colombia. You bring us hope. You

come to listen and to learn from us. Go home and tell your government and communities that we are good people, a people of great tenderness. We want to live in peace. Stop sending money for war."

Gail S. Phares is a Latin American specialist and a founder of Witness for Peace. She visited Colombia for the fourth time January 17-27, 2003.

Greg Palast, OOA Peace and Justice Award Winner, returns to Los Angeles, **Sunday February 23**, to launch the publication of the New Special US edition of his book, *The Best Democracy Money Can Buy*, and raise funds for Pacifica Radio.

A reporter with BBC News and the Guardian of London, Palast is called, "the most important investigative reporter of our time" (Tribune Magazine UK) yet is barely known in the USA, despite having broken some of the biggest stories of the past decade, including the details of the theft of the election in Florida. At our January awards dinner, Palast brought the crowd to its feet with his funny, insightful stories of the frightening buffoonery of Bush's War on Terror. He'll have a whole lot more taken from his latest BBC investigations and his book, an LA Times bestseller.

Sunday, February 23
Beverly Garland Hotel, Universal City
7:30pm.

Note: Check Greg's website, gregpalast.com, or the KPFFK website, KPFFK.org, as the venue or time may change.

IN MEMORIAM

Maureen (Renee) Frances Carey Haun Former Board Member of the Office of the Americas, Served with Theresa as a Maryknoll Sister in Chile, Wife of Luis Becerra, Mother of Eric and Risa.

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	Crystal & 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

OOA Board Members

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

* Advisory Board

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.

I would like to join the Urgent Action Network.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip: _____

FAX: _____ Email: _____