

SILENCE IS COMPLICITY

We join our board members Noam Chomsky and Howard Zinn together with scholars Edward Herman and Edward Said in:

A CALL TO ACTION ON SANCTIONS AND THE U.S. WAR AGAINST THE PEOPLE OF IRAQ

At the end of 1998, the United States once again rained bombs on the people of Iraq. But even when the bombs stop falling, the U.S. war against the people of Iraq continues through the harsh economic sanctions. This is a call to action to end the bombing and the sanctions.

This month U.S. policy will kill 4,500 children under the age of five in Iraq, according to UN studies, just as it did last month and the month before that, all the way back to 1991. Since the end of the Gulf War, at least hundreds of thousands—maybe more than one million—Iraqis have died as a direct result of the UN sanctions on Iraq, which are a direct result of U.S. policy.

This is not foreign policy—it is sanctioned mass-murder that is nearing holocaust proportions. If we remain silent, we are condoning a genocide that is being perpetrated in the name of peace in the Middle East, a mass slaughter that is being perpetrated in our name.

The time has come for a call to action to people of conscience. We are past the point where silence is passive consent—when a crime reaches these proportions, silence is complicity. There are several tasks ahead of us.

First, we must organize and make this issue a priority, just as Americans organized to stop the war in Vietnam, and to protest U.S. policies in Central America and South Africa. We need a national campaign to lift the sanctions.

This kind of work has already begun, and those efforts need our help. For the past several years, individuals and groups have been delivering medicine and other supplies to Iraq in defiance of the U.S. blockade. Now, members of one of those groups, Voices in the Wilderness in Chicago, have been threatened with massive fines by the federal government for "exportation of donated goods, including medical supplies and toys, to Iraq absent specific prior authorization." Our government is harassing a peace group that takes medicine and toys to dying children; we owe these courageous activists our support.

Such a campaign is not equivalent to support for the regime of Saddam Hussein. To oppose these sanctions is to support the Iraqi people. The people are suffering because of the actions of both the Iraqi and U.S. governments, but our moral responsibility lies here in the United States, to counter the hypocrisy and inhumanity of our leaders.

Media Role

Also, there has been a virtual embargo on news and the effects of the sanctions in the mainstream media. For the most part, the American people do not know what evil is being carried out in our name. We must continue to apply pressure on journalists at all levels—from our local papers to the network news—to cover this tragedy. We should overwhelm the major press with letters to the editor and put pressure on journalists to cover the story.

And we must realize this could be a long struggle. Preparations should begin for all the possible strategies, including civil disobedience once a sufficient number of people are committed. Direct action forcing a moral accounting is going to be necessary.

Whatever else we are doing, we should treat this as an emergency and put it at the top of our agenda. Existing groups can work on the issue, new groups may be formed, and various networks need to be built.

Without action by us, the horrors will go on, the children will continue to die. We must appeal to the natural sympathies of the American people, who will respond if they know what is happening. We must therefore bring this issue, in every way we can, to national attention. The only way to avoid complicity in this crime is to do everything we can, and much more than we have been doing, to end the sanctions on Iraq. This issue must be discussed in every household and every public forum across the country.

OOA Board Members

Edward Asner
*Carolyn Berry
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
Haskell Wexler
*Don White
*Howard Zinn, Ph.D.

* Advisory Board

OFFICE OF THE AMERICAS IN ACTION

PRAXIS refers to action that is taken after reflection and decision. Here are some of our recent examples:

- We shared in four demonstrations to denounce the ongoing massacres in Iraq. Our commercial media was marked by misinformation, hype and war-mongering stupidity. The owners of the presses, who enjoy "freedom of the press," are precisely the ones who profit from the war business. The ever increasing military waste is currently 49% of the annual budget. This percentage is achieved by eliminating any trust funds like Social Security from the budget analysis. Trust funds are improperly included in the budget to give the appearance of a smaller percentage of the total for military waste.

For some understanding of the profound immorality and illegality of our attacks on Iraq, we recommend: *Challenge to Genocide, Let Iraq Live*, Ramsey Clark and others, International Action Center, 1998. 39 West 14th Street, Suite 206, New York, N.Y. 10011 212/633-6646 FAX 212/633-2889 Email: iacenter@iacenter.org Web: <http://www.iacenter.org>

Lori Berenson

- Meeting in Washington, D.C. to form the National Committee to FREE LORI BERENSON. Coordinators came from throughout the United States to meet, to lobby and to demonstrate at the White House.



Theresa led a meeting on organizational structure. Blase spoke at the White House Rally. Washington's icy streets symbolized our reception by the Clinton Administration. We are happy to report that the Organization of American States announced that its

Inter-American Commission has ruled that Lori's petition against the government of Peru for lack of due process and violations of her human rights is admissible and the case has advanced to the next level. Lori remains in solitary confinement since October 7, 1998. We ask you to write to President Alberto Fujimori calling on him to end her "cruel, inhumane, and degrading punishment" that is in violation of Article 5 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Please see the "Urgent Action" on her website: www.FREELORI.ORG

- In January, 1999, we return once again to Chiapas to meet with the progressive members of the churches, and to walk in pilgrimage through some shattered communities. OOA will videotape this delegation.

Frequent Flyer Miles Needed

for OOA's many national and international trips.

Candlelight Vigil

- In similar fashion we participated in a candlelight pilgrimage through a neighborhood of Santa Monica which has experienced eighteen gang related murders. One thousand people marched in this gathering.
- Met with Pilar Martinez from the Fundacion Justicia y Amor in Mexico City regarding hospital assistance in Chiapas.

Acorn

- Met with ACORN (Association of Communities Organized for Reform Now) leaders regarding the devastation caused by "Welfare Reform" in the United States. OOA is lending much of its organizational and contact resources to help bring about true welfare reform.
- Spoke at Midnight Special Bookstore on the Unnecessary Wars in Iraq and Chiapas, together with Saul Landau.
- Spoke in opposition to the bombing of Iraq at Pasadena City Hall.

Walmart

- Spoke at WALMART demonstration in Van Nuys regarding slave-like conditions of sweat shops in Honduras.
- Presented "An Evening in Solidarity with Lori Berenson" together with Patricia Todd at the Peace Center in Los Angeles.

Industrial Area Foundation

- Met with the Industrial Area Foundation regarding peace-making in local neighborhoods. A number of gang prevention groups have been formed and OOA is

Needed: plain paper FAX in excellent working condition.

actively participating in these efforts. Among other goals, our objective is to root out the causes of gang recruitment. We are working with Senator Tom Hayden's office as well as the Westside Organizing Committee to address these issues.

- OOA continues to work with the Hotel Workers Union and on Living Wage ordinances.
- Spoke to students at Chapman University after presentation of the film ZAPATISTA.
- Bill Pietz represented OOA at Hurricane Mitch Relief Concert, Saddleback College.
- Spoke at All Saints Church in Pasadena regarding the role of progressive churches in the Americas.
- Spoke to MECHA members at Irvine Valley College after presentation of the film ZAPATISTA.

Senate Hearing

- Participated in California State Senate Hearing on gang warfare and peace-making.

Amnesty International

- Spoke to Santa Barbara Chapter of Amnesty International regarding Latin American conflicts and the case of Lori Berenson as a link to thousands of others who are unjustly imprisoned.

World Focus

- Taped two WORLD FOCUS television programs with Gary Cox of Media One. The issues are: the relief effort directed at Hurricane Mitch, conditions for peace in Colombia and the conflict in Chiapas.
- Fifteenth Anniversary of the Office of the Americas was held at Holman United Methodist Church. It was surely our best event ever. We honored Amy Goodman of Pacifica News and Jesuit Father Greg Boyle of Homeboy Industries.

Pastors for Peace

- Met Pastors for Peace Caravan in San Bernardino and presented aid for victims of Hurricane Mitch. The caravan went on to Chiapas and Nicaragua.
- Conferred with Father Miguel d'Escoto (former Foreign Minister of Nicaragua) on the strategy of aid for hurricane victims.
- Spoke and dialogued with audience after the performance of "De Donde," a play about the INS directed by Andrew Griggs and performed by the students of California State University, Long Beach.
- Greeted Fernando Remirez de Estenoz, First Deputy Minister of the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs and

Chief of the Cuban Interest Section.

- Film maker Nettie Wild who directed "A Place Called Chiapas" asks OOA to help get an audience to see the film as part of the American Film Institute Festival. She spoke to a packed house at the Monica II Theatre. A reception was held for her after the showing at the home of board member Alice Powell.
- "Inside the School of the Assassins," a second documentary about the School of the Americas and its abuses, aired on KCET after much pressure from many sources.

Visit OOA's WEBSITE!
<http://www.officeoftheamericas.org>

Gang Peace

- We participated in a gathering for gang peace at Holman United Methodist Church. Many former and current gang member shared ideas.
- Conducted a brief retreat at the Claretian Center for members of the Urban Ministry from Claremont School of Theology.
- Spoke to members of the Mexico Solidarity Network at the Thomas Paine Coffee House in San Diego and to the congregation of Christ the King Church.
- In conjunction with the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, OOA hosted the 15th annual Encuentro on the Americas with a focus on Chiapas, Cuba and Colombia.
- Presentation to Amnesty International at Mount Saint Mary's College on the role of women in Chiapas.
- Conducted a memorial service for David Chain who was killed in his efforts to save California's ancient forests.
- "Reflections on Vatican II" aired nationally on PBS. OOA worked as advisers to the Director, Mark Birnbaum.
- Participated in hemispheric ecumenical gathering in Riobamba, Ecuador. "The Cry of Riobamba," written by the participants, demands the cancellation of international debts.
- Met with Secretary General of Amnesty International, Pierre Sane, regarding the case of Lori Berenson. He assured us he would personally review the file when he returned to London.

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.

Are you an Office of the Americas Member?
If we have not heard from you in the past year, please renew your membership. See form on page 4.

HAGUE PEACE CONFERENCE



Office of the Americas joins with thousands of like-minded people throughout the world who share our "secret agenda" of abolishing the war system.

1999 marks the 100th Anniversary of the First International Peace Conference at the Hague. The Hague Appeal for Peace will take place from May 11-15. OOA intends to be there to form a "new diplomacy" between citizens, governments and international organizations. Together we will focus on delegitimizing armed conflict and creating a culture of peace for the 21st century.

If you are interested in this historic conference check the Hague Appeal for Peace website at:
<http://www.haguepeace.org>.

U.S. Office is:
The Hague Appeal for Peace
c/oWFM
777 UN Plaza
New York, N.Y. 10017
Telephone: 212/687-2623 FAX: 212/599-1332

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

Most of the social problems we confront today are related to the dramatic absence of distributive justice.

Many workers are living intolerable lives as they receive a totally inadequate "legal minimum wage," while others are raking in more in an hour than such workers earn in a month.

How can we promote something even approaching what is fair?

In Los Angeles, a working person actually needs approximately \$15 per hour to survive. Why can't we start by accepting this as our concept of a "Minimum Living Wage?" While we work for a systemal change in the wage laws of our country, we can start by making a commitment to pay everyone who works for us \$15 per hour.

Would this mean that any of would go hungry as we saw our gardeners, house-cleaners and laborers rejoice in the wake of an adequate income?

Elizabeth Seton once said, "Live simply that others may simply live." It may not be the whole answer but it is a start. If we want peace, we must work for justice.

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

Become an Office of the Americas Sustainer or Member

One of the most important sources of support for the Office of the Americas is sustainer contributions. Sustainers help us through lean periods, make it possible for us to plan effectively and have the financial base to continue our programs for peace and justice. Keep OOA in action! Send a regular pledge (which you can cancel at any time).

Sustainers Receive: OOA's quarterly newsletter, FOCUS, which has reports on current issues and OOA's actions regarding the issues together with reminders of legislative action. We also send monthly updates and analyses as well as invitations to special events.

Founders and Patrons Receive: All of the above plus free attendance at the OOA Anniversary Celebration and a listing in our Anniversary Journal.

Members Receive: OOA's quarterly newsletter.

All of the above receive the satisfaction of being part of an international movement for peace and justice.

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: _____