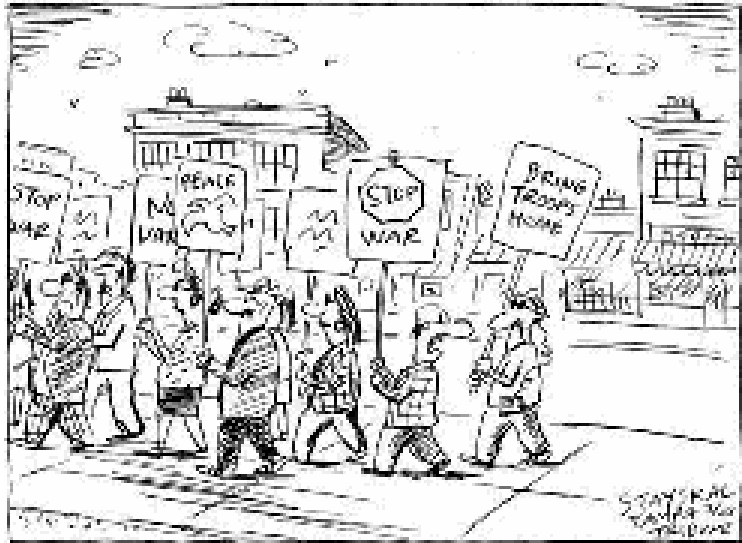


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**(Re)Affirming Non-Violence
as a Means to Peace**

by Ken Willis, RPEC Executive Director

“Pacifists believe - and their belief is based upon individual experience and a study of history, past and contemporary – that the most effective, the most equitable, and the most economical way of meeting violence is to use non-violence.”¹

The day after the Attack on Iraq began, I participated in an anti-war rally in downtown Richmond. During the course of the rally, several other participants spread an American flag on the ground and proceeded to tramp back and forth over it. Feeling that this was not an appropriate act of protest, (many of those at the rally shared that they were against war, not the US) I picked up the flag and placed it in an area where it would not be walked on. I was commended for my act.

For some time now I have been aware of and concerned about a small number of protesters connected with the

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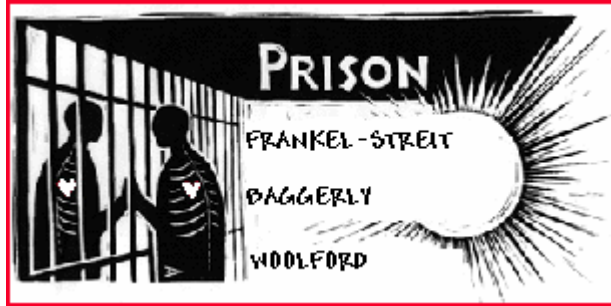
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A Letter From Prison

Cell bloc M, Northern Neck Regional Jail.

A surprising quiet pervades these cinderblock walls this morning, like most mornings. Most of the 24 men who inhabit this small, white-washed cellblock go back to bed after morning chow (6:30 a.m.) because they're tired, separated from families and loved ones, and too depressed to stay awake another day in this void.

Only I and maybe one other quiet guy stay awake to read, pray, and write letters; or to just let the cacophony of noises finally drain from our heads after last night's TV blaring and shouts of men echoing off these walls. It's really a great day when the TV isn't turned on till lunchtime.

It's from this vantage-point that I watch with saddened eyes the war coverage of U.S. tanks speeding toward Baghdad. I think this is the only place, behind bars, where I could stomach the flag-waving propaganda-riddled TV news coverage of this unjust war. I concur with Thoreau that, "In an unjust society the only place for a just man (sic) is in jail".

Never has there been more attention paid to the families of soldiers rent apart by the "call of duty". Hardly a newscast of the war goes by in which a father or mother in the military is not cameoed suffering separation from their families. Most of the time it's the wives sitting with a number of children, holding back tears, worried sick about their loved ones in harm's way.

As a father of three small children, my heart goes out to these military families. But why, oh why, are these men and women over there in the first place? My heart goes out to them because I, like them, am separated from my wife and children. On Dec. 30, 2002, in the midst of a group formed to resist the gathering clouds of war, Steve Baggarly of the Norfolk Catholic Worker, Steve Woolford from a Catholic Worker farm in North Carolina and I poured blood on the doors and walls of the Pentagon entrance. This action was an effort to alert people to the horror and madness of war. For this we were arrested and subsequently dispatched in a quick trial in the Alexandria Federal Court. Any talk of killing of innocents or the bloodiness of war was objected to as irrelevant. Consequently, we were found guilty and all sentenced to 6 months in jail.

You will not see Steve Baggarly interviewed on TV, or his wife, Kim with their two young boys, Daniel (11) and Martin (2), missing their father. Nor will you hear Steve Woolford or his wife, Lenore, interviewed about how they're bearing their separation. Nor will you see my wife, Sue, and our three children, Isaac (10), Anna (8), and Gabriella (5) on TV, missing their father who was separated from them for trying to stop the killing. It's

(Continued on page 6)

(Re)Affirming Non-Violence as a Means to Peace

(Continued from page 1)

contemporary peace movement. My concern arises from the realization that for these individuals the act of demonstrating, even to the point of engaging in acts of violence, is the focus of their activities, rather than the issues they claim to address. I find this focus, their use of foul and abusive language toward those who disagree with their point of view, and their desecration of the Flag detrimental to the peace movement as these acts set the stage for possible injury to those involved in what should be peaceful events, lead to the possible destruction of public and private property, and contribute to an often-held negative view of the movement on the part of the general public. Several recent cases in point have surfaced in connection to opposition to the US War on Iraq:

- According to the Associated Press, a policeman was shot and killed by protesters during an anti-war demonstration on March 21st outside the US embassy in Yemen. An additional 8 police officers and 35 protesters were injured.²
- Following the March Against Poverty and War in Richmond on March 23rd, a handful of demonstrators continued to march towards the downtown area where they broke out the windows of a local military recruiting office and reportedly spray-painted a Richmond mounted police unit. Their actions led to a Times-Dispatch headline the next morning that proclaimed, “Three are arrested after anti-war rally”.
- The authors of at least two letters to the editors of local papers have expressed their concern with regards to the issue and the rally cited above. One relates how he was inspired by “Richmond residents who refuse to capitulate to the fear-mongering of the Bush administration”, yet “disappointed...that a small group of anarchists tried to use the ...march to promote their own violent cause...”³ The other closes his letter by saying, “I am against this illegal war too. However, I will not associate myself with lawless thugs.”⁴

Others have noticed this trend as well. In her syndicated column for March 22nd, political journalist Molly Ivins states, “If you are anti-war, keep in mind that anyone who suggests or urges that you do anything illegal or violent to oppose the war should immediately be regarded as poison. Peaceful civil disobedience is another matter...”⁵ Her thoughts echo my own understanding of the type of peaceful, non-violent direct action in the face of injustice advocated by both Gandhi and King. Central to this model of protest has always been two crucial beliefs: that one does not intentionally antagonize or humiliate their adversary and that violence has no place in a peace movement.

Violence cannot overcome violence; it only leads to more violence. King has written much to address the issue, including this thought: “The minute a program of violence is enunciated, even for self-defense, the atmosphere is filled with talk of violence, and the words falling on unsophisticated ears may be interpreted as an invitation to aggression.”⁶ His sentiments follow Gandhi’s beliefs that “Complete civil disobedience is rebellion without the element of violence in it.”⁷ Such action calls for great restraint on behalf of the practitioner, for, as with the case of protesting the War with Iraq, resorting to violence places the demonstrator clearly at odds with his/her (our) stated desire of raising public concern over the violence inherent to war.

Through peaceful protest we may win some folk over to our point of view. Through acts of violence, we would surely turn many against it.

In Peace, Ken

¹ The Handbook of Non-Violence by Robert Seeley; Lawrence Hill & Co., Westport, Conn. and Lakeville Press, Great Neck, NY, 1986, p. 64.

² “Protest turns deadly”, Richmond Times-Dispatch, 3/22/03, p. A9.

³ “Protest Disrupters Mimic Military”, Richmond Times-Dispatch, 4/1/03, Editorial Page.

⁴ “Clashing views on war”, Richmond Free Press, 4/3-5/03, Op-Ed pages.

⁵ “On the Way to War, What Went Wrong?”, Richmond Times-Dispatch, 3/22/03, Op-Ed Page.

⁶ Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community? by Martin Luther King, Jr.; Beacon Press, Boston, 1967, p. 56.

⁷ All Men Are Brothers by Mahatma Gandhi; Continuum Publishing Corp., New York, 1982, p. 135.

Consumers Corner

Economic Responses to the War Against Iraq

By John Gallini

Those of you who have read this column in its early days will know that my purpose in writing is to help people better align their economic lives with their spiritual values. Thus, assuming that most of you believe that all of us are deserving of a living wage, I have pointed out companies that obtain a significant part of their merchandise from sweatshops, as well as those that engage in “fair trade”. The assumption is that this would affect where you choose to shop.

So how do we respond to this immoral, illegal and unwise war against Iraq? Some, who live outside the U.S., have called for a boycott of “Brand America”. That might work in Greece or France (it would be interesting to see how McDonalds and Coca Cola are doing in those countries) but it is a bit impractical here. Still, one can take a few symbolic steps. A switch from California to French wine seems appropriate, for example.

Another approach, which I proposed in my December column, would be to buy our gasoline from companies that did not obtain most of their crude oil from the Middle East. Some large companies that do not import Middle Eastern oil include: Citgo, Sunoco, Conoco, Sinclair, BP/Phillips and Hess.

Another focused approach has been proposed by several groups, organized around “Be the Cause”, (www.bethecause.org). They propose a boycott to target companies that bankrolled Bush into the Whitehouse. Another website, www.boycottbush.net, was set up in 2001 to encourage individuals to influence the global politics of climate change, using the same approach. Here are the big Bush/Cheney bankrollers:

Kraft (Subsidiary of Altria/Phillip Morris) - Phillip Morris (Altria) contributed \$3.1 million or 82% of their total political contributions.

United Parcel Service - \$ 2.1 million or 71% of their total political contributions.

BP/Amoco - \$1.8 million

Amway - \$1.3 – 1.8 million

Citigroup - \$1.0 – 1.8 million

Exxon-Mobil-Esso - \$1.2 million or 89% of their total political contributions.

Wal-Mart Stores - \$ 0.6 million or 88% of their total political contributions.

I would note that Phillip Morris gets good ratings from the Council on Economic Priorities (CEP) for advancement of women and minorities and for community outreach, but poor marks for their environmental record – and, of course, they are still the object of an Infact boycott for marketing cigarettes to children. Two other Bush supporters are Pfizer and Pepsico, but I have excluded them from the list because of their otherwise excellent ratings from CEP.

My approach in all of this is to better align my purchases with my values. Certainly, I do not want to support companies that have made this war possible, although support for the selection of Bush as president does not necessarily imply support for the war – but it seems to be the best guide we have right now.

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)

CSA is a mutually beneficial arrangement between farmers and the community. In exchange for financial support in the spring from shareholders, farmers commit to provide healthy, locally grown food throughout the growing season. Joining a CSA can lead to a greater awareness of our interdependence on one another and the land.

Free Earth Farm is a Richmond area CSA. A full share provides 8 to 12 pounds per week of 35-40 types of produce, beginning on July 5 and going through November 8. Typical items would include Beets, Lettuce, Chard, Carrots, Broccoli, Tomatoes, Potatoes, Corn, and smaller amounts of Tofu, Honey, Chicken and Eggs. A full share cost is \$500 and there are lower costs for worker shares and half shares.

For a brochure or more information, contact Tony Lagana at (804) 562-8704 or by e-mail at organicutopia@aol.com.

A View From Spain

By Dave Depp

During the first two weeks of March it was my pleasure to travel widely in Spain with my wife Kathleen who is fluent in Spanish. In addition to her friends in Madrid and Berriz in Northern Spain, we had conversations with a variety of people both rural and urban, and both working and middle class. Our conversations invariably included the then impending United States invasion of Iraq.

Julian, who resides in Madrid, shared his memories of war. He was eight years old when the Spanish civil war began in 1936 and he still retains vivid memories of being hungry and seeing people suffering around him. A farmer's wife who rented us a room in her Elorrio house described to us fleeing into the mountains with her siblings and mother to escape the army of Francisco Franco. Both she and Julian opposed the Iraq war because they know first hand the suffering of innocent civilians, an unavoidable part of all wars.

On the plane from Miami to Madrid we were seated alongside a friendly Spanish businessman from Santander, an industrial and fishing city on the northern coast of Spain. He stated that war in Iraq would disrupt the world economy; deplete the United States Treasury, and damage international institutions and relations.

In Guadalupe, an ancient town west of Madrid, we talked to a construction worker and his family that we met as we took an evening walk through the narrow streets. They all opposed the imminent war saying it was wrong for America to attack Iraq without United Nations support.

In the cities of Toledo, Salamanca, and Burgos, we saw bed sheets hanging from windows with the scrawled words, "No a la Guerra!", meaning no to the war. In these cities and in many towns we encountered wall posters protesting the war and announcing past or future demonstrations. In more than one city center we signed anti-war petitions.

In Logrono a waitress dismissed anyone who goes to war or believes in war as "stupid." She said dismissively, "I hope the Americans and Arabs kill each other off." In Ciudad Rodrigo I had my hair cut and the barber told me the president of Spain used to be admired but now he is despised because he is supporting, "Bush's war." With Kathleen's help, I asked him why he supposed his president was risking his reputation and he responded, "To ensure access to oil, and to secure support in his fight against Basque terrorists in Northern Spain." He dismissed President Bush as, "a stupid ex-alcoholic."

We met numerous hotel workers opposed to the war with the exception of one woman in Logrono who allowed that some Spaniards couldn't actively support the anti war movement because they feel something needs to be done about Saddam Hussein and this feeling makes them uncertain and ambivalent.

Throughout our travels and conversations with Spaniards we were never confronted with hostility because we were Americans. Instead, we were clearly informed over and over again that the problem is the American government behaving imperialistically and our leaders being variously arrogant, foolish, and power-hungry.

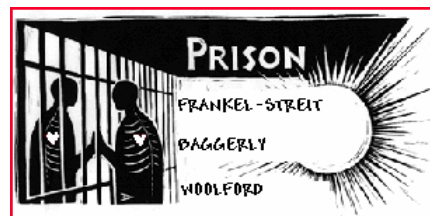


Mother's Day for Peace



Norfolk, Virginia
Sunday, May 11: Rally and March

2:00 pm Festive Rally,
Lafayette Park, 5:00 pm
Permitted March



A Letter From Prison

(Continued from page 2)

not that I want to be on TV. No, thank you. TV, by and large, is not ready for this type of story, for we are a culture that understands the ways of war and violence far more than the ways of active nonviolence. No, in our society it is virtuous to leave family, home and career to go to fight and kill halfway across the world. We have left family and home to prevent killing and war. It's our vision and conviction that until we face our opposition to war with the same degree of commitment, sacrifice and will that soldiers face in the waging of war, we will not have that peace based in justice that we all desire. Bill Frankel-Streit

TROUBLED ABOUT PAYING FOR WAR?

Learn about the Campaign to pass a federal law that would allow the taxes from those conscientiously opposed to war to be used for non-military purposes only. Excellent resources are available, including a video,

Cost for video, booklet, study guide and other materials is \$20 (or purchase separately, video \$15, booklet \$2, study guide \$1). NATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR A PEACE TAX FUND 2121 Decatur Place NW, Washington, DC 20008
Toll free: 1-888-PEACETAX (1-888-732-2382)

<http://www.peacetaxfund.org>,
Email: info@peacetaxfund.org

Arise then...women of this day!
Arise, all women who have hearts!
Whether your baptism be of water or of tears!
Say firmly:
"We will not have questions answered by irrelevant agencies,
Our husbands will not come to us, reeking with carnage,
For caresses and applause.
Our sons shall not be taken from us to unlearn
All that we have been able to teach them of charity, mercy and patience.
We, the women of one country,
Will be too tender of those of another country
To allow our sons to be trained to injure theirs."

From the voice of a devastated Earth a voice goes up with
Our own. It says: "Disarm! Disarm!
The sword of murder is not the balance of justice."
Blood does not wipe our dishonor,
Nor violence indicate possession.
As men have often forsaken the plough and the anvil
At the summons of war,
Let women now leave all that may be left of home
For a great and earnest day of counsel.
Let them meet first, as women, to bewail and commemorate the dead.
Let them solemnly take counsel with each other as to the means
Whereby the great human family can live in peace...
Each bearing after his own time the sacred impress, not of Caesar,
But of God -
In the name of womanhood and humanity, I earnestly ask
That a general congress of women without limit of nationality,
May be appointed and held at someplace deemed most convenient
And the earliest period consistent with its objects,
To promote the alliance of the different nationalities,
The amicable settlement of international questions,
The great and general interests of peace.

"Mother's Day Proclamation"
Julia Ward Howe, 1870

For more information, go to: <http://www.mothersdayforpeace.org>

War Divides Families

By Connie Moss

In addition to the immeasurable "collateral damage" in Iraq as a result of Bush's war, so too is there "collateral damage" from this war here in Southside Virginia. As the destruction of Iraq has brought grief to countless Iraqi families, so too the destruction of Iraq has sadly touched my family.

My oldest son finished high school in 1997. The summer of his graduation and the following Fall, he worked odd jobs, attempted a semester at Community College, and played hard: not exactly the life a mother might have in mind for her son, but one I could accept in understanding that for some, there are more stepping stones in life than there are for others.

But after receiving two of those dreaded calls from police within months of one another, "Mrs. Moss, your son has been taken by ambulance..." I began shaking my finger at my son, as did the young woman whom he would marry in 1999. Truly, as I watched the plane that would deliver my son to San Antonio for basic training taxi down the runway, I let out a huge sigh of relief.

George Bush's declaration, "If you're not with us, you're against us" has not only divided our international community and our nation, his words have divided American families, including mine.

I am no longer on the list of those my daughter-in-law sends pictures of my granddaughter to. My son, somewhere in the Gulf region, has communicated disgust with and contempt for me for "not supporting" our troops. Other family members, who are also confident that their flag decal will get them into Heaven, have labeled my protesting of this war "pathetic".

As heartbreaking for me as it is to know that such division in my family may take many moons, if ever, to heal, I continue to support my son in the best way I can even imagine---by telling the Bush regime to *bring him home now!*

Connie Moss lives in Victoria, VA where she is the mother of six. She is a member of Military Families Speak out, an organization of people who are opposed to war in Iraq and who have relatives or loved ones in the military, and the Virginia AntiWar Network.

A Prayer For The World

Rabbi Harold S. Kushner

Let the rain come and wash away the ancient grudges,
the bitter hatreds held and nurtured over generations.
Let the rain wash away the memory of the hurt, the neglect.
Then let the sun come out and fill the sky with rainbows.
Let the warmth of the sun heal us wherever we are broken.
Let it burn away the fog so that we can see each other clearly.
So that we can see beyond labels, beyond accents, gender or skin color.
Let the warmth and brightness of the sun melt our selfishness.
So that we can share the joys and feel the sorrows of our neighbors.
And let the light of the sun be so strong that we will see all people as our neighbors.
Let the earth, nourished by rain, bring forth flowers to surround us with beauty.
And let the mountains teach our hearts to reach upward to heaven.
Amen.



Experience the Fear

By Stephen M. Colecchi

The White House web site is not on my browser's "favorites" list, but it is worth a visit. The site provides clear evidence of a key to the Administration's domestic and foreign policy—fear.

At a Catholic social ministry conference that I attended in Washington, DC in February, Rev. Bryan Massingale did an analysis of the Administration's security policies and suggested that we visit the White House web site. There one finds links to the national security strategy of the United States—a strategy that names many fears and then supports preventive military action to meet them. Few of the threats are imminent and direct, and many can be addressed diplomatically, but the military stance of our nation is to use force aggressively to counter remote or gathering threats.

On my most recent visit to the White House web site on April 16, I found the first three "In Focus" links related to fear: Iraq, National Security, and Homeland Security. The front page warned that the "Homeland Security Current Threat Level" was "HIGH" in bold print and the ominous orange graphic led to a more detailed description "the national threat level."

The National Security document available on the site declares: "We must be prepared to stop rogue states and their terrorist clients before they are able to threaten or use weapons of mass destruction against the United States and our allies and friends." It goes on to argue: "We cannot let our enemies strike first." It appears the mere possession of weapons is enough for war, even in the absence of a threat to use them. I wonder what we might think of other nations who may want to launch "preventive" strikes against us. And with this preventive strike policy in place, how will we have the credibility to ask other nations to "stand down" when they feel threatened. The conflict between India and Pakistan comes to mind.

As depressing as it can be, I recommend a visit to the White House web site at www.whitehouse.gov. It is important that we understand the policies our nation's leaders and what they intend to do in our name. Then we need to counter the "fear" with a vision of "hope." There are alternatives to "war." But we will only consider them if we refuse to

War and Conscience

By Stephen M. Colecchi

In this time of war and with the possibility of other wars in the context of the "war on terrorism" on the horizon, many young people may want to establish themselves as conscientious objectors (CO) to war. The Center on Conscience and War has an excellent web site that can provide helpful guidance. The web address is www.nisbco.org/. The link to "Questions for the Conscientious Objector" and "CO Affirmation" may be particularly helpful to individuals. The "Draft Counselor's Manual" and "Draft Counselor Training" would be very helpful to churches and organizations who want to assist young people who want to declare their opposition to participation in war. It is important that we stand with those who for deeply held moral reasons object to war.



**Center On Conscience
& War Violence**
www.nisbco.org/.

WHERE CHURCH AND STATE STREETS INTERSECT

A report on the 2003 General Assembly Throughout the Lens of the Faith Community's Concerns for Social Justice.

By The Rev. Fletcher Lowe, Executive Director,
Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy

Peace, Shalom and Salaam.

Currently in Virginia, if I am the non-custodial parent of a child on welfare, I give my \$150 or \$68 child support to the State. My child receives \$50 maximum regardless of the amount I may have given. Last year *the state took in \$8 million, the children got \$2 million!* An injustice! As of July 1, 2003, 100% of that child support will go to the child. Over 12,000 Virginia children living with poverty will benefit.

That illustrates the work that *the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy* does on behalf of the Faith community in Virginia. Founded in 1982, VICPP is *the Commonwealth's only statewide, non-partisan, non-profit organization advocating for justice for Virginia's citizens* who are often unable to speak for themselves: at-risk children and youth, families who live in poverty, the homeless, the incarcerated. The vision of the Center is to *"unite and empower people of Faith to work for a more just and compassionate Commonwealth."* Through its activities, the Center brings to the legislative process the *shared values of its Muslim, Jewish and Christian traditions*, specifically the prophetic call for justice.

This year's General Assembly was dominated by two factors- the shortage of money that resulted in curtailing some essential services for those who live with poverty and the upcoming election of all 100 delegates and all 40 Senators. Also, there was a much more user-friendly climate with this administration than with the previous 2. That led to greater cooperation and support from the Governor's office. A brief summary of the Center's efforts- all of which came in collaboration with other groups and organizations:

➤ **Death Penalty:**

- *Bills to abolish and declare a moratorium failed.*
- *With the bills to exempt the mentally retarded from the death penalty*, there was "good news, bad news." The good news: the clinical, American Psychiatric Association definition of mental retardation prevailed after attempts to make it far more restrictive failed. The bad news: the determination of mental retardation rests with the jury in the sentencing phase after conviction, rather than pre-trial with the judge.
- Presenting *new evidence of innocence* limited currently to 21 days (except DNA) was expanded to 90 days, a mere cosmetic change. However, in the discussion, some key legislators for the first time indicated their desire to effect some substantial changes so that innocence is always relevant, not just after 21/90 days.
- Because of his persistence efforts and ongoing commitment to these and other aspects of criminal justice over the years, the Center has selected *the Hon. Henry Marsh of Richmond as its Legislator of the Year.*

➤ **Poverty and the working poor:**

- *Food Stamps:* 1 car disregarded regardless of value in calculating, semi-annual eligibility reporting rather than with every income change and 5 months transitional food stamps for those moving from welfare to work.
- *Children's Health Insurance:* several user-friendly changes including easier paperwork, expanded coverage and reduced waiting period.
- Calculations for unemployment benefits eased for those with shorter work histories.

(Continued on page 12)

Often Avoided Truths

By Dave Depp

I sat down to write about why going to war in Iraq was a bad idea. After a few minutes it occurred to me that I would simply be summarizing ideas repeated over and over by writers more competent than I am. Instead I want to share what I think are some of the underlying truths related to the present war that are either seldom talked about or avoided completely.

1. The United States has a long history of imperialistic behavior and now openly proclaims such motives. The Bush government now speaks of unilateral and preventive war to insure American military, economic and political dominance.
2. We are in danger of losing our democracy. Our president was selected by the Supreme Court despite evidence that his opponent won the crucial election in Florida.¹ Our Congress irresponsibly gave away the constitutional power to declare war to the Executive branch. The Bush government is restricting the rights of accused people, eavesdropping on private communications and interrogating people based on their country of origin. More restrictions on civil liberties are being planned in Patriot Act II.
3. We should not support our troops if they are engaged in an aggressive, unnecessary and immoral war. The idea that having gone to war makes the war right is absurd. Each person in uniform, however ill-informed, has a responsibility not to follow orders if the orders are illegal or immoral. The Nuremberg trials following World War II codified this view.
4. Wars almost always are fought at the expense of the poor and poorly educated to advance the interests of the powerful and advantaged. The military-industrial complex has been driving our government for years. Retire from the military and you go to work for Grumman, leave Congress and you become a lobbyist for Grumman.
5. Almost all of our educational institutions at all levels teach conformity and blind obedience while avoiding an honest historical presentation of America. Students are not encouraged to question authority, most textbooks present a nationalist perspective, and the typical 18-year-old military volunteer is not prepared to determine what is a just or unjust war.²
6. God does not take sides in war and our political and religious leaders are demagogues when they employ God to support war. Further, the idea that the teachings of Jesus can be easily reconciled with the slaughter of war is dishonest.
7. All the problems facing humanity such as new diseases, pollution, ecological degradation, maldistribution of goods, and wars, require international cooperation, coordination and limits on sovereignty. The Bush government is actively undermining the U.N. while refusing to promote or abide by international agreements.
8. Bravery in a bad cause is extremely unfortunate. Let us mourn the dead and bind the wounds of those needlessly injured in war, while recognizing the bravery of those who take risks for peace. Mordaci Vanunu has rotted in an Israeli jail for years because he dared to inform the world that Israel had developed atomic weapons. Soldiers all over America risk imprisonment and ostracism while jeopardizing their future when they conscientiously object to war.
9. *The tail wags the dog* when Bush and Blair meet to discuss how much part the U.N. can play in the rebuilding of Iraq. The U.S. and Britain should be receiving directions from the United Nations.
10. By waging preemptive war, the United States has lost support all around the world weakening a united approach to reducing terrorism, and the war in Iraq is likely breeding more terrorist violence.
11. Our military defeat of a much weaker Iraqi foe by employing overwhelming fire power including depleted uranium with its associated contamination is not something that Americans should view with pride. Sadness and feelings of national diminishment should predominate.
12. Each of us is directly responsible for the actions of our government. We all provide the money that supports

(Continued on page 12)

CALENDAR**MAY 2003****Meetings of Local Groups**

- Every Sunday** **Food Not Bombs, Richmond <Meal Sharing**, 4:00 P.M. in Monroe Park. Hotline # 359-4880 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.** **Equality Virginia**, 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 1st 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

- Every Saturday** **Hanover Citizens for Peace** - A weekly vigil protesting the Iraq war is held in front of the Ashland Town Hall on Saturday afternoons from 3 to 4 p.m. Contact Dave Depp at 227-3691.
- Every Saturday** **Women in Black** – Start at Virginia Museum, Boulevard entrance, near Grove at 1 p.m.
- May 11** **Norfolk protest on Mothers' Day - Rally and March - Norfolk, Virginia** - 2:00 pm Festive Rally, Lafayette Park, 5:00 pm
- May 16, 17, 18** **AVP Workshop** - Friday, 6:00 - 8:30 p.m., Saturday, 9:00 a.m.- 6:00 p.m., Sunday, 9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. at The Catholic Diocese, 811 Cathedral Place. Contact RPEC at 804-358-1958 for information. Or send your name, address and telephone number with \$35.00 to: RPEC, 14 N. Laurel St., Richmond. VA 23220



**For June Newsletter
May 16**

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

Often Avoided Truths

(Continued from page 10)

its immoral waging of war. We pay for our government's stockpile of nuclear weapons. We pay for a military

establishment larger than that of all other countries combined. It is time to resist paying for our government's decline into open imperialism and preemptive war.

¹ Palast, Greg. The Best Democracy Money Can Buy, Plum Penguin Putnam, 2002.

HELP WANTED!!!

RPEC members: Your board of directors needs you. The RPEC board currently has several unfilled positions. We would much prefer to work at full strength. If you are interested in serving a term as a member of the RPEC Board of Directors, please contact the center at 358-1958 and request a board application.

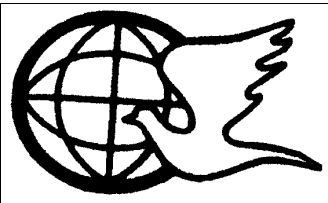
WHERE CHURCH AND STATE STREETS INTERSECT

(Continued from page 9)

THE major issue now is tax reform.

Over the past 4 years there have been 3 committees dealing with this. Now a fourth, and more powerful one is in place. Issues of equity, adequacy and simplicity will dominate the concerns of the Faith community as this develops. Stay tuned and in communication with your legislators. This is a significant opportunity to fix an antiquated and inequitable system.

For more information about the Center, its legislative agenda, a summary of its 2003 legislative efforts, membership, availability of speakers and the like, visit its website, www.vicpp.org or call, 804-643-2474



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