

SIXTEENTH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF THE OFFICE OF THE AMERICAS, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 1999!

Celebrate our sixteenth year with us! Sometimes the curious ask us if we are "faithbased." We really can't think of anything else on which this operation could be based. Luck? No. Money? No. Power? No. An act of faith? Yes.

We will honor local and international leaders who have based their lives on peace, justice, joy, love, endurance, faith and fortitude.

HONOREES:

Maria Elena Durazo, President of Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees, Local 11 for her struggle to insist on human dignity for all working people.

Kathy Kelly, a founder of Voices in the Wilderness which has heroically challenged nine years of U.S. military aggression in Iraq and called the world's attention to a murderous embargo which is taking the lives of 4,000 children each month.

Reverend James Lawson, Pastor Emeritus of Holman United Methodist Church, who served as a personal mentor to Dr. Martin Luther King and to decades of leaders who followed in the struggle for peace and justice (See David Halberstram's new book, "The Children").**

Former Attorney General Ramsey Clark, Actor Martin Sheen and Cinematographer Haskell Wexler will present awards. Actors Edward Asner and Mimi Kennedy will M.C. Celebrate the sixteenth anniversary with us on Saturday, November 13, 1999 at:

HOLMAN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
3320 West Adams Blvd.
(between Crenshaw and Arlington)
Los Angeles, California 90018

JUST HOW MANY WARS SHOULD THE AMERICAN PEOPLE FORGET?

A GROUND WAR IN COLOMBIA?

Can you imagine? The President of Colombia, Andres Pastrana wants to continue peace talks with the rebels in his country. The United Nations is willing to act as mediator. But our diplomats have made it clear to the President of Colombia that he must end the peace talks or the United States will cut off aid. Once again a blatantly irrational policy is pouring gasoline on the smoldering fires of social conflict.

Follow the logic: Narco-guerrillas control the drug business. If we stop the narco-guerrillas we will win the war on drugs. There is just one small problem with this "logic." It is based on false information. The drug business is in the hands of the oligarchy of Colombia, the Army of Colombia, the para-military of Colombia and the Customs Offices of Colombia. Drug shipments have even been sent by diplomatic pouch from the U.S. Embassy in Bogota to the U.S.

In areas of Colombia under rebel control, people are taxed for growing coca or any other crop. The fact remains, however, that complete elimination of the rebel forces would have little or no impact on the massive Colombian drug trade. Just as people living in extreme poverty were labeled "communist" in Central America and were thereby "O.K. to kill," now in Colombia, we can expect to see the massacre of similar numbers falsely tagged as narco-guerrillas.

In the United States and in Colombia profit driven policy makers refuse to respond to blatant social crimes of misery, ignorance and disease. They will once again kill many and solve nothing. Methamphetamine and hundreds of other narcotic substances do not come from Colombia. They are manufactured right here in the United States. They will continue to addict millions until our "Drug Czar" focuses on rehabilitation instead of counter-insurgency.

HEALTHY CHILDREN OBJECT

We were honored to meet the young people from Colombia who spearheaded a Children's vote for peace in their homeland. Through their courageous

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efforts 2.7 million Colombian children ages 7-18 turned out to vote in a special election known as the **Children's Mandate for Peace and Rights**. It is clear to us that the children of Colombia know a great deal more about the situation in their country than all of our "intelligence" agencies put together. A documentary film about the work of these inspiring young people, "Soldiers of Peace," will air on CNN's Perspective Series on September 26th at 7:00 PM.

CUBA YOUTH SEMINAR UNITES NEW GENERATION OF ACTIVISTS

Resistance to the world wide economic crisis is developing a new generation of political activists, proof of which appeared in Havana, Cuba from August 16-19 as 550 of them gathered there for the International Student and Youth Seminar on Neoliberalism. Over 30 delegates from the U.S. participated, among them 17 from Los Angeles, representing five area campuses. The majority of the Los Angeles delegates were 23 or under, female, Latina and Black. Three were members of the United Teachers of Los Angeles. (A complete report on this historic visit written by participant, John Hillson is on file at OOA).

CLOSE THE SCHOOL OF THE AMERICAS

November 19-21, 1999
Fort Benning, Georgia
Call 202/234-3440 for information
www.soaw.org

**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.**

FORMER ATTORNEY GENERAL RAMSEY CLARK

Our former Attorney General, Ramsey Clark presented a 19 count indictment of William Clinton, Madeleine Albright, Sandy Berger, William Cohen, Tony Blair, Gerard Schroeder and other high officials in NATO. 700 people attended this Independent Commission of Inquiry Hearing to Investigate U.S./Nato War Crimes Against the People of Yugoslavia. Copy of indictment available from OOA.

Mr. Clark also sent a letter to the ambassador and foreign minister of each member of the United Nations Security Council and to the UN General Assembly demanding an end to the economic sanc-

tions on Iraq and the endless bombing of that nation. Copy of letter available from OOA.

CHIAPAS

In recent weeks there has been an alarming increase in militarization of the indigenous communities in Chiapas. Report available from OOA.

EAST TIMOR

Once again the peace movement has a much more accurate understanding of reality than "military intelligence."

With full knowledge of the barbaric behavior expected by the Indonesian Military, people in solidarity with East Timor arrived from the United States and elsewhere to observe the elections and to act as witnesses to deter the death squad militias of the Indonesian Military. The U.S. armed, trained and supported army knew exactly what was going on and did nothing to stop it. Journalist Allan Nairn reported that Admiral Dennis Blair, the U.S. Commander in Chief in the Pacific told General Wiranto, Indonesian Commander of the Armed Forces that there would be further U.S. assistance. This message was given to General Wiranto after Admiral Blair had been fully briefed on the massacre at Liquica, Timor.

If the U.S. had restrained its surrogate Indonesian Military and militias there would have been no need for a U.N. Peace Keeping Force.

The heroic vote of the people of East Timor demanding independence from the Indonesian police state is an example for the world.

OFFICE OF THE AMERICAS IN ACTION

* Two demonstrations at the Indonesian Consulate to end the Massacre in East Timor.

Excellent turn out of the religious community at the second demonstration. M.C. by OOA.

* In view of the crisis at the Pacifica Network including KPFK-FM, Los Angeles, we have joined with the Coalition for Free Speech. We are disturbed by a "one strike and you are out" dismissal of journalists and programmers as well as by many other serious problems. The next time you pledge to KPFK, **and do pledge**, you might consider paying only after this situation has been rectified. See: www.savepacific.net.

* OOA accepts a request from Radio for Peace International to produce a program every week for international distribution, "FOCUS ON THE AMERICAS." Because of the expert assistance of our computer wizards, Dennis Allard and Chris Stockdill, this

**Frequent Flyer Miles Needed
for OOA's many national and international trips.**

program will be sent by audio-email from OOA to the transmitter in Costa Rica.

* OOA reception for **Father Roy Bourgeois** at the home of **Susan Adelman**. Scheduled TV interview on Century Cable with Bill Rosendahl. Arranged presentation for Father Roy at the Anaheim Unitarian Church and other locations. 10,000 people will come to Fort Benning, Georgia in November of this year to demand the closing of the School of the Americas.

* The **Los Angeles Peace Center** Coalition wishes to reach all religious, civic groups and schools to establish a Department of Peace. Father Roy and OOA met with Congressman Kucinich who is attempting to structure a U.S. Department of Peace (an effort that has been neglected since 1973). If you have ideas or time to work on this please let us know.

* Locally we are proud to be part of the SMART COALITION for a living wage. The international awareness for the need of a Living Wage is reaching university campuses and cities everywhere. Current minimum wage levels do not even approach half of what a living wage must be. The Santa Monica City Council recently passed our request for a thorough study of the Living Wage.

* Joined **Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union** for demonstration in support of workers at the University of Southern California. Under the leadership of Maria Elena Durazo, Local Eleven is seeking job security for their workers at the university and the assurance that they will not lose pay and benefits by having their jobs out-sourced.

* OOA hosts a lunch reception for historian **Howard Zinn** at the home of Wally and Suzy Marks. Howard discusses his new book, *The Future of History*.

* OOA will host **Bishop Willy Romelus** of Haiti. Romelus is the only Haitian bishop to publicly denounce the coup that overthrew the legally elected President Jean Bertrand Aristide. The bishop was severely beaten by Macoutes (secret police) and his home was ransacked.

* Together with the members of the Romero Foundation, OOA is planning local events to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Martyrdom of Archbishop Romero.

IN MEMORIUM

* In the wake of Bill Sander's unexpected death, Elaine Budin and Lynn Sperling have taken over the administration of our sustainer program. Knowing that the program is essential to OOA and in memory of Bill, they hope, with your help, to increase the number of sustainers and/or pledges to keep the work afloat. Any pledge brings you monthly updates and reports on OOA's work. Our ability to plan future programs is greatly helped by participants in the dollar a day plan (\$30./ month). Bill had been one of our most active

volunteers ever since his participation with us in the International March for Peace in Central America, 1985-1986.

* Our senior volunteer, very much loved and stalwart example of good natured endurance, Joan Korda, passed away this week. She continued her work for OOA during a most difficult period of medical treatments. The example of her perseverance and joy remains with us. Joan Korda...presente...presente...presente! We will greatly miss her.

* Our web-site is receiving growing attention. Please check it out:

www.officeoftheamericas.org

Presentations

* to the Human Rights Caucus of the House of Representatives in Washington, D.C. regarding the imprisonment of Lori Berenson. (Testimony available on request).

Meet at length with Congresswoman Maxine Waters regarding continuing demands on National Security Council for action on her release.

* at the Pacific Unitarian Church regarding the imprisonment of Lori Berenson.
see: www.freelori.org

* on Kosovo to combined meeting of Peace and Freedom and Green Parties.

* on the programs of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee together with the new Executive Director Valora Washington for the benefit of the Southern California Unit.

* on Nicaragua at Echo Park United Methodist Church.

* on the crises in Colombia and Chiapas, at the Midnight Special Bookstore.

* at Memorial for our long standing friend and volunteer, Bill Sanders, at Pacific Unitarian Church.

* at the University of Southern California to Stop the Execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal.

* at PEACE JAM, to honor the children of the Colombian Peace Movement who were nominated for the 1999 Nobel Peace Prize. Through their efforts 2.7 million Colombian children between the ages of 7-18 voted for the Children's Mandate for Peace and Rights, a referendum which has given hope to people in that tortured nation. PEACE JAM featured celebrity guests and musicians to kick off the Season of Non-Violence Campaign 2000 which is dedicated to empowering young people to become effective advocates for peace and justice.

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.

* On the urgent crisis in East Timor at Midnight Special Bookstore.

* At the Beverly Hills Adult School on Current World Conflicts.

Upcoming

* At the First Unitarian Church of Los Angeles on Ending the War System, October 3, 1999.

* At California State University Fullerton on Ending the War System, October 12, 1999.

* OOA will host An Evening with **Steve Allen** at the home of **Jaime Otis** and **Lisa Hensen** on October 23, 1999.

* At the National Council of Senior Citizens on Current Conflicts in the Americas, October 28th, 1999

* On the Cuban Embargo at the Orange County Peace Coalition Forum, October 28, 1999. Sisters of St. Joseph Center.

* At Santa Monica College on the Role of the School of the Americas in this Hemisphere, November 3, 1999.

Meetings

* with Advisory Committee of St. Joseph's Center regarding projects for serving the poor of the West Side for the following year.

* with Peggy Law, Executive Director of the International Media Project regarding the radio project Making Contact.

* with David Bryden, Communications and Outreach Coordinator of Jubilee 2000/USA regarding plans for calling upon the world's richest governments to cancel the backlog of unpayable debt owed by the world's most impoverished countries.

* with Sandinista Congressperson who serves as liaison with President Aleman of Nicaragua, Rev. Miguel Angel Casco Gonzalez.

* with search committee to find a National Director of the **Free Lori Berenson Committee** to be based in Washington, D.C. See: www.freelori.org We have selected Gail Taylor.

* together with the Los Angeles Peace Center Coalition we continue plans for local War Crimes Tribunal.

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Donations Needed:		
Clothing	Crystal & China	Small Furniture
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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

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I would like an OOA speaker for a house / church / organization meeting.

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