

rpecNEWS

The Newsletter of the Richmond Peace Education Center

July/August 1999

VICTORY IN KOSOVO???

by John Gallini

When I agreed to pull together this article on the Kosovo situation, I had in mind using one of the many articles published recently (I have 25 in my computer file). But none seemed exactly right, so I have adapted an article by Glen Stassen from the July/Aug issue of Sojourners. I think two points should be emphasized.

* The 10 week bombing campaign did not produce a victory for the US and NATO.

* With Kosovo as a model, there are a number of alternatives to bombing that could be employed, and that could produce a victory - of sorts.

Almost everyone writing in the progressive press agrees that the bombing did not reduce the violence inflicted on the ethnic Albanian Kosovars; that, indeed, it resulted in more killing and more people driven from their homes. It also resulted in extensive damage to the infrastructure of the region - water, sewage, power, roads, etc. The mines and unexploded ordinance will continue to kill and maim for years to come. It is certainly not a victory for the people of Kosovo, although many will applaud the NATO peace keepers in the hope that the NATO countries will help rebuild Kosovo.

It is not a victory for the US and NATO because it pushes us further

along the path to using military violence to resolve conflict, and further away from the path of nonviolence. It will be more difficult to convince our children that violence is not the way to solve problems,

Many writers also address the question, "what else could we do?" I offer an abbreviated version of Glen Stassen's article in Sojourners. He writes "Last year 23 scholars published a collection of essays titled Just Peacemaking: Ten Practices for Abolishing War. We sought an ethic that goes beyond "just war" debates. We reached consensus on 10 recently developed peacemaking practices that are effectively preventing many wars. In spite of wars within nations - like Serbia, Bosnia, Chechnya, the Sudan, Rwanda, Chiapas, and East Timor - most wars between nations are now being prevented. From the perspective of these 10 peacemaking practices, what about Kosovo?

1. **The practice of nonviolent direct action** is abolishing many would-be civil wars, as in East Germany before the Berlin Wall fell. In Kosovo, democratically elected president Ibrahim Rugova was pursuing nonviolent direct action. But Serbian repression and

Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) impatience shifted action to guerrilla war, violent Serbian army reaction, and NATO's bombing. We - peace groups and government - should have supported the nonviolent direct action strategy in Kosovo.

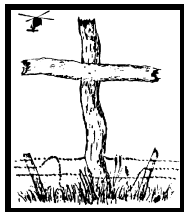
2. **Take independent initiatives to reduce threat to the other side and invite reciprocation.** German Chancellor Schroeder proposed a one-day cease-fire to provide a face-saving invitation for pullbacks of Serbian military forces, and to start new negotiations with Russian help. The Fellowship of Reconciliation suggested offering political asylum to Yugoslav soldiers and Special Police..

3. **Use cooperative conflict resolution.** This practice affirms that the history and culture of a people can help us see the way to a solution. As Jews remember the Holocaust and Muslims remember the Crusades, Serbs remember the massacre by Turks in 1389. Serbs see their sacred history beginning in Kosovo. Therefore a prerequisite to Serbian withdrawal has been assurance that the KLA will be balanced by forces friendly to Slavic interests. Had the United States agreed to Russian prominence in the occupying force,

(Continued on page 3)

SPECIAL CALL FOR PEACEMAKERS

Christian Peacemaker Teams seeks people of faith committed to living simply and nonviolently, with good organizing and teamwork skills, available for full-time service in settings of violence and conflict. Ability to relate cross-culturally and ability with languages helpful. Work involves violence reduction through accompaniment and advocacy for those suffering injustice, observation and documentation of human rights abuses, public witness and nonviolent action.



Active faith communities are encouraged to recruit and provide support for peacemakers to join this growing effort to provide Christ-like responses in volatile situations of human conflict.

For more information, contact Janice Kulp Long Coordinator of CPT's Christian Peacemaker Corps, 950 Heather Drive, Blacksburg, VA 24060. Phone/fax: (540) 951-2788 E-mail: cpt2@igc.

RPEC YARD SALE

RPEC is having a yard sale to raise money for its activities. The sale will take place Saturday, September 11 from 8:00 A.M. till 3:00 P.M. at Ginter Park UMC, corner of Chamberlayne and Laburnum.

Those interested in donating items for sale or volunteering their time please call RPEC office at 358-1958.

RPEC Summer Workshop Schedule

Children's Creative Response to Conflict - Introductory Course.

July 23-25 at First Mennonite Church, 2350 Staples Mill Road, Richmond, VA 23230.

Tuition: \$100 (scholarships available)

Children's Creative Response to Conflict - Training for Trainers.

July 30- August 1 at First Mennonite Church.

Tuition: \$100 (scholarships available)

For information call (804) 358-1958, fax (804) 358-2213, email rpec@richmond.infi.net or write 14 N. Laurel Street, Richmond, VA 23220

RPEC Staff

Newsletter Staff

Editor: Bill Gerow
Program Committee:
Tom Cleary
Steve Colecchi
Adelaide Folensbee
John Gallini
Anita Holloman
Jeff Winder
Circulation Coordinator:
Marcelline Niemann

RPEC Staff

Ken Willis,
Executive Director
Jane Hare,
Office Manager &
Events Coordinator
Marcelline Niemann,
Office Assistant

rpecNEWS is a publication of the Richmond Peace Education Center. The opinions and announcements in rpecNEWS are those of individual writers and are not necessarily endorsed by the Richmond Peace Education Center.

rpecNEWS is published ten times each year and the circulation is approximately 1,200.

The Richmond Peace Education Center is located at 14 North Laurel St., Richmond, VA 23220. Phone: (804) 358-1958. Fax: (804)358-2213. E-mail: rpec@richmond.infi.net.

In This Issue

Victory in Kosovo?.....1
Special Call for Peacemakers.....2
RPEC Workshop Schedule.....2
Essay Contest Winners.....4
Contributor's Corner.....5
Execution Vigil Schedule.....5
High School Essay Contest
Winning Essay, "The
Revelino".....6
Action Alert.....7
RPEC Position Paper on Non-
Violence and the Schools.....8
SOA Update.....8
Uprooting Justice.....9
RPEC Garden Party.....9
Awakening in Chiapas.....10

VICTORY IN KOSOVO???

by John Gallini

(Continued from page 1)

Serbian agreement to withdraw might have been quickly within reach.

4. **Acknowledge responsibility for conflict and injustice and seek repentance and forgiveness.** During the Cold War, Yugoslavia was a darling of the United States - a communist country that had established independence from the Soviet Union. The United States gave them the plans and licensed them to build US anti-aircraft weapons and light arms and provided them with military aid. We could acknowledge that we are in part responsible for Serbian military prowess and aggressiveness. We could cut way back on US weapons trade.

5. **Advance democracy, human rights, and religious liberty.** The "cleansing" we are seeing intertwines religion with ethnicity... The Albanians and Serbs see each other as a threat to their respective religions. The Orthodox church and Islam both need to be urged to develop clear practices of religious liberty, not only in Serbia, but in neighboring Bulgaria and Bosnia.

6. **Foster just and sustainable economic development.** When a country experiences unexpected economic deprivation, it is more likely to have a war. First the partition of Yugoslavia and then the economic blockade caused unexpected economic downturns that may have fueled Serbia's readiness to go to war. The economic blockade and the Balkan

wars have also caused economic downturns in surrounding countries and regions, including Bulgaria, Montenegro, and Macedonia. The whole area needs a Marshall Plan for shared economic recovery.

7. **Work with emerging cooperative forces in the international system.** The International War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague is an emerging cooperative force. The Fellowship of Reconciliation and the German government have urged that a warrant be issued for the arrest of Slobodan Milosevic for his war crimes. They want to strengthen the rule of law, to advocate an alternative to this destructive war, and to separate Milosevic from the people of Serbia.

8. **Strengthen the United Nations and international efforts for cooperation and human rights.** Would NATO or the United Nations lead the peacekeeping force in Kosovo once Serbia withdraws all or most of its army? Rigidity on this question began the bombing, and flexibility on it could have stopped the bombing early. Here was a possible tradeoff, a more complete Serbian withdrawal in exchange for a UN peacekeeping force, with a strong role for Russian and other Slavic troops. Serbian opposition leaders said Milosevic would accept a UN force in Kosovo that included forces from NATO countries.

9. **Reduce offensive weapons and weapons trade.** The Serbs controlled the former Yugoslavian army and kept the weapons. They

had a far greater offensive capability than their neighbors, and it tempted them to make war against Bosnia, Croatia, and Kosovo. Their destructive actions prove the truth that reducing offensive weapons is an effective way to prevent wars. An agreement from the Serbs not to spend their scarce money on rebuilding their military so long as their rivals also agree to limits would greatly advance future peace in the Balkans.

10. **Encourage grassroots peacemaking groups and voluntary associations.** A little over a year ago, television news showed massive demonstrations against Milosevic by Serbian groups. Some reports said the democratic forces in Serbia had a 50 percent chance of defeating the government and its unpopular policies in the coming elections. Now the bombing has quashed the opposition groups and united Serbia behind the Milosevic government. (A second article in July-Aug Sojourners describes the nonviolent movement in Kosovo.)"

I would add one further idea, which comes from the Global Action to Prevent War document. The UN should establish a professional mediation service for assignment by the UN Secretary-General, and a War-Prevention Committee in the UN General Assembly. We must shift our priorities and resources from military intervention to prevention of war. For those interested in access to the multitude of articles

Peace Center Essay Contest Winners Announced

The Richmond Peace Education Center has named the winners in its 1999 Peace Essay Contest. Judges selected winning entries from among almost 300 submissions. The theme of this year's contest was "Playing for Peace: What lessons do sports and games teach us about conflict and its resolution? How can individuals and nations use these lessons to handle conflicts and settle disputes?"

In the lower elementary grades the first place winner is Mary Catherine McCue, Tuckahoe Elementary School. She writes, "Sports and games give us three rules for solving conflicts fairly. They are: 1. Everyone gets something. 2. The rules are clear. 3. Plan! By planning you may not win today, but you probably will win tomorrow."

Other winners are:

Second Place: Paul Ream, Mary Munford Elementary School.

Third Place: Grayson Lambert, St. Anne's in Bristol, Va. and Walton Milam, Sacred Heart in Danville, Va.

Honorable Mentions: Zachary Briggs, R. E. Lee Elementary School, Petersburg; Lamar Montae Denno and Mark Baker, Walnut Hill Elementary School, Petersburg; and Michael O'Brian, St. Anne's, Bristol, Va.

In the upper elementary grades the first place winner is Stephanie Baker, Walsingham Academy, Williamsburg, Va. She says, "We can solve arguments by talking it out, just like the rough spots in a sport or game can be talked out.

We can use the lessons of making new friends, helping out our teammates and sharing resources instead of arguing over them. The leaders of nations should try harder to talk things over instead of fighting with one another."

The other winners are:

Second Place: Matthew Moschel, Walsingham Academy, Williamsburg

Third Place: Avery Waterman, Walsingham Academy, Williamsburg

Honorable Mentions: Danielle Haas, Alberta Smith Elementary School; Sarah Murphy, Walsingham Academy, Williamsburg; Ahmad R. Smith, Jacob L. Adams Elementary School; and Matthew Vaughan and Kathleen Moutvic, St. Pius X, Norfolk Va.

The middle school winner is Anne Bowman, Chickahominy Middle School. She writes, "When athletes don't resolve their conflicts peacefully, there are consequences. There are also consequences when nations don't solve their conflicts peacefully. When nations use guns, bombs and soldiers to resolve conflicts, there is always a loss of life. People don't suffer when we solve our problems the peaceful way. Nobody suffers when nations use diplomacy to solve their disputes." Anne won third place in last year's contest.

At the middle school level the other winners are:

Second Place: Nikki Melton, Goochland Middle School

Third Place: Kelly Matthes, St. Pius X, Norfolk

Honorable Mentions: Joshua

Avant, St. Pius X, Norfolk; Laura Garrett, Short Pump Middle School; Marion Harris, Thompson Middle School; Sarah Wilcox, Goochland Middle School; and Ian Zemmitt, Blandford Education Center, Petersburg.

The high school winner is Jean Ellen Addison, Governor's School. She says, "The greatest victory any player has after being fouled is getting back up without complaint and defeating their aggressor in a one-on-one challenge. One of the most impressive ways to do this is with a soccer move called the 'Rivelino' that fakes out another player. A Rivelino symbolizes the ability of the human spirit to find a path towards success that is not paved in violence."

Second Place: Finale Doshi, Governor's School

Third Place: Vrinda Shah, Governor's School

Honorable Mentions: Joanna Desmond, Sarah Longest, David Ro, Joy Rosenthal, and Thao-Ly Tam Phan, all from the Governor's School

Each of the first place winners will receive a \$150 award. First place essays will be printed in the RPEC newsletter over the next few months, and the winners will be invited to attend the RPEC Annual Dinner in November. Cash prizes will also be awarded for second and third place, and for honorable mention.

Judges spent three hours reading and evaluating submissions. The

(Continued on page 5)

Peace Center Essay Contest Winners Announced

(Continued from page 4)

judging panel included Walter Clark, Jr., Julie Corsaro, Margaret Edds, Lynda Fleet, Tawana Fortune, Bridget Houlihan, Portia Jenkins, Mary McCain, Gwendolyn Nixon, Mickey Offut, Mary Ann Ready, Dorothy Rice, Sharon Russell, Leslie Shiel, and Vivian Sullivan.

Other members of the committee included Paul Fleisher, Kelly Kyle, and Bridget Newberry.

For more information contact the Richmond Peace Education Center 358-1958.

We will publish the winning essays in this and subsequent issues of rpecNEWS. Jean Ellen Addison's winning entry in the High School Category is printed on

Execution Vigil Schedule

Join those who pray for the men who are to be executed and for their victims and the families.

August 17 - Marlon Williams, at St. Peter's Catholic Church, Eighth and Grace; 8:30 PM.

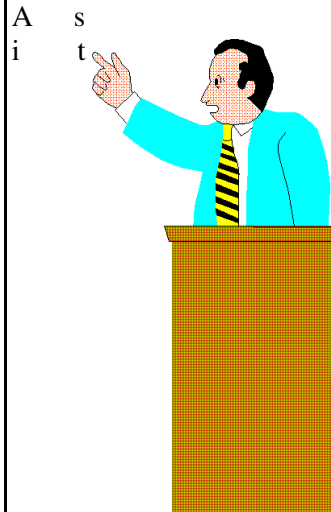
August 25 - Steve Roach, at Friends Meeting House, 8:30 PM.

**Deadline
For September Newsletter
August 10**

Contributor's Corner

Annual Dinner and Auction Scheduled

The evening of Friday, November 5, promises to be a memorable one. The 19th Annual Dinner and Auction is scheduled to be held at Ginter Park Presbyterian Church. As always,



promises to be the event of the season for Peace Center members!

Plans are already underway for securing new and exciting items for the silent and live auctions.

All persons with skills, talents, imagination, and assets are called on to produce items and create works of art to be auctioned at this annual event.

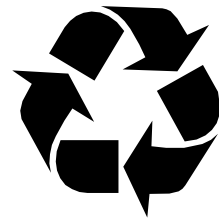
Volunteers are needed to make calls to merchants, giving them the opportunity to participate in this special occasion by donating goods and services. The system is well organized and calls may be made from the comfort of your own home. Let us know if you are available now to help with this important task.

Call 358-1958 and tell us what you can do!

Recycling

On June 29, the Peace Center received a check from Southeast Paper Recycling Co. for \$3.72.

This result was the efforts of two persons who took



newspapers and cardboard to 1350 N. Myers St. and credited it to the Peace Center's account. Southeast will also accept office and computer paper in quantities of 100 pounds or more and aluminum cans in any quantity.

We need a group of members to commit to take their recyclables to Southeast Paper Recycling Co., each month, or as the appropriate quantities accumulate. This could produce a significant monthly income with a very small amount of sweat and effort. LET'S DO IT!!

* * * * *

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

-Callers for Auction Items

-Persons with trucks or vans to take cardboard boxes from Ten Thousand Villages to Southeast Paper Recycling Co.

-Fundraiser/Grant Writer

-Monthly donors - in any amounts or let us know what you'd like to do

The "Rivelino"

by Jean Ellen Addison

Sports and games are not just about winning and losing. They encompass self-discovery and the ultimate sacrifice of an individual for a higher goal. I have played soccer and run track all of my life, and I am grateful for how they have made me a better, stronger person. Through soccer and track I have discovered that I can only reach my goals by working hard and dedicating myself towards surpassing them. I have also learned how to deal with failure and success. Sports teach how to overcome inevitable conflicts by recognizing problems and then overcoming them, rather than by reacting, and then using the game to prove a point.

In soccer, there are always players who will foul you whenever the referee turns his back. That constant elbow in the back or flying foot with evil intentions is a burden for any player. However, players learn not to react to this torture by responding with violence. Not only would they face a reprimand from the referee, but they would also face the disappointment of their coach and the shame of their teammates. By reacting with violence, you allow the person that is provoking you to beat you. The greatest victory any player has after being fouled is getting back up without complaint and then defeating their aggressor the next time they are in a one-on-one challenge. One of the most impressive ways to do this is through a soccer move called the "Rivelino" that fakes out another player. Not only is completing a 'Rivelino' a moral victory, it symbolizes the ability of the human spirit to find a path towards success that is not paved in violence.

This lesson, as any truth discovered in sports, can be applied to life. When Gandhi led the Indians toward ousting the oppressive British, he did it through non-violence. The British controlled the government and were a constant source of negativity for the Indians because they viewed India as merely another source of income to expand the British empire. However, India did not physically fight back. They pulled a "Rivelino" around the British through the constant support and commitment of the masses. In essence, they significantly defeated the British. Martin Luther King Junior incorporated this ideal in the civil rights movement in America. His march to Montgomery from Selma, Alabama and his inspirational speech at the March on Washington were far more effective than any attack that he could have organized against the police. He and the others in the struggle proved that they were morally correct by not responding in violence.

Today, Kosovo, the Kurds, Israel, and Palestine are all plagued by conflict. They are all facing an opposing force that is intimidating and very real. But instead of responding in violence and making themselves look equally like an enemy, and therefore losing the patience of the 'referee,' the United Nations, they should respond in non-violence that has the ability to overcome conflict. This can be seen in the compliance of the Kosovo Liberation Army with the United States and the United Nations in recent peace talks in France. They will defend themselves against the Serbs on a platform that involves the world, and not just their army. In our modern world, the world and its organizations can be seen as a way to get past an enemy by using a "Rivelino." Also, in this process they may come to the conclusion that the enemy is as human as they are.

Soccer has truly been a unifying force in the world. It provides a forum for world, interaction. Not only has it enhanced my awareness of conflict and success in my own life, it has made me more aware of the world around me. Through soccer, I have been in Mexico when Michel Platini scored a tying goal against the Brazilians in the quarter-finals of the World Cup, I have been in Sweden when the Danish defeated all odds to win the European Championship, and I have been in Atlanta, Georgia when the Nigerians won the Olympic soccer finals. But more importantly, I have been with every soccer player every time they defeated their oppressor through a "Rivelino" or some other display of skill. Marco Van Basten of the Netherlands was plagued by defenders, and had to retire early due to the ankle injuries that he incurred as a result. However, his goals are glorified around the world. In addition, he was voted World Football Player in 1993 as recognition of his ability to overcome his defender through a "Rivelino" or another amazing feat of soccer skill. It is always the forward that is nominated for awards in honor of great soccer players. This represents the superiority of using non-violence to defeat an opposing force. Sports have taught me that the human spirit has the ability to prevail over conflict by ignoring an alternative of violence and truly proving the strength of every individual and nation in the world. In our modern world, sports are a medium that can be applied to every facet of daily life, particularly our interaction with others.

Action Alert:

Debt Relief for Poverty Reduction Act of 1999

Stephen M. Colecchi

Director, Office of Justice and Peace

Catholic Diocese of Richmond

On March 11, H.R. 1095, the "Debt Relief for Poverty Reduction Act of 1999" was introduced. This bill, which was developed through the cooperation of the U.S. Catholic Conference, Catholic Relief Services, Bread for the World, and other groups, would significantly advance efforts to provide debt relief for impoverished countries. To gain enough momentum to carry it through both the House and the Senate, the bill will need lots of co-sponsors.

BACKGROUND: In poor countries, the government's obligation to make payments on its debts reduces resources for the basic needs of the world's poorest people, including needs for health care, decent housing, and education. Moreover, the need to generate resources for debt repayments can exacerbate harmful environmental practices that often prevail in poor nations as natural resources are exploited to raise cash.

H.R. 1095 would make important progress toward real debt relief for impoverished nations. It would:

- 1 provide deeper debt reduction
- 2 assure that determination of the appropriate level of debt relief takes into account the need to reduce poverty and protect the environment;
- 3 target debt relief for the poor by depositing savings from reduced debt service in a Human Development Fund, which would be dedicated to reducing the number of people living in poverty, expanding access of the poorest members of society to basic social services, and protecting the environment;
- 4 ensure that the economic and social reforms that are made conditions of debt relief ("conditionalities") incorporate effective measures for poverty reduction and environmental protection;
- 5 ensure that the terms and conditions of the debt relief and the arrangements for the operations and monitoring of the Human Development Fund would be "transparent" (open to public review) and would involve the participation of civil society, including humanitarian and development groups; and
- 6 authorize the funds necessary to carry out the provisions of the bill.

Current Co-Sponsors:

James Leach (R-IA), John LaFalce (D-NY), Douglas Bereuter (R-NE), Spencer Bachus, III (R-AL), Maxine Waters (D-CA), Frank Wolf (R-VA), Barney Frank (D-MA), Tony Hall (D-OH)

ACTION NEEDED:

Write your member of the U.S. House of Representatives and urge him or her to sign on as a co-sponsor of H.R. 1095. The Hon. _____, U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515.

Acknowledgement: This material was adapted from information provided by the Department of Social Development and World Peace of the U.S. Catholic Conference. Visit their web site at <http://www.nccbuscc.org/sdwp/>.

RPEC World Wide Web Address:
<http://www.rpec.org>

Richmond Peace Education Center Adopts Position Paper on Non-Violence and the Schools

At their meeting on June 14 The Richmond Peace Education Center adopted this Position Paper on Nonviolence and the Schools.

Mission:

To advocate for just economic and political policies locally and globally, to promote non-violent means of conflict resolution, to recognize and dismantle racism, to work in partnership with other groups committed to justice and peace

The Richmond Peace Education Center is committed to promoting nonviolence in schools because they are a vital institution in society where students and staff are challenged daily to meet strict academic standards despite real fears for their personal safety. Skills are learned, opinions formed and challenged, and decisions are made with regard to behavior that have far-reaching effects on the development of youth and their ability to mature and participate fully in society. The administration, staff, and students, all have a tremendous responsibility and opportunity to create a stimulating, nurturing atmosphere

and community within and around schools.

We strive to be pro-active and creative in building community where conflicts are resolved with win/win solutions through a process of inclusion and full participation in an environment of acceptance and respect for all.

We accept that conflict is a part of life--that with conflict comes opportunity for growth and change for all involved. We support policies which are comprehensive and multi-faceted in addressing the needs of students and staff members, with emphasis on nurturing and building community where each person feels a true sense of belonging and affirmation.

We recognize that in order to prevent violence we have to put forth alternatives to violence and develop skills and attitudes of nonviolence, cooperation and community-building within ourselves as individuals and as an organization.

We provide training in Children's Creative Response to Conflict and Peer Mediation to students and school personnel.

We continue to seek research-based curricula with which to

School of the Americas Update

By Jeff Winder

On Monday, May 3rd, nearly 2,000 activists encircled the Pentagon in an early morning vigil and nonviolent action calling for the closure of the SOA. Sixty people were arrested for painting red body images of SOA victims on the parade ground sidewalks. They were released with citations; but the charges were later dropped.

For the next two days, hundreds of activists flooded congressional offices with good results. Rep. Moakeley's bill (HR732) netted 19 new co-sponsors and Sen. Durbin's bill (S873) gained the support of two more Senators. The vote is likely to occur in August or September so now is a crucial to contact your legislators to ask for their support in closing the SOA.

Write: U.S. Senate Washington, D. C. 20510 and U.S. House of Representatives Washington, D.C. 20515

Join us for the 10th anniversary commemoration of the vigil to close the SOA at the gates of Ft. Benning in Columbus, GA. November 19-21, 1999. 10,000 are expected to attend and up to 5,000 will cross the line onto base property in an act of nonviolent civil disobedience.

For more information contact SOA Watch (202) 234-3440

For local carpools contact Jeff Winder (804) 457-2631

Consumer's Corner

There are a number of sources of information about consumer choices. One good place to start is **Coop America**.

Coop America publishes a quarterly magazine which focuses on consumer issues, and the **National Green Pages** which lists "green" companies throughout the U.S. (unfortunately, none of them are in

the Richmond (area). They also provide information on sweatshops. Contact them at:

Coop America
1612 K Street NW #600
Washington, DC 20006
(202) 872-5307

Their websites include: www.coopamerica.org

www.greenpages.org
www.sweatshops.org

Another internet source is **Good**

Uprooting Injustice

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Across the nation, farmworkers continue to struggle with unsafe working conditions, poverty-level wages, and discrimination. Agribusinesses and growers continue to make unreasonable demands on both U.S. resident farmworkers and non-resident farmworkers. In response to these conditions, the Toledo-based Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) has dedicated itself to uniting cucumber pickers in a historic drive to improve working conditions for farmworkers in eastern North Carolina.

This report, by Sandy Smith-Nonini, carefully documents the conditions facing farmworkers and the organized response. The following findings are among the most telling made by Dr. Smith-Nonini:

- Government offices lack the resources, including Spanish speaking inspectors, necessary to effectively enforce the limited legal standards that apply to working conditions and wages for farmworkers.

Aqueelah As-Salaam, former Executive Director of the Richmond Peace Education Center, and currently Executive Director of The Institute for Southern Studies recently appended this note to a report by Sandy Smith-Nonini. The report, titled, "Uprooting Injustice", was published by the Institute for Southern Studies. Copies are available for \$5.00 plus 99 cents postage to:

The Institute for Southern Studies
P. O. Box 531

- Large corporate food processors retain the majority of every food income dollar earned in North Carolina, leaving about a third for growers and less than a tenth for farmworkers. In California, where farm laborers have union contracts, farmworkers receive close to a fifth of every food income dollar.
- Growers fail to provide even decent working conditions, with inspectors citing "failure to provide hand washing and portable latrine facilities to

workers in the fields' as among the most common workplace violations found on farms.

- The FLOC campaign is a unique response that promises to reconcile the conflicts between the Mt. Olive Pickle Company (a major food processor), growers, and farmworkers-by seeking a three-way contract to more equitably manage resources in the growing process.
- The FLOC campaign is different from most union organizing struggles in its "permanent commitment" to the community of farmworkers in eastern North Carolina.

As this report went to press, the Farm Labor Organizing Committee announced a boycott of Mt. Olive Pickle Company products. It is the publisher's hope that readers will use the information in this report to decide whether to support the boycott and to learn more about the conditions faced by farmworkers in North Carolina and the country.

*Aqueelah As-Salaam
Executive Director, Institute for*

RICHMOND PEACE EDUCATION CENTER ANNUAL GARDEN PARTY

You are invited to come our annual party celebrating the work of the Richmond Peace Education Center.

In addition to good food and good music Sarah Foster, Dorothy M. Rice, Muriel M. Branch, and Paul Fletcher will be signing copies of their books. Portions of the proceeds will be donated to RPEC.

We ask for a contribution of \$15 (more if you can, less if you can't).

When? Saturday, August 14th, 5-8 PM.

Where? The Showcase at 25th and East Franklin.



The Showcase will donate 10% of it's sales during this event to the Peace Center.

Given by: Sarah Huggins, Don Ayers, Tom Cleary, Tawana Fortune, Linda Heacock, Anita Holloman, Ginnie Morrow, Terrie Pendleton, Novella Ruffin, Vivian Sullivan, and Ken Willis.

See you there!

Awakening in Chiapas

By Jeff Winder

"We used the bible as our base. We learned information that was about our daily lives. We heard before God that we were human beings, and we were awakened. We were awakened to the fact that the poor have needs . . . We don't want your government to train the soldiers to come back and kill their own people, we don't want your government to send machine guns and helicopters. We don't want war. This is what the people say."

These are the words of Mariano, who hosted the visit of our Witness for Peace delegation to the indigenous community of El Churro in Chiapas, Mexico. We came to Chiapas as international observers, in hope that our presence there might deter acts of violence for a short time. Through our meetings with human rights groups, Zapatista delegates and members of the indigenous community, we saw that an awakening has indeed happened. We learned about the government's efforts to suppress this awakening as indigenous people unite to demand justice and protect their ancestral homelands, putting them at odds with the ability of corporations to exploit the natural riches of Chiapas. We learned that the war being waged is not the guerilla war portrayed in the media, but a "low-intensity war, a war against the poor. We learned about the involvement of our own government in this war, and its connection to our daily lives. Hearing these things, we also were awakened.

Recent international interest in the conflict in Chiapas peaked with the Zapatista uprising of 1994, timed to coincide with the day NAFTA was signed into effect. Long before advocates in the U.S. were aware, the indigenous poor of southern Mexico realized that neoliberal reforms and their culmination in NAFTA would threaten the very existence of their way of life. The Zapatistas, taking their name from Emiliano Zapata, who led

the land reform revolution of 1910 - 1917, rose up in arms and took control of seven municipalities. Two weeks of heavy fighting ensued before a cease-fire was agreed to and peace talks began. The EZLN (Zapatista army) has honored this cease-fire, refusing to return fire even as their support bases were attacked and they were driven into the mountains and jungle. The government, while participating in the turbulent peace talks, continued to mount military offensives, harass and intimidate the support communities of the EZLN and mount a public smear campaign against Catholic bishop Don Samuel Ruiz, mediator of the peace talks. After more than two years of negotiations, the San Andres Accords on Indigenous Rights and Culture were signed. These were to be the first of four more agreements. When the government refused to implement any of the accords, the EZLN withdrew from the talks. They maintain their presence in the villages and in their mountain and jungle strongholds and continue with nonviolent actions to promote their agenda.

The Mexican government has tacitly recognized its failure to defeat the Zapatistas militarily and continues its campaign of low-intensity warfare against their support communities. This strategy, also called counter-insurgency warfare, is one that has been used throughout Latin America with disastrous results for the civilian population. A wide variety of tactics are used to terrorize villagers suspect of providing support to the EZLN. In military offensives raided and occupied communities, creating more than 20,000 internal refugees. They were never able to locate the General Command and apply arrest warrants to the Zapatista leadership; but numerous civilians have been arrested, tortured and jailed on trumped-up terrorism charges for allegedly being members of the EZLN. Many of these remain in

prison. Soldiers dwell in massive military encampments in the jungles outside of Zapatista support communities. The soldiers frequently rape women when they go to the river to wash clothes. Men with assault rifles interrogate villagers each time they leave their communities. In some heavily conflicted areas, there is one soldier for every three villagers.

Central to this bloody conflict in Chiapas is land use and ownership. Many indigenous communities subsist on ejidos, collective farms where each family owns the right to farm a parcel of land: but not the right to sell it. These lands have been constitutionally protected and Mayan communities have lived on them for generations. Unfortunately, these farmlands lie atop deposits of petroleum, uranium, natural gas and aluminum. They lie in the path of potential hydroelectric projects and African Palm plantations. So in preparation for NAFTA, then president George Bush told then president Carlos Salinas that in order for Mexico to become a full trading partner with the U.S., the ejidos would have to be eliminated. Without a referendum, the constitution was changed to make it possible to sell the ejidos. At the same time, government subsidies to these small farmers were eliminated and U.S. agribusiness corporations flooded the market with grains, drastically undercutting the prices of small local farmers. For a people already impoverished, the pressure to sell became tremendous.

Despite these outside pressures, only 3% of the ejidos have been privatized to date. People in these indigenous communities live by subsistence and recognize that without their lands they have no means of survival. In many cases, the extraction of these natural resources leaves the land unsuitable for farming. General Electric now has a proposal to build

(Continued on page 12)

July-Aug '99

CALENDAR

Meetings of Local Groups

- Every Wed.** **General Strike**, 8:00 PM. Call 355-6914 for details
- Every 3rd Wed.** **Amnesty International**, 7:00 PM at Friends Meeting. 4500 Kensington Ave. Call 320-9488
- Every 2nd Thurs.** **Virginians Against Handgun Violence**, 7:15 PM., Jewish Community Center, B. Phillips-Taylor, 737-2975
- Every 3rd Friday** **Sufi Dancing: Dances of Universal Peace**, 7:30-9:30 PM except Oct. Round House, Byrd Park. 353-4901
- Every Thurs.** **Richmond Organization for Sexual Minority Youth (ROSMY)**, 7:00-9:00 PM. Call support line: 353-2077 for more information; 353-1699 for the administrative line.
- Every 3rd Sat.** **Virginians for Justice**, 12:00 noon at the office. A political advocacy group working towards equal rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender citizens of Virginia. Open to the public. Contact number is 643-4816.
- Every 3rd Sun.** **Richmond Community for Ethics and Meaning**, at First Unitarian. 1000 Blanton Ave., 5-8 PM, Susan at 784-4069.
- Every 4th Sat.** **Pax Christi Peace Community** - Call Elaine Ogburn for details - 320-4514.
- Every 2n Mon.** **Virginia People of Faith for Alternatives to the Death Penalty**, 4:45 PM
Catholic Diocese Conference Room, Floyd and Cherry, Kathleen Kenney, 359-5661

UPCOMING EVENTS

- July 23 & 30** **CCRC Training**; 7/24 (Basic) and 7/31 (Training for Trainers)
- August 3-7** **Thirteenth Annual Pilgrimage to the U.S. Peace Places** - A 5-day, 165 mile march from Appomattox, Va., where the Civil War ended, to Yorktown, Va., where the Revolutionary War ended - Theme: "Increase the Peace"; Contact Chris Barrett (804) 846-6475.
- August 14** **Annual RPEC Party** - At the Showcase, 25th and Franklin, 5-8 P.M.
- August 27-29** **16th Annual Twin Oaks Women's Gathering** - "Women Celebrating Ourselves in Community". A multi-cultural event. Dance, movement, drumming, camping, swimming, creative activities, workshops, sweats, mud pit, ritual, fun, singing, games. Sliding scale fee \$40-\$140 includes camping and workshops. Register by August 1st. Contact Twin Oaks, 138 Twin Oaks Road, Louisa, VA 23093; email: gathering@twinoaks.org.
- September 3-5** **Twin Oaks Communities Conference** - A networking, learning, and bonding opportunity for anyone interested in cooperative or communal lifestyles, issues, and activities. \$75 (sliding scale) includes meals and camping. Contact: Communities Conference, 138 Twin Oaks Road, Louisa, VA 23093; (540) 894-5126; email: conference@twinoaks.org.
- September 12** **"A Friendly Forum on the Death Penalty"** - Kathleen Kenney, Nancy Gowan and Fletcher Lowe will speak on the 21 Day Rule at Friends Meeting after the regular service Sunday. Call 358-6185 for information.
- September 17-19** **Pax Christi Richmond Annual Retreat** - Led by Mary Rathert, OP. Contact John Gallini, 272-8141

Awakening in Chiapas

(Continued from page 10)

forty new hydroelectric power plants. Each of these would flood a valley filled with homes and farmland. The African Palm (which produces glycerin for the U.S. missile industry) causes an extreme rate of erosion. Twenty years of production turns the land into a desert that will not be farmed again in our lifetimes. Oil drilling and refining, ore extraction, huge monocultures of non-native crops, all of these have toxic by-products and destructive impacts on the local ecology. These impacts matter greatly to a land-based indigenous culture, a people who have first-hand knowledge of how directly our lives depend upon the health of our lands. As Mariano reminded us, our own government plays a significant role in this struggle. Mexico is now the single largest customer of the School of the Americas. The war on drugs is cited as the reason, but in actuality, only 8% of

Mexican students take counter-narcotics classes. The rest are enrolled in the same old counter-insurgency classes whose graduates have left a bloody trail all across Latin America. Many of the corporations lining up to exploit the wealth of Chiapas are based in this country. The free trade agenda that has resulted in the erosion of even the most basic of human rights and environmental protections for the poor in Chiapas and the world over is a product of United States foreign policy.

The people of El Churro, Mariano's village, live in great poverty. There is running water only in one central building. Most of the people live in homes with dirt floors, cracks in the walls and no glass to cover the windows. This is a mountainous region where the winter temperatures often fall below

freezing at night. Basic healthcare is lacking and sanitary facilities are nonexistent. Yet, none of this is what stands out in my mind when I remember our visit to El Churro. I remember how healthy the community seemed, how easily the people laughed, how the children seemed to thrive. I remember the vivid realization that this is what is being destroyed by free trade and low-intensity warfare. I often think of the children of El Churro as I watch my own children play. When I do, I pray that my own people will be awakened, and that one day, we will unite to end the violence being done in our names.

(Excerpted from a longer article. For full text or if you might like to participate in a delegation to Chiapas contact Jeff Winder (804)457-2631)



Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Richmond, VA
Permit #1119