



FOCUS: Peace Now!

OFFICE OF THE AMERICAS

OfficeOfTheAmericas.com

Office of the Americas is a nonprofit organization dedicated to furthering the cause of justice and peace through broadbased educational programs.

OFFICE OF THE AMERICAS TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION NOVEMBER 1, 2003

The OOA recently celebrated our 20th Anniversary at the University Synagogue on Saturday, November 1, 2003. We are proud to announce the following honorees:

DANNY GLOVER

Actor and activist Danny Glover, one of Hollywood's most renowned and respected leading men, has appeared in many major productions on stage, screen and television including *The Color Purple*, *Lethal Weapon*, *Lonesome Dove* and the HBO presentation of *Mandela*.

Off-screen he is a powerful advocate for peace and social justice, oftentimes risking his professional reputation by using his voice to speak for the voiceless in our society. Internationally, Danny serves as Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations Development Program focusing on issues of poverty, disease and economic underdevelopment.

It was with great pride that the Office of the Americas presented to Danny Glover — Aids Activist — Death Penalty Opponent — Civil Liberties Spokesman — Social Justice Advocate — Past Board Member of Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International — Current Board Member of Transafrica Forum — our 2003 Peace and Justice award for his dedication to the struggle for a better world.

HOWARD ZINN

The Dean of American Historians, Howard Zinn, has created a mutation in his profession. History is generally written by the conquerors, by the spokespersons of empire and the manipulators of power.

Howard Zinn has ended that custom and given us a view of the world from the base. A *People's History of the United States* sold over one million copies. For many students, this book is their introduction to critical thought. History is not made by men on white horses with flashing swords. History is made by small groups of people who identify a problem and create the methodology and the will to solve it.

Howard has written a host of books including a critical analysis during the War in Indochina: *Vietnam: The Logic of Withdrawal*, Beacon, 1967. The books, plays, lectures, essays, and most of all, the person of Howard Zinn have led to a host of awards. For his combination of superb scholarship, razor sharp analysis, profound humanism and his tireless work for justice and peace, the Office of the Americas was proud to present Howard Zinn with its 2003 Peace and Justice Award.

CONGRESSWOMAN BARBARA LEE

We desperately look for courage in the Congress of the United States, and occasionally we find it. Congresswoman

Barbara Lee was the lone vote of dissent in authorizing George Bush to have a free hand to attack "suspected terrorists." Her conscience told her, "We must not become the evil we deplore." She acted accordingly.

This was not an isolated incident. In 1998 Congresswoman Lee was one of five members of the House to vote against the bombing of Iraq, and in 1999 she was the only member of the House to vote against sending U.S. forces into Yugoslavia.

Congresswoman Barbara Lee brings her education as a social worker to the problems that confront our citizens. She understands that a bloated defense budget actually undermines rather than enhances our national security.

The Office of the Americas believes that Congresswoman Barbara Lee represents a better future for the House of Representatives, and we were proud to present her with our 2003 Peace and Justice Award.

OUR HISTORY

The Office of the Americas is a non-profit organization dedicated to furthering the cause of justice and peace through broad based educational programs. Through its blend of scholarship, activism and experience, the Office of the Americas provides reliable facts and humane perspectives on global issues. Through its public education program, Office of the Americas

works to reach key constituencies: students, church, temple and mosque members, civil and human rights workers, and all others concerned with international peace and justice issues with the goal of ending the culture of militarism throughout the world. Incorporated as a non-profit educational corporation in April of 1983, the Office of the Americas has confronted areas of U.S. foreign policy which its board of directors considers illegal and/or immoral.

Delegations

Theresa and Blase Bonpane and the board of directors founded the Office of the Americas and have led the organization for these two decades. Theresa and Blase began frequent fact-finding delegations to Central America in 1979, prior to incorporation as a non-profit. Thousands of people who went on these and later delegations came home to write op-ed pieces for their newspapers, speak to their churches and civic groups and to their legislators regarding the impact of the Contra War in Nicaragua, U.S. direction of the Guatemalan and Salvadoran military, and the coordination of the Central American Wars from the U.S. Embassy in Honduras during the ambassadorship of John Negroponte.

International Peace March

In 1985-86 the Office of the Americas led the U.S. delegation of the International March for Peace in Central America. Four hundred marchers from thirty countries proceeded from Panama City to Mexico City in support of the Contadora Peace Process and assisting in the identification of the Iran/Contra scandal. Our on-the-ground fact finding continued in Guatemala, El Salvador and Cuba.

OOA in Iraq, 1991

In keeping with the OOA mission, as the Gulf War began we went to Baghdad in 1991 to evaluate the situation and considered any such war as unnecessary and counterproductive. On the day the U.S. bombing began, the leadership of OOA was jailed for civil disobedience at the Los Angeles Federal Building. OOA had met with the Iraq Peace Team while in Baghdad and remained in close touch with them as Voices in the Wilderness was formed to call attention to the murderous embargo imposed on Iraqi civilians.

Chiapas

In January of 1994 OOA went to San Cristobal de Las Casas in Chiapas, Mexico to analyze the Zapatista conflict. We began working directly with the mediator of the conflict, Bishop Samuel Ruiz Garcia and continue to serve on the board of Secretariado Internacional en Solidaridad con el Pueblo de America Latina (SICSAL) a hemispheric solidarity movement presided over by the bishop. We were present at the historic peace talks

between the Mexican government and the Zapatistas at San Andres Larrainzar in 1995. OOA has had a frequent presence in the militarized zones of Chiapas during this conflict.

Peru

OOA led a delegation to Arequipa, Peru to visit wrongfully imprisoned Lori Berenson. We were able to enter Socabaya Prison and delegate Amy Goodman did the first extensive interview with Lori since her imprisonment. The interview aired nationally on Amy's program, "Democracy Now." We have worked with Rhoda and Mark Berenson on the matter of their daughter's wrongful imprisonment for over seven years.

Colombia

OOA began its focus on Colombia by a visit in 1983. As the United States increased its presence and military aid through Plan Colombia, we returned in 1997, interviewing all sides in the conflict: people living in the war zones of Uraba as well as government officials, military leaders and the paramilitary. We left Colombia with the conviction that the U.S. had learned nothing from its conflicts in Central America and was to repeat each and every failed policy. The War On Drugs clearly served to escalate the drug business internationally to the point that drugs now make up 8% of international business.

Peace Movement: Post September 11, 2001

On the day after the Twin Towers were attacked in New York City, September 12, 2001, Executive Director Theresa Bonpane, Lisa Smithline and others formed the Coalition for World Peace. Peace Vigils began immediately and we were overjoyed to find that even people who had lost family members in the attack were opposed to our country starting a war in Afghanistan. On the contrary, they favored an internationally coordinated police search for those responsible. The Coalition for World Peace further coalesced with other coalitions, and, as a result of such coordination, the largest demonstrations for peace in world history took place. By February 15, 2003, tens of millions of people throughout the world met in a united global outpouring against Washington's rush to war.

Speaking Engagements

OOA has given hundreds of presentations at universities, high schools, civic organizations and religious groups.

Archives

We are especially pleased that our work over these twenty years has been recognized by the Department of Special Collections of the U.C.L.A. Research Library (collection 1590). Over one hundred boxes of files make up that collection of OOA materials: tapes of lectures, published and unpublished writings together with our programs from radio and television.

Office of the Americas has five thousand members and one hundred volunteers including our Board of Directors. Our mission is to continue working with the millions of people and organizations throughout the world to abolish the war system and to build a functional peace system. The year 2003 has brought us closer to that objective than we could have ever hoped or imagined.

Media

The Office of the Americas has worked intensely with media through its website <www.officeoftheamericas.org> OOA has a scheduled television program on Adelphia Cable, WORLD FOCUS, and a weekly radio program on Pacifica by the same name. Our weekly news commentary is heard locally on KPFK (90.7 FM).

OFFICE OF THE AMERICAS IN ACTION

In pursuit of Justice for Immigrant Workers

The Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride has returned from its historic journey across the country in pursuit of justice for all workers. Immigrant workers living and paying taxes in the United States deserve the rights to legalize their status, to have a clear road to citizenship, to reunify their families, to have a voice on the job, and to enjoy full protection of their civil rights and liberties. The road to citizenship needs a new map. The goal of the Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride was to help draw that new map.

Inspired by the Freedom Riders of the Civil Rights Movement, immigrant workers and their allies set out from nine major U.S. cities, crossing the country in more than 18 buses. They converged on Washington, D.C. to meet with members of Congress and then traveled to New York for a mass rally on October 4, 2003. Check our website for a report on this historic event and look for the "Welcome Back" celebration in October (also see: www.iwfr.org).

Recent WORLD FOCUS Interviews

Rhoda and Mark Berenson, parents of Lori Berenson, who is in her eighth year of wrongful imprisonment in Peru.

Congresswoman Diane Watson

Dr. Nicolas de Torrente, Executive Director of Doctors Without Borders.

Colombian Labor Leaders: Francisco Javier Ruiz and Wilson Moyano.

Salon at the Yard

Elina and Paul Olague of Warszawa Restaurant in Santa Monica host our new monthly *Salon at the Yard* series and have given Office of the Americas a wonderful opportunity to educate our friends as

we continue to build our community. We've heard from Blase Bonpane on Militarism, Kelly Hayes Raitt speaking on her recent visit to Iraq, Kimi Lee on Sweatshops, Torrill Eide on the International Human Rights March, and Nancy Snow on Propaganda and a World Without TV. We look forward to our future speakers: Nancy Lessen on Military Families Speak Out; Jay Levin on Media Challenge; Margaret Prescod on Militarism's Impact on the Poor; Maurice Zeitlin on Labor Organizing; and more. Join us for an evening of socializing for social justice. Check our website for the schedule: <officeoftheamericas.org>

MAY THE WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION REST IN PEACE

The defunct World Trade Organization was truly unAmerican. Congratulations to Starhawk and the poor of the earth who cast the mighty from their seats. By the way, what is an unAmerican? An unAmerican is someone who thinks we have a king and who believes in the divine right of kings.

Such an attitude is required for giving homage to the current resident in the White House. In short, I think an unAmerican would give uncritical acceptance to political authority as if it were their religious faith. Actually, I think an unAmerican would make the United States into an idolatrous religion.

I think an unAmerican would confuse this nation's policies with the Super Bowl and insist on being a cheering section for our side regardless of the facts. It seems to me that an unAmerican would be concerned about personal wealth and absolutely unconcerned about the common good, the public good and distributive justice.

Well then, what is a proAmerican? I think a proAmerican is someone who understands that political leaders are to be a servant class for all of the people and that they must never forget their place in society.

A proAmerican would question authority and especially that of any framers of mean spirited and vengeful policy directed at individuals or groups.

A proAmerican must have some sense of history and current events. There simply cannot be a proAmerican who lacks a sense of the common good, the public good and distributive justice.

I think a proAmerican would be ever conscious that America extends from the North Pole to the South Pole in the Western Hemisphere and that one section of America is called the United States.

ProAmerican people must value the lives of those outside of our polity as much as they do those who live within it.

It seems to me that to be proAmerican we must understand that the most serious danger to our future are groups like the World Trade Organization which have such a minimal understanding of

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www.officeoftheamericas.org**

democracy that they will impoverish the many in order to have a wild excess of greed for the few.

A proAmerican would understand that we live on a very small planet which is currently in very grave danger. In short, we live on a life boat in space. If we drill holes in the forward section of the boat, we who live in the aft section will sink together with the rest.

Once again conventional wisdom has it all backwards. Conventional wisdom is apt to call someone proAmerican who is in fact a racist, war mongering fanatic. There is no future for such thinking. May the World Trade Organization rest in peace. God Bless the whole world, no exceptions!

The Closet Liberal Says "Goodbye and Thank You."

After many years providing the community with low cost clothing and household items the Closet Liberal had its final sale in June of 2003. A very special "Thank You" to our loyal supporters and our dedicated volunteers. We are very grateful.

"Don't Mourn, Organize!"

Joe Hill prior to his execution on a trumped up murder charge in 1910.

Upcoming

Sunday November 16, 2003
ICUJP Fall Conference: Religious Communities Confront the Religious Right: Commonalities, Conflicts and Consequences USC's Mark Taper Hall 626 683 9004

Save the Date

An Invite to Peace Activists
A BIRTHDAY PARTY VIGIL
Help me celebrate my 75th Birthday in a manner most meaningful to me.

Join with our regular "WAR IS NOT THE ANSWER" vigil -- antes.

December 18
Wilshire and Veteran Blvds.
4-7 p.m.

Refreshments and Balloons
Bring your own sign.

Parking available on side streets, parking lot on Wilshire and Galey, and Federal Building Lot - #2 after 6 p.m.
Alice Powell - 310 447 8997

Welcome Back Midnight Special Bookstore!

Join us in supporting this important treasure in our community.

New Location:
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Santa Monica, CA 90401
310-393-2923
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