

Berrigan on Obama: trust him but verify

by George Morrison
and Ike M. Thacker IV

The Obama administration has re-focused a wayward U.S. on nuclear arms control, peace activist Frida Berrigan said in Louisville Nov. 18, but she urged listeners to take Ronald Reagan’s advice and “trust but verify.”

Recalling those words of the right-wing president of the 1980s regarding Soviet pledges to reduce nuclear arms, Berrigan told about 20 listeners at the Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary that, regarding Obama, we should be “hoping, but waiting for verification.”

Her remarks came two weeks before the president announced a troop buildup in Afghanistan, a move that drew about a dozen protesters from the Louisville Peace Action Community and other groups to a Saint Matthews shopping center lot Dec. 5.

Berrigan, who spoke hours after her Third Thursday Lunch talk, is the daughter of the late peace and civil rights activist Phillip Berrigan.

At the monthly Third Thursday talk, sponsored by the Louisville FOR and Interfaith Paths to Peace, she spoke on, “Bread before Bombs: A Discussion on Building Human Security.”

At her second talk, Berrigan, whose father left the priesthood, then married Elizabeth McCallister, with whom he raised Frida and her two siblings in an African-American neighborhood in Baltimore, said that grass-roots activism must not wane



Frida Berrigan in a bit of an in-your-face mode during a peace demonstration in Newark, N.J. in 2007.

because of the perception that the nation has a more progressive president.

“There is the sense that Obama is saying all the right things,” she said. “We just have to wait for him to do the right things.... We forget that we have to be pushing very, very hard.”

However, Berrigan, the senior program associate at the New America Foundation’s Arms and Security Initiative, said Obama’s support for disarmament is truly a different

course from the Bush administration, not merely imagery.

“There has been this sea change that is worthy of the Nobel Peace Prize,” she said.

At the lunch talk, Berrigan laid out the extent to which the world, and particularly the United States, is filling graveyards with bodies killed by bombs and bullets, rather than bellies with bread.

Berrigan said at the lunch that the U.S. spends more than \$1 trillion annually on its military, while some 5 billion people live in poverty around the world. The U.S, she added, spends more on armed forces than the next 14 nations combined, and about seven times as much as second-place China.

Despite her warmth toward the Obama Administration, Berrigan said history shows that it isn’t the goodwill of leaders that achieves genuine arms reduction.

“It wasn’t the United States or the Soviet Union that kept nuclear weapons from being used,” she said. “It was people.”

The deep arms cuts just before the collapse of the Soviet Union also were brought about by grass-roots action, Berrigan maintained.

“That wasn’t (Reagan) and Gorbachev being enlightened, but movements in both of their countries, and the world.”

In the largest successor state to Gorbachev’s Soviet Union, Berrigan said, many people realize that the nation’s continuing to maintain nuclear weapons is a prime cause of their high rates of poverty

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McKinney links Gaza, civil rights



Cynthia McKinney

by George Morrison
FORsooth editor

The seizures of relief ships bound for Gaza carrying former U.S. Rep. Cynthia McKinney and other activists prompted the former Green party presidential candidate to draw on her experience fighting

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Part 2: fair and free trade are contrasted, explained

by Maggie Jezreel

“What is Fair Trade? Fair Trade is a system of exchange that honors producers, communities, consumers, and the environment. It is a model for the global economy that is rooted in people-to-people connections, justice and sustainability. When you make Fair Trade purchases you are supporting fair price for products, investing in people and communities, environmental sustainability, economic empowerment of small scale producers, and fair labor conditions.” — From Green America website.

“That’s unfair!” We all recognize this call, usually from a child who is upset with the outcome of a situation that does not benefit him or her, or to point out an obvious injustice. And it should be our clarion call as consumers, demanding that corporations produce goods using fair labor agreements and sound environmental practices, and invest in the communities where they are operating. Consider the following two examples of unfair trade practices.

Uzbekistan is the world’s 2nd largest exporter of cotton. The Uzbek government forces one-third of its people to work in the fields, as 90 percent of the harvest is done by hand. During harvest time, schools are closed and children are put to work. Two years ago children as young as eight and nine could be found in the fields. Adults are pulled from their regular jobs as teachers and doctors without adequate compensation. The farmers themselves must sell the cotton to state-owned companies who pay only a fraction of market prices. These farmers are often left in debt at the end of the season as the cost of growing the cotton exceeds the compensation that they receive for growing it.

Unjust labor practices are not the only problem with this \$1 billion-a-year crop. In the 1970s, the Aral Sea supported a 40,000 ton-a-year fishing industry. Now the sea is all but dried up as the water has been diverted to cotton production. As it is piped along, as much as 60 percent of the water does not reach its designated end as it evaporates or escapes along the many leaks in the pipe.

The resulting dry sea bed combined with the pesticide dust originating in the depleted cotton fields is whipped about by the wind. This toxic dust is carried for miles causing tuberculosis and cancer at alarming rates.

A citizen of Uzbekistan might be reluctant to complain to their authoritarian government. In May 2005, the government military crushed a public demonstration in Andijan, massacring many demonstrators, including women, children and babies. Estimates of those killed range from just under 200 to 5,000 people, but it is unclear as no independent investigation was allowed.

We should cry “That’s NOT FAIR!” At the end of October, Nicaraguan co-operative movement leader Eddy Gutierrez spoke in Louisville as part of a speaking tour sponsored by Witness for Peace and the Kentucky Interfaith Taskforce on Latin American and the Caribbean. Gutierrez represents small-scale coffee producers in northern Nicaragua and he spoke of the many obstacles created by the Central American Free Trade Agreement.

CAFTA is a document portions of which were only available in English when it came up for a vote in Central America. The laws in this document benefit large producers. If a large corporation believes it is being treated unfairly in a country, it can bring the country’s government to tribunal.

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McKinney links Gaza, civil rights (continued from page 1)

racism in the U.S. south, she said Nov. 21 in Louisville.

“I had been there before,” McKinney told the 12th yearly Unity Dinner after describing being arrested by Israeli authorities for trying to break Israel’s blockade of Gaza after rocket attacks from there on Israeli civilians. “It was like *deja vu*.”

McKinney said during her keynote speech at the Kentucky Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression’s dinner that being rammed by an Israeli boat and held in a prison in Israel brought to mind seeing children sprayed with fire hoses and facing angry mobs as they integrated schools in the 1960s.

More recently, her denunciation of the Persian Gulf War on the floor of an overwhelmingly pro-war Georgia state legislature helped prepare McKinney, then a legislator, for the Gaza crisis, she added.

“George Herbert Walker Bush gave us seven reasons for going to war with Iraq. Not a single one of the reasons was good enough for me.” She shared that view while speaking in the legislature, “then I intoned that president George Herbert Walker Bush should be ashamed of himself.”

Members walked out, then McKinney’s bill to study why a black section of Atlanta had the area’s highest pollution-related death rates died for lack of a second, and she was told it was retribution for her statement on Bush, she said at the dinner.

During her 12 years in Congress, McKinney drew the ire of the Bush family and its supporters many more times, introducing a bill to impeach George W. Bush and vice-president Dick Cheney and suggesting the administration might have known the 9/11 attacks were coming.

McKinney also passionately backed changing U.S. foreign policy to support human rights, a cause she kept up after losing her seat in 2006—the sole defeat of a Democrat incumbent in an otherwise banner year for the party, she recalled.

Louisville Committee for Peace in the Middle East member Pat Geier said during the Unity Dinner that area people planning a trip to Gaza were raising money for the trip. She said to help, e-mail the committee at: mideastpeace@mailforce.net. Or call (502) 456-6586.

Twice since late 2008, as part of her efforts in that cause, she boarded relief boats bound for the Mideast which were seized by the Israeli navy.

In the second such incident, in June, the ship she was on, which the 21 activists onboard re-named the Spirit of Humanity, tried to reach the besieged Gaza with three tons of aid, including medical supplies, cement, olive trees and children’s toys, a Green Party press release said.

Israeli authorities said they wanted to inspect the contents to assure no weapons were onboard. Their government said it would deliver the aid pending the inspection, but McKinney said aid seized the first time is still being held in Alexandria, Egypt.

Egyptian officials let McKinney and others visit Gaza during that first trip, in late 2008, by crossing the border from Egypt, she said at the dinner. However, after conferring with Israel and the U.S., Egypt did not release the aid, McKinney added.

Recalling the “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” written by Martin Luther King Jr. outlining the need for civil rights, McKinney composed “Letter from an Israeli Jail” during her incarceration, in which the 2008 Green presidential candidate wrote that Israel’s incursion into Lebanon was “full-scale outright genocide,” adding that Israel had “lost its last shred of legitimacy.”

She said if the state is threatened by McKinney and her shipmates wanting to deliver aid that includes art supplies, then Israel “must be declared a failed state...”

“I am facing deportation from the state that brought me here at gunpoint after commandeering our boat. I was brought to Israel against my will. I am being held in this prison because I had a dream that Gaza’s children could color and paint, that Gaza’s wounded could be healed, and that Gaza’s bombed-out houses could be rebuilt,” the letter said.

McKinney noted that King’s letter singled out Anne Braden for praise, one of several mentions Braden, who died in 2006, received during the dinner she helped make a yearly event through her tireless activism with the Kentucky Alliance.

Along with Braden, McKinney paid tribute to the persistence of Kentucky Alliance co-chairperson K.A. Owens, who repeatedly asked McKinney to reconsider after she said several times during the last year she could not attend the dinner.

“I must give credit where credit is due, to K.A., who wouldn’t take no for an answer,” she said. “I finally relented and... I’m so impressed with Louisville, Ky.”

Retired Kentucky State Senator Georgia Powers, the first woman and the first African-American to serve in the General Assembly, while receiving an honor at the dinner, also noted Braden’s inclusion in King’s writings and speeches.

“He spoke of her as a quiet, militant, uncompromising leader,” said Powers, who battled segregation as a private citizen, senator and author of three books.

The dinner’s brochure noted that Senator Powers worked for civil rights laws, the Equal Rights Amendment and a bill to increase the minimum wage in Kentucky.

The dinner, held at Masterson’s restaurant, also honored:

Bud Dorsey, a longtime photojournalist for the African-American community newspaper *The Louisville Defender*. His work has documented decades of struggles and human interest stories.

Presenter Bob Cunningham said: “They say a picture is worth a thousand

words. I know a picture taker who is worth a thousand words.... For so long, Bud Dorsey has been the Louisville Defender.”

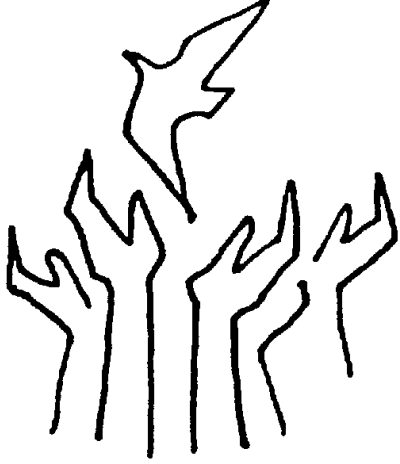
Khalilah Collins, a community organizer and director and lead organizer for Woman In Transition, a group run by and for poor people.

A student at Spalding University’s Master of Social Work program, Collins also works with the Poor People’s Economic Human Rights Campaign and is the recipient of a Davis Putter Scholarship and the scholarship’s Anne Braden Award for her activism in the south while earning an undergraduate degree.

Pam McMichael, an anti-racism and pro-fairness activist who serves as director of the Highlander Research and Education Center in East Tennessee. She is the co-founder of many groups, including Southerners on New Ground and the Alliance Against Women’s Oppression.

A former social services worker in Kentucky, McMichael lauded the Kentucky Alliance, the meetings of which, she recalled from her early years as an activist, would often feature people telling of discrimination, then members devising responses.

“Social services taught me about structural racism,” McMichael said. “The Kentucky Alliance helped teach me what to do about it.”



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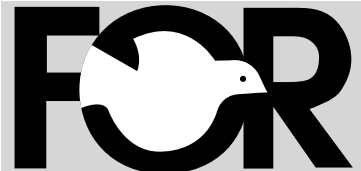
The Louisville FOR’s web site includes Action Alerts about issues of great concern to peace and justice people. It also lets you link to peace groups in many nations and look over every FORsooth going back to April 2002. And the pictures – starting with the July-August 2008 issue – are in color.

If you love blogging, contribute your thoughts and hopes to the US FOR’s blog www.forpeace.net. Keep up with the national organization’s unequaled activism for a world of nonviolence and justice at www.forusa.org.

As much as we know you love reading FORsooth, there’s no reason to wait till next month to be inspired and challenged by the FOR.

FOR’s Mission Statement

The Fellowship of Reconciliation seeks to replace violence, war, racism and economic injustice with nonviolence, peace and justice. We are an interfaith organization committed to active nonviolence as a transforming way of life and as a means of radical change. We educate, train, build coalitions, and engage in nonviolent and compassionate actions locally, nationally, and globally.



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94 Years on Peace Frontiers

Since 1915, the Fellowship of Reconciliation in the United States has led campaigns to obtain legal rights for conscientious objectors, win civil rights for all Americans, end the Vietnam War, oppose U.S. intervention in the Third World, and reverse the superpowers’ arms race. An interfaith pacifist organization, the FOR has members from many religious and ethnic traditions. It is part of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, with affiliates in 40 countries.

In the development of its program FOR depends upon persons who seek to apply these principles to every area of life. If you are not already a member, we invite you to join us in this endeavor. Membership consists of signing the Statement of Purpose, indicating that you agree with FOR goals.

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Traveling a new street toward peace

Growing group sees two states crucial for Israel’s security

by Russ Greenleaf

J Street (www.jstreet.org), the latest and greatest manifestation of the centrist Jewish peace movement in America, believes the best way to be pro-Israel is to end the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and let the Palestinians have an independent nation of their own. “Hope for the Palestinians equals security for Israel,” J Street supporter Ami Ayalon said at the organization’s first conference, which I attended October 25 to 28 at the Grand Hyatt in Washington, D.C. Ayalon speaks from years of experience as director of Shin Bet, Israel’s internal security service. These ideas have long been promoted

by the Jewish Alliance for Justice and Peace (Brit Tzedek v’Shalom). When I was an active member three years ago, we had a conference in Washington that drew more than 200 people. About 70 of us went to Capitol Hill to lobby Congress for a two-state solution (an independent nation of Palestine living alongside Israel in peace). J Street has done even better. J Street’s first conference was scheduled for 1,000 people. More than 1,500 showed up. The \$400-a-plate gala dinner fundraiser sold out. They added seats, but the hotel stopped them at 600, and they had to turn people away. Forty-four members of Congress and 150 members of the press attended the gala dinner. One hundred forty-eight members of Congress publicly endorsed the J Street

conference and its message that Israeli settlement expansion must stop for the sake of peace. When we went to Capitol Hill to lobby Congress this time we had a group of more than 700 people - mostly Jews, but Christians and Muslims as well - all asking Congress to support President Obama’s efforts to bring a two-state solution. Last year J Street raised more than \$600,000, which it donated to 40 congressional candidates to help elect people who support ending the occupation. Twenty Jewish organizations participated in the J Street conference, including Americans for Peace Now, Brit Tzedek v’Shalom, and Rabbis for Human Rights. Brit Tzedek v’Shalom announced that

it will merge with J Street and bring along its 43 chapters, 50,000 supporters, and 1,000 rabbis. It will become J Street’s local advocacy arm, lobbying members of Congress in their home districts - an important compliment to J Street’s Washington lobbying efforts. J Street is growing. It is changing attitudes in Washington. Support J Street. (It is open to people of all faiths.) Keep working for peace. Keep telling the truth. There is hope.

Russ Greenleaf lives in New Albany, Ind. He is a member of the Louisville Committee for Israeli and Palestinian States, Jewish Voice for Peace, Brit Tzedek v’Shalom and J Street.

Dear in his, another’s words is a guide to nonviolence

A Persistent Peace: One Man’s Struggle for a Nonviolent World
by John Dear, Loyola Press, and

John Dear on Peace: An Introduction to His Life and Work
by Patricia Normile, St. Anthony Messenger Press

reviewed by Terry Taylor

Two books about the life and witness of Jesuit peacemaker and priest John Dear have recently been published. One is a memoir by John himself. The other is a brief introduction to how we can bring John’s peacemaking into our own lives. Together they are a package that should be indispensable to anyone seeking to embrace the life of an activist. John is no stranger to Louisville. He has been here to speak several times and in the fall of 2006 led the inaugural Gandhi-Merton Pilgrimage for Nonviolence that took 50 people from around the U.S. on a spiritual walk from the Abbey of Gethsemani to Thomas Merton Square in downtown Louisville. In his memoir, *A Persistent Peace: One Man’s Struggle for a Nonviolent World* (published by Loyola Press), we learn that John has lived a number of different lives even though he just turned 50 in August.

BOOK REVIEW

He was born a child of privilege, became a frat boy and wanted to be a rock star. He is a priest, a pilgrim, former national director of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, nominee for the Nobel Peace Prize and a repeat offender (he has been arrested more than 75 times, all in the service of a just and more peaceful world). This last facet of his life is very important because he is quick to put his life and his career on the line in the service of the Gospel. Near the beginning of this 400+ page book, John relates the story of how he made his commitment to become a fulltime peacemaker. It was just after his graduation from college and he was on a walking pilgrimage in the Holy Land that led him to literally follow in the footsteps of Jesus. One day he visited the Chapel of the Beatitudes on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. As he read the words of the beatitudes on the side of the Chapel, he told God that if the Holy One REALLY wanted him to follow these dictates in his own life, God should give him a sign. At that very moment two jet fighter planes dropped out of the sky and zoomed toward John across the Sea of Galilee at

supersonic speed (pps. 50-51). Needless to say, John got the message. Toward the end of his memoir John relates another story that illustrates his courage in the face of potentially violent confrontation. It was in the fall of 2003, just after the war in Iraq began. One morning John awoke at his home in a small town in New Mexico to the sound of soldiers marching around his house and chanting, “Kill, Kill, Kill, Kill.” When they refused to leave, John stepped outside his door and told the soldiers who were about to be shipped to Iraq, “In the name of the God of Peace, I order all of you to quit the military, not go to Iraq, not kill anyone, and not be killed...God does not bless war. God does not support war. God wants us all to live in peace. I want none of you to get killed (pps. 418 and 419).” What happens in his life between these two events is enough to fill the lives of 20 people. The book itself is not what one would expect from a Jesuit. My experience of books written by “Jebbies” is that they are usually dense and hard to read. John’s memoir on the other hand reads like a novelist’s cliffhanger, with exciting surprises virtually every time you turn the page. It moves along at breakneck speed as he relates story after story about his interactions with peacemakers and on behalf of the hopeless all over the world. Secular Franciscan Patricia Normile’s

slim and compelling book, *John Dear on Peace: An Introduction to His Life and Work* (published by St. Anthony Messenger Press) isn’t a biography; it is instead an invitation for us to take part in John’s work and to bring John’s vision into our own lives. Following a brief introductory essay, Patricia sets out 13 short chapters on specific topics related to spirituality and peacemaking. Among these are: “What is Peace?,” “The Power of Gentleness,” “Re-tooling Our Hearts,” and “The Chapter You Write with Your Life.” It is this final chapter that is for me the heart of this book. Its key idea, that we need to not just read but do, is precisely the message of John’s life story. To help us learn to “do,” Patricia concludes each of her 13 chapters with four wonderful tools: a selection of John’s thoughts about the chapter’s topic, some questions for reflection, scripture to ponder, and a concluding prayer composed by Patricia herself. For me, John’s memoir and Patricia’s examination of John’s spirituality work best when read together. Keep them by your bedside so that you can go to sleep and wake up with God’s call to live out the message of Beatitudes fresh in your mind. *The reviewer, of Louisville, is the executive director of Interfaith Paths to Peace.*

Part 2: fair and free trade are contrasted

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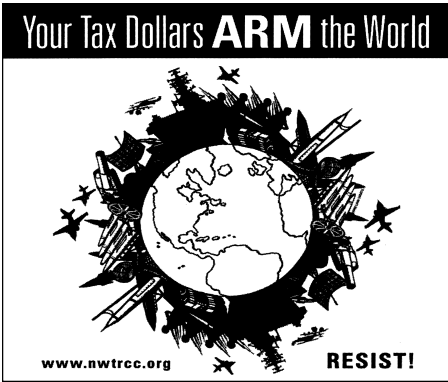
A government would have to think twice before going to court against one of these businesses: most multi-national corporations’ annual budgets are quite a bit larger than the GNP of one of these small Central American countries. If a government would choose to challenge labor conditions or environmental practices, corporate investors could sue that government in secretive and stacked trade tribunals for expropriation of future profits! Almost all such cases have been ruled in favor of the investors. Gutierrez went on to describe the biggest challenge: transforming how profits are distributed. Local buyers are representatives of large corporations; there are two main buyers that represent the largest multinational corporations. The farmer’s price is based on the stock market, which is subject to the speculative market. And of course, this can be manipulated further: it may mean that the producers receive only 60-70 percent of the international price set for that day. Currently the coffee farmer will receive \$78-91 for 100 pounds of raw coffee beans. One hundred pounds of coffee can produce 2,000 cups of coffee. If we imagine that a cup of coffee would sell for \$2, the resulting gross profit is \$4,000. So what becomes of the remaining \$3,909? Certainly there are many more hands involved before it ends up in our cups. Representatives of large corporations

purchase the coffee from the farmer and then mark it up to sell to their clients (Starbucks, Nestle’s, etc). They include costs for roasting the beans, importation fees, transporting the goods, barista wages and, of course, profits, all of which are paid with that \$3909. But let’s return to the reality of the farmer. As stated, the farmer in Nicaragua receives his/her \$91 for the 100 pounds of coffee, but what we may not be aware of is that it costs \$110 to produce those 100 pounds. The farmer then must take out a loan, hoping to have better fortune on the next crop, but the increase of immigrants to the U.S. indicates that things are not getting better for the farmers. Gutierrez made a modest proposal of doubling the amount paid to the farmer, a mere 4.5 percent of the gross profits! But until then, “That’s NOT FAIR!” So what is the anatomy of a business successfully using Fair Trade practices? Let’s take a look at Divine Chocolate. Ghana is the world’s 2nd largest exporter of cocoa. Like coffee, it is grown on many small-scale farms and then brought to the market to be sold. And like coffee and cotton, the price received at market sometimes slips below what it costs to grow the cocoa crop. In the early 1990s, the Ghana cocoa market became partially liberalized, which allowed for the formation of licensed buying companies.

A group of farmers including a visionary farmer representative with the Ghana Cocoa Board formed one of these buying companies: Kuapa Kokoo, which means Good Cocoa Growers. With its membership made up of farmers and its purpose being their benefit, this cooperative strives to empower its farmers toward a dignified livelihood, to bring more women into its workforce and to practice environmentally sustainable techniques to grow the crop. A common obstacle in Ghana is the unscrupulous scale clerk, who will rig the scale in such a way as to keep the farmer from realizing the full worth of the crop. Kuapa Kokoo responded by placing a scale in each of the villages and by making sure that the scales were overseen by an elected clerk. Farmers began to see the benefits in the growth of their incomes. And the membership of Kuapa Kokoo also grew. The success of Kuapa Kokoo continued: in 1997, the organization voted to set up its own chocolate company, Divine Chocolate, in order to see more gains from its cocoa crop. So what is the outcome of such an amazing organization? Farmers have job security, which continues to grow with each passing year. The communities are improving as Kuapa Kokoo invests its gains by digging clean water wells, establishing mobile medical clinics, creating Kuapa Credit to help during the lean times, building schools, and bringing

women into the work of Kuapa. One member of Kuapa Kokoo put it this way: “Getting together to form a Women’s Group, which Kuapa encourages us to do, meant we could get a Kuapa Credit loan, and use the money to plant secondary crops like Okra and Cassava. Money from these crops helps in between cocoa harvests. Since joining Kuapa we have been able to build our own house. If not for Kuapa, I would not have enough money to feed my family, or enough to sell all year round. Kuapa Kokoo has really helped me!” (from divinechocolateusa.com). Now, that IS fair. Fair Trade.

The writer, the original editor of FORsooth, is a member of the board of directors of Just Creations, a not-for-profit store in Louisville which sells many Fair Trade products.



Paradoxical conference little help to Bhutanese people

by Buddha M. Dhakal

Bhutan was the host of a three-day international conference in October on “Deepening and Sustaining Democracy,” said to be jointly organized by the Center for Bhutan Studies and the United Nations Development Program.

It should be a matter of pride for the government of Bhutan to hold such a magnanimous conference with a bit of experience on democracy. But for the region of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, of which Bhutan is one of eight members, it is quite a surprise.

Bhutan is not a champion of democracy. Bhutanese democracy is a top-down approach carefully planned and handled by the former royalists.

Although the conference aimed to initiate sufficient dialogue on the models and components of democracy and on failures and success of democracy in the region, it did so very little for the Bhutanese people themselves.

Bhutanese model of democracy

The exercise of power by an elected government, functioning of a bicameral parliamentary system and independence of judiciary are integral to fostering of democracy. Bhutanese democracy clearly lacks the independence of a judiciary, allowing the king to continue to act as the highest court of appeal, sans supreme court and appellate courts.

The protection and guidance of the constitution is vested upon the king, a structure which is essentially against the core value of vibrant democracy. In case of any constitutional hindrances, the interpretation of the constitution remains void without the independent judiciary.

Regarding participatory democracy, hundreds of people were excluded from voting in Bhutan’s first ever general election. The Bhutanese people were not given the free choice of candidates to represent them because of the pre-determined candidates of the two parties.

The village units or gewogs are poorly equipped and virtually powerless in strengthening the grass-roots democracy. As used to be, the gewog heads are merely the implementing agents of the government orders (often called royal decrees) with very little or no say in the official decision.

Prime Minister Jigme Thinley put a high regard to the fourth king for his “persuasiveness and sacrifice” to allow democracy but not the struggle of people, ignoring the people’s movement for democracy. Thus the prime minister is hinting at Bhutanese democracy without a participatory approach and undermining the value of the electoral process that enhances people’s capacity to make decisions.

The local government act was passed with no complete framework of the grass-

root democracy. It calls for the election of townships and municipalities to constitute a local government. However, with no proper training and empowerment of local heads, it would be another excuse for the Thinley government to blow a trumpet that the people are not fully capable to exercise democracy. For the democracy to take root, the grass-root democracy should be strengthened, which requires empowering and educating local leaders with democratic norms and practices in the first place.

Contrary to what Thinley says, the country did not have a set of law-abiding legal instruments, no administrative system that could be held accountable and no such special institutional arrangements which could lead to democracy. All that was in place was a chain of commands in administration without actual debate and discourse (it was not permitted for the lower-level officials to reply to the higher-level officials) on any important matters of public interest. It was a one-way flow of information and the local heads simply implemented the “commands.”

Scholars might be misguided to think that Bhutanese people participated in democracy through electoral process. But the people once again voted for the individuals just as they used to do for the National Assembly election of absolute monarchy.

Multiparty and pluralism

Multiparty is not accepted in the Bhutanese parliamentary system. Of the two parties allowed to contest in the election, one — the DPT — is declared as having a landslide victory over the other (with only four seats). Thus the Bhutanese parliament has a very weak opposition, that cannot sufficiently maintain checks and balances in the democracy.

Pluralism in the society was long forbidden in the name of preserving unique culture, following the introduction of the “One nation, One People” policy and compulsion to follow Driglamnamzha, a strict code of dress, behavior and regulation of much of Bhutan’s art and architecture. With the mainstream culture of not recognizing the diversity of people’s language, culture, religion and ethnicity, there exists inherent fear in the public to disagree.

Consequently, the parliament is formed with a bi-party system, eliminating the prospect of emerging pluralism in the polity. And one can expect some dire situations. As Dr. Narayan Khadka said in his address to the conference, the unsatisfied and unrecognized can find other outlets to assert their participation which could be volatile. A number of small ethnic communities such as Doya, Khengpa, Brokpa and the Lhotshampas who live in interior Bhutan are still marginalized.

Pluralism does not necessarily mean multiparty, but a variety of intellectual inputs, free expression of public opinions, initiation of debates and dialogues among

About Bhutan (population 697,000), from WorldAtlas.com:

Bhutan was settled in the 9th century by wandering migrants from Tibet. Called Druk Yul (*Land of the Thunder Dragon*) by its people, the strikingly beautiful Kingdom of Bhutan lies in the eastern Himalayas, sandwiched between China and India. This small, landlocked country, literally surrounded by mountains, is most difficult to navigate as there are few roads and no domestic (*in-country*) airlines or trains.

Long influenced by the culture of India and the British government, it gained its independence from India in 1949. Today its major trading partner is India, however much of its people still live in poverty, with wide-spread illiteracy a major social problem. The capital city of Thimphu sits at an altitude of 7000 feet, on the banks of the Wong Chu river, and remains the site of royal government offices.



all stakeholders to make participatory democracy. A brain-child of fourth king, the DPT government led by Thinley, a long time royal representative, still fears the pluralistic society.

He seems to be very pessimistic about capacity to empower the various section of Bhutanese populace. If the government is committed to nurture grass-root democracy with established values and culture, it must initiate the practice of maximizing the participation of smaller communities in the decision-making process while acknowledging their diversity and safeguarding their freedom. It is not just organizing a conference and deliberating democracy with no basic practice.

The parties are again regional, though formation of such regional parties was discouraged. Socially and economically they are in poor shape (see kuenselononline.com July 2, 2009). The ruling party, DPT is in total financial debt of Nu 29 million and

the opposition PDP has an outstanding debt of Nu 3.5 million after paying off a debt of Nu 20 million.

The social network of the parties to connect people is too feeble. The heads of party face a critical shortage of money to spend in carrying out party activities and the opposition party is already in debt. It is not a signal to favor multiparty pluralism.

Ushering of multiparty democracy in Bhutan is continually advocated by the parties in exile. Not better-off, the exile parties are making efforts to find a better options to the ongoing political development in the country. They deserve to be included in the present political framework, at least to serve as a strong opposition.

The writer is a Bhutanese journalist living in exile in Louisville who works with the Association of Press Freedom Activists-Bhutan. The organization operates in exile in Nepal. See www.apfanews.com.



Berrigan (continued from page 1)

and unemployment.

“There is an anti-nuclear movement in Russia,” she said. “They have borne a tremendous cost.”

Berrigan called for letters to senators backing ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, called the CTBT, but she worried that the administration, which backs the treaty, will have to agree to a “wish list” of more military spending to get enough moderates and conservatives onboard to achieve the 67 votes needed for ratification.

Although noting that Pakistan and India have detonated nuclear weapons and Iran and North Korea might be moving that

way, Berrigan gave some reassurance about the value of non-proliferation.

“Since the end of the cold war, more countries have given up nuclear programs than have started them.”

Ike M. Thacker IV is an advocate for political, social and economic democracy. He focuses on housing.

Louisville-based activist Sharon Wallace will speak at the January 21 Third Thursday Lunch talk on the siege of Gaza. For more information on the \$6 lunch, contact Jean Edwards at (502) 458-8056.

FINANCIAL REPORT November 2009

BEGINNING BALANCE	\$ 9,285.60
Frita Berrigan donations	449.00
Donations & Honorariums	5,270.00
TOTAL	\$15,004.60

EXPENDITURES:	
FORsooth Editing	\$150.00
FORsooth Layout	100.00
FORsooth Printing	306.00
FORsooth Mailing	200.00
FOR National Dues	100.00
TTL AFSC speakers	100.00
Unity Dinner program ad	50.00
Frita Berrigan air fare	262.40
Office Expenses	115.66
	\$1,384.06
	<u>1,384.06</u>

ENDING BALANCE.....\$13,620.54

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As poverty swells, AFL-CIO backs plan to create jobs

We were recently visiting in Tennessee. The Nashville paper, *The Tennessean*, ran an article on November 27: “Children living in poverty increases in Middle TN. Ability to learn, lifetime health can be affected”: “...children living in almost every part of the region were more likely than other age groups — including senior citizens — to live in poverty.

“In Davidson County (Nashville—I.G.), poverty rose from 15.2 percent of residents in 2007 to 16.9 percent last year. The same rate for children grew from 24.2 to 25.7 percent. ‘When you see these kinds of gaps in poverty, this many children living in poverty compared to the rest of the population, it is directly related to public policy choices being made in this state,’ said Gordon Bonnyman, executive director of the Nashville-based Tennessee Justice Center.”

The right-wing blames this on the lazy, but the article reports differently: “The problem isn’t necessarily parents’ employment. A full 49 percent of the parents of children living in poverty or near it across the United States are employed part or full time. And in Tennessee, 56 percent of children living in poverty or near it have parents who are employed, but they don’t earn enough to exceed federal poverty guidelines.”

This crisis of poverty is not peculiar to Tennessee. Here in Louisville, the Metropolitan Housing Coalition produced a report, “Where Do You Live? Louisville’s Homeless Children and the Affordable Housing Crisis.”

It is replete with statistics, but its commentary will suffice for this column: “Every year when school starts, kindergarten teachers ask their eager students, ‘Where do you live?’ Giving their home address is a basic skill for five-year-olds; it also helps them feel safe and fixes their place in the world. But for the growing number of homeless children in Louisville, this question has become much too hard to answer.

“During the last school year, at least 8,582 children in Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS), or nearly one in nine, were homeless at some point. That number has risen by 50 percent since 2004 and 14 percent in the last year. Homeless students came from every Metro Council District and attended nearly every school....

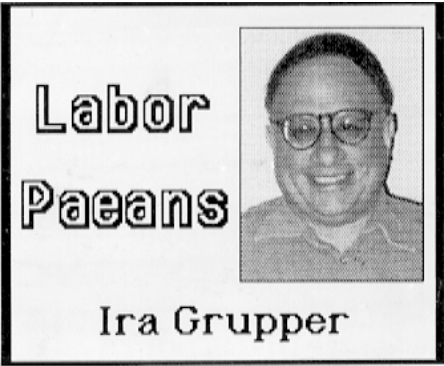
“To put these numbers in perspective, last year’s homeless students would fill 119 school buses or provide full enrollment for 14 of the district’s largest elementary schools.... For cities nationwide, the rising number of homeless children in public schools is a disheartening sign of the recession and its long-lasting effects.... In Louisville, the increase compromises one of our city’s primary economic goals: To build an educated workforce for the 21st century.”

NEVER GIVE UP

by His Holiness The Dalai Lama
& Ron Whitehead

Never give up
No matter what is going on
Never give up
Develop the heart
Too much energy in your country
Is spent developing the mind
Instead of the heart
Develop the heart
Be compassionate
Not just with your friends
But with everyone
Be compassionate
Work for peace
In your heart
And in the world
Work for peace
And I say again
Never give up
No matter what is going on around you
Never give up

copyright (c) 1994-2009 Ron Whitehead



Ours is a land of plenty, yet here’s what the *New York Times* opines (November 29, 2009): “With food stamp use at record highs and climbing every month, a program once scorned as a failed welfare scheme now helps feed one in eight Americans and one in four children.”

Parents can feed their kids when they can find work. Reports the AFL-CIO website (Nov. 30), as this column is being pieced together:

“President Barack Obama this week is convening a jobs summit to address the ur-

“...all the poverty, homelessness, lack of healthcare and more
could be wiped out with all the money we spend on war,
and on a permanent war economy.”

gent need to create jobs for the more than 26 million unemployed or underemployed workers looking for work in an economy in which there are more than six workers for every one job. An economy in which one in three Americans (has) either lost his or her job or live(s) in a household with someone who has.

“The summit, set for Thursday, Dec. 3, will include more than 100 experts and leaders from business, labor, government and community organizations, including AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka and Nobel laureates Joseph Stiglitz and Paul Krugman.

“At the summit, Trumka will discuss the five-point plan proposed by the AFL-CIO and our allies to create jobs and boost the economy, which involves:

- Extending the lifeline for jobless workers through unemployment insurance, food aid and health care assistance.
- Rebuilding America’s schools, roads and energy systems.
- Increasing aid to state and local governments to maintain vital services and prevent layoffs.
- Fund jobs in our communities, focusing on distressed areas.
- Put the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) funds to work for Main Street by increasing lending from community banks to small and medium-sized businesses.”

Will this plan, or a complementary one put forward by the Economic Policy

Institute, be accepted by big business at the Obama summit, and by the Obama administration? Stay tuned.

Not only do so many lack adequate jobs, housing and food, but, unlike any other developed nation in the world, if you need medical attention you can get it only, or mostly, if you can pay for it.

At press time we saw a sickly watered-down U.S. House healthcare proposal (H.R. 3962) sent to the U.S. Senate, where it is expected to be made sicker still.

Even the limited House legislation, ironically, would not have passed were it not for the hard work of the labor movement, Physicians for a National Health Plan, Healthcare Now and other progressive organizations. We were up against the massive money and lobbyists of the insurance, pharmaceutical, and hospital corporations.

Yet, all the poverty, homelessness, lack of healthcare and more could be wiped out with all the money we spend on war, and on a permanent war economy.

Writes Prof. Harry Targ (Purdue University), in a paper called “On Afghanistan”: “So when we ask ourselves

why military operations in Afghanistan will be expanded the answer seems clear. First, the military constitutes the largest organized, armed, and funded institution in American society. In today’s political economy it stands shoulder to shoulder with Wall Street as a source of almost unstoppable resistance to change.

“Second, military largesse trickles down throughout the society affecting manufacturing, scientific research, education, private armies, spy operations, and myriad other activities.

”Third, pentagon elites see the danger of this new administration reallocating spending to meet the needs of a crisis-ridden economy: health care, jobs, education, and transportation (it is interesting to note that Senators Lugar and Graham already have called for shelving health care reform until the battle in Afghanistan has been won).

“Finally, military institutional interests demanding increasing shares of government money use in their advocacy expanding wars playing upon the deeply embedded war-proneness of American culture.”

The above analysis is not seen in the mainstream newspapers. These papers are the voice of the big shots, and there is a local example to prove it. We have two Ford plants in Louisville. The United Auto Workers (UAW), both here and nationally,

were getting ready to vote on a national contract with a lot of concessions.

And how does the Louisville *Courier-Journal* report this? October 29, Page 1: “Ford’s plans for Louisville hinge on vote.” Well, the Local 862 workers turned down the lousy contract, 84 percent voting against it, and notwithstanding the newspaper’s “objective” advice.

Ford had promised to introduce two new models to Louisville, and spend hundreds of millions of dollars in renovating the two plants.

But, thankfully, Ford says it will still expand here. In fairness to the situation, there are many times when companies do follow thru with threats, and Ford isn’t saying exactly what it will do hereabouts.

That’s the problem, and that’s why Ford workers are to be commended for sticking together.

When you receive this newspaper column, your columnist will be preparing to travel to Cairo, Egypt, and then from Cairo to the Gaza Strip, to participate in the Gaza Freedom March.

Six of us from here in Louisville will be joining up with more than 1,000 protestors from around the world, from 41 countries, mostly from the U.S., demanding Israel lift the collective punishment blockade against 1.5 million Gazans, and allow a normal mercantile flow of food and medicine into Gaza.

The Gaza Freedom March will try to enter Gaza from the Egyptian side (Rafah crossing).

When I lived in Israel, from November 1999 to the end of April 2000, I would walk from my lovely middle class Jewish neighborhood of Rehavia, in West Jerusalem, to Salah al Din Street in the Palestinian part of East Jerusalem. There I would either take a *service* (shared taxi) or a bus to Ramallah, Qalqilyah, Bethlehem, Jericho or elsewhere.

Sometimes, less frequently, I would travel to Gaza. It took a toll on me then, and during the three other occasions I spent time there. Now I am almost 60 six years old, and the tension, and projected lack of sleep, may be more difficult still.

Yet, what is happening to the Palestinians, and done in my name, in the name of the Jewish people, is something I cannot remain silent about.

Of course, Palestinians and Jews have been neighbors for so many millennia, so I must refer to the Hebrew bible: “When a stranger resides in your land, you shall not wrong him. The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as one of your citizens; you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.” (Leviticus 19: 33-34).

So, I must go on this trip.

Contact Ira Grupper at irag@iglou.com.

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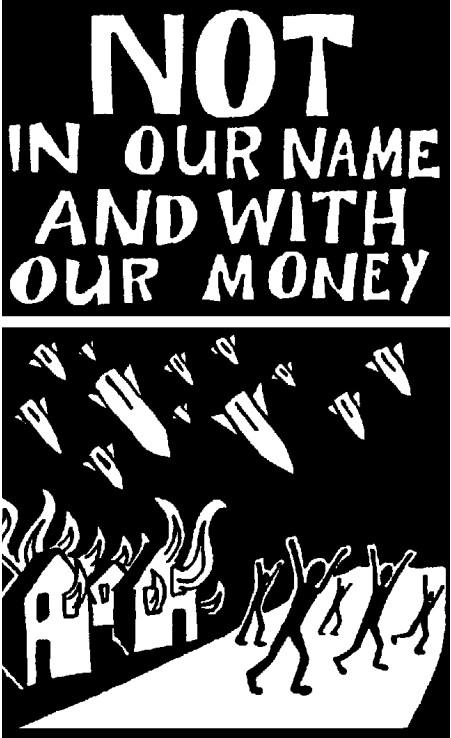
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Memorable martyrdom, terrible tragedy

20 years ago, oligarchy, militarism murdered innocents

by James E. Flynn

Recently thousands of faithful citizens gathered once more at the gates of Ft. Benning, Ga. Other thousands have done so for most of the past 20 years, while those gathered this year of 2009 are remembering the 20th Anniversary of the brutal martyrdom in El Salvador of six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and her 16 year-old daughter in the early morning hours of Nov. 16, 1989.

- P. Ignacio Ellacuria: PRESENTE!
- P. Segundo Montes: PRESENTE!
- P. Ignacio Martin-Baro: PRESENTE!
- P. Joaquin Lopez y Lopez: PRESENTE!
- P. Juan Ramon Moreno: PRESENTE!
- P. Amando Lopes: PRESENTE!
- Sra. Elba Ramos: PRESENTE!
- Srt. Celia Ramos: PRESENTE!

Those eight were martyred by 24 Salvadoran soldiers, 18 of whom had only recently returned from training at Ft. Benning, where the infamous “School of the Americas” was then and is still located. The brutality of the martyrdom is noteworthy as one connects the dots between San Salvador and Ft. Benning. These killings sparked international outrage and tarnished the image of the U.S anti-communist efforts after it was found that some of the soldiers involved received training at the “School of the Americas.”

Those soldiers entered the campus of the University of Central America under cover of darkness in the early morning hours of Nov. 16, 1989. They broke into the private rooms of each of the priest-professors, gunned down several in their rooms, and dragged two out into a courtyard in their pajamas.

They killed those two priests in the

garden and afterward carved out the brain of P. Ignacio Ellacuria, the President of the University. Pictures taken after the bodies were discovered show that brutality starkly.

Sra. Elba Ramos and daughter Celia were dragged from their couches, raped and then killed. Pictures reveal bloody bullet wounds to their faces.

Inside the private rooms of the priests, soldiers riddled books, typewriters, and desks, burning other books and clothing. One Bible now on display at the museum for these martyrs shows a straight line of bullets riddling the Bible almost into two pieces. On the wall of the corridor of the dormitory was a picture of Archbishop Oscar Romero. One soldier fired a bullet into the heart of Romero’s picture - he had been martyred nine years before.

One Jesuit colleague, P. Jon Sobrino, who also lived in the dormitory, escaped this tragedy because he happened to be giving a series of lectures at that time in Thailand.

Ironically, Elba and Celia Ramos had been brought to the dwelling of the Jesuits by Elba’s husband, who tended the garden outside the dormitory; recently there had been intense fighting around San Salvador, and he worried about their safety. They were asleep on a couch in a living room when the soldiers came.

After the burials Sr. Ramos continued to plant and care for red roses in the garden, where today there is a small memorial surrounded by roses with the names of all eight victims inscribed.

When the morning of Nov. 16, 1989 broke, neighbors who had heard the shooting, notified Archbishop Rivera y Damas who hurried to the university. He, other church officials and members of the press were horrified, not only at the brutality of the murders, but at the brazenness of the soldiers. The military initially denied involvement, blaming the guerrillas fighting all around the city of San Salvador.

For years before this tragic date, the Jesuit priests had been urging all sides in the

long-lasting civil war to begin peace talks. While they never encouraged armed resistance, they had spoken boldly against the injustices of the government, the oligarchy and the military who had ruled El Salvador for so long. The oligarchs and military were particularly aiming for P. Ignacio Ellacuria a very strong voice for stopping the conflict and brokering peace talks.

A few days before these martyrdoms, the Frente Marti de la Liberacion Nacional (FMLN) had mounted a serious attack right in the heart of San Salvador.

The FMLN had particularly targeted the area called Escalon where many oligarchs and government officials lived. Residents of this area had felt safely removed and protected from the conflicts that were ravaging the countryside of El Salvador.

The FMLN had decided to move the scenes of struggle from remote areas into the heart of the oligarchs’ compounds. That recent uprising inside the city itself seriously disturbed the residents of Escalon, and the military immediately began a counter-offensive.

It was in the midst of this effort that soldiers entered the University of San Salvador on November 16, including the 18 who had recently graduated from Ft. Benning’s “School of the Americas.”

The Salvadoran government and military held the Jesuits responsible as the “intellectual authors” of the uprising, even though the priests had urged all sides to stop the fighting, lay down their arms and begin peace talks.

Today the small chapel in the middle of the campus of the University of Central America is the burial place for the six Jesuit priests. Elba and Celia were buried in a family lot. The chapel has stark stations of the cross on its walls depicting many years of other brutal massacres and individual assassinations perpetrated by Salvador’s infamous

“death squads” — usually members of the military out of uniform.

The brutal martyrdoms of the Jesuits was so publicized world-wide that pressure on the combatants led to final peace talks completed in 1992, signed by the Salvadoran government and the leadership of the FMLN.

The Jesuit priests joined the list of many other victims of the long drawn-out Salvadoran civil war, a war that extended from the 1960s into the 90s, and a war that claimed the lives of more than 75,000 civilians. Most of those civilians were victims of the Salvadoran military and its notorious “death squads,” though some were victims of the FMLN.

On the occasion of the 20th commemoration of the martyrdom of the Jesuits, Nov. 16, 2009, the new president of El Salvador, Muricio Funes of the FMLN party has awarded the Jesuits El Salvador’s highest honor, “The National Order of Jose Matias Delgado,” President Funes is using these awards as a “public act of atonement” for mistakes by previous governments.

Over the entrance to the chapel where the Jesuits are buried are inscribed words from Archbishop Romero, applicable to the eight killed 20 years ago and to the thousands of other slain Salvadorans: “If they kill me, I will rise in the Salvadoran people.”

May all the martyrs of El Salvador rest in peace - and may they encourage us not to rest until there is peace with justice in small countries like El Salvador.

The writer, a Roman Catholic priest and longtime activist for peace and economic and racial justice, recently returned to Louisville after living for 10 years in Colorado and Utah, where he served Catholic Anglo and Latino communities.

On coup in Honduras



Letters to FORsooth

FORsooth readers who would like more background on the people behind the Honduran military coup would do well to find a copy of *The Washington Spectator* of December 1, 2009, “A New Cold War in a Small Tropical Country,” by the well-respected journalist Lou Dubose.

The website is www.washingtonspectator.com. Interestingly, a one-man band named Robert Carmona-Borjas, a “Venezuelan expatriate began to use his non-profit [Arcadia Foundation] to undermine the elected government of a country to which he had no known connection.”

Also, “South Carolina Republican Senator Jim DeMint’s five-month ‘hold’ (just - released) on the nomination of Arturo Valenzuela as assistant secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs... limited President Obama’s ability to implement his own policy in the region.” There’s even an Iran-Contra connection among the nefarious individuals plotting against the Honduran President Zelaya. Why are we not surprised?

Kate Cunningham
Louisville



Third Thursday Lunches

presented by the

Fellowship of Reconciliation & Interfaith Paths to Peace

September 2009 to January 2010

January 21

The Israeli Military Attack on Gaza: The Occupation Continues

Dr. Sharon Wallace will share her experiences and photos from her trip to occupied Palestine during the Israeli assault in January of 2009. Sharon Wallace, activist, teacher and mother has been traveling to, and working in, the occupied West Bank and Gaza strip since 1990. She has worked with direct action groups, Palestinian media and non government organizations.

The Rudyard Kipling • 422 West Oak Street • Louisville
Buffet Lunch at 11:30 • Presentations at Noon • \$6.00
For reservations, call Jean Edwards (458-8056)



FOR MESSAGE REACHES THE WHITE HOUSE

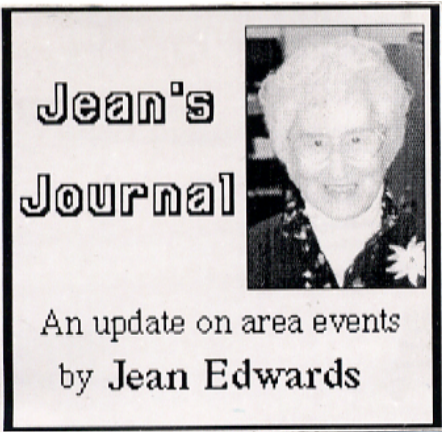
In recent says news outlets were filled with reports of the President’s decision to send more troops to Afghanistan. The peace community became quite agitated and flooded Congressional offices with letters and e-mails, all the time wondering if our messages were making a dent in getting the President to change his plan. Little did we dream that **FOR’s** Executive Director , **Mark Johnson** was actually speaking for us at the White House. His report follows.

“A few days ago, I received an invitation to the White House. I was one of twenty briefed by the President’s staff and advisors on Afghanistan and Pakistan. I was heard by administration officials as I presented on behalf of **FOR** the case for change in the current Afghanistan and Pakistan strategy – End military engagement and pursue diplomatic efforts. For over an hour I met with six members of the executive branch. I listened. They listened.”

This surprising story indicates to me primarily that at least the current administration is aware that **FOR** exists. When did the previous administration ever ask to hear our point of view?

We have reason to be very proud of Mark Johnson and the **FOR** staff. They are doing a remarkable job of keeping in touch through e-mails and their excellent blog site. They urge us to use the blog more often: **www.forpeace.net** The national office has had to make severe budget cuts recently due to the downturn in the economy. They are having a difficult struggle at a time when it is so important for the **FOR** message to be heard.

Consequently we join them in asking all of our readers to send a tax deductible contribution right away. Send to: **Fellowship of Reconciliation, P.O. Box 271, Nyack, NY 10960.**



LETTER TO PRESIDENT OBAMA

On December 1, 2009, The Fellowship of Reconciliation in Nyack, NY joined with 33 other national peace and anti-war groups to send an open letter to President Obama that strongly opposed his anticipated decision to escalate the war in Afghanistan by committing more troops. The document calls increased war spending an “utter folly” and names the war “a war against ordinary people which if continued will result in the deaths of hundreds if not thousands of US troops and untold thousands of Afghans and cause people in other lands to despise the US as the world’s richest nation making war on one of the world’s very poorest.”

Those who signed (including Mark Johnson who leads the national **FOR**) pledged to “keep opposing this war in every nonviolent way possible. We will urge elected representatives to cut all funding for war. Some of us will be led to withhold our taxes, practice civil resistance, and promote slowdowns and strikes at schools and workplaces.”

Mark Johnson said, “**FOR’s** collaboration and engagement with peace activists and civil society leaders in the Middle East and Central Asia informs us time and again that military methods are not the answer.

FOR CHAPTER IN OLYMPIA CONNECTS WITH AFGHAN YOUTHS

FOR member **Doug Mackey** of Olympia, WA has been reaching out and connecting with young people in Afghanistan who have been vigiling for peace. These Afghan kids — most aged 9-17 — have lost close family members to war. They are sweet and nonviolent. They arranged for the US ambassador to visit them and convey their message of peace to President Obama. See <http://ourjourneytosmile.com/blog> Don’t miss these priceless pictures and messages from Afghan youth.

Doug Mackey arranged for local high school students in Olympia to teleconference with them, and the local newspaper also covered it. See www.theolympian.com/localhighlight/story/1048586.html

For more information contact **Dennis Mills** (mills.dennis@comcast.net) or **Doug Mackey** (dougwmackey@gmail.com) Also you might like to contact **Glen Anderson** who coordinates the Olympia **FOR** chapter and does a fabulous job. glen@olywa. Tel: 360-491-9093.

GUANTANAMO UPDATE. FAST/VIGIL PLANNED TO SHUT IT DOWN

When Frida Berrigan spoke in Louisville last month, she told about her trip to Guantanamo last December with a delegation called **Witness Against Torture**. The witness was important to encourage our newly elected President to close the prison, long a symbol of US terror and lawlessness. On January 22, 2009, after signing the Executive Order to close Guantanamo, Obama committed his administration to closing the prison *within a year* !

Since that time the process of releasing the 200 plus men still detained there has become mired in bureaucratic and legal footdragging, Frida explained. Only a few have been released. More than 60 of them have been cleared for release — innocent men caught in an indiscriminate sweep that landed them at Guantanamo, isolated and tortured. The government acknowledges it has no evidence on most of them, if not all of them, yet still they languish.

January 11, 2010 will mark eight years since the Bush administration turned the US Naval Base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba into an “enemy combatant” detention facility, re-commissioning it as a torture chamber and legal black hole they hoped no one would notice and from which they hoped none would emerge. **Witness Against Torture** has written that because of the Obama administration’s improper handling of detainee issues and now, as the administration expands the war in Afghanistan and expands operations at the US prison in Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan “we see more clearly than ever the need for consistent, principled, nonviolent action and witness.”

Witness Against Torture has issued a **CALL TO ACTION** for **January 11-22, 2010 to participate in a Fast and Vigil to Shut Down Guantanamo, End Torture and Build Justice**. The action will begin on January 11 to mark eight years since Guantanamo became a “war on terror” prison, and lasting through January 22, the date the Obama administration committed to closing the facility.

Please consider being present in that community in Washington, DC for these eleven days in January, or acting in parallel in your own community. See flyer elsewhere in this newspaper. For more information to www.witnessstorture.org

To sign up, or for any questions, contact: frida.berrigan@gmail.com or **Matt Daloisio**: daloisio@riseup.net

SPRINGFIELD, KENTUCKY DECLARED “THE GREENEST, MOST SUSTAINABLE”

Another “First” in Kentucky was the rare joint proclamation on Friday, October 9, 2009 of the Judge Executive of Washington County and the Mayor of Springfield, Kentucky, who declared their rural community of Springfield “**The Greenest, Most Sustainable Rural Community in Kentucky**.”

The action was the result of a full year’s work by the Board of Directors and **Sister Claire McGowan**, the Executive Director of **New Pioneers for a Sustainable Future** located in Springfield. The team of New Pioneers researched and listed at least 20 actions, policies, and efforts of the community of 12,000 which are clearly oriented to sustainability. These range from extensive recycling activity, a unique water treatment plant, to sustainable community educational programs, emphasis on locally grown food efforts, more than 650 registered Green Pioneer homes, and having its own community based sustainability organization.

On October 15, 2009 **The New Pioneers for a Sustainable Future** provided Washington County a unique four-hour symposium in the Opera House: **AWAKENING THE DREAMER; CHANGING THE DREAM OF THE MODERN WORLD**.

This symposium invites participants to help create a different kind of world that is environmentally sustainable, spiritually fulfilling and socially just. It was created four years ago by the San Francisco-based Pachamama Alliance and has spread to five continents as well as across the United States to the United Nations, and is offered in 5 languages.

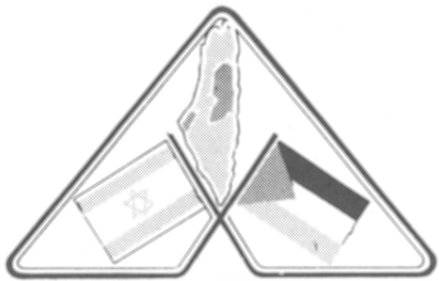
The Pachamama Alliance is a US based not-for-profit organization that was born out of a relationship developed between a group of people from the United States and the leaders of remote indigenous peoples in the Amazon region of Ecuador. This relationship was actually initiated by the indigenous elders and shamans themselves who, out of their deep concern for the growing threat to their ancient way of life, and their recognition that the roots of this threat lay far beyond their rainforest home, actively sought the partnership of committed individuals living in the modern world.

This global multimedia four-hour program was directed by Father Joe Mitchell of Louisville’s Earth and Spirit Center, 1924 Newburg Road, Louisville, KY 40205. It is available periodically at the Center or for group showing elsewhere. Call 502-452-2749. Earthandspiritcenter.org

Thanks to Sister Adrian Marie Hofstetter op of St. Catharine, Kentucky for sharing this information.



The key to peace in the Middle East Support a Two-State Solution to End the Israeli/Palestinian Conflict



VIGIL FOR PEACE
Every Friday, 12 Noon – 1:00 PM
Corner of 6th Street & Broadway
Louisville, Kentucky



Louisville Committee for Israeli/Palestinian States (502.451.5658) www.louisvillepeace.org/twostates.html
Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR)/Louisville Chapter (502.458.8056) www.louisville-for.org
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC)/Kentucky Chapter (502.893.9828) www.adckentucky.com

Calendar for peacemakers

Dec 2 (Wed) **THE LOUISVILLE SUSTAINABILITY FORUM.** Meets the first Wednesday of each month. The forum’s purpose is to hold and promote the intention of sustainability for Louisville; establish and nourish relationships that strengthen community and create change; and create a space for discussion that inspires, motivates and deepens our ability to catalyze social change. Bring your lunch and enjoy the company of like-minded community members. Noon to 1:45 PM, Passionist Earth & Spirit Center, The Barn at 1924 Newburg Road.

Dec 6 (Sun) **SUSTAINABLE LOCAL PUBLIC POLICY.** Every Sunday at 2 PM at the Legal Aid Society, 416 W. Muhammad Ali. Become a part of this grassroots movement bringing principles of sustainability into local public policy. For details, contact: j@bikecourier.org.

Dec 6 (Sun) **VIGIL FOR PEACE** every first Sunday evening, remembering all those suffering from conflicts in the Middle East. Bring a candle. 7-8 PM, Bardstown Road at Douglass Blvd. Sponsored by LPAC (Louisville Peace Action Community). For more information, call Harold Trainer at 387-9490.

Dec 7 (Mon) **SUSTAINABLE LOCAL PUBLIC POLICY.** Every Monday at 6 PM at the Center for Neighborhoods, 610 South Fourth Street, #701. Become a part of this grassroots movement bringing principles of sustainability into local public policy. For details, contact: j@bikecourier.org.

Dec 9 (Wed) **KITLAC (Ky Interfaith Taskforce on Latin America and the Caribbean).** Every second Wednesday at the Presbyterian Seminary. 7:30 pm. Call David Horvath, 479-9262, or Pat Geier, 456-6586.

Dec 10 (Thurs) **THE FDR/LINCOLN LEGACY CLUB.** Meets the second Thursday of the month, for those interested in learning about fair trade and the American system of economics of Hamilton and Clay. 6:30 PM, 1838 Frankfort Ave. For more information, contact John Miller at papajohn15@bellsouth.net.

Dec 10 (Thurs) **APPAF (American Palestine Public Affairs Forum).** Every second Thursday. A documentary film exploring the situation in Middle East will be presented. 7:30 PM, Louisville Presbyterian Seminary, 1044 Alta Vista Road, Nelson Hall, Room 119. For more information, call Bashar Masri, 773-1836.

Dec 12 (Sat) **PEAK OIL.** Every 2nd Saturday, Main Library, 4th & York, Mezzanine, Boardroom. 9:00 AM. Call George Perkins, 425-6645.

Dec 13 (Sun) **“AIM HIGHER”** focusing on military counter-recruitment. Every 2nd Sunday at 7 PM, 2236 Kaelin Avenue at the FOR office. This group welcomes invitations to speak about conscientious objection, military recruitment, and the possibility for high school students to “opt out” of having their names given to recruiters. Call Jim Johnson, 262-0148.

Dec 17 (Thurs) **KENTUCKY SINGLE PAYER HEALTH CARE.** Every third Thursday, 5:30 PM. Main Library, 4th & York Streets, Mezzanine Board Room. Call Kay Tillow, 636-1551.

Dec 19 (Sat) **WINTER SOLSTICE SACRED CELEBRATION: THE WOMB OF WINTER.** Sacred Celebration is a quarterly gathering for Louisville’s spiritual community. Attendees are invited to participate in music, reflection, dance, visual arts, prayer, play, sacred ceremony, and grace-filled celebration. Above all, they are encouraged to participate in the strengthening of their own connection to the sacred, to the universe, to the planet, to other species and to each other. Sponsored by Cultivating Connections. 7 PM (doors close at 7:15), Unity of Louisville, 757 South Brook Street. Free and open to the public. Donations welcome.

Dec 20 (Sun) **LOUISVILLE COMMITTEE FOR ISRAELI/PALESTINIAN STATES.** Every third Sunday. First Unitarian Church, 4th & York Streets, 3:00 PM. Call Beverley Marmion, 451-5658.

Dec 20 (Sun) **PEACECASTERS VIDEO SHOWCASE.** Featuring screenings of the PeaceCasters’ most recent projects, fellowship and refreshments. 3-4 PM, Center for Interfaith Relations, 415 West Muhammad Ali. To RSVP, call 583-3100 or email mark@interfaithrelations.org.

Dec 20 (Sun) **PFLAG ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY.** Potluck and “White Elephant Gift Exchange”—if you would like to participate, please bring a wrapped gift valued at no more than \$10, or a wrapped item from around the house that you no longer want. We will have our normal meeting along with the festivities. Please join us and help celebrate the holiday season. Everyone,

as always, is welcome, so please bring friends, family and loved ones. First Lutheran Church, 417 East Broadway, 3-5 PM. For more information, email pflaglouisville@yahoo.com or call 329-0229.

Jan 4 (Mon) **F.O.R. STEERING COMMITTEE.** Presbyterian Seminary, 1044 Alta Vista Road. Please note the change in date from the usual meeting every fourth Monday. Visitors encouraged. Call Dennis Bricking, 298-0590, or Phil Schervish, 558-7175.

Jan 8 (Fri) **CHURCH WOMEN UNITED.** General Meeting. All interested persons invited! First Lutheran Church, 417 E. Broadway. For more information, call 584-4926.

Jan 11 (Mon) **DEADLINE FOR THE FEBRUARY ISSUE OF FORsooth.** Contact **George Morrison, editor, at 454-2752**, or klm86@att.net.

Note: Please email new or updated calendar listings to calendar.peace@gmail.com, or call Nikki at 451-3402.

Jan 14-17 (Thurs-Sun) **NCADP (National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty) NATIONAL CONFERENCE: “Training for the Long Run: Building Bridges to Wider Audiences.”** Featuring keynote speaker **Sister Helen Prejean**. The training program includes presentations of substantive information, practical tools, and innovative ideas from research and personal experience. Seelbach Hotel in downtown Louisville. For more information visit www.ncadp.org or email info@ncadp.org.

Jan 20 (Wed) **14TH ANNUAL RACE AND RELATIONS CONFERENCE: “Moving Forward into the 21st Century.”** Featuring keynote speaker Jane Elliott, internationally known teacher, lecturer and diversity sensitivity trainer. Registration \$75; \$40 for workshops only. Galt House Hotel, 140 North Fourth St. Sponsored by the Louisville Human Relations Commission. To register, call 574-4332 or visit www.louisvilleky.gov/humanrelations.

Jan 21 (Thurs) **THIRD THURSDAY LUNCH: “THE ISRAELI ATTACK ON GAZA: The Occupation Continues.”** Dr. Sharon Wallace will share her experiences and photos from her trip to occupied Palestine during the Israeli assault in January of 2009. She is an activist, teacher and mother who has been traveling to, and working in, the occupied West Bank and Gaza strip since 1990. She has worked with direct action groups, Palestinian media and non-governmental organizations. The Lunch is sponsored by the Fellowship of Reconciliation in cooperation with Interfaith Paths to Peace. Rudyard Kipling, 422 West Oak. Buffet lunch at 11:30; presentation begins at noon. \$6. For reservations, call Jean Edwards at 458-8056 or email edwardsfor@bellsouth.net.

Jan 21 (Thurs) **FORsooth LABELING** at Beverley Marmion’s, 6:30 pm. We need you for one hour! Please stop by and socialize while your fingers do the work. Bouquets to those who do this important work every month! Call 451-5658.

OUT OF TOWN

Dec 12 (Sat) **EMERGENCY ANTI-ESCALATION RALLY to protest the escalation of war in Afghanistan.** Washington, DC. For more information, visit www.enduswars.org.

Jan 11-22. **SHUT DOWN GUANTANAMO! FAST FOR JUSTICE.** A daily vigil and fast will be held in Washington, DC to mark the 8th year of torture, abuse and detention at Guantánamo. Please consider being present in DC at this time or acting in parallel in your own community. To sign up, or for more information, contact Frida Berrigan at fberrigan@gmail.com or Matt Daloisio at daloisio@riseup.net.

Jan 25 (Mon) **Federal Trial begins in Columbus, GA, for the four individuals arrested at Ft. Benning after “crossing the line” at the November 2009 Vigil to close the School of the Americas (WHISC).** Please remember: Nancy Givan of Syracuse, NY; Ken Hayes of Austin, TX, Father Louis Vitale of Oakland, CA, and Michael Walli of Washington, DC.

“WHILE DIPLOMATS TALK PEACE, PALESTINIANS TALK ABOUT SURVIVAL”

— Dr. Yacoub Yacoub (1936-2008)

Regular Meeting Times for Area Organizations

ADDICTION RECOVERY ADVOCATES OF KENTUCKIANA – 2nd Thursday (485-1248)

AIDS INTERFAITH MINISTRIES (AIM) OF KENTUCKIANA, INC. – 1st Tuesday (574-6085 or 574-6086)

AMERICA 2000 DEMOCRATIC CLUB – 4th Tuesday (459-0616)

AMERICANS UNITED FOR SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE – 3rd Thursday, every other month at noon (608-7517)

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL – 1st Saturday (637-8951)

APPAF [AMERICAN PALESTINE PUBLIC AFFAIRS FORUM] – 2nd Thursday (895-8155)

BREAD FOR THE WORLD – Last Monday (239-4317)

CAPA [CITIZENS AGAINST POLICE ABUSE] – 2nd Thursday (778-8130)

CART [COALITION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION] – 3rd Wednesday, 1578 Bardstown Road (895-5172)

CLOUT [CITIZENS OF LOUISVILLE ORGANIZED AND WORKING TOGETHER] – (583-1267)

COMMITTEE FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST – 2nd Monday (456-6586)

COMMON CAUSE – 1st Tuesday, every other month (454-7797)

COMMUNIST PARTY USA – First Sunday at 2:00 PM (384-3875)

COMMUNITY FARM ALLIANCE OF JEFFERSON COUNTY – 2nd Tuesday (775-4041)

CONVERSATION CAFE – Wednesday evenings (560-0085)

COUNTER RECRUITMENT, “Aim Higher” – Second Sunday (893-2334)

EARTH SAVE LOUISVILLE – 2nd Saturday (299-9520) www.LouisvilleEarthSave.org

FAIRNESS CAMPAIGN – Quarterly community dialogues and volunteer opportunities (893-0788)

FDR/LINCOLN LEGACY CLUB – 1st Thursday, papajohn15@bellsouth.net

FELLOWSHIP OF RECONCILIATION – 4th Monday (558-7175 or 895-8516)

FRIENDSHIP FORCE OF LOUISVILLE – 2nd Tuesday (893-8436)

GREATER LOUISVILLE SIERRA CLUB – 3rd Tuesday (897-3335)

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY – Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays & Saturdays (637-6265)

INTERFAITH PATHS TO PEACE – 1st Tuesday (214-7322)

IRFI [ISLAMIC RESEARCH FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL, INC.] – Sundays at 6:00 PM (502-423-1988)

JOBS WITH JUSTICE KENTUCKY (582-5454)

JURISDICTIONARY CLUB OF LOUISVILLE – Know the law and how to use it (500-8161)

KFTC [KENTUCKIANS FOR THE COMMONWEALTH] – 2nd Monday (589-3188)

KITOD [KENTUCKIANA INTERFAITH TASKFORCE ON DARFUR] – (553-6172)

KY ALLIANCE AGAINST RACIST & POLITICAL REPRESSION – 3rd Monday (778-8130)

KY COALITION TO ABOLISH THE DEATH PENALTY – Last Tuesday (541-9998)

KITLAC [KY INTERFAITH TASKFORCE ON LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN] – 2nd Wednesday (479-9262)

KY RAINBOW/PUSH COALITION – (245-2272)

LOUISVILLE COMMITTEE FOR ISRAELI/PALESTINIAN STATES – 3rd Sunday (451-5658)

LOUISVILLE PEAK OIL GROUP – 2nd Saturday (425-6645)

LPAC [LOUISVILLE PEACE ACTION COMMUNITY] – (456-6914)

LOUISVILLE WOMEN CHURCH – Meditation every Sunday (473-8435)

LOUISVILLE YOUTH GROUP – Friday nights (893-0788), www.louisvilleyouthgroup.org

METRO SWEEP FOR ACCESS – 3rd Tuesday (895-0866 or 899-9261)

METROPOLITAN HOUSING COALITION – 4th Wednesday (584-6858)

MIGHTY KINDNESS – mightykindness@gmail.com (235-0711)

MUHAMMAD ALI INSTITUTE FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE, at UL (852-6372)

NAACP [NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE] – 3rd Monday (776-7608)

NAMI [NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR THE MENTALLY ILL] – 2nd Monday (245-5287)

PARENTS, FAMILIES & FRIENDS OF LESBIANS AND GAYS (P-FLAG) – 3rd Sunday (329-0229)

PEACE & COMPASSION BUDDHA CIRCLE/CML – (451-2193, brozier@bellsouth.net)

RCRC [RELIGIOUS COALITION FOR REPRODUCTIVE CHOICE] – (866-606-0988)

RESULTS (a hunger lobby) – 2nd Saturday (451-4907)

911 TRUTH LOUISVILLE (502-609-6020)

US DEPARTMENT OF PEACE CAMPAIGN OF KY – 3rd Sunday (472-1772)

Note: If your group would like to be added to this list or if information needs to be updated, please let us know by calling 458-8056.