

# PEACEWORK

GLOBAL THOUGHT AND LOCAL ACTION FOR NONVIOLENT SOCIAL CHANGE

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## Dreams and Nightmares in Iraq US-Style Repression in El Salvador A Mad Plan for No Nukes in Scotland



**Monserat Jail, San Salvador, July 4, 2007. Lorena Martinez, Rosa Valle, and Haydee Chicas, staff members of the Association of Rural Communities for the Development of El Salvador, were detained on their way to a peaceful demonstration. They were released under provisional conditions on July 19 but are still being charged under El Salvador's new anti-terrorism law modeled on the USA PATRIOT Act (page 19).**



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November 2007 issue deadline: Sept. 6th.

## From the Editor's Desk

What a din this issue of *Peacework* raises! Howls of laughter, and howls of grief; soldiers barking orders, and civilians (some in earnest, some in staged re-enactment) begging for mercy; explosions, arguments, songs.

Sometimes the sounds we make are profoundly unintelligible to those with whom we need to communicate. To convey to US Americans something of what Iraqis experience in their encounters with occupying soldiers, former Marine Jeff Key and other veterans in the street theater project Operation First Casualty point imaginary machine guns and yell "I'm screaming at you in a language you don't understand! You speak Arabic, I speak English! For all you know I could be screaming about the weather! All you know is that I have a weapon and I am screaming at you!" And Tito Meza tells us about his three-year-old grandniece, unable to express in words what she feels at being separated from her mother with no explanation; unlike many children victimized by the current wave of anti-immigrant repression, Arlette is safe with family as she yells and cries, and as her mother awaits deportation. How much better it is when we use our words and our music and our laughter to knit people together instead of rending them apart. Native American and Alaskan Native women know how to bring to their communities the help and understanding that are needed to reverse a terrible trend of anti-woman violence — and it is up to all of us to make sure they get the resources they need to do this work. Scarlet P., a "freeway blogger," offers cheery advice on how to engage each other as citizens in the place where so many of us often find ourselves — on the highways.

Good communication and open minds have created connections even across the dangerous divide between law enforcement officials and citizens who challenge the laws (and the prisons that back the laws up.) Jamie Bissonette reports on a carefully planned sweat lodge — held outside a prison's walls — in which six Native American prisoners were allowed by prison officials to participate. Anti-nuclear activists in Scotland have succeeded in impeding the operations of the Faslane Naval Base over much of the past year, partly because the police have chosen to treat them (as they have been treated by the protesters) with decency and a concern for their safety.

Such effort goes into trying to get us to shut up that we must spend precious time and energy just fighting to be heard, to keep our words from being stifled and those who speak them "disappeared." The USA PATRIOT Act has been such a hit here at home that other nations want one too — El Salvador, for example, which has recently used its version to detain several nonviolent community organizers *on their way* to a protest against water privatization. In Pakistan, the fundamentalist movement to silence infidels and (of course) women was itself the target of a massively violent attack on one of its flagship mosques. Is there irony, or only a dreary lack of it, in the title the government bestowed on its attack — "Operation Silence"? Here in New England, some citizens who regularly commit civil disobedience to try and close the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant are tired of having the charges against them dropped — so last time they got hauled into court, they made their case out loud even though the judge ran away rather than hear it!

In between songs, beneath the roar, within our jail cells and whenever we have the solace of gathering with comrades, there is the hum and the tappity-tapping of conversation. George Lakey doesn't take offense at Peter Gelderloos's invective against nonviolence, rather he welcomes the stimulation of dialogue. This summer, at the US Social Forum and the United for Justice with Peace convention, there was so much talking that people are still talking about it. Check out UFPJ's call for a variety of different anti-war actions this fall, near and far, and let's make some noise. ☪

— Sara Burke, Co-Editor



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Correction: The article "Building Bridges" in May 2007 incorrectly identified Operation Desert Fox as occurring during the first Gulf War, instead of in 1998.

## Boots, Beards, Burqas, and Bombs

*Beena Sarwar is op-ed and features editor at The News International in Karachi, and is currently a Nieman International Fellow at the Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard University. This article was originally published in Himal Southasian, Kathmandu, August 2007.*

The Pakistan Army emerged victorious from the Lal Masjid battle that took place in Islamabad on July 10, following a week's standoff. But it was a victory achieved at a heavy price. The bloodshed in the Red Mosque upped the ante in the ongoing war between the "boots and the beards," to use the terminology of young Pakistanis for the military and the religious extremists. The story also involves the burqas — hundreds of girls and women affiliated with the Jamia Hafsa girls' madrassa (religious school) adjacent to the mosque were an integral part of the story as it unfolded.

By the end of the army operation, the mosque's name, derived from the red bricks it is built with, took on a new, bloody connotation. Elite units of the Pakistan Army pounded the sprawling two-acre compound with automatic and chemical weapons for more than 12 hours, fiercely resisted by armed militants inside. By the end of the fighting, over 70 of the mosque's affiliates, including their leader, Ghazi Abdul Rasheed, were dead. So were ten soldiers. The number of dead may in reality be much higher than the official number, and may also include women and children. Some were burnt beyond recognition. Smoke that still lingered over the site two days later was identified as residue from the Pakistan Army's use of White Phosphorus, a hot-burning substance prohibited by the Geneva Convention for use against civilians.

For months, General Pervez Musharraf had allowed the militants of the Lal Masjid to run a parallel Taliban-style government in the heart of the capital. They had damaged billboards and other property that they deemed 'vulgar,' and ransacked music and video shops. Female students from the madrassa occupied a children's

library in January, and kidnapped women they accused of being prostitutes. Their abduction of six Chinese massage-parlour workers was apparently the last straw. It is believed that pressure from Beijing, Pakistan's long-time ally, finally goaded General Musharraf into besieging the mosque, and ordering its inmates to surrender. A week later, he launched Operation Silence, originally expected to last only a couple of hours.

### Ghazi and Abdul

The Lal Masjid saga exploded in July but it actually dates back to the late 1970s, when America enlisted Pakistan, led by the all-too-willing General Zia ul-Haq, as a frontline state against the Russian communists who had invaded Afghanistan. Soon the Pakistani madrassas were flush with American and Saudi money. The influx coincided with the rise of Khomeini's Shiite Iran, perceived as a threat by the Saudis who until then were the undisputed 'leaders' of the Muslim world. More madrassas, mostly financed by the Saudis but some also by the Iranians, began appearing in Pakistan, along with training camps for the mujahedin. Afghanistan's fight for national independence was transformed into a jihad.

Hailing from a poor family in southern Punjab, Ghazi Abdul Rasheed's father, Maulana Abdullah, was the first *khatteeb*, or priest, of the Lal Masjid, when the government's department for religious affairs built it in 1965. Abdullah retained this post for the following three decades. During the 1980s, the Maulana was known to be close to various government officials, including General Zia. The Lal Masjid, like so many others during that time, eventually developed into a multi-storied, fortified, sprawling mosque-madrassa complex. When a shooter, believed to belong to a rival Islamist group, murdered Abdullah in the mosque courtyard in 1998, it was just part of a by-then familiar pattern.

Ghazi Abdul Rasheed began as a moderate youth who initially rejected his

father's religious training. Instead of going into the madrassa, he earned a masters degree in International Relations from the well-regarded, secular Quaid-e-Azam University in Islamabad. He was transferred from the Ministry of Education to UNESCO in Islamabad, where he worked for several years. He married into a moderate family, and attended mixed gatherings. Rasheed's subsequent radicalization itself reflects the rise of militant Islam in Pakistan.

After the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan in 1989, the mujahedin, who for the previous decade had been steeped in the mindset of jihad and violence, began fighting each other. Many returned to a Pakistan bereft of their chief patron, Gen Zia, who had been killed in a still-unexplained midair explosion in August 1988.

It is no coincidence that the farce of Pakistan's 'return to democracy' was marked not just by governments being regularly dissolved and caretaker set-ups overseeing fresh elections, but by a rise in sectarian violence that were at their peak in the mid- to late 1990s. Maulana Abdullah appears to be but one of the casualties of a fire that he himself was involved in stoking.

The Maulana's murder brought his younger son, Ghazi Abdul Rasheed, back into the fold, guided by his elder brother, Abdul Aziz. Rasheed continued his job with the Ministry of Education but became increasingly drawn to the faith, growing a beard and taking more interest in the affairs of the mosque and its madrassa. In 2004, he was at the centre of a controversial fatwa according to which Pakistan Army soldiers killed during operations in South Waziristan were to be considered infidels not worthy of a Muslim burial. The Lal Masjid's links with al Qaeda were also revealed that year. Rasheed was accused of plotting to attack government installations, but was soon mysteriously cleared of those charges. A group of Uzbeks were instead found guilty.

The Lal Masjid again came into the

limelight following the London bombings of July 2005, when it was reported that some of the perpetrators had recently visited the mosque. But the Islamabad government again sat back, making no attempt to arrest the brothers even after declaring them wanted criminals.

### Blowback

The links between Pakistan's intelligence agencies and the country's militant Islamists have long been apparent. Those affiliated with the Lal Masjid are no exception. Abdul Aziz has told journalists that he often visited intelligence agency officers disguised in a burqa. These links seem to have been behind the ineffectual attempts by General Musharraf's administration to deal with the unfolding situation at the mosque — the indecisiveness in direct contrast to the heavy-handedness with which liberal and secular protests are handled.

The government's inaction emboldened the Lal Masjid affiliates to start undertaking vigilante action in Islamabad, along the lines of the Taliban's Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of Vice Department, or Saudi Arabia's Morality Police — something that their friends in Peshawar and areas bordering Afghanistan had long been doing with impunity. The government did nothing to put down this growing monster in the country's capital. The Lal Masjid had encroached on government land to build the Jamia Hafsa women's madrassa, so electricity, gas, and water to the illegal structure could have been cut off long ago. The madrassa had been in operation for years before the government served it notice in January, in a drive to demolish illegal buildings. It was in protest of this order that Jamia Hafsa students occupied the children's library.

All this was well before General Musharraf suspended Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhry on spurious charges. This sparked off a lawyers' movement for constitutionality that erupted into widespread public protest in March — and was then conveniently relegated to the background by the drama surrounding the Lal Masjid. On July 20, in a landmark judgement, the Supreme Court ruled that Chaudhry must be reinstated,

and also quashed charges of misconduct that Musharraf had filed against him. All this has served to significantly reduce Musharraf's political standing in the country. The Lal Masjid affair weakened his links to the religious right, whose assistance he has taken time and again to prop up his regime.

Dire predictions of General Musharraf's underestimation of the ramifications of the Lal Masjid calamity began even before the phosphorous smoke had cleared. "The government, with its ham-handed handling of the situation, has in fact created the potential for further problems ahead. The deaths of so many at the hands of state forces may act only to pave the way for greater extremism in society and support for the violent cause militants espouse," warned lawyer Asma Jahangir, chair of the independent Human Rights Commission of Pakistan.

The US-based thinktank Statfor noted in early July that radical Islamist forces constitute a minority in Pakistan, although a significant one. "While the vast majority of Pakistanis do not support jihad-ists, they do not necessarily support Musharraf's agenda either," Statfor's researchers noted. "Overall, Pakistan lacks a national consensus regarding Islam's role in public affairs, something extremist and radical forces are exploiting." The report predicted, as did many others, that the Red Mosque operation is likely to be "the beginning of a long confrontation between the state and radical/militant Islamist forces," which would lead to military operations in the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) and tribal areas, "as well as nationwide social unrest."

These apprehensions were soon borne out. Since July 10, pro-Taliban elements have increasingly clashed with the Pakistani military, and have intensified suicide attacks around the country, taking scores of lives. For the first time,

a suicide bomber targeted a lawyers' pro-democracy rally on July 17 in Islamabad, just minutes before Iftikhar Chaudhry was to arrive to address the meeting. The target, a welcome stall set up by workers of Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan Peoples' Party, raised speculation that the bomber was aiming at not just the lawyers' movement but also at Bhutto, for having supported General Musharraf's action against the Lal Masjid. Two days later, three separate attacks killed more than 40 people in Balochistan and NWFP, where more than 100 had been killed during the previous week alone.

This is a situation that military action alone will never resolve. What is needed is a long-term political road-map to bring Pakistan back into the fold of democracy. Meanwhile, as General Musharraf battles religious zealots and political liberals, unable to take assistance from one against the other, it is clear that there is more violence, rather than less, written in Pakistan's immediate future. ☞



**Lahore, Pakistan, May 2007. Pakistani lawyers gathered at the Lahore High Court premises to welcome suspended Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry. AFP PHOTO/Arif ALI**



## Requiem for a Brave Woman

*Susanne Fischer is Iraq country director for the Institute for War and Peace Reporting. She first met Sahar al-Haideri when conducting a training course in Sulaimaniyah in May 2005. First published in Iraq Crisis Report #223, 6/12/07.*

Sahar al-Haideri had to die because she was a journalist — an Iraqi journalist who dared to ask questions, and who gave a voice to Iraqis who do not want their country to be torn apart by sectarian violence or ruled by terror imposed by al Qaeda's franchise organizations. Haideri, 45, reported from her home city of Mosul, a troubled place considered Iraq's second most dangerous location for journalists after Baghdad.

Insurgent groups have been pushing at alarming speed to establish an Islamic "emirate" in the northwestern provinces of Anbar and Nineveh, and Mosul would be designated its capital.

Haideri was among the first Iraqi journalists to publicize the rise to power of extremists in Mosul. The first story she pitched to us at the Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) — during a course on how to report women's issues held in May 2005 — was about insurgents trying to impose Taliban-style restrictions on women in Mosul. She described how female lecturers and civil servants were being targeted and killed. "The intimidation and attacks have forced other women in Mosul to give up going to work," she wrote.

Staying home was not an option she considered for herself. She went where no foreign journalist could go any more — into the streets, shops, and restaurants of her volatile city.

In the seventeen reports and eight radio features that Haideri contributed to IWPR, one common theme stood out — the struggle for control over Mosul, and how this affected its people, and most of

all its women.

Haideri was a tough reporter and a caring wife and mother of four at the same time. The human touch was never missing from her work. Her stories always reflected this concern for people's lives — shopkeepers and teachers; mothers, fathers and children; students, hairdress-



**Sulaimaniyah, Iraq, January 2007. Reporter Sahar al-Haideri attended a training in investigative reporting by the Institute for War and Peace Reporting. Photo: Christoph Reuter**

ers, and janitors.

Nor did she shy away from exposing pseudo-Islamic rhetoric and the abuse of religion for the sake of power.

In her stories, people dared to speak out against a life on the edge of insanity. "Extremists have started to interfere in all aspects of daily life in Mosul," she wrote in December 2006, describing how one recent leaflet instructed the owners of clothes stores to cover the heads of shopfront mannequins for the sake of decency. A shopkeeper she interviewed for the story said, "I don't know where these groups came from. They want to take us back 1,400 years. But if you want to stay alive, you have to obey their orders."

Haideri did not want to be told what she must or must not write. Her way of dealing with increasingly dreadful realities was to pitch more and more stories. It was almost as if she could counter the

trend of diminishing hope through her writing, or stop the erosion of social cohesion with her pen.

But the logic of those who want Iraq to fail dictates that anything that might give hope must be destroyed. That is the reason that doctors and professors are targeted, and it is also why so many journalists have died — and will continue to die. George Packer, a reporter for *The New Yorker*, recently wrote: "The campaign of killing — conducted largely by insurgents and militias — has been systematic. Its purpose is to make journalism impossible."

This intention is sadly confirmed by a statement in which the Ansar al-Sunna group claimed responsibility for ambushing and killing Haideri in Mosul on June 7. The group accused Haideri of collaborating with the "apostate" Iraqi police and government. "After sophisticated monitoring, we concluded that... Haideri was writing false reports about the mujahedin in order to distort the truth," said the group's statement. (The authenticity of this statement has yet to be verified.)

Mosul's deputy police chief had earlier said that Haideri's name was fourth on a hit-list prepared by the so-called Emir of the Islamic State in Mosul. But whichever group the men waiting for Haideri as she left her house on June 7 belonged to, the message her death is supposed to deliver remains the same — journalists must die because they are allies of the government, the security forces, and the "infidels."

The statement purporting to be from the "Islamic State" said that the killers took Haideri's mobile phone, which was found to contain the telephone numbers of police officers. Of course Haideri had police contacts in her mobile phone, as well as those of officials and politicians. That goes with the job, and is no proof of bias.

If any evidence was needed of Haideri's open-minded approach, her story on

## Iraq: The World's Fastest Growing Refugee Crisis

the aftermath of a suicide bombing in the border town of Tel Afar provided it. She went there embedded with the Iraqi police, but the story she filed was titled "Police Linked to Tel Afar Reprisals."

Haideri was aware of the risk her work entailed. Every journalist in Iraq knows he or she might be killed at any moment, and repeated threats are commonplace. Many have fled the country, while some leave temporarily in hope of coming back as soon as the situation improves.

In recent years, Haideri published articles under various pseudonyms, and she took every opportunity to leave the city — to attend training courses in Sulaimaniyah or in Amman, or for short trips to Syria. She had already evacuated her family from Mosul. But she always came back.

Haideri was highly conflicted about her position — constantly raising concerns about her security and seeking to leave, but continuing to report and write more than ever.

"Our psychological state is unbalanced because we live and think in fear and worry, and always think about our destiny and that of our family," she wrote in March 2007 for the *UK Press Gazette*. "But I never thought about quitting, as journalism is my life, and I really love it." It seems her enemies knew the only way to make her quit was to kill her.

As we mourn her death, the best tribute we can pay her is to remember that she is not the only one on the hit-list. There are many more journalists in Iraq who need our help if we want them to stand up against those trying to silence them.

"May God save female journalists, most of whom work anonymously for fear of being killed for no other crime than telling the truth," Haideri said on IWPR's radio show *The Other Half*.

Iraqi journalists need more support of a worldly nature, too. In Haideri's honor, IWPR has established The Sahar Journalists' Assistance Fund, which will be used to support local journalists in cases of exile or disability, or to assist their families in case of death in service. To learn more about the dire situation of Iraqi journalists or to contribute to the fund, visit [www.iwpr.org](http://www.iwpr.org). ☞

*Refugees International is one of a group of NGOs working together to help Iraq refugees and bring world attention to their situation. To watch video clips from a recent symposium on the Iraq refugee crisis, visit the Iraq Voices section of [www.afsc.org](http://www.afsc.org).*

The UN estimates that over 4 million Iraqis have been displaced by violence in their country, the vast majority of whom have fled since 2003. Over 2 million have vacated their homes for safer areas within Iraq, 1.5 million are now living in Syria, and over 1 million refugees inhabit Jordan, Iran, Egypt, Lebanon, Yemen, and Turkey. With no legal work options in their current host countries, Iraqis are already exploring the use of false documents to migrate to Western nations.

The violence in Iraq has reached a deadly tipping point: Most Iraqis feel threatened. While the US debates whether a civil war is raging in Iraq, thousands of Iraqis face the possibility of death every day all over the country. Refugees International has met with dozens of Iraqis who have fled the violence and sought refuge in neighboring countries. All of them, whether Sunni, Shia, Christian, or Palestinian, had been directly victimized by armed actors. People are targeted because of religious affiliation, economic status, and profession — many, such as doctors, teachers, and hairdressers, are viewed as "anti-Islamic."

Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria consider Iraqis "guests" rather than refugees fleeing violence. None of these countries allows Iraqis to work. Although Syria is maintaining its "open door policy" in the name of pan-Arabism, it has begun imposing conditions on Iraqi refugees, such as charges for health care that used to be free. In Jordan, Iraqis have to pay for the most basic services, and live in constant fear of deportation. It is also becoming increasingly difficult for Iraqis to enter Jordan or to renew their visas to remain in that country.

Although they have received additional funds for this crisis in 2007, the UN High

Commissioner for Refugees can't provide adequate protection and assistance to Iraqis. Without staff to monitor borders, UNHCR depends on national governments for updated information on new arrivals. UNHCR is also unable to provide significant assistance to Iraqis, and receives very little support from other UN agencies that seem slow to acknowledge the extent of the crisis.

Conditions for Palestinians from Iraq and other third country nationals are especially desperate. Many Iraqis resent the preferential treatment Palestinians received under Saddam Hussein's regime. As a result, several militia and sectarian groups have singled out Palestinians as recipients of a collective "fatwa" (or death sentence). Three hundred and seventy-two Palestinians from Iraq are living near the Al Tanf border crossing between Iraq and Syria in a makeshift refugee camp located in the land between both borders. They have been denied entry by the Syrian government and they refuse to return to Iraq. Another vulnerable group is the Iranian Kurds in Jordan; 192 have been living in between the Iraqi and Jordanian borders since January 2005.

The United States must begin by acknowledging that violence in Iraq has made civilian life untenable, creating a refugee crisis that is essentially exporting the nation's instability to neighboring countries. Given its central role in Iraq, the US should lead an international initiative to support Middle Eastern countries hosting Iraqi civilians. The US should recognize and support the constructive role Syria is playing in hosting Iraqi refugees and help it keep its borders open.

Western countries, including the US, must agree to resettle particularly vulnerable groups, without prejudice to their right to return to their country as recognized under international law.

Tell Congress to provide more funding for Iraqi refugees, and donate to humanitarian relief groups like Refugees International. ☞

## Operation First Casualty

*Jeff Key's Corps reserve unit was deployed to Iraq in 2003. He spoke out publicly against the war in 2004. Soon after, he came out as gay, and was discharged two years later. He is a member of Iraq Veterans Against the War, [www.ivaw.org](http://www.ivaw.org).*

*"When war comes, the first casualty is the truth." — Senator Hiram Johnson, 1918*

The supposition of this statement is that when war occurs, deception by those who orchestrate the war is essential and immediate. Given the current state of US foreign and domestic policies, the horror in Iraq and the absolute disregard for our troops, US Americans should know this best of all. "Truth is the first casualty of war" should be our national motto.

After the September 11, 2001 attacks, many citizens allowed a deceptive administration backed by a network of self-interested corporations to play on their fears, and did what our "president"

told us to do: We went back to shopping. We eat, drink, smoke, poke, pop, or purchase anything we can to perpetuate the state of denial that is necessary for the continuation of the status quo. Therefore, a tony shopping district in Santa Monica, California was the perfect setting for a performance of Operation First Casualty, a street theater project created by Iraq Veterans Against the War.

It seems like until people are directly affected, they couldn't care less about the troops who are being killed and wounded, the troop suicides, or the absolute hell that is daily life in a nation that never attacked ours. It just isn't what Americans think about all day.

So we're bringing the war to them... okay, not the real war. In fact, when you compare the reality of war to a bunch of soldiers and marines walking through the street pretending to hold rifles, it can be

almost comical. A few people even laugh when they see us, but most don't. Most stand slack-jawed at the prospect that what they're seeing even *could* be real. Except in New Orleans, Americans aren't used to seeing armed members of the military patrolling their streets.

In an instant, people are able to realize that what they are witnessing isn't "real."



**New York City, May 27, 2007. In "Operation First Casualty," a street theater project of Iraq Veterans against the War, veterans and civilian volunteers enact a US Army house raid.**

The "Iraqis" (actually volunteers who have practiced this performance with us) are all wearing white T-shirts with orange armbands which we then use to blindfold them. The onlookers can clearly see that we are not snatching up civilians out of the crowd to "bag and tag" them. Even so, it is still a very upsetting experience for those who see it. To hear the people we are detaining scream and beg is chilling to anyone who hears it. The sight of a person being pushed to the ground by someone in military fatigues is not something most of these witnesses have ever seen in person.

We basically ignore the people who watch the action as we carry out our mock patrol. If not actively involved in apprehending a "detainee," I stood with my imaginary weapon leveled at the crowd screaming over and over, "I'm screaming at you in a language you don't understand!

You speak Arabic, I speak English! For all you know I could be screaming about the weather! All you know is that I have a weapon and I am screaming at you!"

The only people we really interact with are our confederates who have rehearsed the actions with us; but still the effect is powerful and you can see it written all over the faces of those who witness it. Volunteers

walk alongside us and give out pamphlets explaining what's going on to anyone who's interested. They let the people know that we are actual Iraq War veterans who oppose the war. We get myriad responses. In Santa Monica, I heard a lot of "good for them" and "they should do more of this." I did hear one of the volunteers ask a man, "Do you want to know what's going on?" The man's response spoke volumes. He simply said, "No."

Actually, when I first heard about Operation First Casualty, when other IVAW members were doing it in Washington DC and in New York, I thought, "But won't that be too upsetting to the people? What if there are kids around?" As soon as I became conscious of my thought, I became conscious of the fact that even someone like me who has been to the war is not immune to thinking that it's somehow acceptable for us to visit real hell on the Iraqis but it is not okay for Americans to have to witness this watered-down version. The weapons in Iraq are real and the children know it too. The children who were four when we invaded are now eight. Think of the real life, death, and destruction they have had to witness. What a crucial four years in a child's development! I hate to even imagine the effect we've had on them. Yet I was worried that the crying child at Third Street Promenade would be traumatized. When I saw a man walking away from the maelstrom of activity with his crying son's face pressed to his chest, my fears were real-



ized. Then I heard a woman say, “Imagine what it’s like for their children every day over there” and I knew that even though it was unpleasant, for adults and children alike, we had achieved our mission.

We rehearsed the activities (for clarity and safety) on Saturday and then did the action on Sunday. I didn’t sleep well on Friday or Saturday nights. I don’t want to revisit Iraq. The thought of the horrible suffering of these people that I went to try to help haunts me daily. If I could, I would forget about it. I wanted desperately to sit this one out even though it was, after all “just pretend.”

So many times over the last three years of my activism, since I first spoke out publicly against the occupation, I have been blessed to stand alongside brave souls who have stood the good fight against injustice for many years now, some since before I was born. I always wondered how they kept from being petrified as they stood in the face of such powerful oppression. Now I’ve been told by those who stood with them, they *were* petrified! They did it anyway.

I have also had the privilege of being cared for and supported by many Vietnam vets who also came home from war to begin another war of fighting to bring home those troops and fighting to get veterans taken care of. They have shown us, the Iraq vets, that this is not an easy fight but it is what is right to do.

So even though I really would rather have done just about anything else, I did it anyway. I hoped the other vets just couldn’t tell how nervous I was or how much dragging those screaming volunteers to their knees made me want to vomit. Then it happened, just as it has happened over and over since I first joined up with Iraq Vets Against the War: When I looked in their eyes, I saw a reflection of what I was feeling.

Hell, none of us really wanted to be there. But we all knew we should be there. We all believe that no matter what spin comes from what white tower in Washington and how many people believe it, this illegal, immoral, and dangerous occupation must end. And we won’t stop until it does. ☹

### What Would It Be Like if the United States Were Iraq?

*Inspired by “If the US Were Iraq” by Juan Cole, this text is part of the “Dreams and Nightmares” exhibit currently on tour with the American Friends Service Committee’s traveling installation, Eyes Wide Open.*

What would the US look like if it were in Iraq’s current situation? The US population is more than 11 times that of Iraq. At a conservative estimate, war-related violence killed 360 Iraqis during the week of June 19-26 this year, proportionally equivalent to 3,960 Americans. What if 3,960 Americans — more than were killed in the attacks of September 11, 2001 — died in car bombings, grenade and rocket attacks, machine gun spray, and aerial bombardment each week?

#### The Evening News: Capitol Under Attack

The death toll is rising as major attacks continue in the Northeast cities of Boston, Philadelphia, New York, and Baltimore. The White House and other buildings near the National Mall remain under mortar fire. Employees at the State Department, White House, and Pentagon consider it too dangerous to leave their compounds for visits to the suburban enclaves of Crystal City and Alexandria.

Reporters for major foreign television and print media remain trapped in Washington, DC and New York hotels, unable to safely move more than a few blocks and dependent on stringers to know what is happening in Oklahoma City and St Louis. Eyewitness accounts and visits to the Midwest take place only when reporters travel embedded in with occupation forces.

#### Guerrilla Forces Control the Heartland

Every city in the US has experienced a crime wave, with thousands of murders, kidnappings, burglaries, and carjackings. An estimated 275,000 guerrilla forces control Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, Salt Lake City, Las Vegas, Denver, and Omaha. Local police and federal troops are unable to enter these cities, and the head of security for Washington DC was recently assassinated.

In the last year, the Secretary of State (Condoleezza Rice), the President (George W. Bush), and the attorney general (Alberta Gonzales) were also assassinated.

The occupation force continues to bomb Billings MT, Flint MI, Philadelphia, Watts in Los Angeles, Anacostia in Washington DC, and other urban areas, attempting to target “safe houses” or “criminal gangs.” Hospital sources report that the majority of those killed are civilians.

#### The Response

When the National Council of Churches called for a popular march of civil resistance tens of thousands of believers converged on the National Cathedral to stop occupation forces from demolishing the historic church in their effort to pursue Christian militia armies.

Commercial air traffic has come to a virtual standstill. Major roads are also extremely dangerous, especially I-95 from Richmond VA to Washington DC along with I-95 and I-91 to Boston.

New York City has only four hours of electricity a day. Unpredictable service forces factories to regularly grind to a halt and air conditioners to fail in the middle of the summer from Houston to Miami. The Alaska pipeline is bombed and disabled monthly. Unemployment hovers around 40%.

Several months ago, municipal elections were canceled and the new president quietly installed friends as governors. Two appointed governors — in Montana and Wyoming — were assassinated soon after taking office and several others resigned after their children were taken hostage by guerrillas.

Displaced by the violence, about 16.5 million people have become internal refugees, and the same number have fled into Mexico and Canada. ☹

# Maze of Injustice: Native American and Alaska Native Women Work to Stop the Violence

*The "Maze of Injustice" Report is part of Amnesty International's participation in an international campaign to stop violence against Indigenous women globally.*

Sexual violence against Indigenous women in the USA is widespread — and especially brutal. According to US government statistics, Native American and Alaska Native women are much more likely to be raped or sexually assaulted than other women in the USA. Some Indigenous women interviewed by Amnesty International said they didn't know any women in their community who had not experienced sexual violence. Though rape is always an act of violence, there is evidence that Indigenous women are more likely than other women to suffer additional violence at the hands of their attackers. According to the US Department of Justice, in at least 86 per cent of the reported cases of rape or sexual assault against American Indian and Alaska Native women, survivors report

that the perpetrators are non-Native men.

Sexual violence against Indigenous women is the result of a number of factors including a history of widespread and egregious human rights violations against Indigenous peoples in the USA. Indigenous women were raped by settlers and soldiers in many infamous episodes including during the Trail of Tears and the Long Walk. Such attacks were not random or individual; they were tools of conquest and colonization. The underlying attitudes towards Indigenous peoples that supported these human rights violations committed against them continue to be present in society and culture in the USA. They contribute to the present high rates of sexual violence perpetrated against Indigenous women and help to shield their attackers from justice.

Treaties, the US Constitution, and federal law affirm a unique political and legal relationship between federally recognized tribal nations and the federal government.

There are more than 550 federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribes in the USA. Federally recognized Indian tribes are sovereign under US law, with jurisdiction over their citizens and land and maintaining government-to-government relationships with each other and with the US federal government. The federal government has a legal responsibility to ensure protection of the rights and wellbeing of Native American and Alaska Native peoples. The federal government has a unique legal relationship to the tribal nations that includes a trust responsibility to assist tribal governments in safeguarding the lives of Indian women.

Tribal law enforcement agencies are chronically underfunded — federal and state governments provide significantly fewer resources for law enforcement on tribal land than are provided for comparable non-Native communities. The lack of appropriate training in all police forces — federal, state and tribal — also undermines survivors' right to justice. Many officers don't have the skills to ensure a full and accurate crime report. Survivors of sexual violence are not guaranteed access to adequate and timely sexual assault forensic examinations, which is caused in part by the federal government's severe under-funding of the Indian Health Service.

The Federal Government has also undermined the authority of tribal governments to respond to crimes committed on tribal land. Women who come forward to report sexual violence are caught in a jurisdictional maze that federal, state, and tribal police often cannot quickly sort out. Three justice systems — tribal, state, and federal — are potentially involved in responding to sexual violence against Indigenous women. Three main factors determine which of these justice systems has authority to prosecute such crimes: whether the victim is a member of a federally recognized tribe or not; whether the accused is a member of a federally recognized tribe or not; and whether

## Indigenous Support Initiatives

Programs run by Native American and Alaska Native women are vital in ensuring the protection and long-term support of Indigenous women who have experienced sexual violence. However, lack of funding is a widespread problem. For example, the Emmonak Women's Shelter in the Lower Yukon Delta of Alaska is a long-standing shelter and the only Alaska-Native-run provider in a village setting. In 2005, the state of Alaska cut its funding for the shelter.

In 2005, the organization South Dakota Coalition against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault contributed to the founding of Pretty Bird Woman House, a domestic violence programme on the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation. The program, which is named after Ivy Archambault (Pretty Bird Woman), a Standing Rock woman who was raped and murdered in 2001, does not yet have a shelter facility or funding for direct services for its clients, but helps women to access services off the Reservation.

An important achievement in the provision of culturally appropriate support services to Native American and Alaska Native women has been the formation of 16 tribal coalitions working against domestic and sexual violence across the USA: Alaska Native Women's Coalition; American Indians Against Abuse; Arizona Native American Coalition Against Family Violence; Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women; Community Resource Alliance; Great Basin Native Women's Coalition Against Domestic Violence; Indian Country Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault; Kene Mewu Family Healing Center, Inc.; Minnesota Indian Women's Sexual Assault Coalition; Niwhongwh xw E:na:wh Stop the Violence Coalition; Oklahoma Native American Domestic Violence Coalition; Sicangu Coalition Against Sexual Violence; Southwest Indigenous Women's Coalition; Strong Hearted Women's Coalition; We, Asdzani Coalition; Yupik Women's Coalition.

the offence took place on tribal land or not.

The answers to these questions are often not self-evident and there can be significant delays while police, lawyers, and courts establish who has jurisdiction over a particular crime. The result can be such confusion and uncertainty that no one intervenes and survivors of sexual violence are denied access to justice.

Tribal prosecutors cannot prosecute crimes committed by non-Native perpetrators. Tribal courts are also prohibited from passing custodial sentences that are in keeping with the seriousness of the crimes of rape or other forms of sexual violence. The maximum prison sentence tribal courts can impose for crimes, including rape, is one year. At the same time, the majority of rape cases on tribal lands that are referred to the federal courts are reportedly never brought to trial.

In failing to protect Indigenous women from sexual violence, the USA is violating these women's human rights. Indigenous women's organizations and tribal authorities have brought forward concrete proposals to help stop sexual violence against Indigenous women — but the federal government has failed to act.

Amnesty International is calling on the US government to take the first steps to end sexual violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women:

- *Work in collaboration with American Indian and Alaska Native women to obtain a clear and accurate understanding about the prevalence and nature of sexual violence against Indigenous women;*
- *Ensure that American Indian and Alaska Native women have access to adequate and timely sexual assault forensic examinations without charge to the survivor;*
- *Provide resources to Indian tribes for additional criminal justice and victim services to respond to crimes of sexual violence against Native American and Alaska Native women. ♻*

## Sweating in the Rain: Prisoners Reclaim a Spiritual Tradition

*Jamie Bissonette coordinates the American Friends Service Committee's Criminal Justice Program in New England.*

On May 18 and 19, 2007, in a historic first for Maine, a Sweat Lodge Ceremony took place at Bolduc Minimum Security Prison near the Maine State Prison at Bolduc.

In the weeks leading up to the 19th, Denise and Brian Altvater of the American Friends Service Committee's Wabanaki program dedicated much time to making all of the arrangements at the prison. They prepared a list of items that would need to be brought into the prison like prepared food for the feast after the ceremony. Denise worked with the Department of Corrections to get all of these things approved. Denise collected the information and had the guests approved while Brian chopped the wood, cut and prepared the poles, gathered the rocks, and assembled kindling, cedar, mats, tarps and water.

Two days before the Ceremony, Dave and Melissa Gehue traveled down from Nova Scotia. On the 18th, Dave, Melissa, Denise, Brian, Tim Shaw (Penobscot) and Jamie Bissonette were trained as volunteers at the Maine State Prison at Warren. Good spirit and cooperation filled the air at the Department of Corrections.

The day of the Sweat Lodge Ceremony, the weather was a huge barrier. It was 39 degrees and pouring rain. The ground was soaked. We arrived at the prison expecting to do all of the preparation work for the Lodge in this downpour. We were greeted by the Superintendent, who offered to reschedule if we felt the weather was too bad. We explained that we would go ahead and to our surprise, the six men who were prepared to participate in the Lodge were released to assist in the preparations.

Because Brian had prepared so carefully, keeping all the wood in

water-tight plastic containers, the fire lit easily despite the heavy rain. Dave Gehue taught the men how to bend the poles and placed each pole. After the fire was lit, two of the men stepped back to look and then said, "It has been so long since we have stood by a fire, or even seen one." There were smiles all around. During the Ceremony, Denise led the women in song.

After the Ceremony, the men did not look the same and they told us they did not feel the same. We prepared fry bread, real butter (another thing the men remarked that they had not seen in a long time), fruit, and molasses cake. It was deeply appreciated. The men made coffee for us.

We left the Lodge, the altar and the stones for the men. The rest we took out. By this time it was pouring very, very hard. The prison officials never searched us, the truck, or the men. They were supportive and kind, and a few stopped by to look and ask a question or two. It was a very good day. ♻



**Rocks for sweat lodge. Photo: Russell Garwood**



## The Mad Plan: Activists Blockade Nuclear Weapons Base in Scotland for an Entire Year

*Brian Larkin and Jane Tallents are members of the Faslane365 Steering Group. Brian was a member of Covenant for Peace and Ann Arbor Peace Community in Michigan. Jane lived at Faslane Peace Camp for six years and is a member of Trident Ploughshares.*

In August 2006, members of the group Trident Ploughshares met in a woodland camp adjacent to a British nuclear weapons depot to consider next steps in the long campaign to oust nuclear weapons from Scotland and the UK.

For eight years Ploughshares had been organizing nonviolent direct actions against the Trident nuclear submarines housed at the Faslane Naval Base. Each of the four Trident subs at the base is equipped with US missiles and up to 192 warheads — and each warhead can deliver around five times the destructive power of the bombs that obliterated Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. There was widespread objection to the British nuclear weapons program, and several key national and international events were coming up in 2007. The moment had come to try something new.

From this meeting emerged the plans for Faslane365: a plan to blockade the Faslane Naval Base, 30 miles west of Glasgow, every day for a full year. This blockade was not envisioned as an action to be undertaken only by Ploughshares or by any one group; instead the newly formed Faslane365 Steering Group put out a call far and wide for local, national, and even international groups each to come for two days, planning their own versions of nonviolent direct action to blockade the base.

Some considered it a “mad plan,” but it might just work.

### Creative Nonviolence and Cups of Tea

Since the beginning of Faslane365 in October 2006, more than 118 groups have made the trip, braving rain and swarms of midges to block access to the naval base for 171 days this year. The mad plan has drawn on a network of long-haul peace activists and has also attracted hundreds of newcomers to direct action. Participants have included groups of environmentalists, Buddhists, Christians, asylum seekers, artists, writers, musi-

human rights to climate change. All have insisted that Trident is not only immoral, dangerous, and wasteful, but a violation of international law and Britain’s treaty obligations.

The Faslane365 steering group has assisted with logistics such as transport, welcomed groups with cups of tea and a gazebo at the gates against frequent rain, provided nonviolent direct action training and support with media, served as a liaison with police, and kept an overview of the campaign; but the autonomous groups have determined the scope and form of their own actions.

The blockades have been diverse and creative. Some groups simply sat in the road. Police took a few minutes to lift them. Strathclyde police recognize that protesters are peaceful, and so generally conduct their arrests without violence. About fifty University lecturers and Oxford students holding a seminar on the sidewalk, at a signal, stepped en masse into the gateway and continued the seminar — for six hours — but were finally arrested when the students brought a barbecue and tent into the entrance.

Other groups, determined to blockade the base for as long as possible, planned various methods to make it more difficult for the police to remove them safely from the road. These included “lock-ons” made from sections of plastic or metal pipe inside which two people clip together with carabeneers fastened to their wrists. Specialist police then cut through the tubes before clearing the blockaders from the entrance. The police seize tubes when they spot them to prevent effective blockades. Peace campers rolled a concrete-filled barrel lock-on into the road which police had to cut through with a jackhammer, taking three hours to clear the blockade. A German group



**Faslane Naval Base, Scotland, 2007. A protestor is arrested for blockading the gates as part of Faslane365, a year-long campaign of nonviolent direct action against nuclear weapons.**

cians, actors, choirs, clowns, teachers, and health professionals. Regional groups from throughout the UK and ten other countries have participated. Prominent participants have included members of the Scottish, Westminster, and European parliaments, former UN Assistant Secretary General Richard Jolly, and Nobel Laureate Mairead Maguire. Nearly a thousand people have been arrested.

The many autonomous groups participating have increased public pressure and raised awareness of a diversity of issues at stake in the ongoing maintenance and potential deployment of Trident — from

walked up the main road locked together. Police prevented them from proceeding to the access road so they sat in the main road, creating a six-mile traffic jam. The Scandinavians and environmentalists set up tripods in the gateway and road, a person perched atop each one. The police had to erect a scaffold to remove the protesters. Other groups super-glued hands, to each other or to the gate. And Greenpeace blockaded Trident in its own port by anchoring the Arctic Sunrise across the sea gate. Police had to cut the anchor to remove her. These effective blockades resulted in an anti-protest protest by some local people.

Other groups' actions have been more whimsical. The Spaniards poured red paint over themselves and danced into the gate unimpeded by the amused police. There has been a Tea Party, a Silent Disco, and even a "Banana Blockade" by a bunch of bananas in tiny tinfoil lock-ons. The Faslane Highland Games staged by activists in front of the gate included "Putt the haggis," "Welly (Wellington boot) Over the Faslane Sign," and a Punch and Judy Show in which an evil Arms Dealer convinces Punch and a peaceable Crocodile to buy bombs. (Punch and the Croc drop their bombs but get a chance to start over.) The Tug of Peace strayed into the gateway, the rope the right length to close the entrance.

The Bishop of Reading gave a sermon praising peacemakers whom the world often considers troublemakers, and then led a procession into the gateway. The police, unsure how to respond to this authority figure in mitre and vestments, parted like the Red Sea but formed a cordon across the closing gate. The congregation then offered a sign of peace, shaking hands with the chagrined police.

### Drawing on a rich history

Direct action against nukes emerged early on this side of the Atlantic. In 1961, four thousand people sat down outside the Ministry of Defense in Whitehall, while in Scotland activists in kayaks attempted to turn back the US submarine Proteus when it arrived with nuclear weapons at the Holy Loch. Some actions

have been small and spontaneous. Once people broke into a base and got into the control room of a Polaris sub. But the many peace camps that sprang up in the 1980s also reached out and empowered people to participate in big actions. The Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp organized 30,000 women to surround the base where US cruise missiles were stationed.

Faslane Peace Camp, which celebrated its 25th birthday in June, drew on experiences from US campaigns like Seabrook which organized mass civil disobedience and incorporated tools for horizontal decision-making. In 1998, Trident Ploughshares was launched, a nonviolent, open campaign to disarm Trident. In addition to "Big Blockades," members have organized some very successful "maximum disarmament actions." In 1999, three Ploughshares activists boarded a floating laboratory which checks the "sonar invisibility" of Trident submarines and threw all the equipment into Loch Goil.

### Changing Tactics with the Times

But in 2001 the High Court of Scotland ruled that citizens had no right to do disarmament, finding that deployment of Trident was not illegal under international law. Though many experts have pointed out flaws in their arguments, anyone doing major damage in a disarmament action in Scotland would not be able to use a defense of necessity and would likely face a lengthy prison sentence.

This led to a change of strategy, toward mobilizing larger numbers of people to do blockading. Few people can risk a long jail term but many are willing to do a low-risk blockade once or twice a year, especially if there is good support and training. Yet we also realized that while Big Blockades generate a sense of "people power," there is a letdown when business goes on as



**Faslane Naval Base, Scotland, July 30, 2007. Members of the Assynt Peace Group hosted the Highland Games outside the Base, before blockading the gates as part of Faslane365, a year-long campaign of nonviolent direct action against the UK's nuclear weapons program. Here, a Highlander prepares to compete in the "Putt the Haggis" event.**

usual the next day. Thus arose the idea for a sustained, year-long blockade.

The decision was also influenced by three important events that were coming up this year: the British government's proposal to replace Trident with the next generation of nuclear subs, the Scottish election scheduled for May, and the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) Prep Conference to be held in Vienna.

The ongoing blockade contributed to making the widespread opposition to Tony Blair's proposal to upgrade Trident highly visible. Though the proposal passed in Parliament the rebellion by 88 members of Parliament from Blair's own Labour Party was significant.

But in Scotland the political landscape was different. Seventy-six percent of Scots wanted to be rid of Trident. In May the Scottish National Party was elected to govern with an anti-Trident commitment.

*continued on page 21*

# Rise Up Singing: Raising our Voices Against Nuclear Weapons

*Penny Stone is a peace activist who teaches singing as action, celebration, and protest; she is often to be found at the Edinburgh Peace and Justice Centre ([www.pjrc-edinburgh.org.uk](http://www.pjrc-edinburgh.org.uk)). On June 2-3, 2007, as part of Faslane365 (a year-long campaign of nonviolent direct action against the UK's nuclear weapons program), she participated in the "choirs" blockade of the Faslane Naval Base in Scotland.*

"I believe that I am upholding international law, and that this is my duty as a citizen of this country, and of the world."

To hear myself saying this was a great relief, as I had deliberately not prepared a statement to make when the charges "breach of the peace" were brought against me at Faslane Nuclear Base. I was relieved that what came out was both logical and correct.

We had been singing through ceaseless rain for many hours, with good humor, and with deep concern, assisted by our old friends the midges. Songsheets disintegrated in our hands, and we kept singing. This continued all day with different choirs and song leaders teaching us new songs, and munching through some old favorites, such as "War Machine," that are sadly still relevant today. It was one of those days when you just have to give in to being drenched, and enjoy it all the better for it.

As a group, we moved into the road singing "Freedom come all ye" and continued to sing as some of us sat down. As a unified whole, we turned our backs on the beautiful countryside that holds our weapons of genocide, faced the gates of Faslane, and kept singing. We reinforced for ourselves that we will use our personal resources not for destruction, but for constructive means, by creating living,

working music together as a community. We sang for ourselves and each other, and we sang for the police, the military, and the wider community, that they may hear our message and feel both the pain and hope that we express.

Those standing in the road moved away to the relative 'safety' of the pavement, and those of us sitting in the road

is obscenely wrong for us to be engaging weapons of mass destruction in our military defense, and not only allowing, but *instructing* members of our armed forces to prepare to commit war crimes. I say this particularly at a time when our departed Prime Minister, who is about to become a 'peace envoy,' makes statements such as "The problem with this country is that we put civil liberties before the fight against terrorism." Thanks Tony, but sadly, and in fact quite terrifyingly, the opposite is true.

All evening we sang in the cells. We sang "Peace Salaam Shalom," "I Shall Be Released," "Aye But I Will Sit Here," some arias by Vivaldi and Purcell, "Never Give Up," and countless other songs.

During a brief logistical oversight, we failed to notice that all of the choir leaders had decided to blockade the road, thus risking arrest, leaving our singers without waving arms to encourage them.

Upon our release, some of us were driven back to Faslane, and some departed sadly, but with a song in the street and warm hugs to send them on their way. With most sincere delight, we returned to find our friends still singing by the gates, and evidently having a wonderful time, so we joined them for a couple of hours, learning new songs, remembering old ones, and enjoying conversations with the police and eating mercifully dry sandwiches.

The sheer force of a group of people singing is quite something to be reckoned with not only because of the physical power of many voices together, but also because of the beauty and pain which are expressed so thoroughly through this medium. It is a resistance that causes the police to unwittingly tap their feet, or to feel a depth of sorrow that we all, by



**Faslane Naval Base, Scotland. Choir members participating in Faslane365, a collaborative, year-long campaign of nonviolent direct action against nuclear weapons. Photo: Gareth Harper**

remained. And still we sang.

I didn't really notice being arrested on a very conscious level. We were singing "Bin the Bomb," and I looked past the gates, and was very aware of being one of many voices, of being part of a choir. I met the eyes of my arresting officers as I was carried away, singing with all of my force. One by one my friends joined me in the police van, and we continued to sing. We sang our way to Clydebank and spoke freely with the police whom we encountered as one by one we were processed. Having convinced them that the lentils in my pocket were neither a sinister plot nor a tasty snack, but in fact a broken shaker, I was taken to my cell.

It's surprisingly freeing, being locked inside a room for an act that you believe to be thoroughly correct. For innumerable logical, moral, and legal reasons, it



## New England Protesters Demand to Be Heard

*Athol (MA) Daily News, 6/22/07*

Brattleboro, VT — Seven women of the Shut It Down affinity group of Citizens' Awareness Network took the floor in the Windham County Courtroom One on Tuesday, June 19 to publicly explain their demands to close the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant.

Informed that charges of trespass and

the charges violates the women's right to due process. "Take it up with the state's attorney," said a court officer. "You have no business here."

Approximately 15 spectators remained in court as the women read statements condemning the Entergy Corporation, which operates the power plant, and the governments of Vermont and the United States for deceiving taxpayers about dangers and hidden subsidies.

Court officials milled around during the women's 10-minute recitation, punctuated by demands to shut down Vermont Yankee. Some officials listened to the demands while others ignored the women and carried on conversations as if nothing were happening.

Members of the Shut It Down affinity group have acted five times at Entergy Headquarters in Brattleboro or at the Vernon plant to urge the shutdown of the nuclear plant. They have spray-painted danger signs on the Entergy driveway, deposited effigies at the main Entergy sign, and attempted to chain shut the doors of the Entergy headquarters. On each occasion, they were arrested and charged with trespassing or disorderly conduct and ordered to appear in the

district court to answer the charges. In every instance, the state's attorney ordered that charges be dropped.

The women said they decided to act to call attention to "collusion between the state's attorney's office and the Entergy Corporation."

"We will take this up with the state's attorney," the women of Shut It Down vowed as they left the courtroom. They have made plans to contact him soon.

*[Editors' note: The activists sent Peacework a copy of their letter to the State's Attorney's office on 6/28/07. At press time, they had received no response from Dan Davis, Esq., Windham County State's Attorney, 185 Main St., Brattleboro VT 05301-2842.]* ☞

our common humanity, instinctively feel about death and destruction. It is quite something to be asked by your arresting officer to continue singing — to continue to express that which you have been arrested for. Music has the power to unite a group of people who are visually divided by uniform: yet all embody the same principle of trying to regain and retain a place of safety and justice, though they employ different means to achieve this. I feel that this is largely understood by the people who protest at Faslane, and by the people who police at Faslane.

In recent weeks, many of my friends have been somewhat preoccupied with the fact that I've been arrested, and have unfortunately missed the point completely. I did not go to Faslane to be arrested, although I was fully aware that this would happen. If I had wanted to get arrested I could simply have committed a crime much nearer to home. I went to Faslane to remove my consent from our national defense strategy of the threat and use of genocide. I express myself through music, so I go to this place and I sing.

We sang in the rain, and we sang in the road. We sang in the police van, and we sang in the cells. They released us, and we sang our way back to Faslane.

As those wonderful singers slowly left Faslane to return to their ordinary lives, I was left with a great depth of sorrow. I was almost bereft at the loss of people who will willingly and ceaselessly sing with me, and who sing, as I do, with great strength of purpose. I was saddened by the unthinkable terror that we could release in one moment, and by the great length of the road ahead, but I was also galvanized by the knowledge that my action was not solitary, that it is part of a many-stranded movement of people to create change for the better. Before I left Faslane, I wrote a song with only the words "Be still my sorrow."

As I drove home, exhausted from four days of singing, I let out a guttural roar until there was no breath left in me. ☞



**Vernon, VT, April 25, 2007. Members of the Shut It Down affinity group of Citizens' Awareness Network chained themselves across the entrance to the Vermont Yankee nuclear power plant. Photo: Mary-Ann Palmieri**

disorderly conduct against them had been dropped by State's Attorney Dan Davis, the seven demanded that the court hear their statements.

"We deserve to have the charges against us heard," said Hattie Nestel of Athol, Massachusetts, who led the women from the courtroom's spectator area toward the judge's bench, which Judge Katherine Hayes immediately vacated.

Shouting "Get back! Get back!" several court officers blocked the women's access to the area between counsel tables and the judge's bench. State's attorney staff still at the prosecution table also fled the courtroom as the women insisted on being heard.

Nestel contended that failure to hear

## Is Nonviolence the Only Way?

*George Lakey has organized campaigns on local, state, and international levels. Information about his work, and some of his other writings challenging critiques of nonviolence, can be found at [www.trainingforchange.org](http://www.trainingforchange.org).*

*How Nonviolence Protects the State, by Peter Gelderloos, South End Press, 2007.*

In 2001 I traveled to the University of Colorado to engage in a public debate with activist and professor Ward Churchill, on the subject of his book *The Pathology of Pacifism*. I began the debate with a series of points on which we agreed, before going on to challenge him. We had a stimulating time of it, and I offered to meet him in other venues for continued debate.

Because I find I can often learn a lot from our critics, I picked up this book by Peter Gelderloos with anticipation. I certainly found things to agree with. Along with Gelderloos I find that there are people who glibly regard nonviolent action as a kind of magic that overcomes all odds. I agree with him that people's interest in nonviolent action doesn't eliminate their blinkers of racial bias, or classism, or the other oppressions. I also agree with him that robust strategizing can be hard to find among groups that use nonviolent action.

Gelderloos' main concern is that an activist might hold back from doing or supporting the most effective means of combating oppression. This 'holdback' might come from a belief that nonviolence is the most effective means of change — a mistaken belief, in his view. Or the holdback might come from a moral scruple. The holdback might come from a failure to identify with the oppressed because of classist or racist or another kind of privilege, with the activist using fastidiousness about violence as an excuse. It might come from the wish to confine a social movement's goals to reform or minor policy change, and the fear that introducing violence into the struggle will escalate the stakes and result

in a power shift — a revolution, possibly even liberation.

Because activists advocating nonviolent struggle are so full of holdbacks, Gelderloos argues, "nonviolence" has gradually become a rallying cry that stifles progressive change. It's become a "lowest common denominator" that unites — on a tactical level — a range of voices that otherwise have differences with each other (radicals and liberals and conservatives who oppose, for example, the Iraq war, or human rights violations). This cry of "nonviolence" is so pervasive, uttered by such a range of political actors, that the cry crowds out those pragmatic and passionate militants who believe in a diversity of tactics including violence.

And, for Gelderloos, diversity of tactics is the heart of the matter.

### Diversity of Tactics

Gelderloos argues that "nonviolence" is ineffective, racist, statist, patriarchal, and tactically and strategically inferior to a diversity of tactics.

His could be a grand attack, but Gelderloos weakens it fatally by making completely amorphous what he's attacking: "nonviolence." That leaves him free to cherry-pick from all the annoying and incorrect things we've ever run into that might have anything to do with "nonviolence," and to explain how annoying and incorrect they are. Meanwhile, the question of how "diversity of tactics" works among the activists who embrace this approach is one worthy of close consideration (

Under the banner of "nonviolence" Gelderloos lumps together all pacifists (both radical and reformist), plus all non-pacifist advocates of strategic nonviolent

struggle, plus all occasional users of non-violent tactics who basically believe that when push comes to shove, violence is necessary. Gelderloos' argument lumps together Martin Luther King and the

NAACP, whereas in fact they rarely got along. Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee founder John Lewis and the white owners of record labels that sell hip-hop are, in his view, somehow bunched together. Members of the War Resisters League will be surprised to learn that they (as pacifists) found acceptable the massive bombings of Dresden and Tokyo during World War II, and the atomic bomb-

ings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The bewildering references go on and on. Where, in reality, are Gelderloos' unnamed "nonviolence adherents" who today claim victory in the struggle against nuclear weapons? And who are the non-violent advocates of revolution/liberation whose strategy, according to Gelderloos, relies on converting the privileged elites — "the authorities" — to their point of view? I try without success to imagine Barbara Deming or Dave Dellinger or Gandhi recognizing themselves among the nonviolent revolutionaries who, according to Gelderloos, believe that lobbying is the way to bring about fundamental social change!

Because Gelderloos' object of address is so amorphous, his effort sprays all over the place and it's hard to see how he advances a valuable debate. Even some of his best points are weakened by vagueness and omission. He says that anarchist militants are marginalized by advocates of nonviolent struggle — an important point; he explains that those who marginalize anarchists are sexist, capitalist, statist reformers who play it safe. Yet nowhere



in his book could I even find mention of Starhawk, a widely respected feminist anarchist anti-capitalist who has steadfastly reached out to the Black Bloc and other militants while leading protesters into dangerous, tear-gas-filled streets in anti-globalization confrontations! Don't her decades of leadership, her edgy and coherent writing, her risk-taking, and her following earn her the respect of fellow anarchist Gelderloos? Or does Starhawk go unrecognized (even in his chapter about patriarchy) because he can't discount her when she advocates nonviolent struggle?

By contradicting himself, Gelderloos gets more chances to take potshots at his diffuse opponent, but he misses the chance to explore carefully the underlying and really important question: what's the more effective way, under what conditions, to defend against repressive violence — answering violence, or explicit and strategic nonviolent struggle?

### The uses of polemics

I do like the passion that electrifies the prose and enlivens the character of this book. In fifty years of life in social movements I've generally appreciated the polemics that come with the territory — I find that argumentation stimulates me and pushes my thinking. That's the upside of polemical discourse.

The downside emerges when the topic is: how to strategize about mass movements and popular struggles.

Polemics work best when the questions are about purity: "True anarchism is..." "The heart of pacifism is..." "The fundamental principles of feminism prove that..." etc. Polemical discourse thrives among small groups of the faithful. The trouble with strategizing in mass movements and popular struggles is that the focus of strategy is not on purity, but rather on effectiveness. It's not that radicals when strategizing need to throw out their principles, but rather that their goal needs to be to bring principles to the historical moment with all its contradictions. Principled radicals can also be grounded in complex reality. On a good day, that enables us to communicate with the mass of people who don't come to the struggle

in order to implement ideological principles of any sort but instead come to the struggle to win.

That means that all of us — anarchists in the labor movement, gay liberationists in the LGBT rights movement, pacifists in the anti-war movement — are not operating (if we're effective) in our "core," but instead we're on our edge, faced with the tremendous and wonderful complexities of the reality that non-radicals actually experience.

A fine example of writing about revolutionary strategy that takes up questions of violence and nonviolent struggle is activist sociologist Martin Oppenheimer's *The Urban Guerrilla*. Oppenheimer presents his best case for one violent strategy in the US, then he deconstructs it in terms of probable results. He turns next to making his best case for an alternative violent strategy, and carefully analyzes that one in terms of probable outcome. Finally, he turns to a nonviolent strategy — a last resort. Oppenheimer's non-pacifist pragmatism helps the reader to become very thoughtful about options for mass revolutionary strategy. I recommend his book highly, although it won't necessarily get the emotional juices flowing that a polemical approach does.

The puzzle is: how to combine polemical writing, full of rants and delicious simplifications, with strategy questions that face us in popular struggle, necessarily on our edges and therefore complex? I believe it can be done, and hope we can learn to do it.

### What's his strategy?

On one level this might be an unfair question. Gelderloos is mainly trying to persuade the reader to adopt a "diversity of tactics" that includes violence. The question of strategy hovers on every page, however, because even if the reader decides to add more tools to the toolbox, I still need a way of deciding: which tools do I use when?

I got hopeful when Gelderloos addressed the limitations of the recent series of nonviolent campaigns that have toppled dictators in Serbia, Georgia, and the Ukraine. In my 1973 book *Strategy for a Living Revolution* I described simi-

lar limitations in the nonviolent campaigns that overthrew dictators in El Salvador and Guatemala in 1944, and went on to describe in detail how the lessons learned from those can be folded into a more radical (and anarchist-friendly) theory of revolution. Unfortunately, Gelderloos is so dismissive of these current cases that he learns nothing positive from them about strategy.

This may be part of the reason why, for all the knowledge Gelderloos has about revolutionary struggles, his chapter on "The Alternative" is so empty. He describes traditional anarchist concerns about organization and leadership, reminds us that he values diversity of tactics, and that's about it!

There's got to be more — from both sides. And because I so much appreciate clarification and debate on these issues, I hope Peter Gelderloos will in the future give up on scattered complaints and focus his critique on a single, clear subject. My personal favorite would be strategy for revolution; it's a big topic, but a clear one. If he'd like, I'd be willing to volunteer to engage him on it. Let the debate begin! ☞

For George Lakey's critique of violence as a tactic in high-stakes struggles for justice, see "Diversity of Tactics and Democracy," *Clamor Magazine*, March/April 2002 and "Strategizing for a Living Revolution" in *Globalize Liberation* (David Solnit, ed.; City Lights, 2004)

### Send Peacework to Prison

Peacework offers news and analysis from the peace movement worldwide. Its perspective is based in respect for all people and a deep commitment to nonviolence. Peacework continues to offer subscriptions to prisoners for \$1 per year, even as the number of subscribers in prison increases, and mailing costs rise.

For \$15, you can subsidize one-year subscriptions to two of Peacework's many incarcerated subscribers. Make checks payable to AFSC-Peacework, with the memo "Send Peacework to Prison", and mail to Peacework, AFSC, 2161 Mass. Ave., Cambridge MA 02140. Your gift is tax-deductible.



## Salvadoran Activists Targeted with US-Style Repression

*Chris Damon has been living and working in El Salvador since 2000. She is currently a researcher for the National Development Foundation (FUNDE) in San Salvador.*

The tiny Central American nation of El Salvador has long been out of sight and out of mind to most US residents. Once the guns of the 12-year civil war went silent in 1992, the country signed peace accords, disbanded the famously repressive National Guard, modernized the police force (incorporating ex-combatants from both sides into its ranks) and embarked upon a somewhat haphazard process of healing.

Recently, that process of healing has been put to the test with the jailing of 14 local and national activists arrested in July, during protests in and around the small colonial city of Suchitoto. Dozens of social movement organizations coalesced in Suchitoto due to plans by Salvadoran president Antonio Saca to unveil there his administration's new "National Decentralization Policy." Many local activists view that policy as a thinly veiled plan to privatize water resources.

Among the 14 protesters arrested were 4 staff members from the Association of Rural Communities for the Development of El Salvador (CRIPDES) who were intercepted on their way to Suchitoto and forcibly removed from their vehicle. On July 7th, a Specialized Judge for Organized Crime, operating within a new court system established by El Salvador's recently-passed anti-terrorism legislation, sentenced 13 of the activists to three months of preventive detention to allow the public prosecutor to gather more evidence to support the charges of acts of terrorism, public disorder, and illicit association.

Advocates for civil liberties have questioned the anti-terrorism legislation and its application in this case. Lilian Cotto, deputy for the Central American Parliament, notes that the right to protest is constitutionally protected. Anaite Vargas of the Inter American Platform

for Human Rights, Democracy, and Development, asked President Saca to not apply the Special Law Against Acts of Terrorism and Organized Crime against the detainees in Suchitoto given that these laws have become in effect a form of governmental malpractice against civil society's legitimate right to pacific protest.

### **PATRIOT Act South**

US citizens should not be startled by events unfolding in El Salvador, given that the anti-terrorism legislation passed there was inspired by the USA PATRIOT Act. In fact, many aspects of Salvadoran public policy are US-inspired, for while El Salvador has been far from the minds of most US citizens, the reverse is far from true. This Massachusetts-sized nation of six million residents counts another two million former residents or expatriates, most of who are now living in the United States. The country dollarized its economy in 2001. And El Salvador is currently the only Latin America nation which still has troops in Iraq. El Salvador followed closely the passage and application of the PATRIOT Act in the United States, passing its own "Anti-terrorism Law" on September 21, 2006 (the law was pushed through the Legislative Assembly following the widely publicized shooting of two riot police officers in front of the National University).

To date, the law has been applied to leaders of the street vendors who have periodically confronted police efforts to evict them from downtown areas within the metropolitan area. Vicente Ramirez, a leader of the street vendors, was released on a plea bargain in July of this year, after charges were reduced from terrorism to aggravated damages, nearly five months after he was jailed for a protest that included rock throwing and the burning of a municipal vehicle in Apopa. Another group of street vendors is awaiting trial under the new law for protests in downtown San Salvador.

The detainees arrested on their way

to the Suchitoto demonstrations include social movement leaders, community residents, and a young journalism student. One of the activists, Lorena Martinez, is known to many in the United States from her years of advocacy efforts on behalf of 300 CRIPDES communities made up of campesino families, many of them former refugees displaced by the civil war. As president of CRIPDES, Ms. Martinez together with the other national and local leaders, has toiled ceaselessly for basic services, housing, roads, and other necessities for these communities.

Martinez was captured along with CRIPDES's vice-president Rosa Centeno, a longtime staff member who administers the group's small loan program for rural women. With them was Hayde Chicas, a 24-year-old journalism student at the National University, who has been gaining practical experience working part-time in the CRIPDES communications office. The fourth member traveling in the association's pickup truck was Manuel Antonio Rodriguez, a shy, unassuming driver and nighttime security staff for the association.

What is most disturbing perhaps to civil liberties activists, is that while most of the other 14 individuals captured on July 2 were, in fact, blocking highways and attempting to impede the president, governmental authorities, and invited guests from reaching Suchitoto, the CRIPDES activists were intercepted *on their way* to the demonstration. Rodriguez was roughly yanked from the vehicle and thrown to the ground.

### **The Politics of Repression**

The arrests, while surprising in their preemptive nature, were not altogether unexpected within the current political climate of El Salvador. However, when the 14 were not charged or released within the initial 72 hours, concerns grew. Five days after their arrest, Judge Fuentes determined evidence presented against 13 of the 14 to be sufficient to warrant preventive detention for three months.

Eventual prison terms under the new law could reach 60 years. Following this announcement, Karla Albanes, lawyer for the detainees, remarked that she would limit herself to say only that political pressure had been brought to bear.

That politics would play a role is not surprising for a nation suffering extreme degrees of political polarization. Since 1989 El Salvador has been governed by the rightist Republican National Alliance, ARENA, a party whose founder, Roberto D'Aubuisson, was an organizer of the death squads and is widely believed to be have helped orchestrate the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero in 1980. Nevertheless, the ARENA party continues to enjoy broad support among some sectors of the country's poor majority. This support is bolstered by initiatives such as "The Solidarity Network" whereby families residing in some of the country's poorest municipalities receive a government handout of \$15-\$20 every two months.

The most recent mayoral elections in March 2006 showed the two leading political forces, ARENA on the right and the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) on the left, practically tied in the capital city of San Salvador. While recounts showed the FMLN to have maintained the city by a handful of votes, for ARENA to have come that close to capturing the city, historically a stronghold for progressive, left-leaning voters, was an eye-opener to all. ARENA will no doubt redouble its efforts to win the city and maintain the presidency in 2009 (when local and national elections converge). Many view the 2009 electoral campaign as having already begun.

The stakes are high for both sides in a country just 15 years out of civil war. For the sake of El Salvador's political stability, it is hoped that recent attempts to outlaw public protest will not stand up in court and that if they do, these limitations of civil liberties will be challenged internationally. ☹

*For action ideas and resources on the CRIPDES activists and the ongoing struggle for economic justice and civil liberties in El Salvador, see sidebar.*

## How You Can Help the Salvadoran Activists

*US-El Salvador Sister Cities is a network accompanying and accompanied by our sister communities and movements in El Salvador. By working in solidarity, we join the same struggle for sustainable communities, dignity, and self-determination in both countries. To learn more and receive regular updates and advocacy alerts, contact us at US-ESC, POB 2543, Plattsburgh, NY 12901; 585/360-1985; [www.elsalvadorsolidarity.org](http://www.elsalvadorsolidarity.org)*

Call the State Department and demand that the United States government encourage the Salvadoran government to respect the right to peaceful protest. Call Jeremy Cornforth at the US State Department's El Salvador Desk at 202/647-3505.

### Sample Script for El Salvador Desk at the US State Department

You can use the following "script" to talk to Mr. Cornforth. If at any point you get cut off, be sure to ask the final question — "will you call the ambassador and assure that the terrorism charges be dropped?"

- I'm calling because I am very concerned about the July 2 arrests of the people protesting water privatization in Suchitoto, El Salvador.
- The Salvadoran police violently captured community leaders - shooting rubber bullets and tear gas at close range - and local community members and is now charging them with terrorism.
- The Salvadoran government's disproportionate reaction raises serious concerns about human rights and the freedom of organization and expression.
- The US government has publicly supported the Salvadoran government, including supporting the passage of the anti-terrorism law last September.
- It is extremely important that the U.S. stand up for human rights everywhere and not let protest be criminalized in the name of a so-called fight against terrorism.
- Will you call Ambassador Glazer and tell him to call for the terrorism charges to be dropped?



Atlanta, GA, June 2007. US Social Forum. ©2007 Skip Schiel

## Freeway Blogging

*Scarlet P. has placed over 5,000 signs by freeways on the west coast. Visit [www.freewaybloggers.com](http://www.freewaybloggers.com) for more tips and encouragement.*

*"If this be treason... make the most of it."  
— Patrick Henry*

### Here's how you do it:

1. Find Cardboard.
2. Paint it white.
3. Paint your message.
4. Stick it up with duct tape & bungee cords.

Anything you can see while driving is a place you can put a sign. The more difficult it is to reach, the longer it'll stay up. Tens, even hundreds of thousands of people can drive by a sign before one of them takes so much as five minutes to go take it down. Apart from actual prisoners, you won't find a more captive audience than people in their cars.

Like anything else, free speech is fun until someone gets hurt. Signs should be placed on the inside of fencing, not suspended directly over traffic. So long as your letters are at least six inches tall, they'll be legible through the fencing.

To get really big letters, I use an overhead projector. I print the text on a transparency from my computer, shine it on the cardboard (painted white) and trace the letters

with a marking pen. Then I lay it flat and fill in the letters with cheap enamel and a small foam brush. But I don't play up the overhead projector method much because I don't want people thinking: "Once I get my hands on one of those projectors, by golly, then I'll do it!" The most important sign to put up is the first one — it almost doesn't matter what it says or how it looks, just so long as it gets done. Soon.

### Is it legal? Yes and No

Yes! Free political speech is a fundamental right under the First Amendment. It is your right as a citizen to display non-commercial signs and banners, with some exceptions. Rules regarding signposting along roadways vary from place to place. So, call your local department of transportation to find out more. Ssay you'd like to put up some American flags and "Support the Troops" signs... Don't feel bad if that's not precisely what you intend to put up: this is America, and the rules apply equally to all points of view.

No! Again, the rules vary from state to state, but here in California, your right to political self-expression ends exactly 600 feet from the Interstate, and failure to comply may run afoul of the law notwithstanding that nothing in the Streets & Highways Code or Outdoor Advertising Act expressly bars political expression.

Although it remains unresolved whether they are constitutional, some local laws may be used to keep you from speaking out on the roadways.

The stated reason for limiting your right to political expression is that such signs present a safety hazard due to their being a "visual distraction" to drivers, which is perfectly reasonable just as soon as they move every damn billboard, commercial sign, and jumbo-tron screen 600 feet from the freeway as well. So long as my local car dealer's allowed to show commercials on a thousand

square foot TV right next to the 405, you can call my piece of cardboard a visual distraction, but I'm not buying it.

Here at Freewayblogger, we feel that free speech is meaningless unless it extends to everybody: not just to those who can afford it. When the founders of this nation said that everyone was entitled to freely express their political opinions, they didn't mean we could hammer up a sign out in the woods somewhere, they meant we could hammer it up right in the middle of the town square. Why? Because that's where all the people were.

With this in mind, we feel it is our God-given and constitutionally-granted right to post our messages on the interstates, freeways, or wherever else we think people will read them and we're willing to fight for this right all the way to the Supreme Court.

But you'll have to catch us first.

### How long do they stay up?

I've had some signs stay up for minutes, others for months, depending largely on what they say and where I put them. In general, large ones come down fast, smaller ones not so fast. I feature larger signs on the web site because they look cooler, but by far the majority of, and I believe the most effective, signs I post are small reminders along the peripheries of the freeway such as "The War is a Lie." or "Osama Bin Forgotten." As long as the letters are at least eight or nine inches tall, people will be able to read them just fine. Unlike overpasses, signs posted along the peripheries of the freeway are easier and more discreet to post, and can stay up for days.

### Does it do any good?

I don't know. I started doing this because I got tired of listening to the political debate in my country being framed by a bunch of pompous windbags and megalomaniac clowns on my radio and TV. I started doing it because I didn't have a voice in that debate, and to the extent I did, that voice was filtered through corporate editors. In that sense it has changed at least one person's mind: mine. Signposting has taught me that I do have a voice, and more important, so do you. ☺





## *The Mad Plan* continued from page 13

But when the Scottish Parliament was established in 1999, only certain governmental responsibilities were “devolved” to the Scottish Parliament and these do not include jurisdiction over “defense.” Therefore the Scottish government has no say on nuclear weapons, even though they are based in Scotland. Nonetheless the new Scottish Parliament passed a resolution calling upon the UK not to replace Trident. This was a historic vote, the first time a Scottish Parliament had voted against nuclear weapons. With both the people and the Parliament of Scotland decisively opposed to Trident, the UK government is now enforcing the deployment of nuclear weapons against the express will of a people under its jurisdiction.

### **Faslane365 and beyond**

Still, the questions here in Britain remain. How can we translate widespread public opposition to Trident into a change in government policy? Can the government of Scotland find a way to enact the will of its people?

Until disarmament begins we intend to build on the momentum and keep up the pressure not only because it is right to do so but because we have a very real expectation based on an analysis of the political situation that we can effect the removal of nuclear weapons from Scotland. Indeed we see Scotland as a place where it is possible to break the logjam and, to borrow a metaphor from Henry Kissinger, start a domino effect which could lead to the abolition of nuclear weapons.

That is why we are inviting US peace-makers to join a delegation to come to Scotland for the Big Blockade on October 1, which will mark the culmination of this year of resistance. You can find out more or sign up on the US Group page on the Faslane365 website or contact [brian@faslane365.org](mailto:brian@faslane365.org). If you cannot join us, send us your messages of support or organize a vigil in solidarity and let us know about it. Please visit the website at [www.faslane365.org](http://www.faslane365.org) and Sign the Statement of Support. ☪



**Chicago, IL, June 2007. George Friday and George Martin at the third annual convention of the United for Peace and Justice Coalition.**

### **Don't Mend It — End it! Peace is Possible!**

UFPJ Assembly a Great Success, Next Steps Decided

It was terrific. Over 300 people from 35 states, representing close to 200 member groups of United for Peace and Justice, gathered in June outside Chicago for the 3rd National Assembly of UFPJ. The energy was high, and the conversation was deep.

Those who came to the Assembly understood the urgency of our common work, as well as the need to tackle the challenges and opportunities of the moment. By the end of the weekend there was agreement on a plan of work for the coming period, as well as a newly elected national steering committee for UFPJ.

The Assembly re-affirmed that the central focus of this coalition is our work to end the war in Iraq and bring all the troops home, now! Here is the plan we agreed to take home to our local communities:

**September 14-21: Days of Decision.** In September, General Petraeus will deliver his report on the war, and Congress will face a decision on funding another year of war. Republicans and Democrats will consider the future of US operations in Iraq. We, the people, must set the agenda for a change in US policy in Iraq. Therefore, The Declaration of Peace is calling upon people across the United States to take nonviolent action in September to end the US. occupation of Iraq.

**September 21, and the third Friday of every month thereafter: Iraq Moratorium Campaign.** An escalating, monthly series of actions demanding an end to the war. One day a month, make a break with business as usual: Buy no gas on Moratorium days, hold vigils, pickets, rallies, and teach-ins, host film showings, talks, and educational events, organize teach-ins, school closings, etc.

**October 21-23: No War, No Warming.** The Iraq war and the threat of climate change are the twin global threats that millions of Americans said they wanted immediate action on after the US. mid-term election. But as Iraq continues to devolve into violence and chaos, and as we hit another year of record warm temperatures, our legislators are failing to respond to the will of the people. We want a safe and healthy planet for years and years to come. Help us plan local and national actions to highlight the connections between the war in Iraq and the global warming crisis, including a mass gathering, with civil disobedience, in Washington DC.

**October 27: National Mobilization to End the War in Iraq.** Ten massive, regional demonstrations around the US. Details available soon at [www.unitedforpeace.org](http://www.unitedforpeace.org). ☪

# PIECES

## EVENTS

**Takeover: The Return of the Imperial Presidency and the Subversion of American Democracy;** 10/4, 6:30-8 pm, Lecture by Charlie Savage, Boston Globe reporter and winner of the 2007 Pulitzer Prize for National Reporting, joins us tonight to address the Bush administration's expanding executive powers and what it means for the future of our country. Old South Meeting House, part of the Partners in Public Dialogue Series, Ford Hall Forum, [www.fordhallforum.org](http://www.fordhallforum.org)

**Agape Community's 25th Anniversary annual St. Francis Day Celebration,** 10/6, 10 am, featuring Arun Gandhi, Grandchild of Mohandas Gandhi: Looking Forward and Looking Back: Our Great Nonviolent Lineage; interfaith liturgy and prayer; bring brown bag lunch and pot luck dish for dinner; Community features a straw bale house, compost toilet, solar energy, and vegetable-oil car; Info: Suzanne, 413/967-9369, [peace@agapecommunity.org](mailto:peace@agapecommunity.org), [www.agapecommunity.org](http://www.agapecommunity.org)

**National Mobilizations to End the War in Iraq,** 10/27; Ten regional actions: Boston, NYC, Chicago, Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and four other cities TBD., [www.unitedforpeace.org](http://www.unitedforpeace.org)

## GATHERINGS

**Faslane365 Big Blockade Against Trident Nuclear Missile Submarines in Scotland;** 10/1, strategy session on 9/29 and 9/30 in Glasgow. Evening of 9/29, celebration including music, poems and films. [www.faslane365.org](http://www.faslane365.org)

**New England Annual Gathering of War Tax Resisters,** 12/7-9; Woolman Hill, Conference Center, Deerfield, MA. Theme: "Taking Control of Change- Embracing Simplicity." Gathering for all WTR's and those who are just testing the water. \$60/wkend. For info, brochure, regis, contact: Erik Schickedanz, 270 Bullock Rd, Guilford, VT 05301. 802/257-5725. E-mail: [andbefree@yahoo.com](mailto:andbefree@yahoo.com).

## CAMPAIGNS

**Iraq Moratorium, 9/21;** demanding an end to the war through an escalating series of

actions on the 3rd Friday of every month; [www.iraqmoratorium.org](http://www.iraqmoratorium.org)

**Promote Fair Trade Fruit:** Fair Trade certification for bananas, and other fruits such as mangoes, pineapples, and grapes, ensures that farmers receive a fair price for their fruit, and that farmworkers have good working conditions and receive fair wages. Tell the manager at your favorite store that you want to see Fair Trade Certified™ fresh fruit, as well as other certified products, on the shelves. Get your church, school, or community organization involved in promoting Fair Trade. [www.coopamerica.org/programs/fairtrade/products/bananas.cfm](http://www.coopamerica.org/programs/fairtrade/products/bananas.cfm)

**The Declaration of Peace Days of Decision; 9/14-21;** Working together to Defund the War & Establish A Comprehensive Peace Plan for Iraq. "We The People Declare Peace!" A Week of Nationwide Coordinated Nonviolent Actions to End the U.S. Occupation of Iraq; "Creating the conditions for the impossible to become the PROBABLE; the PROBABLE to become the DOABLE; and the DOABLE to become the INEVITABLE." [www.declarationofpeace.org](http://www.declarationofpeace.org)

**Keep Space for Peace Week,** 10/4-13; Is this the world we want? Satellites, giant radomes, radar installations watching for military targets everywhere? Cruise missiles, weapons in space, global strike capability & "Full Spectrum Dominance" from US bases around the globe? The Bush administration is now moving forward with plans to deploy "missile defense" interceptors in Poland & space warfare radar in the Czech Republic. Join us in an international week of protest to stop the militarization of space, by organizing a local event in your community during October 4-13. Help us prevent the next arms race. Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space, POB 652, Brunswick ME 04011; 207/443-9502; [www.space4peace.org](http://www.space4peace.org) Opportunities

**No War, No Warming;** 10/21-23; Fight Climate Change, Not Wars For Oil! Massive intervention in Washington DC, including nonviolent civil disobedience at the US Capitol, or your own community. Take immediate action to: STOP the war in Iraq and future resource wars by ending our addiction to fossil fuels; SHIFT government funding to rebuild New Orleans and all communities suffering from racism and corporate greed; GO green and promote environmental justice with new jobs in a clean energy economy; [www.nowarnwarming.org](http://www.nowarnwarming.org)

**Rape=War, You=Change, Stop Violence Against Women;** Sign a petition to the US Congress to: Fund programs that prevent violence and respond to incidents of rape against women and girls; Support efforts to help women and girls recover their dignity, health, livelihood, and families; Include anti-sexual violence initiatives in relevant international assistance programs; International Rescue Committee; <http://ga3.org/campaign/stopviolence>

**Support Deb Mayer,** a teacher for 22 years, who was fired for saying to her middle school class that she believes "we should seek peaceful solutions before going to war." The Federal judge in her initial trial ruled against her, maintaining that teachers do not have the right to free speech when acting in their roles as employees of a school system; Deb Mayer now needs help with legal fees as she attempts to have this important case heard by the Supreme Court. Contributions to Deb Mayer's legal fund can be made to Teach Peace, 302 Walnut Street B, Madison, WI 53726

## OPPORTUNITIES

**Executive Director/City of Cambridge Peace Commission;** for unique one-person city dept. connecting local & global issues of violence, peace & justice. Commitment & exp w/ diversity, peace & justice issues; leadership, vision & collaboration in policy, advocacy, training, & prgm implementation. Represent Commission locally, nationally & internationally. two copies of résumé & cover letter by 10/11 to Personnel Dept., City Hall Room 309, 795 Mass. Ave., Cambridge, MA 02139. Position begins March 15, 2008. [www.cambridgema.gov/dept/peace.html](http://www.cambridgema.gov/dept/peace.html).

**Non-Denominational Social Justice Sunday School;** Community Church of Boston; free for youth (ages 7-14) & their families, every Sunday starting 9/9; the Justice School will encourage youth & children to search for their own truths through games, art, skits, books, music; many social justice activist guests; 565 Boylston Street, Boston, MA in Copley Square; Info: 617/266-6710, [jooyoung@commchurch.org](mailto:jooyoung@commchurch.org), [www.thejusticeschool.org](http://www.thejusticeschool.org)

**Transform your Classroom;** Facing History & Ourselves offers programs to help you renew your commitment to growing & learning, & bring content & methodology into your classroom that will engage & transform your students; with the online seminar Holocaust & Human Behavior, gain full access to our in-depth professional development services, curricular resources, & ongoing support to educators in the areas of history, social studies, & English language arts. By

using the Holocaust as a case study, we raise profound moral questions about the consequences of our actions & our beliefs, & Facing History teachers help their students make connections between history & the moral choices they make every day. [www.facinghistory.org/onlineSeminar](http://www.facinghistory.org/onlineSeminar)

Guide by the Health Careers Ambassadors Program Youth Team of the Hyde Square Task Force, Inc. a group of 16 low-income and minority youth, ages 14-21; Info: Guy Armand or Jaime Lederer, 617/524-8303, [jaimelederer@gmail.com](mailto:jaimelederer@gmail.com), [www.hydesquare.org](http://www.hydesquare.org)

Winestine rode the entire trip with the caravan, filming from his bicycle as events unfolded. Stills and trailer for the film can be found at [www.caravanprague.com](http://www.caravanprague.com), Cinema Libre Studio, Andy Schreiber, [aschreiber@cinemalibrestudio.com](mailto:aschreiber@cinemalibrestudio.com), 818-349-8822, [www.cinemalibrestudio.com](http://www.cinemalibrestudio.com).

**RESOURCES**

**Rethinking Our Classrooms: Teaching for Equity and Justice**, edited by Wayne Au, Bill Bigelow, and Stan Karp, revised and expanded edition; includes new essays on science and environmental education, immigration, military recruitment abuse, and more; "A treasure trove.... Inspired stories of real-life classrooms make this edition better than ever." — Sonia Nieto, \$16.95, 800/669-4192, [www.rethinkingschools.org](http://www.rethinkingschools.org)

**C.H.I.L.L. Health Guide;** Community Health Information Living and Learning Health

**People Power: Fifty Peacemakers & Their Communities** by Michael True; Brief portraits of peacemakers around the world, including Tolstoy, Addams, Gandhi, Day, Parks, Romero, and the Berrigans; "Every home should have one!" — Howard Zinn; Distributed in the US by South Asia Books, 866/513-4700, [sabooks@juno.com](mailto:sabooks@juno.com)

**Caravan/Prague: Bicyclists for a New World DVD;** A bicycle caravan -- with the theme, "Money or Life" -- travels 500 miles across Europe in 2000 to join protests in Prague against the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. The goal: create a living utopian community which will be a living counter-example to the values of these powerful financial institutions. Filmmaker Zack

**War Made Easy: How Presidents and Pundits Keep Spinning Us to Death DVD;** featuring Norman Solomon, featuring narration by Sean Penn, "Solomon is one of the sharpest media-watchers in the business." — Barbara Ehrenreich, [www.warmadeeasythemovie.org](http://www.warmadeeasythemovie.org)

**Welcome to the Terrordome: The Pain, Politics, & Promise of Sports** by Dave Zirin; \$16; Zirin examines the role of politicians, big business and the media in shaping sports, and profiles the athletes striving to make change. [www.haymarketbooks.org](http://www.haymarketbooks.org)

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**10/24/07**



# An Open Letter from Tito Meza

*Tito Meza is Executive Director of Proyecto Hondureño, and a housing and tenants' rights activist in Somerville, MA.*

Dear sisters, brothers, and friends of the immigrant community, I place this letter before you with the purpose of informing you regarding the arrest of my niece Iris Yaneth Meza and the resulting separation from her three-year-old daughter Arlette Meza.

Iris was detained in Burke, New York on July 28, 2007. Iris was looking for allergy medicine at the pharmacy when she was detained. I imagine that in a town of very few immigrants, her indigenous features gave her away.

Her apartment was searched and she was arrested, along with her three-year-old daughter. Her daughter was immediately handed over to a DSS social worker and was quickly transferred to a foster mother — unknown to the child or the mother. The social worker notified our family and we were able to quickly mobilize to go to New York.

I am happy to say that Arlette is no longer in DSS custody — as of July 31, she has been in our family's home. Her mother, however, continues in detention, awaiting a court date and presumably deportation.

At three years of age, Arlette does not understand what has happened with her mother. She frequently repeats a phrase probably taught to her by her temporary guardians, "Mi mami is gone." Even though she is very healthy and in the loving care of our family, nobody can substitute the love and care given her by her mother day and night from the moment she was born into this world.

How may Arlettes are living through

my niece in the few minutes they allowed me and she said, "Uncle, please don't let them take my daughter from me. If they deport me, I want to take her with me. She has always been with me. She eats everything. She likes tortillas and frijoles. She only has one problem — she is allergic to mosquito bites."

Despite the fact that we were taking Arlette out of state and that her mother will face deportation, we were denied the request for mother and child to visit. There was an angry exchange between the guards and social workers, who advocated the need for Arlette to see her mother before leaving the state — to no avail. Arlette realized that something was going on and loudly stated, "Mi mami is gone!"

Afterward, as if she realized that this is where ICE had her mother detained and that she was nearby, she threw a huge tantrum, unable to express in words her protest to all the trauma she was being subjected to at her young age.

Brothers and sisters, my reasons for sharing this letter with you go beyond the situation affecting my niece. The reality is that like Arlette and Yaneth, there are thousands of our brothers and sisters subjected to this state of terror in the name of a law that is affecting the present lives and the future of our children and our families. ☹



**Bridgeton, NJ, May 1, 2007. Immigrants and their supporters protested anti-immigrant bills in Congress and local anti-immigrant initiatives. ©2007 David Bacon**

the trauma of forced separation from their parents? What do we do in the face of this state of terror that our families are being exposed to?

In the process of gaining custody of Arlette we went to visit the jail where her mother was detained. I spoke with

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