



Spring/Summer
2011

Planted by the Waters

Ecumenical Peace Institute/CALC • P. O. Box 9334 • Berkeley, CA 94709 • (510) 655-1162 • www.epicalc.org

For the Beauty of the Earth
Good Friday, Earth Day & the Bomb
The Cross in the Midst of Creation
Rev. Sharon Delgado, preaching
Liturgical dance led by Carla DeSola

The headline of the flyer tells the story.

Good Friday fell on Earth Day this year. For many years Ecumenical Peace Institute has offered a Good Friday witness at the Livermore Lab about nukes, but not just about ending nuclear weapons. Our focus is also on ending the system of oppression which nuclear weapons enforces. So naturally in observation of Earth Day and in keeping with our anti-imperialist theme, we invited Sharon Delgado to preach this year.

Sharon is a leading figure in connecting the faith community with environmental matters. She demonstrates the strong link between the devastation of the environment, the destructive economic system and the military machine which maintains that system. The title of her book makes these connections clear: *Shaking the Gates of Hell: Faith-Led Resistance to Corporate Globalization*. Furthermore Sharon has been on the ground at the Good Friday witness before. She knows the territory.



Many of us know Carla DeSola from her many presentations around the Bay Area. She is an internationally known liturgical dancer and teacher. She has offered dance at the Good Friday witness before. Her dance helped us bring into the depths of our souls the experience of the beauty of the earth as we sang the songs and moved as she led us. Some of Carla's dance students from the Graduate Theological Union helped to lead us into the dance.



Opening music and a rehearsal of the liturgical movements was followed by a poem with drum: *La Madre Tierra* by Silvia A. Brandon Pérez

The service then opened with a call to prayer by Imam Amer Araim of the Walnut Creek area. Marvliia Kellev updated us on the activities of the Lab. Our confessional responsive reading, led by Nancy Souisa of PSR, incorporated a Kyrie Eleison from Ghana with movement.

Sharon preached on the passion story from Mark, with the theme *The Cross in the Midst of Creation*. She reminded us



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—from the Board President
by Janet Gibson

Focus on California Education

California ranks as number 48 among the 50 states in the amount of money it spends on each child's education, and its system for financing education lacks a set of principles that define state and local roles and responsibilities for revenues, program control, and accountability. A 2006 research study by Stanford University (*How California Funds K-12 Education*) concluded: "It is doubtful that anything short of a comprehensive overhaul of the system is likely to lead to its improvement." Exacerbating this is the reality that California's budget problems are as bad or worse than those of any other state.

With the inability of the state to make financial changes, billionaire businessmen have often become the stealth movers behind education reform. There was the Businessmen's Roundtable, companies like Arthur Anderson, individuals such as Sam Walton and Eli Broad, and now Bill & Melinda Gates. Most of these reformers come with their own agendas which, in the understanding of many professional educators, strike a blow to our system of free public education. At best, they promote innovative change. At worst, they run schools as businesses, promote charter schools and elitism, and try to break teacher unionism.

We have witnessed attacks on public employee collective bargaining in Wisconsin. Since California is a strong

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EPI Volunteer Corps

Why not join the EVC now? You are needed!

CORPS members are needed to fulfill occasional 2-4 hr. assignments. The jobs, scattered throughout the year, will greatly support EPI efforts. They include help with events, mailings, calling members.

Volunteers have fun, are often offered yummy refreshments, and can work both day or evening times. We will carefully observe your parameters (e.g., only on Thursdays 12 - 5; Evening events preferred).

If interested (even if you have helped before), please let Sandy Hunter know:

Sandyh10@yahoo.com or 524-7989.

We would like to induct you into our **VOLUNTEER CORPS**. You will help the causes of justice and peace and we will love you!

Good Friday at Livermore, *from page 1*

that Jesus was opposing the Powers that Be, referencing Walter Wink's work on the subject. She reminded us of Jesus' action against the money changers who were defiling the primary house of prayer of his people. As a sign of hope and resurrection, she told of the Phoenix tree which grew at Hiroshima and taught us the song:

We are rising up like a Phoenix from the fire,
So brothers and sisters spread your wings and fly higher.
We are rising up.
We are rising up.
We are rising up.
We are rising up.

Rabbi David Cooper of Kehilla Community Synagogue offered closing prayers and a poem.



In the procession to the gate, we paused to observe seven Stations of the Cross, in which we witnessed the ways that empire oppresses human beings and creation, presented by the many groups working on the issues:

- 1) In the Cross-Hairs of Torture — School of the Americas Watch - West
- 2) Refugees/Immigrant Issues — East Bay Sanctuary Covenant
- 3) Occupation of Palestine — Berkeley Women in Black
- 4) Border Issues/The Wall — Pacific School of Religion Border Immersion
- 5) Militarization of our Youth — American Friends Service Committee
- 6) Nuclear Weapons, and a concern for the people suffering under the continuing nuclear crisis in Fukushima, Japan — Tri-Valley Communities Against a Radioactive Environment
- 7) Religious Freedom — Islamic Community Outreach of California

We joined at the West Gate of the Livermore Nuclear Weapons Lab in the Elm Dance, which has been brought to the peace and justice community by the Buddhist teacher, Joanna Macy. As the Elm Dance concluded, 33 people approached the gate to bear further witness in their call for an end to the weapons designed at the lab and were arrested.

At the community gathering we had the chance to talk about these issues further.

Good food, a chance to sit down and breathe deeply. Thank you, Asbury United Methodist, for your hospitality.

We include in this issue Sharon's letter to her friends inviting them to the Good Friday witness.



Good Friday, Earth Day & the Bomb

by The Reverend Sharon Delgado

On Good Friday, April 22, which is also Earth Day, I will preach at a "stations of the cross" service at the gates of Lawrence Livermore Lab, where nuclear weapons are designed and developed. I will join in nonviolent civil disobedience at the gates of the Lab following the service as an action of witness and resistance to the many ways that Christ is being crucified in our world today: by cutting basic services to the poor and middle class; by eliminating workers rights; by scapegoating teachers, gutting school budgets, and turning our backs on our young; by the cruel imprisonment of whistleblower Bradley Manning and others; by creating weapons of mass destruction with devastating power.

We, US citizens and taxpayers, are complicit in a system that is wreaking havoc on human community and God's creation. We have spent trillions to bail out Wall Street, while on Main Street jobs are lost, homes are foreclosed, food and energy prices rise, and social and environmental programs are slashed.

We are complicit. We pay for a criminal justice system that targets people of color and immigrants and incarcerates a larger percentage of our population than any other country on earth. We fund a permanent war economy, project global dominance through military power, and continue to develop nuclear weapons that threaten life on earth. At the same time, we de-fund social programs that provide real security for our people. On this Christian holy day we have the opportunity to join with people of all faith traditions to express our solidarity with all who suffer unjustly, to demonstrate our faith in the God in whom we live and move and have our being, and to align ourselves with the Source of life who is revealed through creation. For Christians, this is also an opportunity to consider what it means to relinquish everything to follow the one in whom we see what God is like and what human life can be when lived in the Spirit and presence of God.

Jesus of Nazareth engaged in nonviolent resistance in his day. He showed the way and opened a Way to be in right relationship with God, other human beings, and the whole creation. Jesus nonviolently confronted the political, economic, military, and religious institutions of his age, in faithfulness to God and in compassion for people who were "harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd." Can those of us who seek to follow him do anything less?

Earth Notes

by Virginia K. Anderson

Only by walking:
Dew on toes, star-flower glimpsed,
bird-and-worm's progress.

Lichen-colored rock
is red, yellow, gray, moss-green:
Nature's peace symbol.

Old earth, wrinkled, scarred,
has gifts for us, and wisdom.
Our task is to learn.

from *On the Edge of Peace*

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EPI aids victims of volcanic devastation

by Cheri and Lisa Ho

Cheri and Lisa Ho are the daughters of our dear Esther Ho who served on the EPI board for so many years. We were very pleased to be asked to assist in the collection of aid for the victims of the volcanic explosion in Indonesia by acting as fiscal sponsor. To be perfectly honest, they did all the work.

Indonesia's Mount Merapi (translated as Fire Mountain) began a series of eruptions on October 25, 2010, which ultimately claimed 353 lives. Over 350,000 people were evacuated to emergency shelters during the violent volcanic activity.

Esther Ho's family, including son-in-law Sekti Artanegara, and daughters Lisa and Cheri Ho, learned that Sekti's family in Yogyakarta were intimately involved with relief efforts, including personally buying, cooking, and delivering food and supplies to the residents of the evacuation centers on a daily basis. Seeking ways to contribute to relief and reconstruction, Sekti, Lisa and Cheri partnered with EPI to create the Indonesian Aid Fund. Fundraising efforts netted over \$2000 in donations.



Lisa and her family traveled to Indonesia in December 2010, and were able to visit some of the locations damaged by the eruptions. They also delivered the funds raised through the EPI partnership to Aisyiyah, a local charity led by Sekti's sister dedicated to sustained community development. Recent activities include building an early childhood development center and providing tutoring and library resources for school children.

"We feel lucky to be involved with a local organization that we know has direct connections in the area, a long-term perspective, and a track record of managing donated funds responsibly, so we know the contributions we brought will be used toward the most beneficial redevelopment projects," said Lisa.

After learning that access to clean drinking water continued to be a problem in many of the areas surrounding Mount Merapi, the money was earmarked for construction of community wells. To date, four water pumps have been purchased and two permanent wells have been constructed with Indonesian Aid Fund donations. The balance of funds (\$200) was used to provide additional food and supplies for people still living in evacuation shelters. Aisyiyah continues their redevelopment activities and their support of displaced persons in the Merapi area.



Esther's family felt privileged to be able to contribute to the community reconstruction efforts, and they expressed gratitude to EPI for engaging in this partnership. "We were moved by the generosity of so many friends donating money to assist people whose lives were disrupted by the eruptions. Mom's vision of peace-making encompassed helping people all over the world in all aspects of need," said Cheri, "so we felt this partnership with her group of close friends and like-minded activists was an ideal way to honor her memory."

Focus on California Education, from page 1

Labor state, collective bargaining is not being overtly threatened. However, attacks are coming from other directions and the focus is usually on public education. Recently, recruits in a national organization, Teach Plus (financed significantly by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation), persuaded Indiana state lawmakers to eliminate seniority-based layoff policies. Driven by budgetary cutbacks and, under the guise of school reform, the critical issues of teacher tenure and seniority are being attacked.

Unlike "at will" employees who can be given a day's or even an hour's notice that their employment is over, teachers have a two year trial period when they are observed, supported, and evaluated. During that time they can be "let go without cause." If principals give good evaluations and believe that individuals should remain in the teaching professions, they are given tenure, a more permanent and secure employment relationship. From that time on, tenured teachers have certain rights that protect them from arbitrary firings and prescribe a process to terminate their contract. Without this type of protection, competent teachers become vulnerable to administrators who want only "yes" people or parents who might be angry about a bad report card.

Teacher seniority has been in the news a lot lately. As budgets dwindle and staffing changes, layoff notices are sent. Seniority usually means that the "last hired" is the "first fired." One might conclude that the new young teacher who is so popular has to go and the "worn out, old teacher" keeps the job. On the surface this seems very unfair. But it is not the whole picture. Most experienced teachers have unparalleled experience in their subject matter and classroom management, and love teaching. Fifty percent of new teachers quit in the first five years. State law mandates that all teachers be evaluated on a regular basis and that incompetent teachers be dismissed. Since age cannot be an automatic determiner of good or bad among teachers, evaluation is the best process to bring capable people into the profession and move inadequate people out. As difficult as it is to dismiss any educator, seniority has an inherent fairness.

Californians who grew up between 1950 and 1970 experienced an educational system that was recognized as one of the best in our country. But times are changing. Schools throughout the state have different mixes of students, ranging from high concentrations of low-income, disadvantaged students to concentrations of high-income, highly advantaged students. We must become involved to regain educational excellence for all our children.



Haiti After Aristide's Return

By Robert Roth

Robert Roth is a co-founder of the Haiti Action Committee and a board member of the Haiti Emergency Relief Fund. He was in Haiti when President Aristide returned.

On March 18th, President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and his family returned home from a 7-year forced exile in South Africa — an exile brought about by the violent U.S.-orchestrated coup in 2004. Up until the last minute, the U.S. government tried to stop the return, with President Obama going so far as to place a last-minute call to President Zuma of South Africa.

In a speech at Toussaint Louverture airport in Port-au-Prince, Aristide commented on the undemocratic and exclusionary elections then taking place in Haiti. He stressed the need for including all Haitians in the political process of the country:

The problem is exclusion. The solution is inclusion.

Exclusion of Fanmi Lavalas is the exclusion of the majority. And the exclusion of the majority is like cutting off the very branch we are all sitting on. Every Haitian without exception, because every person is a human being, so the vote of every person counts.

Thousands of Haiti's poor followed his car as it moved from the airport, through the streets of Port-au-Prince, and towards his house. Standing in the courtyard of Aristide's house with Pierre Labossiere as part of an international delegation, we heard rumors that Aristide's car was arriving. Then a roar erupted and we saw thousands of people climb over walls, rush past security and engulf the courtyard. They were exuberant, singing and chanting for hours: "Welcome back Titid. Welcome back schools. Welcome back hope." "Lavalas — We bend but do not break." (*Lavalas is the name of Haiti's popular movement. In Creole, it means "flash flood" — the flood of the people.*)

It was a beautiful moment, made possible by years of sacrifice and effort by Haiti's grassroots movement, aided by a determined international solidarity campaign. For those who had doubted that Aristide's return was possible — and there were many, both within and outside of Haiti — it showed, once again, the power of the people.

Aristide's return demonstrates Haiti's independent will and self-determination. He brings back a deep, abiding respect for the poor of Haiti and a belief in their intelligence, their wisdom and the justice of their demands. His return challenges the racist notion that the poor of Haiti can only look to the U.S., the UN and the NGO's for relief and development. This is why he is loved and this is why he is feared.

Aristide has made clear that his focus will be education. Haiti's education system has always been a form of social apartheid — completely eliminating the poor while building up a small elite. During the Lavalas administrations, more schools were built in Haiti than in its entire history. Adult literacy programs — often led by women — reduced the illiteracy rate.

When the Aristide Foundation's University (UniFA) opened a Medical School in 2001, it recruited students from the poorest communities throughout Haiti, each of whom committed to return to their

communities upon graduation. These were revolutionary initiatives in a country whose elite despise the poor and have worked for generations to keep them away from any form of literacy or higher education. It was no accident that U.S. and UN forces drove students out of the campus after the 2004 coup and turned the building into a military barracks.

Even with limited resources, Aristide's return will generate the impetus to reopen the medical school. Along with the Aristide Foundation's continuing work among youth — a Youth League has begun, with over 1000 young people meeting at the Foundation a few months ago — we can expect a stronger mobilizing of a new generation of activists, whose dynamism will be needed in this next phase of Haiti's development. And — given a little time — the thousands of dedicated grass roots organizers, whose work has never ceased in all these years of repression and occupation, will surely regroup and make their demands heard.

There is no question that the task is daunting. Aristide returns to a colonized country. Bill Clinton has set up an Interim Recovery Commission that is now sitting on over \$10 billion. U.S. AID is pouring money into U.S.-based NGO's that pay more for staff than they do for projects. Construction companies are lining up to bid for earthquake rubble removal contracts. Cholera — brought to Haiti by UN forces from Nepal — has spread throughout the country, with recent reports citing 800,000 cases. A seemingly permanent foreign MINUSTAH occupation patrols the streets, with their blue helmets and pointed guns.

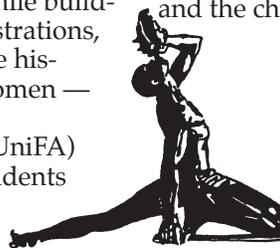
As if to rub salt into the wounds, there is the new president, Michel Martelly. A kompa singer and long-time proponent of Jean-Claude Duvalier, Martelly worked with the dreaded FRAPH death squads that killed over 5000 people in Haiti after the first coup against Aristide in 1991. He has made the reestablishment of Haiti's hated military a priority of his administration. In the past, he has called for a ban on "all strikes and demonstrations." In a revolting video released right before the election, Martelly called Lavalas members "faggots" and threatened sexual violence against Aristide. Some of his chief aides had warned that "the country would burn" if he were not selected.

In the end, Martelly was selected by only 17% of eligible Haitian voters. With Fanmi Lavalas excluded, and two right-wing candidates running, the vast majority of Haitians stayed away, refusing to lend credibility to the charade. The percentage of voters who turned out was the smallest in 60 years for any presidential election in the Americas.

Right after his election, Martelly obediently traveled to Washington, where he met with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who declared that the United States was with him, "all the way." He then made the rounds with officials of the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the chair of the International Monetary Fund chair, Dominique Strauss-Kahn (later arrested for attempted rape in New York). After the discussion with Strauss-Kahn, Martelly beamed and announced that, "the meeting had gone well." (1) Of course it did. The vultures are hovering over Haiti.

Consider the recent deal brokered by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton with South Korean

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Haiti After the Return, from page 4

garment giant, Sae-A Trading Company, which will soon become Haiti's largest private employer. Sae-A is building a 617-acre "free trade zone" near the northern city of Cap-Haitien. It plans to employ 20,000 workers and pay them only 2/3 of Haiti's minimum wage. U.S. AID is contributing \$124 million, the Inter-American Development Bank \$100 million, and Sae-A will put in \$78 million. The planned industrial park will supply Wal-Mart, Target, Kohl's and other major U.S.-based retailers.(2) When confronted with questions over the deal — including whether the new factories will be sweatshops — Hillary Clinton dismissed all concerns, declaring, "Haiti is now open for business."

The Sae-A project is just one part of the structural adjustment plan now being consolidated in Haiti. Known as the "death plan" in Haiti, it involves privatization, new contracts for elite import-export barons, and continued limits on social investment — all combined with targeted repression of grassroots organizations. In one particularly frank analysis, UN economic advisor Paul Collier highlighted the new possibilities for investment in Haiti: "Due to its poverty and relatively unregulated labor market, Haiti has labor costs that are fully competitive with China, which is the global benchmark."(3)

Taking note, Coca-Cola has expanded its Haiti operations, through its "Hope for Haiti" mango drink. Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines, which didn't even have the decency to postpone its post-earthquake Haiti tours, has received funding from U.S. AID to multiply its tourist operations in northern Haiti, training Haitians to be "hospitality workers." And energy companies are lining up to grab contracts to dig up the country in order to exploit Haiti's vast mineral wealth.

Attacking Lavalas is part and parcel of this strategy. Yet, despite decades of repression, the popular movement in Haiti remains active and alive. Women's organizers are right now supporting market women through low-interest micro-credit programs. Human rights workers continue to demand the release of political prisoners and expose the horrific conditions within Haiti's prisons. Progressive radio stations denounce Martelly and the sham elections. The popular church (*ti legliz*) perseveres in its work among peasants throughout the countryside. Young people flock to the Foundation for education and training. And the re-opening of the medical school is on the horizon. *All of this demands international solidarity.*

As we take a breath and celebrate Aristide's hard-fought-for return, we know that the work continues. Hopefully, we are all ready for this next round.

Notes:

1. <http://www.haitilibre.com/en/news-2775-haiti-washington-first-day-of-michel-martelly-all-the-details.html>
2. Katz, Jonathan (Associated Press) - Korean Factories Become Main Employer For Haiti
3. Collier, Paul: Haiti: From Natural Catastrophe to Economic Security: A Report from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, January 2009

People wanting to assist in Haiti's reconstruction are encouraged to donate to Haiti Emergency Relief Fund, www.haitiemergencyrelief.org. For ongoing information visit www.haitisolidarity.net.

On my return to Haiti ...

A profit-driven recovery plan, devised and carried out by outsiders, can not reconstruct my country

Jean-Bertrand Aristide

guardian.co.uk, Friday 4 February 2011 20.00 GMT

Haiti's devastating earthquake in January last year destroyed up to 5,000 schools and 80% of the country's already weak university infrastructure. The primary school in Port-au-Prince that I attended as a small boy collapsed with more than 200 students inside. The weight of the state nursing school killed 150 future nurses. The state medical school was levelled. The exact number of students, teachers, professors, librarians, researchers, academics and administrators lost during those 65 seconds that irrevocably changed Haiti will never be known. But what we do know is that it cannot end there.

The exceptional resilience demonstrated by the Haitian people during and after the deadly earthquake reflects the intelligence and determination of parents, especially mothers, to keep their children alive and to give them a better future, and the eagerness of youth to learn — all this despite economic challenges, social barriers, political crisis, and psychological trauma. Even though their basic needs have increased exponentially, their readiness to learn is manifest. This natural thirst for education is the foundation for a successful learning process: what is freely learned is best learned.

Of course, learning is strengthened and solidified when it occurs in a safe, secure and normal environment. Hence our responsibility to promote social cohesion, democratic growth, sustainable development, self-determination; in short, the goals set forth for this new millennium. All of which represent steps towards a return to a better environment.

Education has been a top priority since the first Lavalas government — of which I was president — was sworn into office under Haiti's amended democratic constitution on 7 February 1991 (and removed a few months later). More schools were built in the 10 years between 1994, when democracy was restored, and 2004 — when Haiti's democracy was once again violated — than between 1804 to 1994: one hundred and ninety-five new primary schools and 104 new public high schools constructed and/or refurbished.

The 12 January earthquake largely spared the Foundation for Democracy I founded in 1996. Immediately following the quake, thousands accustomed to finding a democratic space to meet, debate and receive services, came seeking shelter and help. Haitian doctors who began their training at the foundation's medical school rallied to organised clinics at the foundation and at tent camps across the capital. They continue to contribute tirelessly to the treatment of fellow Haitians who have been infected by cholera. Their presence is a pledge to reverse the dire ratio of one doctor for every 11,000 Haitians.

Youths, who through the years have participated in the foundation's multiple literacy programmes, volunteered to operate mobile schools in these same tent camps. In partnership with a group from the University of Michigan in the US, post-traumatic counselling sessions were organised and university students trained to help themselves and to help fellow Haitians begin the long journey to healing. A year on, young people and students look to the foundation's university to return to its educational vocation and help fill the gaping national hole left on the day the earth shook in Haiti.

Iraq “We haven't really left ”

Last August, President Obama announced that “the American combat mission in Iraq has ended.” We expressed our doubts at the time, and detailed the ways in which the U.S. remains in Iraq, in the Fall 2010 issue of *Planted*.

This article will look predominantly at the calls for help from Iraqi people who reach out to us through social networks similar to those we have seen in the “Arab spring” movements in Tunisia and Egypt. In Iraq, as in many places around the globe, people are struggling against the proxy governments installed by U.S. occupying forces to carry on the policies instituted during the times of direct U.S. rule.

In a recent article in the *Guardian* (UK) we read:

Swimming against the tide of popular uprisings across the region, the Iraqi government is trying to wipe out free and independent trade unions. Two weeks ago it decided that the main trade union body in the country was no longer going to exist. Ministers appointed a government committee, packed with officials from the Sadrist movement, to take over the structures and assets of the General Federation of Iraqi Workers (GFIW) and run its upcoming elections.

This is a dangerous recipe for breaking apart one of the few institutions left that unites people across tribal, ethnic and religious boundaries, and which is committed to women's rights and the creation of a peaceful and prosperous Iraq.

Iraqi workers have been forming and running their own unions, often in the face of tremendous personal danger, first under Saddam's repressive regime, and then under the allied occupation and the bloody backlash that followed. Despite these pressures, unions have been improving workplace health and safety, wages and productivity, and building a social security system to help vulnerable workers back on their feet.

As the uprisings from Tunisia to Bahrain show, unions are playing a key part in the mass movements calling for dignity and justice in people's lives. In Iraq, they are an urgently needed antidote to rising authoritarianism and the ever-present risk of sectarianism. Unions also have a critical role in speaking up for the rights of women. . . .

It is important to remember that the Coalition Provisional Authority maintained Saddam's crushing rules against independent unions. Readers can see the complete *Guardian* article at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/may/10/iraq-union-crackdown>

In 2007, US Labor Against the War hosted a tour of Iraqi labor leaders around the U.S. including the president of the Electrical Workers Union of Iraq, a woman.

We are finding important information on the website of the Iraqi Civil Society Solidarity Initiative. A recent posting apposes the establishment of permanent U.S. bases in Iraq:

The Legislature of the so-called ‘White al-Iraqiya Bloc,’ Aliya Nuseif, on Thursday [May 5, 2011] demanded the U.S. forces to present a clear report on the number of their bases in Iraq, warning against the existence [of] what it described as “underground” bases after the American withdrawal from Iraq.

“The number of American bases in Iraq to this day remains unclear. U.S. forces are demanded to present a report about the bases they have established, at a time when Iraq had no government, before the finalization of any subject related to the Security Agreement signed between both countries,”

Nuseif told Aswat al-Iraq news agency.

Nuseif warned of the “probabilities for the presence of ‘underground’ U.S. bases that we are unaware of.”

“Iraq has enough issues to worry about, and there is no necessity to exploit our territories to attack any neighboring state, while we shoulder the U.S. Administration with responsibility for any military action taken by their bases existing on the Iraqi territories,” Nuseif said.

She said that “there is an item in the Security Agreement, warning the U.S. forces against carrying out any military aggression on any of Iraq's neighboring states; so, the American side should commit itself to this item.”

Noteworthy is that the U.S. combat troops had [supposedly] left Iraq at the end of August last [2010], according the Security Agreement, signed between Baghdad and Washington at the end of 2008, whilst the remaining U.S. non-combat (sic) troops, estimated at 50,000, should leave the country by the end of this current year.

Various reports indicate that the U.S. military is looking for ways to keep forces in Iraq well past the shifting deadline for troop withdrawal. In an AP article on April 10 Defense Secretary Gates is quoted as saying, “the U.S. would consider a range of possibilities, from staying an extra couple of years to remaining in Iraq as permanent partners.” Clearly what would be required would be making sure the government in Iraq is one which would ask for an extension of the occupation. Since the vast majority of Iraqis are opposed to occupation, this would require the establishment and support of a non-democratic government.

What is to be done?

- Our job is clearly to continue and increase our demand that the United States completely and entirely withdraw from Iraq all forces, “combat”, “training”, “support” and civilian contractors. We have to succeed in this.

- We must also demand the dismantling of all military bases in Iraq. Possibly any bases that have civilian use could be turned over to Iraq's civil society — that would be the choice of workers, including teachers, medical workers, technical workers.

- We need to watch carefully that U.S. departure is not just a transfer of domination from direct U.S. control to the domination of the people by allied repressive governments. We need to make sure that we do not leave behind a new Mubarak or Saddam to rule as “our son of a bitch” for the benefit of western corporate interests.

- We need to maintain contact with the civil sectors — the unions, the women's groups, people working to cross sectarian lines. We need to watch closely the contracts made by “our” oil companies to exploit Iraq's oil. The Iraqi people need the full use of their own resources to rebuild their country after the destruction of decades of sanctions and war.

Ecumenical Peace Institute will work to keep ourselves informed in these regards and spread the information as widely as we can, especially through the weekly vigil and via the internet.

Let us know your address, email, & phone # so we can keep you posted.

Join us as you can at the Oakland Federal Building.

Afghanistan— *what's going on there? and what's going on in Washington?*

Plans for U.S. bases in Afghanistan are reported in the *New York Times*

Kabul, Afghanistan — First, American officials were talking about July 2011 as the date to begin the withdrawal from Afghanistan. Then, the Americans and their NATO allies began to talk about transition, gradually handing over control of the war to the Afghans until finally pulling out in 2014. Now, however, the talk is all about what happens after 2014. Afghanistan and the United States are in the midst of negotiating what they are calling a Strategic Partnership Declaration for beyond 2014.

Critics, including many of Afghanistan's neighbors, call it the Permanent Bases Agreement – or, in a more cynical vein, Great Game 3.0, drawing a comparison with the ill-fated British and Russian rivalry in the region during the 19th and 20th centuries.

... Afghan officials have acknowledged that the talks do countenance some sort of long-term bases after 2014, if only for the purpose of continued training of Afghan troops.

... One person's long-term base is another's permanent base, however, and in the region many people took Mrs. Clinton's assurances as proof that the United States was not leaving, whatever the bases are called. [*We in the peace and justice movement look at the School of the Americas -- which began in Panama -- and see what the training of troops can entail.*]

... "The Americans have not been honest about this, even among themselves," said Mullah Attullah Lodin, deputy chairman of the High Peace Council of Afghanistan, which is charged with leading reconciliation efforts with the Taliban. ... The big concern, he said, was that if any such agreement were reached, it would make it that much harder to enter into serious peace talks with the Taliban

<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/19/world/asia/19bases.html>

Then Osama Bin Laden is killed in Pakistan.

With Bin Laden Dead, some in Washington are working to get troops out. Reps. Jim McGovern, D-Mass., and Walter Jones, R-N.C., have introduced bipartisan legislation in the House of Representatives to require the Obama administration to present an exit strategy for U.S. forces from Afghanistan. The legislation, (H.R. 1735) the "Afghanistan Exit & Accountability Act," has 41 co-sponsors.

"Our bill requires the president to give Congress a concrete strategy and timeframe for bringing our servicemen and women home to their families and communities," McGovern explained. "It requires quarterly reports on the human and financial costs of continuing the war and how much we would save if we withdrew our forces within a reasonable time frame."

McGovern and Jones plan to offer the legislation as an amendment to the FY 2012 Defense Authorizations Bill when it comes before the House at the end of May or in June.

It is clearly time to let Congress & the President know we want all our troops home now

- from Afghanistan, where Bin Laden hasn't been for years,
- from Iraq, where Bin Laden never was and where there were no weapons of mass destruction,
- from Libya, where bombing raids do not protect civilians,
- * from Pakistan, where unmanned aerial bombers are killing whole families.

It is time to let them know that, in addition, we want all bases in Iraq and Afghanistan dismantled and removed.

The ACLU alerts us to expansive plans for undeclared world wide war on "terrorism"

Congress may soon vote on a new declaration of world-wide war without end, and without clear enemies. A "sleeper provision" deep inside defense bills pending before Congress could become the single biggest hand-over of unchecked war authority from Congress to the executive branch in modern American history. [This is **Section 1034, deep inside the National Defense Authorization Act.**]

President Obama has not sought new war authority. In fact, his administration has made clear that it believes it already has all of the authority that it needs to fight terrorism.

But Congress is considering monumental new legislation that would grant the president – and all presidents after him – sweeping new power to make war almost anywhere and everywhere. Unlike previous grants of authority for the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, the proposed legislation would allow a president to use military force wherever terrorism suspects are present in the world, regardless of whether there has been any harm to U.S. citizens, or any attack on the United States, or any imminent threat of an attack. The legislation is broad enough to permit a president to use military force within the United States and against American citizens. The legislation contains no expiration date, and no criteria to determine when a president's authority to use military force would end.

<http://www.aclu.org/blog/national-security/house-gets-ready-vote-new-worldwide-war>

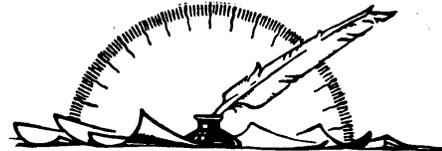
ON THE EDGE OF PEACE

Voices from the Faith-Based Peace & Justice Community

Ecumenical Peace Institute's book of poetry, prose, and art from the interfaith peace and justice community around the world is now available.

Here you can find the words of Esther Ho, Lee Williamson, Joan MacIntyre, Diane Thomas, Earl Johnson and many others. We hope you will enjoy being in the company of friends as you read it. *On the Edge of Peace* has been very well received. Some readers say that it is a history of the work of the faith-based in poetic and artistic format.

To get your copy, call the office, email or write. We are asking \$15 plus mailing costs. *Benefits EPI's work.*



“God, Faithfulness and Resistance”

*Archbishop Thabo Makgoba
at Sabeel Conference, Bethlehem*

4 March 2011

Bethlehem, Occupied West Bank – The Rev. Thabo Makgoba, Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, South Africa, called Israel’s separation barrier “a wall of strangulation.” Makgoba addressed participants of the Sabeel International Conference, preaching at the Church of all Nations at Gethsemane in Jerusalem 25 February 2011.

More than 200 international participants came to Bethlehem for the conference under the theme, “Challenging Empire: God, Faithfulness and Resistance.” Sabeel is the ecumenical liberation theology center based in Jerusalem.

“We must not be naïve in speaking about South Africa while standing in Jerusalem,” Makgoba said. “The wall of strangulation or ‘beautification’ is worse than the South African pass laws, the Bantustans or homelands, and racial discrimination,” he said. Visiting with Palestinians in Bethlehem and Hebron is “an experience I will treasure,” he said, and, “I will rededicate myself to the pursuit of justice.”

Makgoba called for “prophetic theology.” He said, “We must do this especially from the perspective of the poor, the oppressed, the marginalized, the outcast, the powerless, the voiceless, the Palestinians – for all of whom God has a particular option, as Jesus affirmed when he (...) set out what we might call the ‘manifesto’ of his ministry.”

Makgoba shared aspects of Christians’ struggle against Apartheid in South Africa. “Faith helps us resist the assumptions of empire,” he said. “For we subvert all its norms when we dare to live as Jesus lived and taught (...) when we dare to believe that blessings come when we love our enemies, pray for those who persecute us, and practice radical forgiveness – even as we raise our voices for justice and act to transform unjust structures,” he said.

In Bethlehem, bible study leader Ched Myers presented a radical Jesus unfamiliar to most Christians today. Myers is the author of *Binding the Strong Man* and a partner in Bartimaeus Cooperative Ministries, Oak View, Calif., USA.

“Jesus publically identifies with the notorious John the Baptizer, whose message of repentance was directed not just to a personal change of heart but to the whole nation. Jesus and his followers were complicit in John’s rebel movement,” Myers said.

Jesus did not propose “a utopian dream that can only be realized in heaven or the afterlife,” Myers said. “Jesus’ gospel leaves no room for otherworldly religion: ‘The time is now; the sovereignty of God is here.’ (Mark 1:15),” he said.

Myers called the destruction of Palestinian olive trees by Israeli settlement development “economic warfare” and compared it to Roman economic oppression of formerly self-sufficient fishermen in Jesus’ time. Fisherman had “fallen to the bottom of an increasingly elaborate economic hierarchy. It stands to reason that peasant fisherman would have been particularly responsive to a call to resist,” Myers said.

Myers explained that Nazareth in Galilee, Jesus’ home town, was located in the neighborhood of the demolished city of Sepphoris, re-built by the Romans as a powerful administrative center. “It was a dramatic case of imposing a colonial settlement on an indigenous landscape. Sepphoris

would have towered over Nazareth, like the [Israeli] Har Homa settlement does over Bethlehem today, even more so,” Myers said. Jesus the carpenter might have walked about an hour to get work in the new imperial city. “The trauma of Sepphoris’ destruction and reconstruction as an imperial city right at his doorstep would have had a profound impact on his consciousness, infusing in him a keen sense of the travails of empire,” Myers said.

Myers outlined some aspects of “the Jesus of the gospels that tend to be overlooked by churches today,” including “going to the roots of our tradition and of our social crisis” and apprenticing ourselves with “older traditions of resistance and renewal.”

Published on Friends of Sabeel--North America (<http://www.fosna.org>)

What Would “Swap” Look Like?

by Carolyn Scarr

John Feffer, in *Foreign Policy in Focus*, described it well: In his Middle East speech last week and then again at AIPAC, Obama said that any deal should involve “1967 lines with mutually agreed swaps.” In other words, any deal to establish a Palestinian state — the “two-state solution” — must turn the clock back before the Six-Day War in 1967 when Israel seized control of the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, among other territories. The “swap” part is an acknowledgement that Israeli settlers have changed the “facts on the ground” in the West Bank so that Palestinians should be compensated with different territory in exchange. (May 24, 2011 www.fpiif.org)

As the saying goes, “the devil is in the details.”

At a recent presentation by local folks who attended the Sabeel Conference this spring, I saw a map of Israel/Palestine showing the 1967 line and the line of the wall which is the current de facto border between Palestine and Israel. This line, which makes gerrymandering look like a plane geometry figure, scoops up under Israeli control the headwaters of the streams flowing into Israel from the hilly region in which Palestinians have lived for centuries. This line divides Palestinian villagers from their farmland. This line and other areas of Israeli military control of the West Bank, chop Palestinian land into fragments and prevent travel between towns and villages. And of course the big issue is Jerusalem. Jerusalem is holy to all three Abrahamic religions. This is why, when the United Nations passed the resolutions creating Israel, Jerusalem was divided between the incoming Jewish population and the resident Palestinians, who were mostly either Muslim or Christian.

Now we get to the “swap” part. The hardliners in Israel will hold out for no swap. But others will start to negotiate. Who will they negotiate with? Americans have a history of negotiating with native peoples in which we pick the designated leaders who will give us the best deal. Any Indian who signs over land to the expanding American population is by definition a “leader.” Later Tribal Councils were established who would sign contracts advantageous to mineral exploiting companies. They are “leaders.” And of course we don’t have a corner on having or finding leaders who act against the interests of the weaker amongst their

continued on page 11

Honduras — the Coup Continues

The supposed re-establishment of constitutional government in Honduras was decisively disproved by the arrival as we put together this newsletter of a plea for help from the Honduras Accompaniment Project which asks for phone calls on behalf of 6 detainees at Core 7 Metropolitana Police Station. One detainee is pregnant and all of them are injured.

Chuck Kaufman of Alliance for Global Justice forwarded:

Repression in the National Congress.

7:30 pm this evening [May 20] the national police repressed a group of street vendors within walking distance of the National Congress where for 17 days a group of teachers have remained in a hunger strike demanding their reinstatement after being fired for taking part in the demonstrations defending the recently passed education bill.

This appeared to be more an action of intimidation because in those moments a film forum organized by the Political Organization Los Necios (OPLN) and the National Youth Front in Resistance (FNJR) was being held. Police proceeded to beat dozens of people including children, women, elderly men and detaining several of them including Nick Madrid of the Patriotic Resistance Movement (MRP) and Isaias Ortega of OPLN, both part of FNJR.

The detainees have been brought to the Core 7 and during the repression were shot at with live ammunition against the crowd. The teachers are in a delicate situation, human rights organizations have been contacted and recently arrived at the police station to ascertain the situation of detainees.

Gerardo Torres.

Enviado desde mi BlackBerry de Claro

[more] From Gerardo Torres:

In the past few moments recognised members of the fascist organization 14/88 have entered the police station accompanied by the National Police — the same station where Nick Madrid and Isaias Ortega are being held. We are worried as we believe this is an attempt to cause serious harm against the detained comrades.

At the May 19th EPI board meeting had just decided to join Marin Interfaith Taskforce and 91 other organizations in signing the letter below which says it all:

To Whom It May Concern:

Just days after the June 28, 2009 military coup d'etat overthrew the constitutional, elected president of Honduras, Manuel Zelaya Rosales, the Organization of American States voted unanimously to suspend Honduras from the OAS.

Since that time the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights on multiple occasions has confirmed the existence of human rights crises in Honduras, most recently in a report on April 1, 2011. The IACHR reports cited violent disproportionate use of force against protests; the lack of an independent judicial system and the firings of judges for political reasons; that the governmental Truth Commission has not assigned investigators nor initiated investigations of human rights crimes.

Other international human rights organizations and human rights entities in Honduras have also documented the continuation of the human rights crises, impunity and lack of rule of law during the current regime of Porfirio Lobo. The reality is contrary to the presentations of the government of the United States and of Porfirio Lobo that claim that Honduras has restored constitutionality and reconciliation and thus, should be readmitted to the Organization of American States.

We believe that the regime of Porfirio Lobo should not be rewarded for continuing the repression and impunity. On the contrary, international pressure should be increased until real rule of law and human rights guarantees are restored.

Therefore, we make this call:

1. To the international community to condemn the more than 200 political assassinations, continuous harassment, threats and attacks against defenders of human rights and the countless beatings, persecution, detentions, and toxic gas attacks against Honduran citizens.

2. To the Organization of American States to continue the suspension of Honduras and no consideration of reinstatement until:

§ There is an end to the human rights violations and impunity for crimes against humanity in Honduras. The crimes must be investigated and the intellectual authors as well as the material perpetrators brought to justice and punished.

§ All the political exiles, including former President Manuel Zelaya, are able to safely return to Honduras and to exercise their full rights as citizens with no fear of persecution.

§ The Honduran people convene a National Constituent Assembly, (democratic, popular and participatory) the only mechanism for a return to constitutional order.

§ The National Front of Popular Resistance is recognized as a legitimate political-social force entitled to freedom from political persecution and guaranteed protection for all civil and human rights.

Aristide, from page 5

Will the deepening destabilising political crisis in Haiti prevent students achieving academic success? I suppose most students, educators and parents are exhausted by the complexity of such a dramatic and painful crisis. But I am certain nothing can extinguish their collective thirst for education.

The renowned American poet and essayist, Ralph Waldo Emerson, wrote that “we learn geology the morning after the earthquake”. What we have learned in one long year of mourning after Haiti’s earthquake is that an exogenous plan of reconstruction – one that is profit-driven, exclusionary, conceived of and implemented by non-Haitians – cannot reconstruct Haiti. It is the solemn obligation of all Haitians to join in the reconstruction and to have a voice in the direction of the nation.

As I have not ceased to say since 29 February 2004, from exile in Central Africa, Jamaica and now South Africa, I will return to Haiti to the field I know best and love: education. We can only agree with the words of the great Nelson Mandela, that indeed education is a powerful weapon for changing the world.

Libya: Was Armed Revolt and Western Intervention the Only Option?

(Excerpts For complete article visit <http://stephenzunes.org/>)

by Stephen Zunes

Stephen Zunes is Professor of Politics and Chair of Mid-Eastern Studies at the University of San Francisco

The decision by the United States and its Western allies to intervene militarily against the Libyan regime of Muammar Gaddafi may have averted a massacre, but it is fraught with serious risks of eventually costing even more lives. Furthermore, it could undermine the remarkable and overwhelmingly nonviolent pro-democracy movements which have been sweeping the Arab world in recent months. . . Had Libya's popular uprising maintained its largely non-violent discipline of its early days, there probably would not be the bloody stalemate and other dangers now emerging in the conflict.

What has been notable about the successful civil uprisings against the Tunisian and Egyptian dictatorships, the serious popular challenges to the Yemeni and Bahraini dictatorships and the smaller-scale protests sweeping the region, is that they were completely indigenous and not sullied by foreign intervention. Furthermore, the chances of a successful transition to democracy following the ouster of an authoritarian regime are much higher if the overthrow results from a massive nonviolent movement, which requires the establishment of broad alliances of civil society organizations and the cooperation and consensus to make that possible. This contrasts with an overthrow resulting from a violent struggle - led by an elite vanguard, dominated by martial values and seeking power through force of arms rather than popular participation - which, more often than not, has simply resulted in a new dictatorship.

. . . As mercurial and repressive as Gaddafi is, he still has a social base. It is not just foreign mercenaries that are keeping him in power. In his 41 years as ruler, he wrested the country away from neo-colonial domination, instilled a sense of national pride and - despite his mismanagement and capricious policies - led his country to achieve the highest Human Development Index ranking in Africa, surpassing scores of relatively wealthy non-African countries as Saudi Arabia, Bulgaria, Serbia, Mexico, Costa Rica, Malaysia and Russia. There are many Libyans who, while unhappy with Qaddafi's rule, are not ready to support the opposition.

For a revolution against a heavily armed and deeply entrenched dictator to succeed, the opposition movement needs to mobilize a large percentage of the population on their side, as took place in Tunisia and Egypt. Libyans need to engage in strategies that will make the regime come across as illegitimate and as traitorous, while making themselves look virtuous and patriotic.

Given how their history of suffering under colonialism and foreign intervention has made Libyans notoriously xenophobic, there is a risk of a nationalist reaction from Western bombing that could strengthen Gaddafi more than the damage done to Gaddafi's war-making machinery would weaken him.

In addition, defections by security forces - critically important in ousting a military-backed regime - are far more likely when they are ordered to gun down unarmed protesters than when they are being attacked by foreign forces.

. . . Continued US support for the Yemeni and Bahraini governments as they brutally suppress nonviolent pro-democracy forces while simultaneously coming to the aid of the violent Libyan opposition . . . sends the wrong message.

It is critical, therefore, that those of us who would like to see democracy triumph in Libya challenge the myth that a military solution is the only alternative to ending Gaddafi's repression and tyranny.

Did Nonviolence "Not Work"?

The overwhelmingly nonviolent, pro-democracy revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt in January and February followed scores of successful unarmed civil insurrections over the past few decades, which have brought down dictatorships in scores of countries. . . Yet, only in Libya has the pro-democracy struggle deteriorated into a bloody civil war, which has been used as an excuse for foreign military intervention.

Some analysts have tried to attribute this to Gaddafi, arguing that nonviolence "can't work" when faced with such a ruthless tyrant. History, however, has shown repeatedly that dictators as willing as Qaddafi to unleash massive violence against unarmed citizens were nevertheless overthrown through large-scale nonviolent action.

. . . In Libya, the protests were almost exclusively non-violent during the first week of the uprising. It was during this period that the pro-democracy movement made the most gains, taking over most of the cities in the eastern part of the country. It was also during this period when most of the resignations of cabinet members and other important aides of Gaddafi, Libyan ambassadors in foreign capitals and top military officers took place. Pilots deliberately crashed their planes, flew into exile and otherwise refused orders to bomb and strafe protesters. Thousands of soldiers defected or refused to fire on crowds, despite threats of execution.

It was when the rebellion took a more violent turn, however, that the revolution's progress stalled and was soon reversed, which in turn led to the United States and its allies attacking Libya.

It is certainly true that a successful, popular, nonviolent uprising against the Libyan regime would be a greater challenge for pro-democracy forces than in Tunisia or Egypt,

. . . Smart strategy is key to any insurrection, whether it be armed or unarmed. The largely spontaneous Libyan uprising, in its nonviolent phase, focused almost exclusively on mass protests, making them easy targets for Gaddafi's repression, rather than relying on more diverse tactics -- including strikes (which could have been particularly effective in the oil industry), boycotts, slowdowns, and other forms of non-cooperation. In short, the failure of the nonviolent struggle was not because it was nonviolent, but because it was not well-organized strategically.

This does not mean that armed struggle has any greater chance of success, however. Military force challenges Gaddafi at his strongest point where he clearly has the advantages and, with all land approaches to the capital Tripoli through flat open desert, it is hardly an ideal situation for successful insurrectionary warfare either. And the slaughter has only increased since the movement turned violent.

Even now, if a cease-fire could be arranged, rebel-controlled areas could solidify a well-functioning democratic order other Libyans would desire to emulate, while dissidents within areas controlled by Qaddafi could begin a series of strikes and other actions which -- combined with international sanctions targeting the regime -- could seriously undermine the dictator's ability to resist. However, the promise of continued US and NATO military support will make it unlikely that either side will abide by a cease-fire and a bloody stalemate could go on indefinitely. As a result, Western military intervention -- despite the seeming moral imperative that prompted it -- could prove to have made matters worse.

Hiroshima and Nagasaki Days

Still in the early days of planning — There will be events at the Livermore Nuclear Weapons Lab on Saturday, August 6 and Tuesday, August 9.

Save the dates and check www.trivalleycares.org as the dates draw near.

“Swap”, from page 8

people. The Soviet leaders chose to seed the clouds to rain down the radiation of Chernobyl onto the small village of Novozybkov to preserve Moscow.

It is likely that compliant Palestinian leaders will be found and advanced who will sacrifice the interests of small farmers along the Israeli border whose lands are inconvenient to Israelis living in the “settlements” and who use the massive amounts of water to fill their swimming pools and water their lawns.

Israeli human rights organization B’Tselem, reports that Israel has instituted a regime that massively exploits the resources of the Jordan Valley and the northern Dead Sea, far more than elsewhere in the West Bank, demonstrating its intention: to de facto annex the area to the State of Israel. This is at the eastern edge of the West Bank, at the border of Jordan — not Israel. Will Israel propose to swap for this land? That would be hard to justify by their favorite reasoning, a need for defensible borders. So this problem might just not be put on the table.
www.btselem.org/Campaigns/2011_Jordan_Valley/English/index.html

Possibly the only real, just and peaceful solution will be a democratic pluralistic state that encompasses all of the historic land of Palestine. This is put forward by some Palestinians and even some Jews. Notable among Jewish supporters is the historian Ilan Pappé. It is an idea which deserves serious examination.



Mèsi Anpil Thank you greatly

We want to acknowledge all our financial supporters over the years.

We get busy lining up events, cooking vegetarian dishes for our gatherings, vigilling, collaborating with other like-minded groups, editing and publishing our peace poetry book and newsletter, and sending important news via email.

None of this could be done without you, our volunteers and financial supporters. So a big THANK YOU.

Every year we have over 150 individuals, families and groups who have contributed.. Some people have donated every year since 1993 !! Their loyalty and support have kept us going.

Plans are afoot to make it easier to donate on a modest, regular basis. In an upcoming issue we will have the details along with the listing of our long-term “angels.”

Short of cash to give? Join up for our EVC--and give with your time. (see page 1)

Understanding Islam, by Amer Araim

Reviewed by Marijke Fakasiiieiki

Amer Araim’s recent Book: Understanding Islam is an encyclopedia of wealth about a religion many in the U.S. have heard but few really understand.

Araim, a Sunni Muslim originally from Fallujah, Iraq, worked as a senior political affairs officer for the U.N. He has been active in the Contra Costa Interfaith Council, participating in joint interfaith projects and activities and starting his own non-profit, The Islamic Community Outreach of California in 2008 “to present Islam to both Muslims and non-Muslims as a religion of peace, dedicated to worshipping Allah (God) and serving our local community. Since 2001, we have been engaged in a constructive dialogue with faith groups and educational and professional institutions as well as individuals seeking knowledge about Islam.”

After 9/11, in the process of sharing about Islam with different groups, Amer found many people had common questions and issues of interest. He decided to write a book, with the support of his family, to help people go beyond tolerance of this seemingly different religion to expand their minds and hearts and to share the deeply enriching heritage of Islam.” His hope, too, has been to help Muslims realize that in America they live in a vastly pluralistic society.

His efforts for enlightenment about all things Islamic has paid off. His book takes us on a spiritual journey woven through an encyclopedia of terms and practices which help us to see Muslims as a people with a rich religious and cultural heritage who are here in America for a variety of reasons, but most of all are here because of America’s constitutional right to religious freedom.

This book helps us be invited into the Muslim world, walk among its people, places, wisdom, and spirituality without leaving the room. For more information about this wonderful book, visit www.islamicoutreach.org

I/We want to be part of the Peace and Justice work of Ecumenical Peace Institute/CALC by:

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Regarding that Envelope

There is an envelope included in each issue of *Planted by the Waters*. If each person who receives *Planted* puts a check into the envelope and mails it to EPI/CALC, it will greatly improve our ability to do the work for justice and peace which we are called to do together. It doesn't have to be a lot. Every little bit counts.



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You are invited to read *Planted by the Waters* online at <http://www.epicalc.org/> and download articles to share. Upcoming events which EPI is involved in planning will be found at the website.

Calendar & Announcements

Saturday, June 25th 10:00am —2:00pm (FREE lunch!!) Death Penalty Activist Training
Easter Hill United Methodist Church,
3911 Cutting Blvd, Richmond, CA 94804
(1/2 mile from El Cerrito Del Norte BART, Near AC Transit 76, 376). Free parking.
Admission is free, but space is limited. **Please register by June 24th!**

Register online at www.alamedadeathpenalty.org/register
Questions? Call Ana Zamora at (415) 621-2493 or email her at azamora@aclunc.org
Visit www.alamedadeathpenalty.org for more info.

Saturday, August 6 & Tuesday, August 9, Livermore Nuclear Weapons Lab, see announcement, page 11.

Sunday, Sept 25, East Bay Sanctuary Covenant dinner, location to be announced. Call 510-540-5276

Photo credits:

Pictures from the Good Friday Witness by Rev. Alexandra Childes and Amanda Scarr.
Pictures of the work in Indonesia by Lisa Ho.

Actions

Living Graveyard Each **third Monday, 12:00 - 1:00**, at the Oakland Federal Building the weekly anti-war vigil is transformed into the "Living Graveyard." Covered with white sheets, participants lie on the city sidewalk, far enough apart to allow for pedestrian and wheelchair traffic. Tombstones mark the numbers of the dead. This legal street theater makes visible the reality of the deaths caused by the war. Names of the dead are read to the sound of a gong.

Weekly Vigils

Mondays, 12:00 - 1:00, Oakland Federal Building, 1301 Clay Street. End occupation of Iraq. Sponsored by Ecumenical Peace Institute, Berkeley Women in Black, Bay Area Labor Committee for Peace & Justice, and others.

Thursdays, 12:00 - 1:00, San Francisco Federal Building, 450 Golden Gate, peace in Iraq, San Francisco Friends.

Thursdays, 12:00 - 1:00, Union Square, Grandmothers Against War, end occupation of Afghanistan.

Thursdays, 4:30 - 5:30, Five Flags Park, Foothill, Jackson & Mission, Hayward. Justice for Palestinians. South Alameda County Peace and Justice (SAPJC) & Tri-City Peace and Justice (TCP).

Fridays, 12:00 - 1:00, Telegraph & Bancroft, Berkeley Women in Black, for justice and peace in Palestine.

Sundays, 3:00 p.m., walk around Lake Merritt for peace. Meet at the columns at the east end of the Lake, between Grand & Lakeshore Avenues. sponsored by Lake Merritt Neighbors Organized for Peace, (LMNOP).