

Peace and posterity – LPAC’s story enters Filson files

by Johanna Camenisch,
Miriam Corcoran SCN
and Judy Munro-Leighton

Two Louisville institutions Oct. 11 celebrated efforts in the city for peace and justice as the Filson Historical Society received its first ever record of area residents’ anti-war actions.

The Filson was host to a reception for members of the Louisville Peace Action Community (LPAC) to establish officially the LPAC Archive. The materials went from being stuff in Judy Munro-Leighton’s garage to public archives.

James Holmberg, Filson Curator for Special Collections, graciously accepted

articles, photographs, anti-war petitions, large hand-painted banners and yard signs, letters to the editor, agendas from hundreds of meetings, correspondence to and from members of Congress, thousands of small white flags, lines of well-worn t-shirts, and questionnaires from the LPAC Booth at the Kentucky State Fair four years in a row.

This extensive archival collection represents eight years of tireless work for peace by hundreds of people who worked with LPAC.

Before the U.S. invasion of Iraq on March 19, 2003, LPAC did everything in its power to prevent a war against a country that had not attacked the U.S. We wrote hundreds of letters and emails. We pressured



— photo by Jamie McMillin

One of the Louisville Peace Action Community’s most striking protests involved 570 pairs of shoes placed on the Jefferson County Courthouse steps in 2004 on the first anniversary of the U.S. Invasion of Iraq, when the U.S. death toll was 570. They represented “the shoes they wore before they went to war.”

To this day, our deepest regret is that we could not prevent the war against Iraq. On March 19, 2004 – the first anniversary of the U.S. invasion – we covered the Courthouse Steps at 6th and Jefferson streets with 570 pairs of shoes to commemorate the U.S.

deaths in Iraq. These running shoes, boots, flip-flops, dancing shoes, and slippers, organizers said, represented “the shoes they wore before they went to war.” For 12 hours, this solemn display drew crowds of

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“...we are proud that we persevered.... We are honored to have a record of our anti-war activities archived....”

the extensive LPAC collection and said these artifacts and materials will be available to area, national, and international researchers who study all aspects of the Iraq War. Holmberg noted that The Filson has considerable information about wars fought by Kentuckians, but had no record of anti-war action by a group of citizens.

The LPAC Archive at The Filson is certainly unique and you will find an amazing array of items compiled during the last eight years. You will see newspaper

our members of Congress and stopped work in their offices. We even emailed the Pope in 2003 to thank him for his stand against an illegal, immoral war. We held candlelight vigils and marched many miles in this city and in Washington, D.C. LPAC placed thousands of hand-lettered yard signs all over the state that proclaimed, “Peace is Patriotic.” And, like patriotic Americans across the country, we took to the streets in 2003 when U.S. planes bombed Baghdad.

Mideast dialogue absent crucial word: occupation

by Russ Greenleaf

Rabbi Ron Kronish and Sufi Muslim Sheikh Ghassan Manasra spoke on “Inter-Religious Dialogue in Israel and the Region in the Service of Peace” at the Festival of Faiths Nov. 8 in Louisville. Both speakers, citizens of Israel, smiled, were nice to each other, agreed with each other, and talked about their wonderful dialog among people of all faiths in Israel. But they did not mention the occupation at all.

We didn’t let them get away with it.

Sheikh Manasra said, “The politicians are very busy, so we don’t want to bother them.” He focuses on educators instead. He tries to influence school principals in the hope that they will educate children about peace,

He is disappointed that there is still no two-state solution, but he is continuing the interfaith dialog anyway. He calls it “peace-building.” In his presentation, he did not mention the occupation of Palestinian land by Israeli soldiers and settlers.

I had suspected these guys would not mention the occupation.

During the question period, I said, “I’m Jewish and I’m not anti-Israel. Whenever anyone talks of peacemaking or peace-building, I always want to make sure we mention what the real cause of the lack of peace is, because if we don’t address the real cause, then we don’t have any hope of achieving peace.

“The real cause is the brutal military occupation of Palestinian land by the

The author, a member of Louisville Jewish Voice for Peace, writes on page three about how to oppose Israeli house demolitions.

“so when the children become the politicians of the future they will make peace.” Never mentioning the occupation, Manasra agreed with everything Kronish said.

In the question period, Presbyterian minister David Johnson said, “This dialog approach is similar to what happened during the U.S. civil rights movement, when some people wanted to focus on dialog to change white people’s attitudes, rather than focusing on changing the laws and ending segregation.”

Rabbi Kronish, director of the Inter-Religious Coordinating Council of Israel (ICCI), said his interfaith dialog program began during the Oslo peace process in the 1990s, when it looked like a two-state solution would occur soon. He saw interfaith dialogue as a head start on helping people learn to live together, so they would know how to act when the peace agreement was finalized.

Israeli army, and the daily wrongs that are committed by the Israeli army against Palestinians, which in many cases have risen to the level of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed against defenseless civilians. I don’t think you have much chance of achieving peace unless Israel stops the war crimes, apartheid, and ethnic cleansing, which are ongoing. What are you doing to address those issues?”

Kronish said, “I wouldn’t use those words. There are two causes of the conflict: the occupation, and the failure of the other side to recognize Israel and end terrorism. You can’t blame only one side.”

Another questioner said the best way to bring peace is to cut off military aid to Israel. Another questioner pointed to the

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Catholic perspective ties peace, environment concerns

Following are excerpts from the Edwards Peacemaking Lecture, named for Louisville FOR co-founders George and Jean Edwards, delivered Oct. 21 at the Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary by **J. Milburn Thompson**, Ph.D., former professor at Bellarmine University.

The many sources Thompson listed included his own work, *Justice and Peace: A Christian Primer* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, rev. ed., 2003) and Martin Luther King Jr.'s *Strength to Love* (N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1963).

Thompson's talk was titled, "is talk was title, His If You Want Peace On Earth, Make Peace With Earth."

I am deeply honored to be asked to give the Edwards Peacemaking Lecture. George and Jean were important mentors for me when I lived in Louisville before my 18 year sojourn in Connecticut. Since I have returned to Louisville, they have functioned more as idols. I feel my life has not come close to the courage, commitment, and persistence of theirs in working for peace.

I was also surprised to be invited.... The invitation encouraged me to bring my Roman Catholic perspective to bear. I may have overdone it. Those familiar with Catholic social teaching will catch the allusion in my title to Pope Paul VI's famous phrase, "If you want peace, work for justice." Since Pope John XXIII's encyclical *Peace on Earth*, the Catholic Church has clearly understood that peace is not the mere absence of war, but the presence of justice. Peacemaking is clearly about politics, and peacemakers are familiar with the need to deal with issues of economic justice as one of the causes of war and a part of the foundation of genuine peace. If you want peace, work for justice.

Ecology, however, is often seen as somewhat peripheral to the peace movement. Nonviolent activists often lead a simple lifestyle that happens to be environmentally friendly, but environmental activism can seem something of a distraction when people are oppressed and violence is raging.

Peace tends to focus attention on the human community and the community of nations.

Pope Benedict XVI's annual World Day of Peace Message for 2010, however, focused on the environment. It was titled *If You Want to Cultivate Peace, Protect Creation* (2010). So Benedict, like me, is also alluding to Paul VI. In July of 2009 Benedict issued the first social encyclical in eighteen years, titled *Charity in Truth*, and it contains a significant section on the environment. The most significant Vatican statement on the environment prior to these two was published 20 years ago. John Paul II's 1990 World Day

of Peace Message was titled *Peace with God the Creator, Peace with All of Creation*. So both John Paul II and Benedict XVI try to link the environment and peace. Now, to be honest, neither do an especially good job of making this connection explicit, but part of the work of theologians is to aid the church in thinking through such issues. That is what I propose to do this evening. I want to highlight the link between peacemaking and environmental responsibility....

In the concluding paragraph of his 2010 World Day of Peace Message, Benedict XVI asserts the connection between peacemaking and protecting creation, but he doesn't really explain how they are linked. So, how are the protection of creation and peacemaking linked?

It seems to me that one obvious link is

The Catholic Church has consistently pointed out that the cost of war and preparation for war is a theft from the poor.... Annual global military spending by the nations of the world exceeds \$1.5 trillion. The U.S. alone accounts for about 45 per cent of this global defense spending. When two-thirds of humanity is poor, this seems like an egregious example of misplaced priorities.

that war is terribly destructive of Earth and the environment. During the Vietnam War I had a poster on my wall that proclaimed "War is not healthy for children and other living things."

Since the Vietcong guerillas melted into the population like a fish in water, the counter-insurgency philosophy of the United States was to drain the lake. Thus the Vietnamese population was herded into centers and the surrounding villages were destroyed. The countryside was defoliated and poisoned with Agent Orange so that it could not hide or support the Vietcong. Thus

the phrase, "We had to destroy the village in order to save it," arose. (Merton)

Another example of war's environmental impact occurred during the 1991 Gulf War. Retreating Iraqi forces spilled large amounts of Kuwaiti oil into the Persian Gulf and blew up hundreds of Kuwaiti oil wells, leaving them burning. War inevitably takes a terrible environmental toll.

Even the preparation for war pollutes the Earth, consumes excessive amounts of energy, and depletes natural resources. In September, machine gun practice by the National Guard sparked a devastating forest fire in Colorado. The nuclear and chemical weapons programs have created a plethora of radioactive and toxic wastes. These are often stored in deteriorating facilities, some of them here in Kentucky.

A nuclear war would be the greatest potential environmental disaster imaginable. Indeed, the resulting nuclear winter might leave Earth a barren, uninhabitable wasteland. Thus Benedict XVI calls for "progressive disarmament and a world free of nuclear weapons, whose presence alone threatens the life of the planet and the ongoing integral development of the present generation and of generations to come."

A second link, which is at least hinted at in Catholic social teaching, is that peacemaking and responding to the environmental crisis both require the virtue of solidarity and the principle of sustainable human development.

John Paul II suggests that solidarity, rooted in the oneness of the human family with God as our common parent, is the virtue and perspective fitting for our age of global interdependence.

He describes solidarity this way: "[Solidarity] then is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual because we are really responsible for all."

War is contrary to solidarity, a rupture in the human family. Likewise, environmental concerns such as pollution, resource depletion, and the loss of biodiversity often have global consequences. Acid rain, for example, falls far from its source. Overfishing deprives everyone of an important food source. Climate change, however, may be the clearest example of this. The whole of Earth is affected, and all of humankind, though in various ways. The poor, who are generally least responsible for the rising levels of carbon in the atmosphere, are often the most harmed. Humanity's response both to war and to environmental concerns requires the vision and virtue of solidarity.

The principle of sustainable development also seems key both to

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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 unequalled 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.



Founded 1915

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95 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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Petitioning can fight demolitions of Palestinian homes

by Russ Greenleaf

“House demolitions usually are carried out without warning, often at night, and the occupants are given little or no time to leave their homes. Often the only warning they get is the rumbling of the Israeli army’s Caterpillar bulldozers. They have no time to gather their possessions. They barely have time to flee as the bulldozers tear down the walls of their homes.” [Sometimes they are buried alive under the rubble.] – Amnesty International.

We can stop this by supporting the boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) movement, which currently is emphasizing the Jewish Voice for Peace campaign to pressure TIAA-CREF to divest from

Caterpillar. TIAA-CREF is one of the largest retirement funds in America. It has Caterpillar stock in its “socially responsible” investment portfolio. That’s just not right.

Moshe Nissim, Caterpillar bulldozer operator for the Israeli army, said: “I had no mercy for anybody. I would erase anyone with the D9 [Caterpillar bulldozer].... They were warned by loudspeaker to get out of the house before I came, but I gave no one a chance. I didn’t wait. I didn’t give one blow and wait for them to come out. I would just ram the house with full power, to bring it down as fast as possible.”

It is not socially responsible to invest in a company that sells Israel the equipment that it knows is routinely being used to

commit these crimes against humanity. It’s time to tell TIAA-CREF to stop -- by signing the petition at jewishvoiceforpeace.org/tiaa-cref.

Eyewitnesses reported that an American college student, Rachel Corrie, stood in front of a house in a bright orange vest. The Israeli army’s Caterpillar D9 bulldozer came to destroy the house, but Rachel and her friends kept blocking it. Then the driver drove his bulldozer straight at Rachel, pushing a mound of dirt towards her.

She climbed on top of the dirt so she was looking at the driver at eye level. He kept going. She fell backward, and he pushed the mound of dirt on top of her and drove over her. Then he backed over her again,

smashing the dirt on top of her.

Rachel died on the way to the hospital.

The Israel that did this is not an Israel we can support. Israel can improve its behavior, but only if we send its leaders a message that they must stop committing crimes against humanity and start treating the Palestinians as equal human beings.

BDS is the best hope for sending that message. It’s something we all can do. Support this petition campaign. A just peace is possible, but only with your help. Sign the petition at jewishvoiceforpeace.org/tiaa-cref. Come with us to deliver the petitions to the TIAA-CREF office on December 10. Contact us today at 256-525-5290 or email russgreenleaf@yahoo.com.

Catholic perspective *(continued from page 2)*

peacemaking and to environmental responsibility. Oppression and injustice, discrimination and poverty are clearly causes of conflict and war. If we want peace, we have to work for justice, and economic development is essential for moving toward justice. As Benedict XVI emphasizes, however, we are responsible to and for future generations as well as for those living now. Integral human development should be sustainable, that is, it should be accomplished in a way that guarantees sufficient resources and a livable planet for future generations.

This truth is more easily stated than accomplished in a system of global capitalism. The assumption of capitalism is that economic growth is necessary, but not sufficient, for integral human development. But economic growth in an industrial and technological economy requires the consumption of energy and the by-product of pollution. It is not obvious how economic development can be environmentally sustainable. Justice for today’s poor seems directly at odds with justice for future generations. Alternative energy sources may offer some hope for working through this dilemma, and, of course, global capitalism is not the only economic system.

This link among justice, peace, and environmental responsibility suggests another, related connection—cost or financial resources. The Catholic Church has consistently pointed out that the cost of war and preparation for war is a theft from the poor. The direct cost for the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan has already exceeded \$1 trillion. Annual global military spending by the nations of the world exceeds \$1.5 trillion. The U.S. alone accounts for about 45 per cent of this global defense spending. When two-thirds of humanity is poor, this seems like an egregious example of misplaced priorities. When the nations of the world cite economic reasons for refusing to cut carbon emissions in response to climate change, again military spending seems wasteful and wrong-headed.

A fourth link between peacemaking and the environment involves what can be called “resource wars.” Benedict XVI does not use this term, but he does refer to the need to address energy resources and to “the world-wide water problem.” There is a complex connection between resources and environmental degradation on the one hand and conflict and war on the other.

First, competition over vital resources can cause or contribute to conflict. Throughout history nations have gone to war over vital resources. The 1991 Gulf War, for example, was fought, in large part, to insure the access of developed nations to Middle East oil. Resources, especially oil, are central both to the global economy and to the U.S. economy. In this “economy-centric approach” to foreign policy, the U.S. military plays an important role by protecting supplies of vital resources. Thus the United States has engaged in joint military training exercises with Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in the Caspian Sea region, which is now thought to have the second largest reserves of oil in the world after the Persian Gulf.

“Given the growing importance ascribed to economic vigor in the security

policy of states, the rising worldwide demand for resources, the likelihood of significant shortages, and the existence of numerous ownership disputes, the incidence of conflict over vital materials is sure to grow.”

A second sort of resource conflict is stimulated by scarcity. The scarcity of water, for example, can be a major factor in conflicts among nations and within countries. The Middle East and the North African region contain several examples of conflict over water: Turkey and Syria contest the Euphrates River; Egypt and Ethiopia, the Nile River; Israel, Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan draw on the Jordan River; and Israel and the Palestinians dispute the aquifer under the West Bank. Countries have found themselves nose to nose over fishing rights and other resource issues as well.¹

A third type of resource war happens when resources not only contribute to the cause of the conflict, but also fuel the conflict. There are numerous examples of this phenomenon. In Sierra Leone, for example, diamonds not only triggered a brutal civil war, but produced the wealth necessary to purchase the armaments to continue it. The same was true in the protracted civil war in Angola, and minerals are key to the conflict in the Congo. Precious stones and timber fueled fighting in Cambodia; oil profits pay for the civil wars in Sudan and Columbia; and opium funded the civil war in Afghanistan.

Finally, environmental change can result in social disruptions that contribute to conflicts. For example, expanding populations can cause deforestation, soil degradation, and water depletion, all of which can decrease agricultural production. Then people fight over food, land, and water.

Poverty and environmental degradation can also form a negative spiral, each creating more of the other. Haiti is one example of this phenomenon. The poor have deforested the land in order to produce charcoal. Now they are poorer because there are no more trees for charcoal, and the rain has washed away the topsoil....

Pope Benedict XVI is being called “the Green Pope” and rightly so. Not only has he spoken out about Christian responsibility for the environment, but in this case the Vatican’s example may be more effective than its statements. Through a variety of green measures, Vatican City has become the first carbon-neutral state in the world. Admittedly Vatican City is also the world’s smallest independent state at 0.17 square mile, but this effort demonstrates a willingness of the church to practice what it preaches regarding the environment. There are numerous other efforts on the part of church institutions throughout the world to go green....

Benedict steers a middle course between the extremes of an Earth-centered approach (biocentrism or ecocentrism espoused by deep ecologists and others) and the total human domination of the Earth, which has characterized the Christian West.

Benedict develops the church’s environmental ethic by drawing on and expanding the principles that form the core of Catholic social teaching. In his encyclical *Charity in Truth*, Benedict places concern for the environment in the context of integral human development. As we have seen,

Benedict extends the virtue of solidarity and the principle of sustainable development to the environment. He does this by expanding the principles of the option for the poor, the universal destiny of created goods, and the common good to future generations....

Finally, the church calls both for a change in lifestyle--toward sobriety, solidarity, and sacrifice--and for structural change--such as an economy directed toward sufficiency, community, and the common good. Both personal conversion and social transformation are necessary to meet the needs of the poor and of future generations and to exercise a responsible stewardship toward the Earth. The greed, selfishness, and exploitation of a consumerist mentality have resulted in environmental and economic crises and in human suffering and inequity; simplicity, sacrifice, and justice are the ways forward.

An environmental ethic of human stewardship for the natural world is theologically defensible and environmentally helpful. Genesis is clear that God created the world and remains in charge of it. The “dominion” given to human beings, who are created in the image of God, can persuasively be understood in terms of responsibility, rather than authority....

Let me conclude with the suggestion that, while practitioners of nonviolence have not always consciously included the earth community in their vision, it is not a foreign idea either. Among the many reminiscences about George Edwards was one by Denis

Bricking in *FORsooth*, the newsletter of the local Fellowship of Reconciliation group. Denis remembered being part of the Paddlewheel Alliance and protesting the construction of the Marble Hill Nuclear Power Plant on the Indiana side of the Ohio River. I also participated in those protests with George, Jean, Denis and others. Admittedly our arguments against nuclear power focused on the threat to human health. I remember causing panic in a small Indiana town when a group of us put the nuclear symbol on a rusty 50 gallon drum loaded on to the back of a pickup truck and walked down main street, handing out leaflets about the transportation of nuclear wastes through the area. People apparently thought this ragtag group was actually transporting nuclear wastes. Later, however, when we committed an act of civil disobedience by climbing over the fence and trespassing on to the site of Marble Hill, we had fruit trees with us. Marble Hill had been an orchard, and our goal was to return it to an orchard. We intended to plant the fruit trees on the site. Such symbolism at least hints at treating the earth community nonviolently.

A creatiocentric vision would be a more truthful and effective foundation for the church’s environmental ethic, and a nonviolent relationship with nature would enhance the connection between environmental responsibility and peacemaking. If you want peace on Earth, make peace with Earth.



LPAC’s story *(continued from page 1)*

people on Jefferson Street. Many wept at the magnitude of the war deaths, both Iraqi and American.

In October 2005, with the announcement that the U.S. death toll in Iraq had reached 2000, LPAC members stood on Grinstead Drive, from I-64 to the entrance of Cave Hill Cemetery, holding row after row of 2000 t-shirts, strung on long lines. LPAC wanted to draw attention to the fatalities of the Iraq War who came from all walks of life. They were soccer players, high school sweethearts, a father who never saw his baby, and the girl next door. No one who witnessed the sober sight of 2,000 empty t-shirts lining a mile of Grinstead Drive that day will ever forget it.

As the War dragged on year after year, LPAC stayed busy writing letters to the editor, contacting Congress, and marching in the streets of Louisville. Before dawn on March 19, 2007, the fourth anniversary of the War, LPAC set 4,000 small white flags in perfect formation on the downtown riverfront’s Great Lawn. These flags - in 40 straight rows – represented U.S. fatalities and told only the rank, hometown, and date of each soldier’s death. A father found his son’s flag and knelt in tears with his family. A wife set up a shrine with photographs at her husband’s flag. On that day, we

also recognized and commemorated the unspeakable loss of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi civilians to an illegal, immoral war. The toll on Iraq and its people is something LPAC has never overlooked or forgotten.

In the summer of 2007, Bob Moser of *The Nation* interviewed members of LPAC for an article about anti-war protest groups across the country. When asked about the peace movement, Moser did not hesitate and pointed to LPAC as the most active group in the country.

This may or may not be true, but we are proud that we persevered, that we stayed active and committed, and that we constantly came up with clever meaningful ways to get public attention. We are honored to have a record of our anti-war activities archived at The Filson -- the most prestigious historical institution in Kentucky. We are grateful to Filson Archivist Sarah-Jane Poindexter for her work in setting up this archive and humbled that the LPAC story will be available to posterity.

Johanna Camenisch is a retired Jefferson County Public Schools teacher. Miriam Corcoran SCN is a nun with the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth and a former teacher. Judy Munro-Leighton is a professor at Jefferson Community & Technical College.

At new year, spoken and sung tributes to the fightback

As the year draws to an end, my mind is divided into two camps. One is almost overwhelmed at the whipping the working class has gotten from the ruling class, all over the world.

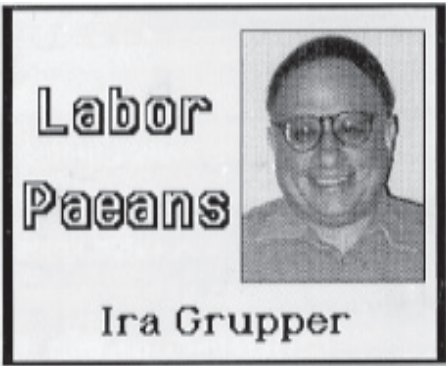
The other looks to the poetry and songs of the U.S. working class, and draws hope from this wellspring, a tributary of the worldwide toiling masses, the valiant fightback taking place today in France, Greece, Venezuela, and beginning to cohere in the United States as well, thru One Nation, the creativity of the Steelworkers (USW), the continuing work of the UE (electrical workers) in international solidarity, the fight for Single Payer, the courage of nurses in building their strength.

One problem in the U.S. is class consciousness. A number of years ago I heard the following conversation on the street: Person # 1: “What’s happenin’?” Person # 2: “Aint nothin’ happenin’.” This metaphysical analysis was followed with: Person # 1: “You aint s---.” Person # 2: “I know.”

Well, truth be known, there are, indeed, happening. And we are, to be sure, more than just the dregs of creation; in fact, now, as in times past, and notwithstanding automation, “without our brain and muscle not a single wheel would turn.”

How did our consciousness, of our class, of ourselves, fall so low? Here’s how. We are all in the desert, and our mouths are parched and dry. We’re going to die.

Well, comes Ira to the rescue. I tell you there’s a water hole down yonder. Y’all are so grateful you make a mad dash for the water hole. And when you get there you discover there is no water hole. It was a mirage, “an optical phenomenon, esp. in the desert or at sea, by which the image of some object appears displaced above, below, or to one side of its true position as a result of spatial variations of the index of refraction of air.”



Hell, it aint no spatial variation, but, rather, I done told you a big fat lie. So you rush back to get to me for positing false hope, for tricking you.

But I’ve been busy in the interim. I drank from the real water hole, got strong, and then hired workers to put a high wall around it. And on top: machine guns and machine gun turrets. Y’all return, and I magnanimously tell you: if you want water, if you want sustenance, you will have to work for me.

So, you work for me. But some among you realize that there’s more of you than there are of me, and I get scared. So, I divide you. I get men to think they are better than women, whites to think they are better than non-whites. I set up soup kitchens while I cut folk off unemployment and health insurance. And I keep making money from your labor power.

But, lest you think I have no heart, I take my ill-gotten gains and set up the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Melinda and Bill Gates Foundation, aided and abetted by Warren Buffett. Then I pepper you with Fox News and, in the interest of full disclosure, CBS, NBC, ABC and CNN as well. Have mercy.

Still, there is remembrance of the valiant efforts at evolving class consciousness: “... we have a glowing dream/ of how fair the

world would seem./ When (men and women) live their (lives) secure and free./ When the earth is owned by labor./ And there’s joy and peace for all./ In that commonwealth of toil that is to be.”

And so the powers that be call us names: anarchists, communists, hippies, troublemakers. The Brazilian Catholic priest, Dom Helder Camara, responded: “When I gave food to the poor, they called me a saint. When I asked why the poor were hungry, they called me a communist.”

We have a tracking system we call U.S. high school curricula. In the universities, with their faux self-actualization, nobody tells you that the janitor who supplies the restrooms with toilet paper is as important as the professor who supplies the mind with information.

This topic of misinformation was addressed so eloquently by the magnificent Malvina Reynolds, so many decades ago:

It’s not the world I thought it was.
It once seemed fair,
Singing with laughter everywhere,
And all on fire
With spring bloom and the gleam
Of young desire, And filled with song.
But I was wrong.
It’s not like that at all.
Sunlight is empty,
And there’s such darkness in the day,
I cannot figure any clear design,
Nor find my way.
It’s not the world’s fault,
It’s mine.
It’s mine and theirs
Who fed me dreams
Instead
Of coarse bread,
And taught me how to hear
The music of stream and bird,
Instead of how to cry
Without being heard;

Who had me learn verse
Instead of how to curse.

We are hog-tied with right-to-work legislation, flummoxed by slick media vomit, and courted by tv ads for furniture and gadgets.

Cheer up—there is hope! We are our own hope. There is beauty in the world. There is truth. There is sex. There is music.

A few months ago I had the blues. And then I was listening to Bettye Lavette singing Mick Jagger’s “Salt of the Earth (Raise your glass to the hard-working people).” It didn’t make the problems go away. But it was so smooth, it gave courage to fight for a better world the next morning.

I am not a drinker. But I salute the imagery and the message, in wishing y’all, in advance, a Happy New Year:

Let’s drink to the hard working people
Let’s drink to the lowly of birth
Raise your glass to the good and the evil
Let’s drink to the salt of the earth
Raise your glass to the hard working people
Let’s drink to the uncounted heads
Let’s think of the wavering millions
Who need leaders but get gamblers instead
Spare a thought for the stay-at-home voter
His empty eyes gaze at strange
beauty shows
And a parade of the gray suited grafters
A choice of cancer or polio
Let’s drink to the hard working people
Let’s think of the lowly of birth
Spare a thought for the rag taggy people
Let’s drink to the salt of the earth
Let’s drink to the hard working people
Let’s drink to the salt of the earth
Let’s drink to the two thousand million
Let’s think of the humble of birth

Contact Ira Grupper at
irag@iglou.com.

Vish likens death penalty to game of Russian roulette

by Ike M. Thacker

The United States and our state like to pride themselves on having “a government of laws, not of men.”

But Third Thursday Lunch speaker Donald Vish said at the FOR’s October 21 meal that the main “laws” governing the history of the death penalty in Kentucky are those of random chance.

Vish, whose many impressive credentials include past stints on the faculty of law at the University of Kentucky and the University of Louisville and as president of Interfaith Paths to Peace, serves as full-time director of outreach (with a very extensive “etc.”) at the Kentucky Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty (KCADP).

He told the lunch the death penalty in Kentucky is “the penal equivalent of Russian roulette: most of the time nothing happens but every now and then somebody gets killed.”

Vish began his defense of this proposition by briefly laying out the history of the death penalty in Kentucky:

There have been exactly *four* executions in Kentucky since 1957, he pointed out, asking rhetorically: “How can four executions in 53 years deter anyone from doing anything?”

How, indeed? As Vish said, “The modern history of the death penalty in Kentucky undermines its own credibility.”

There were several executions in our Commonwealth in 1956, said Vish; then *none* from 1957-1961; then *one* in 1962, signing the death warrant of which so tortured Governor Bert Combs that he beseeched his chosen successor, Ned Breathitt, to abolish Kentucky’s death penalty altogether (Breathitt tried, Vish said; his commission on the issue reported to the General Assembly, but nothing happened).

Vish added that there were no executions *for 35 years* until 1997, a stretch of time known somewhat informally as “the Combs-Breathitt moratorium” (honored even by Republican Gov. Louie Nunn, who was elected saying he would execute but did not); then in 1997, Harold McQueen was electrocuted (like Kelly Moss before him

in 1962, against his will) and in 1999 Eddie Lee Harper was given a lethal injection at his request; finally, in 2008, Marco Chapman “dismissed his lawyers and his legal appeals” and died at our government’s hands, also by lethal injection.

During the 1962-1997 “Combs-Breathitt moratorium,” said Vish, there was of course a fairly brief time from 1972 to 1976 when the death penalty was illegal throughout the U.S. by order of the country’s Supreme Court; but standards were set by that court in the latter year that, if met, allowed for capital punishment. Thirty-five states now have the death penalty, Vish said, even though New Jersey abolished it in 2006 and New Mexico followed suit last year.

In November 2009, Vish noted, following the Chapman execution the previous year, Kentucky Attorney General Jack Conway requested *three* death warrants from Gov. Steve Beshear. In May 2010 the finalization of the process began for the three Death Row inmates, but, surprise of surprises, it was found that there was only enough of one of the drugs in the lethal “cocktail” on hand to kill one human being, and that “even that supply expired in October 2010,” said Vish. Undeterred, the state chose one of the three, Gregory Wilson, to be the first to die (more of the needed poison will not be available until the first quarter of 2011).

Fortunately, the warrant for Wilson’s execution expired on September 16, and the Kentucky Supreme Court is reviewing decisions from the Kenton and Franklin Circuit Courts which, depending on how the Supreme Court rules, could enjoin or stay Wilson’s execution. The Kenton case is mostly specific to Wilson’s situation, said Vish (the Circuit Court in that county denied Wilson’s request for DNA testing and for a determination of “whether he is exempt from execution due to mental retardation”).

The Franklin Circuit Court case, however, in which the judge stayed Wilson’s murder while the court reviewed the legal adequacy of new execution procedures promulgated by the Department of Cor-

rections pursuant to a Kentucky Supreme Court order issued just after Attorney General Conway requested the three warrants, “has the potential to impact all executions in Kentucky,” Vish noted. Specifically, said Vish, the judge expressed “official interest” in two things: the lack of procedures to test for mental retardation prior to execution; and “possible legal flaws in Wilson’s trial where he was given no choice but to represent himself most of the time,” despite his potential mental retardation.

Wilson was left at key junctures alone, for example to deliver his own opening statement and closing arguments.

The “possible legal flaws” in Wilson’s trial range from inexperience by one of Wilson’s attorneys and lack of staff, law books and equipment by another to published reports of improper behavior involving Wilson’s co-defendant, a former prostitute named Brenda Humphrey, who testified against Wilson.

A Courier-Journal story Sept. 8 chronicled Humphrey’s longstanding sexual affair with a colleague and good friend of Wilson’s judge daily during the trial in that colleague’s chambers, being taken there by officers of the court.

Refer to that article for even more incredible details; the upshot is that the trial in which Wilson was convicted was one, as a judge dissenting from the U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals’ decision not to hear Wilson’s appeal has said, conducted in a true “kangaroo court.”

Despite all of this, said Vish, KCADP could get only five Kentucky General Assembly legislators to object to Gregory Wilson’s execution! Obviously, we have a long way to go. The key figure in executions in Kentucky is the governor, Vish noted – no one can be executed without the governor’s signature -- so Vish urged his listeners to write, e-mail, and call their governor repeatedly.

Much of the rest of Vish’s presentation was spent giving general facts about the death penalty:

There have been 1,170 executions

since their resumption in 1976, with 139 exonerations in 26 states; the number of death sentences and executions have dropped dramatically since 1999 nationally; 95 percent of U.S. executions are in the South, especially Texas, which alone accounts for more than 37 percent of the total (Oklahoma and Virginia are the next two most frequent murderers).

More than 90 percent of the world’s executions are in five countries—Iran, Pakistan, China, Saudi Arabia, and the U.S., Vish added; the number of nations which have outlawed the death penalty has gone from only 16 when U.S. states began reinstating it in 1977 to 135 of the world’s 195 countries today.

He pointed out that the *only* intellectual buttress for the death penalty in this country has fallen as the American Law Institute has repudiated its own guidelines, on which the U.S. Supreme Court’s reinstatement of the death penalty in 1976 was *expressly* based, as insufficient.

Vish concluded his remarks by noting that in 2007 in Kentucky, 108 cases went to juries with the death penalty as an option; *none* of those juries imposed the death penalty!

People apparently “talk tough” when answering pollsters’ questions, said Vish, but realize in the pinch that to kill is simply wrong—especially given the fact that the FBI has reported *higher* murder rates in states with high death penalty usage, and the fact that most people freed from death row while capital punishment was illegal from 1972-1976 committed absolutely no further crimes. There is obviously very good reason, even aside from the often-cited expense of the death penalty, for the T-shirt sentiment that says not to kill people in my (the wearer’s) name to show that killing people is wrong!

The writer is an advocate for political, social and economic democracy. He focuses especially on housing issues.

Due to deadline issues, the Nov. 18 Third Thursday Lunch on Fair Trade will run in the February FORsooth.

Decades of policy failures preceded Sudan’s genocide

by Phil L. Nippert

The history Khartoum’s neglect of the rest of Sudan was the subject of a widely distributed publication there, the anonymously written Black Book of May 2000: “...any few educated Sudanese could have produced the damning statistics about underrepresentation of the peripheral regions in the Sudan’s parliaments, cabinets, councils, and provincial governorships since independence, M. W. Daly wrote in *Darfur’s Sorrow: A History of Destruction and Genocide*.

This problem can be traced back to the Ottoman-Egyptian rule of Sudan from 1821 to 1885, known as the Turkiyya. While it was common for Muslim states of the time to have heavily centralized power centers that would exploit their peripheries, the new Egyptian rulers of Sudan took this to a new level by vastly increasing northern Sudan’s need for slaves (both in the army and in households) and satisfying this need by exploiting the people of what is now Southern Sudan (reachable now thanks to the new regime’s power).

In 1874 they defeated the Fur Sultan and installed a government in Darfur. Between 1874 and the fall of the last Fur Sultan in 1916 (the Sultanate was temporarily restored in 1898), drought, famine, epidemics and constant battles for control raged in Darfur and the neighboring sultanates to the immediate west, such as Dar Masalit and Dar Zaghawa); these and the region’s remoteness guaranteed minimal improvement in life there. Force after force from the rulers in Khartoum defeated Sultans and put down rebellions, only to have others spring up to replace them. In the rest of northern Sudan, patterns of exploitation strengthened in the Turkiyya were continued by the succeeding regime of the Mahdi (1885-1898), which divided Sudanese into followers of this leader and “unbelievers.” Its accomplishments in the south were primarily raids for slaves, for plunder and, during the famine of 1888-1892, for food.

Egyptian-British (Egypt was now a part of the British Empire) rule began in 1898 with the defeat of the Mahdi’s successor, and imposed Native Administration, in which existing local governments would continue only now in the service of the British. In the central Nile valley this resulted in tribes made powerful in the Turkiyya (and who were cited in the Black Book as having dominated the country) getting their power back.

The British made sure not to encourage education in order to prevent the rise of an educated civil servant class (as had happened in Egypt and India), and took this policy to extremes in both the South and in Darfur. And Southerners did not see real difference between the Egypt backed by Turkey or the Egypt backed by England: for the sake of authority both burned villages, seized cattle as punishment, sent people to far-off prisons or forced them to join the army (and forced conscription occurred in the same areas of the south where slaves had been sought).

Large amounts of investment went to the North until the World War II era, but Darfur continued to be marginalized: “Bias is evident in every area and illustrated in every annual budget. The resources devoted to outlying regions in human and veterinary health, agriculture, animal husbandry, and communications were meager compared with those reserved to the center. Darfur, often subsumed statistically with ‘the North,’ arguably suffered even more than the famously neglected South,” Daly wrote.

In the south, those benefiting from trade were Greek, Syrian Christian and northern Sudanese traders, who were granted exclusive trade licenses by the British; no southern Sudanese commercial class grew to balance out that of the north. By 1946, though, the British prioritized education for the sake of preparing Sudan for independence, and went so far as to aggressively enforce quotas and build government-run schools in the south. “...but the decades of earlier neglect meant that there were few Southerners experienced in modern forms of administration and commerce when independence came in 1956,” Douglas H. Johnson wrote in *The Root Causes of Sudan’s Civil Wars*.

After World War II, Egypt asserted that Sudan was part of its sovereign territory, and the British decided that the best legal way to counter this was by insisting Sudan hold a self-determination vote.

The coup of Egypt in 1952 led by Gamal Abdel Nasir, along with mutinies of soldiers in Southern Sudan made Britain even less likely to anger the dominant (Khartoum-based) powers in Sudan by insisting that they provide the South (or Darfur) with badly needed development, and more likely to hasten independence. After Sudan’s first parliamentary election in 1953, the government’s Sudanization Committee appointed only Northerners to senior level government positions in the South.

This, along with a sharp increase of northern administrators, teachers, police, merchants and soldiers in the region made Southerners fear colonization by Khartoum. So the southern leaders decided to insist on a federal Sudanese government for the sake of an equitable distribution of power.

Britain granted independence on January 1, 1956, even before a plebiscite or a constitution could be respectively carried out and created by the Sudanese. “A precedent was set that has haunted Sudanese politics ever since: the taking of the popular will for granted, and therefore circumventing agreed legal procedures in all major constitutional issues,” Johnson wrote.

In the parliamentary elections of 1957 the Southerner’s Federal Party won nearly all of the southern seats, prompting the civilian government in Khartoum to prevent this dilution of its power over the peripheral regions by handing control over to the military in 1958.

The junta then tried to spread Islam and Arab influence in the South, restricted and eventually expelled the Christian missions there, burned villages and targeted educated Southerners, and met resistance with arrest and torture of civilians and more attacks on villages and educated people. The first civil war between the North and South began in the early sixties when Southern students and leading politicians joined exiled mutineers of the 1955 revolts to form both a political movement demanding self-determination for the South, and also a guerrilla force (the Anyana). The military regime stepped down after Northern civilian protest of political repression in 1964, but the subsequent parliamentary government continued the war, continued to support Islamization of the South and was responsible for the first major massacre of Southern civilians in 1965. The war grew more severe. In 1969, Jafaar Mohammed Nimairi sized control of the Sudanese government, alienated Northern support by purging his government in 1971 of communists (who had carried out the coup putting him in power) and sought to get more constituent support by turning to the South and negotiating with the rebels.

In 1972, the Addis Ababa Agreement ended the first civil war by giving the South some regional autonomy, instead of the federalization of the national government for which they had asked. The agreement neglected economic and development concerns, explicitly denied the new Southern Regional Government of any control over economic planning, subjected appointments of its executive head to approval of the Sudanese national leader, and required that a Southern Command force be made up of equal amounts of Northern and Southern troops within five years. Since Nimairi was seen as a bulwark against northern opposition to the Addis Ababa Agreement, most Southerners chose to deal with these conditions.

From independence through 1969, Darfur remained almost entirely agricultural and pastoral; different regimes’ failure to modernize agriculture continued the problems of decreased livestock value due to inconsistent pasture quality and scarce veterinary services, lack of reliable transportation and other infrastructure, and no substantial satellite industries such as meat-packing or dairy. Food production did not meet demand, but population increased. Irrigation or agricultural development projects of the time were nothing compared to those being carried out in the east. Experts’



recommendations that cattle herd sizes be limited to those that pastures could reliably sustain were not carried out, and land-use plans were not coordinated with those for establishing sustainable water supplies. The large pastoralist tribe in northern Darfur, the Zaghawa, were not served by the government at all.

The meeting of other basic needs in Darfur were not improved, either. Health services lagged behind population growth. By 1963 only one town, El Fasher, had piped water, and there were still no electricity or newspapers anywhere in the region. As all of the above implies, elected officials did not represent their districts’ interests in Khartoum (when there was a civilian government at all).

During Nimairi’s rule from 1969 to 1985, the agricultural problems in Darfur cited above worsened. A severe drought in 1973 caused permanent migration from northern to southern Darfur. This displacement also resulted in that much more livestock to feed, causing overgrazing, soil degradation and further strain on water supplies in a region poorly served in these sectors by the highly dysfunctional Nimairi government bureaucracy. Infighting, self-interest and technical demands reshuffled departments set up to deal with water needs so much that water planning stopped, and the location of subsequent water projects were no longer based on need but on how much money local officials and government staff could get from Sudanese and foreign businesses, as well as foreign aid groups. High transportation costs and retaining technical staff continued to halt many development programs, many of which were set up merely to correct past projects that had failed due to bad management; by the early 1980s, all the major development in agriculture and other infrastructure had and continued to happen in the Nile valley area.

In 1980, in order to strengthen central authority even more, the north was split into five regions, and Darfur was one of them. This meant that the governor and advisory council were approved by the President. In 1983, the south was split up for the same reason (into Upper Nile, Equatoria and Bhar al-Ghazal) in order to curry favor with northern Islamists and others in the North opposed to appearing to favor the South, and also to ensure Northern control of Southern

oil fields (which had been discovered in the 1970s after the 1972 peace deal, and in the use of which the South had no real say). This put an end to the Addis Ababa Agreement. In May, there were army mutinies in Upper Nile and Bor, and by late July the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement and Army had emerged, led by one man, John Garang, and supported by Ethiopia (where many of the new rebels had regrouped after the initial mutinies). Shari’a law was then imposed nationwide by the September Laws in order to further please Islamists in the government, only widening the rebel-Khartoum split.

The second civil war had begun. It wasn’t long before the first of many defections from the rebels to the government occurred, or before both sides attacked civilians of their opponents’ ethnicity as a means of retaliation, or the conflict spread to the Nuba Mountains area just north of present-day Unity State, and Khartoum armed what came to be known as the Arab militia called the Murahalin which immediately began attacking Southern Sudanese and Nuba civilians. Other aspects of this conflict would be bloody intra-tribal fighting, other militias in addition to the Murahalin attacking civilians, massive numbers of displaced people exposed to the elements, animal attacks, disease and/or lack of aid, and government bombing of civilians (including displaced civilians). And until 1990, the United States supplied the Khartoum side with economic and military aid in order to shore up opposition to the Ethiopia of Mengistu, which was allied with the U SSR. The result of all these factors raging on from 1983 to 2005 would result in the deaths of two million people and the displacement of another four million.

After the Third Parliamentary government began in 1986, a conference on decentralization was held. The former governor of Darfur, Ahmad Ibrahim Dirige, did not attend, but instead submitted a paper calling for a truly federal system (joining similar demands from representatives from far eastern Sudan and the Nuba Mountains... only to be ignored by the veteran politicians in the new organization, who made Darfur revert to Native Administration in 1988). There were violent student protests in Nyala in southern Darfur against the government’s inaction on the matter.

(continued on page 7)

ANOTHER JOURNEY INTO FELLOWSHIP MAGAZINE

It happened again this month as it did in October. As I was starting to write my column, the mail carrier arrived with the new issue of Fellowship (Fall 2010). From that moment I was completely absorbed in looking it over and just delighted at all I found.

Richard Deats, former editor of Fellowship had written reviews of three books -- one by former staff member, Dan Ebener whom many in Louisville remember quite well as he was the keynote speaker at one of our conferences, and another by Don Mosley former chair of the FOR national council who came to speak in Louisville to tell about establishing “Jubilee Partners” in Comer, GA welcoming immigrants from all over the world. Go to www.jubileepartners.org to learn more. He also told about his work in Nicaragua helping to provide artificial limbs for those injured by our wayside bombs.

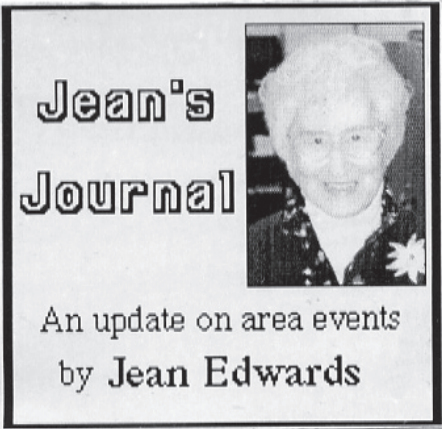
It is fascinating to read what our former friends are thinking and writing. A very important article by Mark Johnson (FOR executive director) is included in the Fellowship Forum, a series of excellent articles focusing on “The Peace & Justice Movement and the Current Political Moment.” In Louisville we will want to study his article “International Peacemaking and the AntiWar Movement” before he comes here to speak in April.

You will not want to miss the interview with Vincent Harding or the important and timely, article by Ibrahim Ramey (former FOR staff member whom many of us remember) entitled “Race, Religion, and Reaction: Islam and the Struggle for American Religious Freedom and Equality

A closing feature in this issue presents three film reviews by Slan Levin, coordinator of the Hudson Valley FOR’s monthly film series in Nyack, NY. (A great idea)

This is only a tiny bit of what awaits us if we can find a few moments to investigate this issue of Fellowship. I feel compelled to mention the very first article, “Where There Is Hate, Extend Hospitality: Interfaith Solidarity in Gainesville,” by Eve MacMaster (pastor of Emmanuel Mennonite Church and leader of the Gainesville Interfaith Peace Coalition). She mentions the sense of relief in Gainesville, Florida now that the media circus has left town. She refers to the threat by Terry Jones to burn the Qur’an which gained national and world coverage. Little did we dream that a peace coalition, including FOR, was working in the background and that, as a result of their efforts the Interfaith Peace Coalition has grown and brought the community together in a wonderful way. We have much to learn from their experiences and leadership.

The article caught my attention because my granddaughter lives in Gainesville now and I lived there for a short time and taught high school Emglish when my first husband was stationed at the nearby army base in Starke, Florida. We searched around for a kindred spirit in the small town and finally discovered the Episcopal priest who had transcended the 1944 war hysteria.



LEONARD PELTIER -- STILL IN PRISON, STILL INNOCENT, NEEDS MEDICAL ATTENTION

Native American activist Leonard Peltier was wrongfully convicted in connection with the shooting deaths of two agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in 1977. Currently at the federal prison in Lewisburg, PA, henhas beeb designated a political prisoner by Amnesty International. Widely recognized for his humanitarian works and a six-time Nobel Prize nominee, Peltier also is an accomplished author and painter.

Peltier’s sister says that he began to show symptoms of prostate cancer over a year ago. Pressured by his attorneys, the prison ran standard blood tests last June. Over four months later Peltier received the results. Now, one year later, it is said that a biopsy is needed to make a diagnosis. The cure rate for prostate cancer is high if detected early.

In the middle of November, 2010 at the United Nations, a spokesperson for Peltier’s Defense Committee said, “delaying tests, avoiding a diagnosis, and preventing proper medical treatment for a potentially life threatening disease is not humane by anyone’s definition.” Even if Peltier does not have cancer, the symptoms indicate a serious medical condition and one that could lead to serious complications if left untreated..

Family members want the government to release Peltier who was denied parole in 2009, His North Dakota tribe has twice passed a resolution asking the government to transfer Peltier into their custody. Many supporters believe that Peltier’s release from prison is the only way Peltier will receive humane treatment.

Read more. Go to www.FreePeltierNow.org

A MESSAGE FROM MARK JOHNSON, Executive Director, National F.O.R.

I hope you will join me in calling on President Obama and his Administration and on the Congress to take the following actions regarding IRAQ:

1. Withdrawal of all U.S. troops and military contractors from Iraq and the closing of all U.S. bases.
2. Reparations to help the Iraqis repair their basic infrastructure and increased funds for the millions of internally and externally displaced Iraqis.
3. Full support for the U.S. troops who suffer from the internal and external wounds of war;
4. Prosecution of those officials responsible for dragging our country into this disaster;
5. Transfer of the funds used for war into resources to rebuild America, with a focus on green jobs;
6. Let the lessons of this disastrous intervention act as an impetus for Congress and the administration to end the war in Afghanistan. It is time to focus on defending ourselves here at home and rebuilding America.

Please join me in this important effort. Write to the President and to your Senators and Representative. Ask them to support these six items. Ask them to bring our troops home and give us budget priorities that will address human needs here at home and abroad. As we see what war and natural disasters have done, we know there is not a dollar to be wasted -- and certainly no need for those dollars to be spent on more destruction.”

Mideast dialogue

(continued from page 1)

malnutrition among children in Gaza and said Gaza seems like a prison.

Sheikh Manasra said nothing to support our statements.

He was not there as an equal and independent speaker. That was clear from the beginning, when a Festival of Faiths representative gave a glowing, appreciative introduction of Rabbi Kronish. Then she said to Kronish, “and we’re glad to have your guest here too,” gesturing to Manasra without mentioning his name.

I feel David and I accomplished our mission. We made sure this show did not go on without someone pointing out that the occupation is the problem.

Two important facts: Several other people in the audience pursued our same line of questioning. And Kronish and a Zionist in the audience offered only minimal rebuttals of our statements.

I think this is more evidence that the truth is winning. The tide of discourse in America is turning in our favor. Let’s all keep up our efforts to get our message across at every opportunity. To paraphrase the Jewish Voice for Peace activists who disrupted Prime Minister Netanyahu’s speech in New Orleans recently: We don’t delegitimize Israel -- occupation delegitimizes Israel. We’re just the messengers.



START treaty needs backing

It is imperative that the New START Treaty (nuclear arms treaty with Russia) is ratified during the lame duck session. Please call Rosencrantz and Guilderstern (U.S. Sens. Mitch McConnell and Jim Bunning) today and tell them you want the nuclear arms treaty with Russia ratified in the lame duck session.

Also, you might want to Google National Public Radio and listen to the Robert Reich interview, then call our congressional representatives and let them know you want the tax cuts for the wealthy to expire and the tax cuts for the middle class to continue.

Thanks,
Jim Johnson
Louisville

Editor’s work, words praised

I’m sorry to read about George Morrison leaving FORsooth and yet happy to hear that you are looking forward to a more contemplative life “in touch with venerable values... less volume and more measure in our public discourse... time for reading and writing.”

I’ve appreciated all your work and your writings, especially the poetry of recent months. Good luck to you in all future endeavors. I hope FORsooth can find another editor or an editorial staff to carry on the written word regarding issues of justice and the announcements about events in Louisville and the surrounding area.

Corrine McCann
The Friends of God
Dominican Ashram
Adrian, Mich.



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

A name we'll long remember – correctly or otherwise

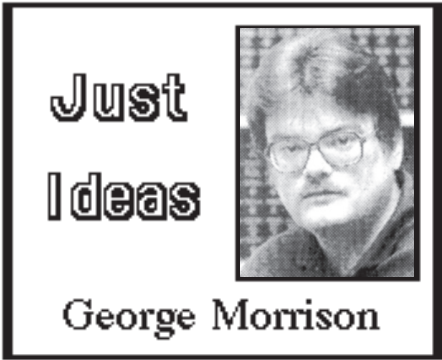
The piece I wrote in the November FORsooth explaining my decision to step down as this paper's editor struck a chord with an Adrian, Mich.-based ashram, an ancient religious term for a spiritual home, called the Friends of God Dominican Ashram.

They are a disciplined, Christian contemplative community valuing the spirituality of all faiths and they liked my statements last month that I wanted a more contemplative life “in touch with venerable values” and that I sought “less volume and more measure in our public discourse.”

The letter from their community (published on page six of this issue), written by member Corrine McCann, an environmental and spiritual activist formerly with the Dominican Sisters of Saint Catharine, Ky., also thanked me for my 20 years of editing and writing in FORsooth, invited me up for a visit and praised my poetry recently published here.

Yes, it's nice to be recognized. Well, sort of recognized. You see, in a delightfully human miscue, Corrine started the letter with the salutation: “Dear Greg.”

I will always cherish this letter; I'll keep it forever, in part, to be sure, because of the sincere and thoughtful wishes, but also because Corrine's correspondence accomplished something laudatory letters



very seldom do. It kept my ego in check. Actually, this is far from the first time I've been called Greg, sort of the economy model of George. I remember a gym teacher in the ninth grade at Hazelwood Junior High School in New Albany called me that all school year.

I would correct him, he would apologize and vow to get it right, but 20 minutes later it would be “Okay, Greg, your turn to climb the rope.”

I gave up. One hour a day for two whole semesters, I was named Greg. So don't worry Corrine and Friends of God colleagues – I'd had plenty of practice. And the niceness of your letter truly isn't diminished.

I just may come to Adrian to tell you

that in person and stay for a while to take advantage of your kind invitation to explore contemplation.

From nomenclature amnesia by wonderfully spiritual folks, to historical amnesia by a cabal of people anything but blessed by a sense of circumspection, particularly the single-minded Mitch McConnell.

The former head of Jefferson County government just plain forgets what happened in 1994 when his party's leaders interpreted a mid-term election win as a mandate to slash and burn through the defeated party's agenda.

The GOP's speaker was out of office in four years and their majority leader was soundly beaten in the next president race and left politics. And that was with the House *and* the Senate having fallen into Republican hands.

It's not our place to offer sage advice to arrogant politicians self-serving enough to get their names on public buildings during their careers because of *our* tax dollars they “brought home.” (Those dollars were earned here, paid here and spent here, Mitch – that should be the “Taxpayers Center” not the “McConnell Center.”)

How interesting that Mitch gladly lets a public building bear his name in glowing imagery during his re-election battles – a

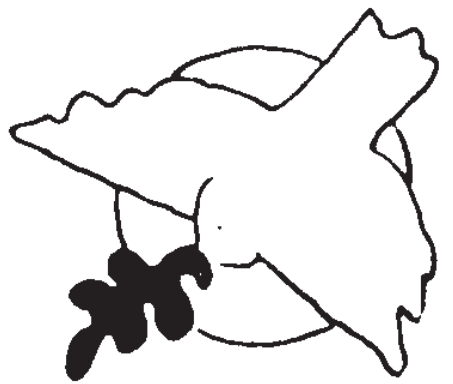
permanent campaign sign -- while he ranks as about the fiercest opponent of publically-financed campaigns.

Wouldn't it be nice if we could choose from among candidates without having to endure dis-informative, hateful commercials paid for by a venal system? Well, in the “race” to fill the open FORsooth editor position, we have five declared candidates so far and not a single TV ad!

Yes, the FOR chapter steering committee was worried we might not attract a single hopeful to become editor when I step down in March, but lots of you have stepped up. A subcommittee is to talk with each person and look at their resumes (which, I'm pleased to say, contain no attacks on Nancy Pelosi) and we may have a new editor, or team dividing up the tasks, by early next year.

As for whether you'll still see the name George (or Greg) in bylines in your FORsooth, well the idea of taking some time off appeals to me – as said, I seek more contemplation -- but I'm sure I'll soon find that a quieter, less polemic existence need not keep me from blasting those right wingers.

Contact George Morrison at klm86@att.net.



Watkins: free labor a purpose of prison

Telling the 13th annual Unity Dinner that the strongest lobby for California's Three Strikes laws was that of prison guards, economist and scholar Boyce Watkins said Nov. 13 that economic exploitation – particularly a need for free labor -- is behind the high incarceration rates of black males, which the Louisville native said is at a rate 5.8 times that of South Africa at the height of apartheid.

Watkins, the Kentucky Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression dinner's keynote speaker, said the richest one percent of U.S. residents have gained 46 percent of new wealth since 1999, and since that year, there has been no net rise in jobs or real wages.

The dinner also saw the Carl and Anne Braden Lifetime Achievement Award go to justice activist Suzy Post, who has fought for racial and social equality, civil liberties and affordable housing since the 1950s.

Post said she has devoted her life to activism, “because injustice pisses me off.”

Praising the life work of area activists including Andrew Wade, the Bradens, Cathy Hinko, Cate Fosl and Howard Owens, Post said: “If not for them, I wouldn't be here and wouldn't deserve a thing.”

Others honored were transgendered and civil rights activist Yana Baker, a political science major at Indiana University Southeast in New Albany, and husband and wife Dr. Adwale Troutman and Denise Vazquez Troutman, respectively, the director of the Metro Louisville Department of Health and Wellness, and President/CEO of the Center For Women and Families (both are leaving those jobs as they depart the city for positions in Florida).



Sudan *(continued from page 5)*

Insecurity worsened in Darfur. Chad fought with rebels that retreated into the region and more Chadian refugees also crossed the border. Weapons made available by Lybia and its representatives proliferated in a new local political reality of ethnic tension and Lybian propaganda touting “Arab” supremacy over “Africans.” Crops failed in 1984 and '85 because of the worst drought in 70 years (and the government's downplaying the catastrophe in order to appear in control), and the deaths of some 108,000 people of famine-related causes (mostly disease). The Zaghawa and Arab tribes displaced by drought, along with refugees from Chad fleeing the war there, encroached upon Fur farmland, to the point that the Fur saw fit to arm themselves with Chad-supplied weapons. The Fur-Arab War of 1987 -1989 resulted in attacks on Fur villages in Jebel Marra, Chadian reb-

els and Darfur militias fighting making the national army seem ineffectual, and finally a peace conference in May 1989 in El Fasher convened by Governor Tijani Sese. Meanwhile the Third Parliamentary government seemed about to sign a new peace deal with the SPLA/M. Sadiq al-Mahdi's coalition government had agreed to suspend shari'a law, quit defense deals made with Lybia and Egypt, and to honor an immediate ceasefire, and both it and the rebels were prepared to meet in Addis Ababa that summer to make it official. And this is why Muslim Brotherhood hardliners in the army overthrew the government, bringing Sudan's current President and regime to power on June 30, 1989.

The writer, of Louisville, is an activist with the Kentuckiana Interfaith Task Force on Darfur.

Third Thursday Lunches

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September 2010 to January 2011

January 20

Christopher 2X

Community peacemaker and youth advocate Christopher 2X will speak on “The Idea of Reconciliation”. He will discuss his efforts to bring together for face-to-face meetings the perpetrators of violence in our community and the victims of that violence (along with the loved ones of those victims) in an effort to seek reconciliation.

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