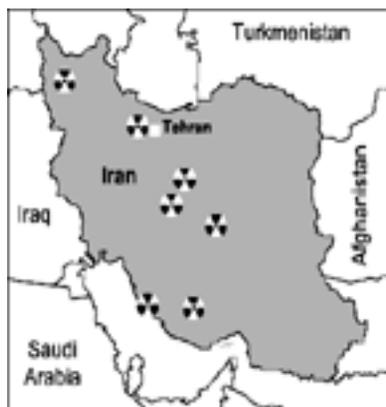




Eye on Iran

By John Steinbach

The current efforts by the Bush administration to demonize Iran have a strong sense of deja vu. As with the build-up to the invasion of Iraq, they are engaging in exaggeration, falsification of facts, and emotionalism to justify a possible attack on Iran.



Unfortunately, this time Bush is being aided and abetted by the Democrats, with Senators Clinton and Lieberman, in particular, ratcheting up the pressure.

The principal rationalization for the drumbeats for war is Iran's nuclear research program, and

accusations of a clandestine nuclear weapons program.

Even if Iran were pursuing nuclear weapons, and there is not one scintilla of evidence supporting this accusation, according to the CIA it would take Iran ten years to develop nuclear weapons.

In addition, even if Iran developed nuclear weapons it would be national suicide were they to be used. (Iran is surrounded by nuclear states, Israel, Pakistan, India, Russia, and the United States in Iraq.)

These accusations of nuclear malfeasance reek of hypocrisy. Iran, a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, unlike India, Israel and Pakistan, has opened up its nuclear facilities to three years of unprecedented international inspections.

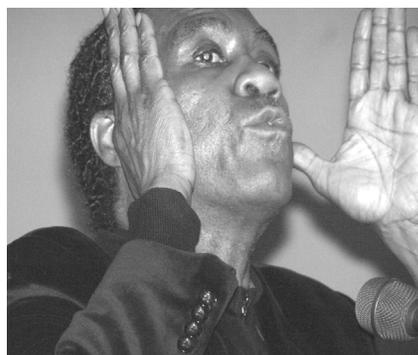
The only violations found were issues of transparency. Meanwhile, the United States, which is in gross violation of the NPT for its refusal to take steps toward total nuclear disarmament, would never permit such inspections of its own nuclear facilities.

COMMUNITY TURNS OUT AGAINST IRAN WAR... p. 4



25 Years At The White House Gates

Longest Continuous Vigil Anywhere? See pages 5-8



Brother Damu, We Miss You!

Roger Newell and Art Laffin honor Damu Smith - page 3



DC Homeless Crisis

Becky Sambol explores city failures on page 9

The Summer of Youth Resistance To The Iraq War

From June 26th - August 8th we'll convene approximately a dozen 17-24 years olds in a program of nonviolent resistance to the war on Iraq. These youth will develop skills and take them to the street to visibly

and vocally demand an end to the war. A consortium of national and local groups are collaborating to bring energetic young people to the Nation's capital, focusing on "arts in action." Youth will reclaim public

space by using political art forms like guerrilla theater, as well as learning how to organize a demonstration and other events. They will intern part-time with local and national anti-war groups to diversify

their experience. Stay tuned for more information as this effort gains momentum. Contact SOR program coordinator Lyndi Borne at 202-299-1050 to learn more. See www.summerofresistance.org,

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The Washington Peace Center is a non-profit, anti-racist, multi-issue peace and justice organization committed to nonviolent social change. The Peace Center serves as a clearinghouse and resource center and has provided peace education and action in the Metropolitan area since 1963. We are supported by the generous contributions of our readers.

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The *Washington Peace Letter* (ISSN 1050-2823) is published for the social justice community of the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan area. Its purpose is to support local, national and international struggles against oppression. It seeks to present a radical analysis of current events, covering information not readily available in the corporate media.

The *Peace Letter* welcomes submissions of articles, announcements, letters-to-the-editor and artwork from the progressive community. Articles may be from 300 to 1,200 words, but may be edited for space considerations. Preference is given to coverage of actions or campaigns being organized in the D.C. area. We reserve the right to select or reject all submissions.

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Peace Center Update

What's Happening?

EYE Program

We are still in the pilot stage of our Educational Youth Empowerment program. In the fall, we look forward to a continued collaboration with Maya Angelou School and other new partners.

We welcome volunteer Instructors who will help us teach peace to high school students through our EYE curriculum.

We also ask teachers who are interested in having our Instructions come to your school to contact us and schedule a workshop. Please visit our website for details.

Peace Talks Series:

In April's Peace talks came Paul Pumphrey's challenging insight on Haiti. He came armed with evidence that challenged the popular belief that Aristide has always been the people's choice. "Two wrongs don't make a right", he said, pointing out that the US-led kidnapping of Aristide was not a reason to erase the fact that Aristide had lost touch with the people. Mr. Pumphrey continues to engage in debates on Haiti, perchance to find a road to peace and stability in that region some day.

Our May Peace Talks featured Cholene Espinoza's appearance on Ryme Khatkouda's "Voices with Vision" on WPFW, as part of a panel discussion. She spoke about how she got involved in the efforts to rebuild a community in New Orleans, and the need to dissolve the mentality of "them" and "us" if any healing is to take place meaningfully in that area. Cholene pointed out that answering the call to rebuild New Orleans restored a faith she had lost as an embedded journalist in Iraq. She is also a former U2 pilot.

We have just had a successful June Peace Talks on Africa in which we showed the documentary, "The Devil's Footpath", followed by an engaging discussion on what path Africa needs to take to achieve political and economic stability. Should Africa be left alone to determine its own path? With almost 5 million dead in the Congo from a war directly linked to the exploitation of resources by



Mkawasi Mcharo and Paul Magno
Co-Coordinators

western multinationals, the war in Dafur, the civil unrest in Uganda, and a myriad other armed conflicts, what is the hope of Africa? The audience brought in a good deal of knowledge towards answering this question. This event was in collaboration with the CCJP-initiated group, African Liberation and Anti-Imperialism circle.

As always, peace is the challenge in every Peace Talks. Please contact us for an update on the next Peace Talks, and watch for announcements on our email list (you can sign up at our website). Our number is 202.234.2000.

At Ease

(Art that enlightens, agitates, speaks and empowers):

Our *At Ease* program lends a platform for artist activists. It was graced by Professor Jerry Levy of Vermont, starring in the play, "Marx in SoHo." In March, the Peace Center produced three shows at St. Stephen's auditorium, each followed by an enlightening discussion on the relevance of Marx in our times.

The play helped burst a lot of myths that have built over time about Marxism, and also gave this great historical figure a humaneness that is too often lost in the debate of ideas that shaped the 20th century.

In May, *At Ease* also featured the political satirist, David Lippman, and his alter ego, George Shrub the singing CIA agent. This was also presented at St. Stephen's. It was a night of laughter and reflection. Humor has a way of dissecting the ugly in a tolerable manner.

Whatever your art – poetry, music, puppetry, theatre or other, *At Ease* welcomes you to agitate and enlighten a world in need of peace and justice.

Please contact us at 202.234.2000 to get involved in any of the Peace Center's programs.

- Mkawasi Mcharo

Operation Refuse War

In May, we collaborated with the Center on Conscience and War, War Resisters International, American Friends Service Committee & the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors to host Operation Refuse War, this year's international conscientious objectors' conference.

Part took place in New York City May 10-12, the rest at the Church of the Brethren in Washington May 12-16. This included:

- * a pre-release showing of 'Sir, No Sir,' a terrific film about Vietnam Era conscientious objection within the U.S. military,

- * two days of presentations and workshops involving 40-50 attendees,

- * a representative contingent featured in the Silent March on May 13th, accompanying the AFSC exhibition, 'Eyes Wide Open' on the Mall,

- * a day of Capitol Hill visits on May 16th to sensitize members of Congress on these issues, and

- * a very spirited early evening demonstration at a downtown recruiting center on May 15th.

Internationals from seventeen countries participated in Operation Refuse War.

In conjunction with the conference, the Fellowship of Reconciliation organized a Congressional Briefing on Conscientious Objection, hosted by the office of Rep. Cynthia McKinney.

Washington Peace Center Coordinator Paul Magno was one of many who offered testimony.

Those interested can find it posted on our Peace Center Blog at www.washingtonpeacecenter.org

Summer of Resistance to the Iraq War

Another team effort involving the Peace Center along with AFSC, the DC Antiwar Network, Nonviolence International and Peace Action has been the Summer of Resistance.

Paul Magno has been working on the steering committee to bring this to fruition and Mkawasi Mcharo will be contributing her experience as a Theater Arts educator to the summer campaign.

- Paul Magno

To: Members of The Washington Peace Center

All members, we really hope you will attend monthly Membership meetings on the second Monday each month at 7pm at the Fleming Center, 1426 9th Street NW. Share your info and wisdom!

All members have voting rights and are invited to join one or

more of our many working groups.

All members will receive a welcome kit and Membership Card.

If you are interested in joining, please provide the following info:

Name - Address - Phone - Email

wpc@igc.org - 202-234-2000

www.washingtonpeacecenter.org



Have great photos of events?
Send them to us for publication!

Brother Damu, We Miss You!

By Roger Newell



The main sanctuary at Plymouth Congregational Church in Northeast was filled beyond capacity, as hundreds of well wishers from across the U.S. gathered, on May 20th, to bid a final farewell and to celebrate the life and work of noted community and national activist Damu Smith.

The date for the community tribute was selected because it coincided with the birthday of another famous freedom fighter—Malcolm X.

Smith, the founder of Black Voices for Peace, took on causes ranging from environmental racism to nuclear weapons to peace in the Middle East. He died on May 5th in George Washington University Hospital after a year-long battle with cancer.

Those in attendance and issuing personal tributes at the community tribute ranged from noted celebrities, such as D.C. Congressional Representative Eleanor Holmes-Norton and Bernice Johnson Reagon, founder of the heralded singing group Sweet Honey in the Rock, to every-day folks who participated in and/or benefited from many of the various battles fought by Smith on behalf of the oppressed in D.C., around the country, or throughout the world.

Noted D.C.-based poet E. Ethelbert Miller summed the thoughts of many of those who sat, clapped, stood, cried, sang and remembered the work and life of Smith during the commemoration, by asking those in attendance, "During your life how much will you change? How much will you try to change the world?"

Miller continued, "Damu will be missed. His life changed our world."

Speaker after speaker reflected on Smith's fervor for justice and action. They spoke of Smith's long fight for the poor and disenfranchised, as well as his work to confront local, national and international injustice.

Whether as a leader of the Organization of Afro-American Students, at St. John's University in Collegeville, MN, or as the director of the Washington Office on Africa during the height of the anti-

apartheid movement, Smith was in the thick of the fight for social justice.

Smith's activism was part of his very being. Bill Fletcher, Jr., former president of TransAfrica, said, "Damu Smith could always be counted upon to speak out in the face of any injustice. Regardless of the consequences, regardless of whether an issue was popular or unpopular, Damu was there to speak up on behalf of the oppressed and the downtrodden."

In Smith's obituary in the Washington Post, the writer pointed out, "Mr. Smith was sometimes controversial. After the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, Mr. Smith cautioned Americans and the U.S. government against targeting Arabs. At a forum, he reminded the audience that the former South African president Nelson Mandela was once considered a terrorist and that federal officials stood by as southern politicians and the Ku Klux Klan terrorized black people during segregation."

The fight on behalf of the downtrodden led Smith to break ground on a new environmental justice movement with the founding of the National Black Environmental Justice Network. He also worked as the head of the national toxics campaign for Greenpeace USA and served as the first environmental coordinator for the Southern Organizing Committee for Economic and Social Justice.

In his tribute to Smith, acclaimed actor and social activist Danny Glover said, "Consistency, commitment, and a truth to social justice that make us individually and collectively rise to the demands of the day. That's what Damu Smith embodied."

Smith was born Leroy Wesley Smith, in St. Louis. He changed his name to Damu Amiri Imara Smith during his years at St. John's University. In an interview, Smith explained the exact meaning of his new name. He said that in Swahili, "Damu" means the "blood" that he was willing to shed for the liberation of the oppressed. "Amiri" means "leadership" that he must provide in the service of the fight for liberation, and finally "Imara" means the "strength and stamina" to maintain the struggle.

Some of those who came to the community tribute did not know Smith through his grassroots activism.

Instead, they were introduced to Smith through the radio show he hosted, "Spirit in Action" on WPFW-FM (89.3 FM).

"His advocacy on the show continued right up to the bitter end,"

pointed out his partner on the show, Milagros A. Phillips.

"He just had a passion for fairness and justice and wanted all people to live in a world that was compassionate," said Phillips.

After complaining of stomach problems for years, Smith became ill while leading a delegation for Palestinian rights in the Middle East. He collapsed and was taken to a hospital in Bethlehem, where doctors discovered polyps in his colon and a tumor in his liver.

Upon further examination when he returned to the US, Smith was told that he was in the end stage of colon cancer and given only three months to live.

At a benefit tribute held in April at Howard University's Cramton Auditorium, to raise funds to help offset Smith's growing cost of cancer treatments, he was saluted by actor Harry Belafonte, poets Amiri Baraka, Sonia Sanchez and Suheir Hammad, and former D.C. Mayor and current Ward 8 Councilmember Marion Barry.

"He was a leader in the anti-Apartheid movement and fought police brutality in Washington, D.C. and around the country," said nationally-syndicated radio host Amy Goodman.

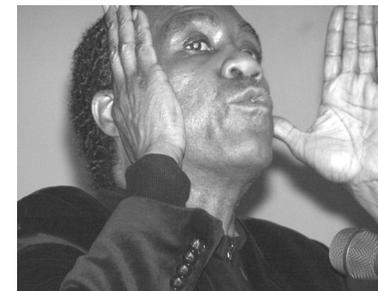
Smith is survived by his 12-year-old daughter, Asha Hadia Vernice Moore Smith, from an earlier relationship; his partner, Adeleke Foster, and a sister and two brothers, Lynn Moore (Asha's mother), two nephews, and six nieces.

"What I always remember about Damu is his spirit. When you spoke to him it was if you were speaking to something beyond him. His vision, his power, transcends his physical body," remembered Amy Shallal, muralist, activist, and owner of Busboys and Poets Café in Northwest D.C.

In a fitting closing summation of Smith's life, the official community tribute program read, "Armed with an unyielding sense of purpose, passion and devotion, Damu Amiri Imara Smith waged a protracted and unrelenting battle for peace and global justice. He fought. He struggled. He triumphed, leaving an indelible imprint on the people and communities he cared so deeply about and the causes he championed."

Donations to an education fund for Smith's daughter can be sent to:

The Praxis Project
Attn: Damu Smith Fund
1750 Columbia Road, NW, Second Fl
Washington, DC 20009
202/234-5921
www.thepraxisproject.org/damu.html



Photos by Shia

DAMU SMITH PRESENTE!

By Art Laffin

I am filled with profound sorrow and deep grief over the loss of Damu, whom I have known since 2001. At the same time, I give thanks to God for this remarkable man of love and justice who touched the lives of me and countless others as he sought with every ounce of his being to create the Beloved Community.

The last time I saw Damu was in January during a Martin Luther King, Jr. event. He was as inspiring as ever, encouraging people to stay rooted in faith, to stay hopeful, and to never give up the struggle for social justice and peace.

He once spoke at the Dorothy Day Catholic Worker and was very interested in learning more about Dorothy Day. We participated in many protests together and we, at the Dorothy Day Catholic Worker, supported the vitally important work of Black Voices for Peace.

As one who did not have health insurance, he spoke out about how the poor were negatively impacted by the inequities of the health care system, and how the needs of the poor were sacrificed at the expense of the war budget.

Damu Smith, servant of the poor and marginalized, steadfast advocate for God's reign of justice and peace, pray for us, intercede for us!

Damu Smith -- PRESENTE!



Damu Smith and daughter, Asha, 2005

Peace Talks

Be sure to watch for upcoming **Peace Talks**, posted every Friday to the WPC website and email list.

To recommend a speaker, call 202-234-2000, or email wpc@igc.org (with "Peace Talks" in the subject line) www.washingtonpeacecenter.org

NO ARMAGEDDON FOR BUSH!



By Carol Moore

President George Bush and his cronies wage war against Iraq and

plan war against Iran to ensure U.S. global dominance, to control oil markets and to protect Israel's illegally occupied lands. Bush warns "all options are on the table."

Although even sanctions against Iran are unwarranted, Bush threatens to use nuclear weapons on Iran, preemptively against "hard targets," or to retaliate against Iran striking back at oil facilities, U.S. troops in Iraq or Israel.

Seymour Hersh says Bush believes only he has the "courage" to bomb and "save" Iran. Bush has proclaimed: "I'm the decider and I decide what is best."

An attack on Iran will likely lead to U.S. use of nuclear weapons, igniting a regional war that would kill and injure millions of Iranians, Iraqis and others, and irradiate the whole Middle East, and beyond.

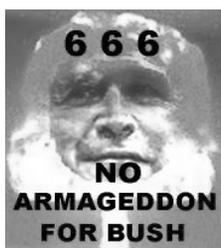
How will Russia respond to nuclear armed aircraft and missiles approaching nearby Iran?

Will Pakistan, India, Israel use their nuclear weapons too? Such an attack could spin out of control into world nuclear war within days!

Does Bush WANT Armageddon?

Peace loving people of the world, reject Bush and his cronies' preemptive wars for global dominance that threaten us with nuclear Armageddon. We demand worldwide nuclear disarmament, starting with the major nuclear powers.

LOCAL ACTIONS



On Tuesday, June 6, 2006 (6/6/6) *, members of the Washington, DC Antiwar Network, Northern Virginians for

Peace and Justice, Women for Peace and Justice in Iran, World Can't Wait (endorsers) and Code Pink and other Washington DC area antiwar and peace activists rallied at the White House on June 6, 2006, calling for an end to President George Bush's drive for wars that could lead to nuclear apocalypse – to Armageddon.

The rally featured a speak out; a tug of war between good and evil;



exorcisms of the White House; scary Bush and Armageddon outfits and posters, etc.

* "6/6/6" is the biblical "number of the beast of the Apocalypse."



COMMUNITY FORUM ON IRAN

On Friday, March 3rd about seventy people attended a community forum sponsored by the Washington Peace Center, the Hiroshima-Nagasaki Committee, and the DC Anti-War Network, entitled "Stopping War Against Iran: Creating a Nuclear Weapons Free Middle East."

The three speakers included Ray McGovern, former CIA analyst of Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity; Simin Royanian, an economist who cofounded Women for Peace and Justice in Iran; and Kevin Martin, Executive Director of Peace Action.

Ray McGovern spoke first, warning that the Bush administration and its supporters are trying to silence other voices. He gave as an example threats by some groups to picket a Barnes and Noble book-signing of "Neoconned Again," a new book compiling evidence that neo-

conservatives and Israel Lobbyists promoted the war against Iraq and manipulated intelligence given to Bush. When several contributors, including McGovern, showed for the signing, they found no audience because Barnes and Noble feared publicizing the event.

McGovern believes that while the desire for cheap oil and a general desire to control the region motivated the war, protecting Israel also was a major motivation. Bush has placed too many people throughout the executive branch who are too tied to Israel and have real conflicts of interest. Being of Irish descent, McGovern stated he could not be unbiased if in his years at the CIA he had been assigned to issues regarding Northern Ireland.

McGovern believes that Iran is no real threat to the United States, only to Israel. He noted the front page Washington Post article about a CIA report that Iran would not have a nuclear weapon for another ten years. He noted that any attack on Iran would be war of aggression under the Nuremberg principles.

Finally, McGovern encouraged peace activists to stand up against the bullying by those who yell "anti-Semite" at those who speak out against neo-conservatives and the Israel Lobby for promoting the Iraq war and the drive to war against Iran.

Kevin Martin described U.S. hypocrisy in criticizing Iran's nuclear weapons given the number and size of U.S. weapons and the fact that it is trying to develop new ones. He detailed how the Non-Proliferation Treaty works and the bottom line is the big powers agreed to begin to eliminate their nuclear weapons and assist non-nuclear nations in developing nuclear programs if they promised not to develop nuclear weapons.

Iran signed that treaty. Israel, India and Pakistan did not, and developed nuclear weapons on their own.

Martin described the renewed call for a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East as a solution to the problem. Considering that surrounding nations have such weapons, it is not surprising Iran and other Middle East nations might consider them.

Martin recommended THAT citizens target Congress and the media to protest the war. He urged religious leaders to get involved, including interfaith calls. And he supported the need for Gandhian nonviolent direct action to stop a potentially catastrophic war before it started.

Simin Royanian, an Iranian and long-time progressive activist, gave the most impassioned presentation, bringing greater detail to points made by the earlier speakers. She described the history of U.S. intervention in Iran – including helping the Shah start up Iran's first attempt to have a nuclear capacity.

Royanian decried U.S. hypocrisy in signing a treaty to give nuclear materials to India, which has not signed the Non-proliferation Treaty. India also sits on the Board of the International Atomic Energy Agency which judges Iran's nuclear program!

Although she is opposed to the theocratic regime in Iran, Royanian supports Iran's right to have nuclear power under the Non-proliferation Treaty.

Royanian predicted the U.S. would use nuclear weapons against Iran, calling the U.S. a "rogue nation." She said much of U.S. policy is related to helping Israel keep the land it has taken from the Palestinians and spoke out for their right of return to the lands from which they have been expelled.

During an active question and answer period, Martin touched on how the United States and Russia are still on "hair-trigger" alert and any use of nuclear weapons in Iran certainly could lead to an accidental or intentional nuclear exchange between the major nuclear nations.

McGovern stressed that there probably will not be a big military buildup on the ground to give us a warning, but a sudden air attack. He opined: "The crazies are in control," and said that an attack would not be made rationally and in America's interest.

Audience members were asked to come up with specific suggestions on how to stop a U.S. war against Iran. Some were:

- ~ learn the power of nonviolence and personal sacrifice;
- ~ work against media disinformation;
- ~ take on the Israel Lobby;
- ~ stop paying war taxes;
- ~ encourage whistle blowing by government employees;
- ~ start including calls against an Iran war in all efforts against the Iraq war; and
- ~ more self-education on the internet.

This successful meeting showed that peace activists are willing to work against yet another unnecessary preemptive war.

For more information on, or to work against a possible Iran war see:

<http://unitedforpeace.net>
<http://stopwaroniran.org>
<http://stopthewarnow.net>

NATIONAL GROUPS MOST ACTIVELY ORGANIZING AGAINST WAR

Antiwar.Com

Daily news about and opinion pieces against US attack on Iran

After Downing Street.Org

<http://www.afterdowningstreet.org/iran>

(also <http://dontattackiran.org>)

Organized widely publicized and endorsed petition vs. strike on Iran which Cindy Sheehan and others will deliver to White House on May 18th

Campaign Against Sanctions and Military Intervention in Iran (CASMI)

<http://www.campaigniran.org/>
International activists

Peace Action

<http://peace-action.org>

Front page link to strong statement for nuclear free Middle East, including Israel

Don't Attack Iran Petition

<http://stopwaroniran.org/>

United for Peace And Justice

<http://unitedforpeace.org>

World Can't Wait

<http://worldcantwait.net>

Large List of Groups Organizing Vs. Iran War Driving out the Bush

<http://stopthewarnow.net/>

RELEVANT LINKS:

The Iran Plans: Would President Bush go to war to stop Tehran from getting the bomb? by Seymour Hersh
http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/articles/060417fa_fact

Nuke Nightmare: Bush's Drive to Armageddon by Joel Wendland
<http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?ItemID=5824>

Four Day War: (Possible Iran War Scenario) The Iran/Israel conflagration, a history by Claude Salhani -
http://www.amconmag.com/2004_09_13/article.html

25 Years at the White House Gates



Longest Continuous Vigil Anywhere?

By Ellen Thomas

Since June 3, 1981, nine years to the day before tanks rolled into Tiananmen Square to put a halt to the pro-democracy movement, signs calling for "Wisdom and Honesty," justice and nuclear disarmament have stood every day and night in front of the White House.

According to National Park Service figures, the signs have been seen by over three million people per year.

To those who maintain perhaps the longest continuous vigil in human history, the signs represent the ancient right -- Thomas Jefferson may have termed it "the duty" -- of people in a democracy to nonviolently voice opinions on issues of broad public concern, even if it means they must go to prison for their beliefs.



On June 3, 1981 a pilgrim named Wm. ("Doubting") Thomas sat down on the White House sidewalk with a cardboard sign -- "Wanted, Wisdom and Honesty" -- to talk about truth, justice, freedom, peace, and the threat of nuclear war.

Concepcion Picciotto also came to Lafayette Park and began working with Thomas in 1981.



To the public, those who maintain the vigil outside the White House arouse a spectrum of perceptions.

The 1991 and 1994 Berlitz Travel Guide for Washington, DC pictured the vigil over the caption, "It's the right of

every American to set up a stand and make a point in Lafayette Park."



Four presidents have, with varying degrees of patience, reduced and endured the vigilers' presence.

Those who share the materialistic values symbolized by the White House sometimes view the vigil as "visual blight."

The Washington Times and Washington Post have called the vigilers



"weirdos" and "lunatics" and the signs "eyesores," "gibberish," and "junk."

On the other extreme, there are those who, valuing life, view the policies of the White House as slightly "mad," and believe that the vigil reflects sanity.

Some journalists have been more than tolerant, likening the vigilers to saints and prophets, and even beautiful!

Actually the vigilers are just trying to practice what they preach. They still have hope for humanity. They believe someday, if they hold on long enough, people might wake up to their own responsibilities and begin, at last, to act compassionately, wisely, honestly. For this, and for the children, they endure harsh weather, the whims of police, and abusive behavior by hostile bystanders. For they know they're not alone.



So, the vigil continues... working for peace, hoping for humanity.

It Hasn't Been Easy

During the early 1980's, hostile Park Police and Secret Service officers tried to drive Thomas and Concepcion away.

At first they were arrested and charged with "loitering" or "disturbing the peace."

But few judges would convict them, and no judge would imprison them, knowing the history of the First Amendment.

Thanks to the 1976 *Stacey Abney* decision by the U.S. Court of Appeals, sleep as part of a round-the-clock vigil was still considered, in and of itself, "expressive conduct protected by the First Amendment."

So there was a meeting between President Reagan and Department of Interior lawyer Richard Robbins, and shortly thereafter regulations began appearing in the Code of Federal Regulations, to:

(1) define "camping" as "using the park for living accommodation purposes, regardless of the activity in which one might otherwise be engaged," thus negating the First Amendment and the *Abney* decision;



(2) move the vigilers from the White House sidewalk to Lafayette Park;



(3) reduce the number of signs that an individual might have to two, and the size to 4' x 4' x 1/4", no higher than six feet off the ground, and requiring that someone always be within three feet of the signs; and



(4) reduce the amount of "property" a person might have other than the signs to 3 cubic feet, a real hardship in cold and wet weather.



These regulations allowed police to harass, intimidate, and arrest all demonstrators who came to

Lafayette Park, and have been used extensively to chase most people away.

But patience, perseverance, creativity, Thomas's pro se lawsuits against police



misconduct, and sympathetic friends have kept Thomas and Concepcion north of the White House, touching the minds and hearts of many.

Other People Come and Go

Many people have joined Thomas and Concepcion in vigiling for varying lengths of time. I was one of them, from 1984 to 2002.



Of the many extraordinary people and events the vigilers have encountered over the years, here are but a few.

Norman Mayer



In 1982, Norman Mayer brought signs and



literature to the White House sidewalk with the message that abolishing nuclear



weapons must be everyone's number one priority.

Norman found Thomas fasting, and talked him into eating by saying "As long as you keep

your vigil, the truth can't be ignored."

On December 8, 1982, Norman Mayer staged a very scary demonstration at the Washington Monument, demanding that the news media devote "90% of its time" to the subject of nuclear weapons or he would blow up the monument with his van (which he claimed had 1,000 lbs of explosives, but in fact contained nothing but a battery-powered TV set). When he drove away after several hours of intense media scrutiny, sharpshooters killed him, for which they received medals.

Thomas erected a 12' x 18' reproduction of Norman's flier in Lafayette Park.



Continued next page

25 Years at the White House Gates

... continued from previous page

Mitch Snyder and CCNV

In 1981 and 1984, the Community for Creative Nonviolence (CCNV), led by Mitch Snyder, pitched tents in Lafayette Park as a statement about homelessness.



In 1981 homeless people actually slept in the tents for a while. But in 1984, the Supreme Court ruled that the Park Service had a right to keep people from sleeping in tents.



Although Concepcion and Thomas had nothing resembling a tent, they were arrested under the "camping" regulation.

During the '80's, Mitch Snyder's fasts for the homeless attracted a great deal of media attention. As a result, the Reagan administration provided a multi-million-dollar homeless shelter and medical clinic at 2nd and D NW, and in 1984 voters passed an initiative (#17) guaranteeing homeless people a right to shelter.

Mitch and everyone's friend, B Wardlaw, went on a cross-country campaign in 1986 which culminated in "Hands Across America."



In June, 1990, however, the city won a referendum rescinding Initiative 17. Mitch began a very debilitating open-ended fast, but this time the media weren't interested in his fast or the plight of the homeless, and neither, apparently, were the voters.

Mitch dropped in on old friends to reminisce. He spent an unusually long half hour with Thomas at the signs.



The first week of July, exhausted, despairing, his vision and health failing, Mitch killed himself. With Mitch's death, CCNV became simply a shelter, and the star-studded vigils and marches for homeless people ceased.

Dr. Charles Hyder



From September 23, 1986 to May 1, 1987, Dr. Charles Hyder, a

310-pound astro-geo-physicist from New Mexico, came to the park to fast for global nuclear disarmament, losing 180 pounds in the process. He attracted a lot of people.



Hyder brought with him his scientific analysis of the dangers of burying nuclear waste in salt caverns (salt will melt under extreme heat, and rise to the surface). He also warned that Chernobyl cancers would be killing people in increasing numbers in decades to come.

At first local newspapers refused to report about Hyder's fast, some claiming, when called, that they weren't going to be blackmailed into writing a story every time someone stopped eating, but by spring 1987, so many international stories had been written, even the Washington Post published an article.

To the best of our knowledge, Dr. Hyder is the only protester to ever have a sack full of mail hand-delivered to Lafayette Park by a White House staffer, addressed by Japanese school children to "Dr. Hyder, c/o The White House."

Hyder was visited by Nobel Prize winners, educators, and members of Congress,



and was sent to Geneva by Carl Sagan to take his proposal to the U.N. talks on disarmament.

He received a letter from Gorbachev asking him to end his fast, and a float was built in his honor for the May Day parade in Moscow. A pass in the Urals mountains was named after him.

Dr. Hyder quit fasting and returned to New Mexico in early May, 1987.



Unfortunately he regained all the weight he had lost and more, and his heart failed. He died in 2004.

During Hyder's fast the vigilers wrote and began circulating a petition

to the legislators of the U.S. and then-USSR calling for a commitment to abolish all nuclear weapons and use the money instead for human needs.

They circulated this petition for years after Hyder was gone.



Dr. Ted Taylor, who was designer of the biggest and smallest nuclear bombs before he quit working for the government and spent all his time trying to eliminate nuclear weapons, came to meet Dr. Hyder, and remained a good friend of the vigil, and lobbied successfully on behalf of Proposition One. (See next page.)



The Ragtag Band

During Dr. Hyder's fast, some young musicians arrived separately, each staying to build signs and feed people, write and teach songs, and perform daily as the Ragtag Band.



Hyder, Mojo, Sunrise, Scott, Song, Robin

So effective was the scene in the park in those days that police enforcement was stepped up.



Prison (1988)

Early in 1987, police issued "camping" tickets right and left. In 1988, Sunrise and Mojo went to prison for two months, and Thomas

and I for three months, charged with "camping." Concepcion kept the vigil going while we were gone.



When we immediately returned to the park upon our release, the police backed off for a while. The Ragtag Band drifted away by 1992. Sunrise now lives in France, Mojo in Texas, and Song in the Philippines.

Peace Park

In 1985, we began calling Lafayette Square "Peace Park." A sign on the corner read "Welcome to Peace Park,"



and back when there was still traffic on Pennsylvania Avenue, we could hear the Trolley Tour drivers point out our signs to tourists as "Peace Park."

During our time in jail, the City Paper and Washington Post both published articles and letters to the editor referring to "Peace Park."

So the National Park Service announced they were going to remove the beloved sculpture, "The Awakening," from Hains Point, and build a "Peace Park." It's not hard to believe they hoped this would distract the public from the vigil.

The National Park Service never did build their "Peace Park," and "The Awakening" has been returned to Hains Point after a cleaning. Many people still call Lafayette Square "Peace Park." We hope it sticks.

Atlantic Life Community



For decades, a very special community of faith-based activists has been coming to the White



House regularly to speak out about the insanity of war.

Twice a year they hold a retreat in DC, hosted by Jonah House of Baltimore and Dorothy Day Catholic Workers of DC, and young people come from around the country to



learn about faith-based nonviolent witnessing for peace and the poor.

The Dorothy Day Catholic Workers also feed homeless people every Thursday night, formerly in Lafayette Park, but the police have chased most homeless people away from the White House area.



Many members of this community have chosen to spend years in

prison for performing "Plowshares" actions, symbolically beating swords into plowshares, for example, by pouring their own blood and hammering on missile silos and submarines, and prayerfully waiting to be arrested.



In 1990, when it became obvious that Bush 41 was going to go to war against Iraq, members of the Atlantic Life Community began a vigil on the White House sidewalk every Friday at noon, which has continued now for sixteen years, against sanctions and bombings during the Clinton years, against war during the two Bush administrations. They also hold a vigil early every Monday morning at the Pentagon.



The Ground War At Home (1991)



One of our most memorable shared experiences with the Washington Peace Center was during the first Gulf War, when Lisa Fithian and others very effectively reached out to the community to join the drummers in Lafayette Park.

The 40 days and nights of continuous drumming had a profound effect.



After President George H.W. Bush told a group of supporters, "those damned drums are keeping me awake all night," the police began enforcing an absurd "60 decibels" rule (background noise was 80 decibels), snatching drums and signs and arresting people, sometimes brutally. Bush later retracted his statement as "hyperbole," but the damage was done.

A video we produced after the war, "The Ground War At Home," played on public access television all over the country during the spring of 1991, showing police misconduct and utter disregard for the First Amendment.

While anti-war protesters were harassed and arrested for even putting a sign or drum down, or drumming at more than 60 decibels, halfway down the block a few pro-war advocates were encouraged by police when they stuck signs in the fence, blew whistles, and encouraged motorists to honk.



One of the drummers, Diana Nomad, was arrested and convicted for chanting "Na myo ho reng e kyo" and tapping a prayer drum, but the Court of Appeals overturned the conviction, ruling that drumming outside the White House is a form of speech protected by the First Amendment.

Diana died a few years ago of brain cancer, a great loss. The rest of us, however, can now drum with impunity, in hopes that the President will hear. Please remember the Nomad case if the police try to silence your drums.



Proposition One



By 1990, the thousands of signatures we had collected on our petition proved that the idea of global nuclear disarmament was popular all over the world, even in the U.S. We lobbied Congress with petitions in hand, to no avail.

Joe Vigorito, who had just come from Arizona's "Impeach Gov. Meachem" campaign, advised us to bring the idea to the voters of DC, in hopes that this might impress the politicians. So we launched a voter initiative campaign and in September, 1993, brought the petition to the voters as "Proposition One", or D.C. Initiative 37- the "Nuclear Disarmament and Economic Conversion Act."

A hard-working crew of unpaid young people registered to vote and hit the streets, collecting thousands of signatures at shopping centers, churches, bus stops, grocery stores,



and (with assistance from well-known activists) we got the idea on the ballot, and won the election.

As a result, since 1994 a bill has been introduced seven times by DC's delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton into the U.S. House of Representatives as "The Nuclear Disarmament and Economic Conversion Act" (HR-1348 this session - see next page for text.)

Proposition One has also traveled overseas. In 1990, Bob Dorrough and Lynn Fredriksen went to Moscow and Kazakhstan and carried a Russian petition with them.



People stood in line to sign the petition wherever they went.



Bob had been a part of the vigil off and on since 1983. He was arrested in 1986 when the large signs were removed under the sign-size regulation and was arrested several times for drumming during the Gulf War. Bob now lives in Japan, teaching English.

In 1994, I was invited to go to Japan to talk about the vigil and Proposition One. The Japanese people are perhaps the most grateful of all foreign travelers who stop at the signs. Concepcion has had photographs from Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings on her signs for more than 20 years.



Hiroshima/Nagasaki Peace Committee



Each year since 1981, during the first week of August, the Hiroshima-Nagasaki Peace Committee of the National Capitol Gray Panthers, founded by Louise Franklin-Ramirez, sponsors a series of events commemorating the bombings in Japan, and hosting survivors of the bombings (known as "Hibakusha"). To find out about this year's events, contact John Steinbach - 703-369-7427 <johnsteinbach@starpower.net>

Pennsylvania Ave Closure

In some ways, life has been easier for the vigilers under Presidents Clinton and Bush 43. No new regulations have been written, and the police are somewhat more civilized - that is, when they aren't closing the park for bogus "bomb" scares and limousines.

But during the Clinton years, Pennsylvania Avenue was closed to traffic for the first time ever.

So Thomas took his sign, "Wanted, Wisdom & Honesty," to the middle of Pennsylvania Avenue. It wasn't long before he was arrested.

It was instructive to observe how this closure came about.

First, there was a news article announcing that the Secret Service hoped to put a tunnel under Pennsylvania Avenue by 2000.

Then in 1994 there were a series of very highly publicized oddball events.



Continued next page

25 Years at the White House Gates

... continued from previous page

Somebody flew a small plane into a tree on the south lawn, and died.

A pedestrian in a trench coat pulled out an automatic weapon and shot between the floors of the front of the White House.

Then a desperate homeless man, who had been kicked and scorned by a Park Police officer for a week, staggered after his tormentor from the park to the White House sidewalk with a knife taped to his paralyzed hand, and was killed by another Park Police officer who wheeled up in a cruiser, leapt out, crouched, and fired.



Somebody went over the fence. People go over the fence several times a year, usually, and the Secret Service has NO problem dealing with them. This time it was big news.

A few weeks later, Pennsylvania Avenue was closed to traffic, perhaps forever.

Rollerbladers were thrilled with the quiet new Avenue, but the vigilers were disappointed, for this seriously reduced the numbers of people who get a chance to read the signs.

Since 9/11, even the rollerbladers are usually elsewhere. Pennsylvania Avenue has been taken over by the police forces, and the rest of us are only tolerated.

IMMORTALIZED IN DOONESBURY

Garry Trudeau has showed a strong interest in Lafayette park since 1984, and paid particular attention in 1991:



To contact the vigilers:

Peace Park Antinuclear Vigil
P.O. Box 27217,
Washington DC 20038
Phone: 202-682-4282

Email:

Thomas <prop1@prop1.org>
Ellen Thomas
<et@nucnews.net>
Concepcion Picciotto
<concepcionpicciotto@yahoo.com>

To learn
much more:
<http://prop1.org>

Lafayette Park Belongs to the Dissenters



Letter to Editor,
published December 22, 1984
Washington Post "Free For All"

Elizabeth Rowe (Close to Home, Dec. 9, 1984) lamented that "Lafayette Square ... is no longer a place to delight the eye and invite the passerby" and that the park should be "restored to its traditional use as a 'public pleasuring place.'" She suggested establishing "the city's new Hyde Park on the Ellipse."

In a letter Dec. 15, Thomas W. D. Wright praised Elizabeth Rowe's inspiration and opined that "some [demonstrators] are aware they are defiling beauty."

It seems grossly unfair to credit Elizabeth Rowe with this "inspiration." In January 1983, the secretary of the Interior, James Watt, had the same notion. Fortunately (or unfortunately, depending upon one's perception of "beauty"), he ran up against the First Amendment.

As early as July 1981 a tourist suggested that I move my signs ("trash" he called them) from in front of the White House to the Ellipse. I replied that if I moved, it would only be a matter of time before someone else's aesthetic sensibilities would be offended and would suggest I move to Greenbelt, Md. or Yosemite National Park, or the top of Mt. McKinley. And I pointed out that freedom of speech is something of a moot point if there is no one to hear what you are saying.

Perhaps Elizabeth Rowe has her traditions crossed, or maybe I just don't understand what she means by "a public pleasuring place." But one thing is certain--no place on the planet is a more traditional place for public discourse than Lafayette Park. And, traditionally, intolerant segments of the ponderous majority have sought to stifle minority dissent in front of the presidential palace.

Until recently those who considered the free expression of ideas less significant to the interests of democracy than the preservation of the status quo have been thwarted in their attempts to prohibit criticism in the area where it is most likely to reflect on the chief administrator.

As recently as 1965, a bill was before Congress (it was voted down by the Senate) which was aimed at banning demonstrations within 1,000 feet of the White House. Now we have entered a new era where bureaucrats write regulations that restrict freedom of religion, speech, the press and the right of the people to peaceably assemble and petition the government for redress of grievance.

In "Birth of a Street Person" (Style, Dec. 14), a story about my wife, [Ellen] Thomas, and me, the U.S. attorney, Royce Lambeth, was quoted as asking, "Why can't (the demonstrators in front of the White House) conform?" Perhaps the answer lies in the question: "Why couldn't Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego kneel down and worship the king's idol?"

I have two additional solutions for folks who don't like to listen to folks they don't like to look at:

- 1) Build a chain-link fence around the District, call it "King's Dominion," and prohibit protesting within the fence.
- 2) Move to the Soviet Union and leave Lafayette Park to those who value individual freedom and human life above "perfect" Polaroid snapshots and the "sanctity" of national icons.

William Thomas

[Note: substitute "Iraq" for "Soviet Union" and it still makes sense. et]

Other Friends...



... all these
and SO
many more ...
Thank you!

HR-1348

"The Nuclear Disarmament and Economic Conversion Act"

The United States Government shall--

(1) disable and dismantle all its nuclear weapons and refrain from replacing them at any time with any weapons of mass destruction;

(2) redirect resources that are currently being used for nuclear weapons programs to use--

(A) in converting all nuclear weapons industry employees, processes, plants, and programs smoothly to constructive, ecologically beneficial peacetime activities during the 3 years following the effective date of this Act, and

(B) in addressing human and infrastruc-

ture needs such as housing, health care, education, agriculture, and environmental restoration, including alternative fuel sources;

(3) undertake vigorous good faith efforts to eliminate war, armed conflict, and all military operations; and

(4) actively promote policies to induce all other countries to join in these commitments for world peace and security.

This Act shall take effect when the President certifies to the Congress that all foreign countries possessing nuclear weapons have established legal requirements comparable to those set forth [herein] and those requirements have taken effect.

DC Homeless Crisis



By Becky Sambol

Franklin School Shelter

Despite testimony to the contrary at a committee hearing in May, the Franklin School Shelter will be closed "imminently." During Mayor Williams' tenure, both the Gale and the Randall Shelters have been shut down.

The Franklin School Shelter has been kept open only through the hard work of local activists. Last year, the mayor and his administration made a commitment to keeping Franklin open until 240 downtown replacement beds were found. It appears that commitment is likely to be violated.

According to Nechama Masliansky, director of advocacy & social justice for SOME, Inc. (So Others Might Eat), (www.some.org), an unidentified developer has signed a long-term lease, but plans for the property have not yet been disclosed.

It is not clear whether the lease was properly approved by the city council.

In an interview in last month's Street Sense publication, Deputy Mayor Brenda Donald-Walker denied that Franklin had been sold and never mentioned the possibility that the property might be leased.

The city has no plans to relocate Franklin Shelter's 240-275 residents. There is speculation that the city will attempt to place some of the residents in trailers at 4th and L Streets and the rest in shelters outside the downtown area. Neither of these are tenable solutions.

The trailers are not considered fit for habitation, especially during a DC summer. The shelters are already crowded and lack the capacity to absorb a large influx of new residents. Among the crucial issues which need to be addressed in response to the imminent closure of Franklin is the violation of the statutory rights of the homeless shelter residents under the 2003 Homeless Services Reform Act.

Efforts to reopen the Gale Shelter, which has the capacity to house 155 people, are expected to be successful no earlier than January of 2007. Even if successful, it will be too little, too late. The city's long term goal is understood to be the cleansing of the downtown area for development. The homeless are being hounded into

southeast DC where they will be out of sight, out of mind, and forgotten.

According to the Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless - www.legalclinic.org - during the course of a year

almost 16,000 people in DC experience homelessness.

6,000 of them are "literally homeless" people who sleep in shelters or in the streets, parks, alleys, vehicles, abandoned buildings, or in a variety of other locations.

As there are only about 1,800 available beds in summer and 2,300 beds and cots during the winter months, the loss of 240 more beds will have a significant impact.

DC Central Kitchen

Earlier in May, another crisis began to unfold. When the city failed to deliver a contract to DC Central Kitchen (DCCCK), the non-profit suspended delivery of approximately 1600 daily meals to five city shelters: Blair, 801 E, Franklin, Emery, and La Casa.

On May 1, DCCCK notified the city shelters that it would be forced to suspend meal service until the city government made a decision to improve the system and invest in a higher level of nutrition for residents.

The city's primary contribution to DCCCK has been free rent and utilities, which accounts for a mere fraction of operating costs.

For the past two years, the non-profit has been telling the city that the rising costs of providing nutritionally appropriate balanced meals to DC's diverse and growing homeless population could no longer be absorbed.

The city's homeless population is not only growing at a rapid rate, it is also aging. Further, besides the growing number of seniors, the city's homeless population counts more and more children among its ranks.

According to DC Hunger Solutions, approximately 175,000 residents

depend on emergency food from food banks, pantries, and soup kitchens, and one out of three children in the district "lives on the edge of hunger" (www.dchunger.org).

When DCCCK began providing hot meals out of a refrigerated truck, there was no other food delivery system for homeless DC residents. DCCCK now delivers 4000 daily meals to 100 local social service agencies as well as emergency shelters.

They also help people get mental health and substance abuse treatment and conduct culinary training programs. DCCCK has 50 full time employees, 20 of whom are training program graduates. All employees earn living wages and full benefits.

The Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness (CPPH), the agency entrusted with awarding contracts for services to the homeless, is expected to finally deliver a six month contract that DCCCK is willing to accept.

Mike Curtin anticipates that when the contract expires on November 30, CPPH will do what it wants to do now: award its contract to the private DC based company, Nutrition Inc.

In a recent phone interview, Thomas Gaskins, president of Nutrition, Inc, maintained that his company has been delivering meals to a few city shelters "to help out," but he denied having bid for the food service contract.

Mike Curtin, Chief Operating Officer for DCCCK, thinks otherwise. He believes that the decision to suspend food service and the public attention it generated has prevented CPPH from awarding a sweetheart deal to Nutrition Inc, but that the city will ultimately award the contract to the private company.

The city's recent track record has, in fact, favored developers and other corporate interests at the expense of the city's most vulnerable residents.

While the food service crisis was unfolding, ground breaking began for the \$600 million baseball stadium and plans were announced to tear down low income housing and terminate a federal contract that pays rent for 211 low income families.

The vice president of the Virginia based firm that owns the property, Bush Construction Corp., was quoted in the Washington Post as saying, "We're not in this just to pour money down the drain."

Privatization:

a weapon in a weaponless war

Think about this: a company that provides food for profit to homeless people is not likely to have an interest in helping people get jobs and needed services, as that might reduce the number of people needing food, and cut into profits.

A corporation that owns the property which houses low income elder residents has no interest in maintaining that arrangement. A developer desiring to turn a profit has no interest in maintaining housing for homeless people.

When it comes to privatization, money flows one way: out of our communities.

Income inequality in DC is already wider than that of any other major US city (www.dcfpi.org). DC has the fifth highest poverty rate in the country. The number of homeless families seeking shelter in DC has more than doubled in the last five years. Over 80 percent of the city's homeless are African American. Over 70 percent of the homeless in the DC region suffer from mental illness. Half of all members of families in the DC shelter system have experienced domestic violence. About 30 percent of the homeless in DC work at least part time. Including all 52 states, DC is the least affordable place to live in a two bedroom house.

The privatization of public social services is a significant contributing cause of poverty and the increasing concentration of wealth distribution. Public dollars that should be directed toward public services are instead funneled into what is called "urban renewal." This is a euphemism for gentrification, which is one of the root causes of the city's exploding homeless population.

When fat contracts are handed off by governments to the private sector, there is talk about improved efficiency and cost effectiveness, but in reality access to social services is reduced and even eliminated. Those who can afford it least suffer loss of employment and income.

Privatization is a cornerstone neoliberal strategy in the war on the poor in Washington DC as well as in developing countries around the world. There are no troops to call home, but the consequences are as devastating as those of any war.

GLUT FOOD CO-OP

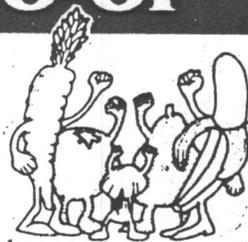
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Faith and Resistance

by Art Laffin

MARCH AGAINST THE WAR

On March 18, to commemorate the third anniversary of the illegal U.S. war in Iraq, some 300 people, demanding an immediate end to the war, marched from Dick Cheney's residence at the Naval Observatory to Dupont Circle. A coalition of peace groups sponsored the event, including the Washington Peace Center and DAWN.

PENTAGON POLICE DENY ACCESS TO ANTIWAR ACTIVISTS SEEKING A MEETING WITH RUMSFELD & ARREST FIFTY-ONE

The Pentagon began the invasion of Iraq on March 20, 2003. So the National Campaign for Nonviolent Resistance [NCNR], a member of United For Peace & Justice, issued a call "From Mourning to Resistance - March on the Pentagon" for activists to come to Virginia three years later to demand an immediate end to the war. Antiwar activists from more than 25 states, including Alaska, California, Florida, Maine, New Mexico, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, responded.

At the beginning rally near the Lincoln Memorial, Bruce Gagnon regaled the crowd with a report of actions in Maine challenging federal legislators for voting to fund the war in Iraq. Fr. Joe Mulligan, S.J., came from Nicaragua to promote the Global Call for Nonviolent Resistance.

Then some 200 participants marched with a ceremonial coffin and banners, across the Arlington Memorial Bridge to LBJ Grove, near the Pentagon. Four speakers condemned the war: Cindy Sheehan, who lost her son Casey in Iraq in 2004, said "millions of people around the world" are speaking out. Mike Ferner, fasting since February 15, called for more resistance. Laura Costas pointed out the physical and psychological challenges faced by many returning veterans. Michael Berg shared the pain he carries because his son Nick, a civilian, was killed in Iraq.

The activists then carried the coffin, covered with photographs of civilians wounded in Iraq, unto Pentagon property, but were stopped by a five-foot-high steel barrier. A request to open the barrier was ignored. So recognizing the madness of the quagmire in Iraq and seeking the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops, fifty one nonviolent peace activists climbed over or ducked under the barrier to seek a meeting with Secretary of War Donald Rumsfeld. Instead they were arrested and charged with "failure to obey a lawful order."

Those arrested are scheduled to appear on one of the following dates, June 16, July 7 and 21 or August 4, in federal court in Alexandria, Virginia. The Baltimore activists who were arrested are Sue Ackerman, Maria Allwine, Susan Crane, Dr. Terry Fitzgerald, Michael Johnson and Max Obuszewski. They look forward to placing the war on trial.

As part of the National Campaign for Nonviolent Resistance, peace activists in New York City and Syracuse were arrested at recruiting centers, others in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania at Lockheed Martin, and in Tucson at a Raytheon Missile Factory. This update is based on a press release sent out by Max Obuszewski. For more info contact Max: 410-323-7200, ext. 31 or mobuszewski@afsc.org

RESISTANCE AT SUDAN EMBASSY TO STOP GENOCIDE IN DARFUR

On March 28 six Catholic Workers from the northeast were arrested at the Sudanese Embassy to call for an immediate end to the genocide in Darfur. Their case was dismissed.

NAVY LEAGUE ARMS BAZAAR PROTEST

On April 4, the 38th anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., the Dorothy Day Catholic Worker sponsored a vigil to protest the over 100 weapons contractors who were displaying their newest killing technology and weapons at the annual Navy League Sea-Air-Space Expo, what we call an "Arms Bazaar," held at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel. Other groups participating in the protest included D.A.W.N., Pax Christi, Veterans for Peace and several student groups. During the vigil the group read the famous speech of Dr. King which he gave at Riverside Church on April 4, 1967, about why he opposed the Vietnam War.

MARCH FOR IMMIGRATION RIGHTS

On April 10, marches took place across the U.S. giving prominent visibility to a new and ever growing "Immigrants Rights Movement." In D.C. over 200,000 people took part in the march. The marches were organized by a coalition of immigrant



organizations, church groups and labor unions who are committed to supporting the rights of 12 million "illegal" immigrants to stay in the U.S. and prevent proposed legislation which would criminalize these immigrants. On May 1 there were work boycotts and more demonstrations across the U.S.

HOLY WEEK FAITH AND RESISTANCE RETREAT

From April 12 - 15 members of the Atlantic Life Community and students from Iowa held the annual Holy Week Faith and Resistance retreat. On Holy Thursday the group witnessed at the Pentagon where a torture victim, in a orange jump suit and black hood, was symbolically crucified to a large cross.

They also displayed a banner which said: "Whose Torture and Death Are You Planning This Holy Week?" and "Resist the U.S. Crucifixion of Afghanistan, Iraq and Plans to Attack Iran."

Susan Crane, Betsy Lamb and Brian DeRouen were arrested for kneeling and blocking a checkpoint near the Metro entrance and were given courts dates for July 21.

On Good Friday, the group held a similar action in front of the White House with a torture victim symbolically crucified to a cross. Seven people risked arrests in the restricted portion of the White House sidewalk but the police chose not to make any arrests.

On Holy Saturday the group returned to the White House with two goats from Jonah House, Paul and Silas, and held a "No More Scapegoating" action. The goats wore signs that said: "No More Scapegoats" and "No More War." As a biblical reflection was offered about scapegoats, tourists flocked to the goats.

There were many good encounters with tourists and numerous leaflets were distributed. The vigil concluded with tourists being invited to join the goats and the rest of the group in a chant: "War is Baaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaad (goat sound). Torture is Baaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaad. Killing is Baaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaad!"

As some of the group left Lafayette Park, they noticed that Secretary of State Condolezza Rice was going into St. John's Church to attend Good Friday services. The group held a vigil outside the church and when Rice came out they called to her: "Stop the Torture, Stop the War, Stop the Killing!"

MOTHERS DAY PROTEST AT WHITE HOUSE

On Mothers Day, May 14, CODEPINK sponsored a 24 hour vigil at the White House focusing on the

theme "Declare Peace on Mothers Day." Those participating in the vigil included Cindy Sheehan, actress Susan Sarandon, women from Iraq and Iran, comedian/activist Dick Gregory, and doctor/clown Patch Adams. The vigil included strategy workshops on grassroots organizing, an interfaith gathering, and writing and reading letters to Laura Bush urging her to pressure her husband to end the war in Iraq.

RECRUITING CENTER PROTEST

On May 15, International Conscientious Objectors Day, nearly 100 activists and CO's attending an International Conference of Resisters to Global War, held a demonstration at a D.C. Armed Forces Recruiting Center. The conference was sponsored by the War Resisters League.

ACTIVISTS ARRESTED AT RUMSFELD'S HOUSE

On May 18, Ray McGovern, Cindy Sheehan and Medea Benjamin led a march from the White House to Secretary of Defense (War) Donald Rumsfeld's house to call for an end to the U.S. war in Iraq and for an end to U.S. military threats against Iran. Following the march, four activists—Peter Perry, David Barrows, Katie Heald and Mari Blome were arrested by Secret Service agents as they tried to deliver an anti-war letter. They were charged with disorderly conduct and unlawful entry and have a court date on June 1. The protesters are members of DAWN, CODEPINK and Women for Peace.

MORDECHAI VANUNU UPDATE

During the week of April 20, the government of Israel extended for a third year the restrictions it imposed on nuclear whistle-blower Mordechai Vanunu when he was released from prison following his completion of an 18 year sentence. He is forbidden to leave Israel; may not travel freely inside Israel; and is forbidden to speak with foreign nationals and foreign media for "fear of causing damage to the security of the State." The restrictions imposed on Vanunu are a gross violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which guarantee that citizens have freedom of expression and movement. For more info see: www.vanunu.com.

SUPPORT PEACE PRISONERS

For a complete listing of over 30 people imprisoned for SOA/WHINSEC resistance actions, see www.soaw.org. For a listing of others imprisoned for anti-war resistance, including military refusers, see nukeresister@igc.org.



Photo by Hendrik Voss

DC Immigrants March for Inalienable Rights

by Nancy Shia

On Monday, April 10th, people began gathering as early as noon in Malcolm X Park at 16th and Euclid Streets, N.W.

The march was scheduled to step off at 4 pm. The mood was upbeat, almost festive, thanks to the sounds and vibes of the Rhythm Workers Union, and many others who brought song and dance to rally and demonstrate.

While the Rhythm Workers Union played on the north side of the park, Arabs and Arab-Americans gathered on the south side to march in solidarity, along with bringing closer attention to the rightwing abuse of Arab and Muslim immigrants.

At the same time, People for the American Way were passing out American flags to people entering the park at 16th near Florida Avenue. The weather was beautiful.

Immigrant families with small children gathered with longtime community activists to march to the mall for immigrant rights

Going down 16th Street, the march took up all lanes. Traffic was stopped



Two Photos by Shia

from I Street, NW to Euclid Street, NW along 16th Street. Chants and slogans expressed determination of people living and working here to stay here.

The symbol most prevalent in the march was the American flag. The message is we are all Americans. We are a country of immigrants.

This is a call for justice from those who heretofore have been kept silent due lack of "immigration status". The time is now for them to claim that status. This sleeping giant has been awakened.

The message is simple and just: No human being should be called "illegal."

Little Friends For Peace

Answer The Violence With Skills For Peace

By MJ Park

Twenty Five years ago MJ had a dream of starting a Peace Camp for children as she nursed her third of six children .

She looked at PJ (now 25) and said, "I am so glad I gave birth to you but I want you to grow up in a world free of nuclear weapons, a world where people care and accept one another, share resources and gifts, and solve their problems with words and negotiation resulting in a win-win ."

So she piloted a program in her basement and it was a success and thus she gave birth to Little Friends For Peace.



Ever since then she has been giving workshops, peace camps, peace clubs, peace classes and trying to teach the art of making peace and living by the Peace Pledge.

The children love getting on board the Peace Train , which contains the instruments of Peace and not the weapons of war and hatred.



Two Photos by MJ Park

Each time the children come to the Peace Room at the Perry School in DC, they say the Peace Building Pledge.

Peacemakers talk about it they don't fight about it and therefore MJ has a Peace Table in the Peace room for the children to come and talk over their problems and issues.

This summer , Little Friends For Peace , will be offering the Peace Camps at different sights including the Peace Room at Perry School Community center in DC. If you are interested in more information check out our web page at : www.lffp.org or e-mail her at : mjpeace@gmail.com .

Gandhi says, "If we want real peace in this world and if we want to wage a real war against war, we have to begin with the children".

MJ has some new dreams : Starting an interactive Peace Museum , having peace education on the required list for schools and having the whole world at a Peace Camp at the same time.

Every good thing starts with a dream

Peace Building Pledge

"I am a Peace Builder, I pledge to talk nice to others, to treat people with care, to make peace, not break peace, to work for peace at home, school and in my neighborhood each day"

A Spring Break Not to Forget

By Bernadette Laber



WPC Intern Reports From New Orleans

To many college students, an eighteen-hour bus ride followed by four days of intense physical labor does not sound like an ideal spring break. Yet hundreds, perhaps thousands of college students are doing just this - giving up their spring breaks to volunteer with the reconstruction efforts in New Orleans.

I had the wonderful opportunity to go to New Orleans through the George Washington University's Alternative Spring Break Program. I was one of about fifty George Washington students who attended this program.

In New Orleans, we worked in a federal tent city created by FEMA called Camp Premier. George Washington University worked through Habitat for Humanity, which was one of the several different organizations located in the camp. Another local DC college, Howard University, brought an

exemplary 250 volunteer students to the camp. In addition to college students from around the nation, church groups, couples, and individuals were all a part of the volunteer efforts.

All volunteers were provided with cots, showers, and three meals a day. The tent city was extremely well organized and protected by federal guards.

The George Washington students were divided into groups of about twelve people. The groups were then grouped again into a larger team that worked under the supervision of an AmeriCorps personnel. The team generally worked in one neighborhood, each group on a different house, in an attempt to rejuvenate whole neighborhoods at a time. Groups from George Washington were all assigned to neighborhoods in St. Bernard's Parish, New Orleans.

It was heard that other teams were assigned to the Ninth Ward, a much poorer area of New Orleans. The type of work done in these areas was probably very different from our work because, unlike houses there, the houses in the St. Bernard's Parish neighborhood are all made of brick.

Homeowners were allowed to apply for this service if their house was confirmed to be structurally sound. Should the homeowners decided to rebuild, it would be at their own costs. However, it seemed that many were simply putting their homes up for sale.

All volunteers were required to wear hard hats, goggles, masks, gloves, long sleeved shirts, pants and boots as protective gear from the potentially dangerous elements in the house such as mold and fiberglass insulation. The labor was hot and sweaty, therefore involving several water breaks to keep us hydrated and healthy. We were fortunate to have fairly conducive weather for our job. We worked "gutting" the houses in preparation for their rebuilding. Gutting consists of removing everything from the house including the kitchen sink, from the furniture to the refrigerator with seven-month-old food in it to the dry wall.

In addition, years and year's worth of personal items were removed from the houses. Items that could not be salvaged were put on the corner with the rest of the debris to be discarded. This was often emotional for the workers- one previous volunteer referred to it as throwing away someone's life. Many of the groups were able to meet the homeowners and talk

with them about their experiences. Our particular couple was forced to swim out of their parent's house to a neighbor's yard where they got into a boat in which they finally reached a nearby elementary school. The elementary school housed people from around the neighborhood for five days until the water receded.

The George Washington students enjoyed our last day in New Orleans in the city, which we had yet to explore. I personally fell in love with it. It has retained its vibrancy and life that stand at its core. A poster board reading "Nothing Cancels Mardi Gras. Nothing," seemed to reflect the city's resilient attitude.

However, we can all help in this ongoing process of reconstruction. Camp Premier accommodates and feeds volunteers for free. It will be operating until the end of June, and it is expecting to have about 1,300 volunteers a week until then.

I met many wonderful people and feel lucky to have been a part of this group, and to have had the opportunity to meet so many concerned and compassionate young people.

While other students may have come back from break with a nice tan, we came back with a sense of community, accomplishment, and hope.



Thank you, William Sloan Coffin! 1925-2006

Peace and Justice Calendar

Wednesdays

Women in Black Vigils

* Every 3rd Wednesday 6:30-7pm
Market & Patrick Sts., Frederick, MD
301-834-7581
wibfrederick@mizmail.com
www.groups.yahoo.com/group/omeninblackdc

Wednesday Night Film Screenings—Hip-Hop Film Series
Wednesdays, 7pm
Schedule of upcoming films:
www.provisionslibrary.org/films.shtml

Thursdays

DAWN Protest At White House

Thursdays, 12:00 noon
White House sidewalk
US out of Iraq, no new wars on Iran, Syria, N Korea, etc. Boisterous is OK!
www.DAWNDC.net

Audio Activism & The Science of Sound - DC Radio Co-op

Thursdays, 6:30-9:30pm
People's Media Cafe, Al Fishawy,
4132 Georgia Avenue, NW
Get the basics in sound gathering, interviewing, rapid audio production and distribution, with immediate feedback at Pacifica station in D.C. WPFW (89.3 FM). Trainings designed for radical activists. NO registration. Just attend, or call 917-681-7228 or 202-588-0999 ext 310.

Fridays

SHED LIGHT ON US WAR CASUALTIES

Fridays, 8 pm -10 pm
Walter Reed Army Medical Ctr, 7200 Georgia Ave. NW
CODE PINK: Women for Peace vigil to draw attention to the late-night arrival of seriously-wounded soldiers from Iraq and Afghanistan. Contacts: Ann Wilcox 202-441-3265; Ellen Taylor: 202-270-1861

White House Friday Peace Vigil

Fridays from 12 noon to 1
The White House
Organized by the Dorothy Day Catholic Worker. 202-882-9649

Marylanders for a Free Palestine and Secure Israel

First and Third Fridays of each month, 10:00 am
Blue Cow Cafe, Thunder Hill Road, Columbia, MD
Call 410-465-3493

Takoma Park Peace Vigil

Last Friday of the Month, 5 to 6pm
Takoma Junction (Rte. 410 and Carroll Ave.)
Vigil to end occupation in Iraq, Palestine and the White House.
301.589-5410 or see:
www.tpkids4peace.org

Sounds of Hope

Every 4th Friday of the Month, 7pm to 10:30pm - Open Mic
Potter's House Books, 1658 Columbia Rd. NW - Local performers, charities and Potter's House present an evening of food, entertainment, and community outreach. For more information call 202-232-2885 or send an email to fridaynights@pottershousedc.org

Saturdays

Anti-War Activists Taking Back The Mall

Every Saturday during the tourist season, 9:00 am
Smithsonian Metro
Carry a clearly-lettered anti-War sign that looks good in a photo.
eca@usa.net

Silent Quaker Peace Vigil

Saturdays, 12 noon -1 pm
West Lawn of the Capitol
Sponsored by area Quakers and like-minded friends.
www.usip.org or
www.seekpeace.org
Info at 301-681-5126 or
john.howley@verizon.net

Friends House Peace Vigil

every Saturday, 3:15 to 4:15 PM
Rt. 108 and Georgia Ave, Olney MD
Consider supporting the peace vigilers, as they have been verbally abused by the right-wing group FREEP, whose intimidation has worked as vigilers are getting nervous about the abuse.

Sundays

Stand for Peace

Sundays, Noon to 1 pm
Spa Creek Bridge in Annapolis, MD - Signs are not allowed to be on a stick or pole. Tell Lucy you'll be there at 410-263-7271 or mdbridgesforpeace@toadmail.com
If you are interested in standing on the Stoney Creek Bridge on Fort Smallwood Road in Pasadena contact 410-437-5379 or depauw@magicalgodmother.com.

VIGILS - Daily:

Peace Park Antinuclear Vigil

Lafayette Park north of the White House, 24 hours a day since June 3, 1981. Bring friends on Saturday, June 3rd - the 25th anniversary of the vigil! See www.prop1.org, call 202-682-4282

Mondays:

Monthly Washington Peace Center Community Meeting

7 - 9:30 pm, second Monday
Flemming Center Community Room
1426 9th St NW
Everyone welcome; members vote!

Weekly Pentagon Peace Vigil

Mondays, 7-8 am
Outside the Pentagon Metro Stop sponsored by the Dorothy Day Catholic Worker 202-882-9649

MD Vigil to Abolish Death Penalty

Mondays, 5-6pm
Corner of Madison Ave. and Fallsway in Baltimore - Outside the prison complex and across the street from Maryland's death row, corner of Madison Ave. 410-233-0488.

DC Guerrilla Poets

DuPont Circle, by the fountain, every 1st and 3rd Monday, from 7:00 until 9:00pm
www.guerrillapoets.org

The Pledge of Resistance-Baltimore Meeting

Mondays, 7:30pm
AFSC, 4806 York Rd, Baltimore
Call Max at 410-323-7200, ext. 31.

Tuesdays:

DAWN Meeting

Tuesdays 7-9 PM
American Friends Service Committee, (AFSC), 2211 14th St. NW
Everyone may attend and participate
www.dawndc.net/meetings.

Peace Center's Summer Highlights:

Summer of Resistance

Summer of Resistance program is seeking assistance from you in the local peace community to provide affordable housing for program participants. Participants will be in Washington and in need of housing assistance from June 23 to August 8th, and range in age from 17- 24.

For any of you who can help, this would be a great contribution to our Summer of Resistance to the War in Iraq. Please contact Lyndi B. at lyndi@summerofresistance.org or 202-299-1050.

Hiroshima Week Activities:

A series of events during the first week of August commemorate the bombings in Japan, and hosting survivors of the bombings (known as "Hibakusha"). To find out about this year's events, contact John Steinbach - 703-369-7427
<johnsteinbach@starpower.net> and keep an eye Peace Center Activist Alerts (subscribe at washingtonpeacecenter-subscribe@lists.mutualaid.org)

WISH LIST

Activists, post your wishes here!

WPC Wish List:

- We need these for our monthly Peace Talks series.
1. Projector
 2. Screen
 3. Computer speakers

Contact 202-234-2000 or wpc@igc.org

Laptop Computer & Powerpoint

Proposition One Committee needs a laptop computer, and PowerPoint. Unless, of course, our first wish - global nuclear disarmament - should suddenly occur. If you have either to spare, please contact: Ellen Thomas <et@nucnews.net> 202-682-4282

It's Time to Join the Peace Center!

Name _____
Address _____
Phone _____
Email _____
I want to be a member I just want to donate



The Washington Peace Center is a 501c3 non-profit organization. Your contributions are tax-deductible.

(Combined Federal Campaign)

Enclosed is my check for \$25 other

CFC # 7856

Send your contribution to the Washington Peace Center, 1426 9th Street, NW, Suite 306, Washington, DC 20001 or call (202) 234-2000.