

The New Jersey Peacemaker

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Founded 1957, 50 Years of Citizen Action

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New Jersey Peace Action and New Jersey Peace Action Education Fund, founded in 1957, are committed to working through grassroots citizen action to abolish nuclear weapons, promote an end to domestic and international weapons trafficking (including abolition of handgun violence), demilitarize the federal budget, and teach non-violent conflict resolution.

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ABU GHRAIB WHISTLE-BLOWER SPEAKS AT SOUP LUNCH

A former U.S. Army intelligence officer who blew the whistle on torture at Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison gave his first public speech about what he saw at NJ Peace Action's annual soup lunch on Nov. 11.

Sam Provance described how he was forced to take part in the abuse of a 16-year-old Iraqi boy whose "face haunts me every day." Though some have been punished, the higher-ups most to blame have thus far escaped accountability. To change the policy, you must change the policymakers, emphasized Provance.

He spoke to ABC News and testified before Congress in 2004, but it was not until his discharge from the army in October that he felt free to speak without fear of reprisal.

Keynote speaker Ray McGovern, a co-founder of Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity, talked of his 27 years as a CIA analyst, where his job was "to speak truth to power." He called it painful to see how the agency's intelligence gathering was misused regarding Iraq.

McGovern discussed the Downing Street memos and other evidence of how

the Bush administration "fixed" the intelligence around the policy—to invade Iraq—in 2002, when it was still pretending to go along with UN weapons inspections.

He also spoke of "the virtue of anger" as the proper response to injustice, and the need to act, even if you put your own neck at risk. Though the 2006 election empowered Democrats and war opponents, Democrats are "used to not doing much," said McGovern. They need to be emboldened and it is our job to do it.

The soup lunch, which fell on Veterans Day, also featured Geoff Millard, who is active in Iraq Veterans Against the War. He emphasized that the war is long over and what we have now is an occupation that will drag on until we decide to leave. "We cannot guarantee what will happen



Torture Talk: Sam Provance

when we go but more are sure to die if we stay," he said.

Those who want to help the troops should remove the magnets from their cars and get behind his three-point plan: 1) Bring the Troops home now! 2) take care of them once they return, including monitoring their health for the effects of exposure to depleted uranium weapons and 3) pay reparations to Iraq.

The NJ Coalition to Bring the Troops Home Now! was honored with the Hope Shapiro Bread and Roses Award for its work to build public support for immediate withdrawal from Iraq.



Michael Parenti,
author of *Superpatriotism & The Terrorism Trap*

featured speaker at
NJ Peace Action's
50th Anniversary Dinner

May 6, 2007

Not On Our Watch -- The Demise of Habeas Corpus

New Jersey Peace Action is working to repeal the Military Commissions Act of 2006, which abrogates the right of habeas corpus and allows the U.S. to torture prisoners.

The right of habeas corpus has been around a long time—since the Magna Carta in 1215—and we should not allow it to be taken away on the pretense that it will make us safer. Habeas corpus allows a court to release someone who has been wrongfully locked up. It is part of the foundation of our legal system, which places the rule of law above the unchecked and arbitrary will of those like George W. Bush who think the law does not apply to them.

The Military Commissions Act was intended to get around a decision by the U.S. Supreme Court on June 29, 2006 that the Bush administration's military commissions deprive the prisoners at Guantanamo Bay of their rights under the Geneva Conventions and the U.S. Military Code of Justice. The Court—which is not a liberal one—found the administration was breaking the law, so the administration changed the law with the help of a cowardly Congress.

The Act strips the right of habeas corpus from people detained by the United States abroad or in this country if the administration labels them an “unlawful enemy combatant.” This shameful and truly un-American legislation passed by 250-170 in the House of Representatives and 65-34 in the Senate. It is especially dismaying that both of New Jersey's Senators, Frank Lautenberg and Robert Menendez, were among only 12 Democrats who voted in favor. Also voting “yes” was Democratic Congressman Robert Andrews from South Jersey, as well as every New Jersey Republican House member.

Even before Bush signed the bill into law on Oct. 17, the NJPA board voted to send a letter to Lautenberg and Menendez condemning the law and calling on them to repair the damage by working to repeal it.

In one of the first public displays of opposition to the law, NJPA sponsored a vigil calling for repeal of the law on the evening of Oct. 27 near the Newark offices of Lautenberg and Menendez. Attendees carried signs and banners with messages like: “America, Wake Up! Destroying the Rule of Law Does Not Make Us Safe” (It will destroy us.) “Repeal the Military Commissions Act of 2006” and “We (the Detainees and Us!) Are in Danger! Our Right to a Fair Trial (Any Trial) is Gone!” and “Where Are Our Checks and Balances?” (with a picture of Bush on a scale, tipping it all the way in his favor.) Other vigilers held two small coffins that said “Habeas Corpus” across the top.

An hour into the vigil, seven participants were invited inside to meet with Lautenberg. Senator Lautenberg explained that he voted for the law because after five years he thought it was better to provide some type of hearing for the detainees at Guantanamo rather than leaving them locked up without any form of trial. He thought the part of the law denying habeas corpus would be reversed by the courts as unconstitutional. Lautenberg said he would work to change the law once the new Congress was in session. ***Let's hold Senator***

Lautenberg to his word and persuade Senator Menendez to be part of that effort. A DVD entitled “Stories from Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib: Reasons for the Immediate Repeal of the Military Commissions Act of 2006” is available from NJ Peace Action. Order your copy now!

Repealing the Military Commissions Act was a theme of the Dec. 2, 2006 Peace Train March and Rally, as was bringing the troops home. After a rally at Peter Francisco Park in Newark, about 80 people (as pictured to the right) marched to Newark City Hall, stopping for a brief demonstration outside the offices of Menendez and Lautenberg. ***Call NJPA for sample postcards calling for repeal of the Act to send to our Senators.***



COUNTER-RECRUITMENT POSTCARD CAMPAIGN

Please join our campaign to protect our children from being recruited by the military. Bush has two more years. Who knows where he would send them? Please send a postcard to Governor Corzine today! Contact the NJ Peace Action office to obtain multiple copies of the postcard.

Dear Governor Corzine:

As members and friends of the Bloomfield-based New Jersey Peace Action (NJPA), we are very concerned about the release of students' personal information to military recruiters under Clause 9528 of the No Child Left Behind Act. As you are aware, the law requires public schools to release students' names, addresses and phone numbers to the military, or risk losing federal funding. Students and families have the right to opt out of having their information released, but few know of this option. Worse, many do not even know their information can be released in the first place.

In 2003, a group of students launched a campaign to have opt-out forms distributed to all Montclair High School students each August with the usual registration materials. The policy was implemented, and 98% of the families responded. Now students there are required to turn in these forms, either consenting or not consenting to having their information released, in order to receive their schedules.

In 2005, NJPA, its chapters and several allied organizations requested a hearing with the NJ State Board of Education, with the goal of establishing a uniform state-wide opt-out policy, modeled on Montclair's. Our request was denied. I am writing now to ask that you use your power as Governor to pressure the Board to act. Recruitment in our schools is a very relevant issue today, with our country at war and the military in pressing need of more soldiers. We hope you share our views, and will do everything in your power to ensure the Board of Education grants us a fair, public hearing on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Please send to: NJPA, 673 Bloomfield Avenue, Bloomfield, NJ 07003 & we'll send it on to the Governor

A 2/07 below your name on the mailing label means you are NOT YET a NJ Peace Action member. We urge you to join now. Your membership dollars will support our work for peace during our 50th anniversary year! Please fill in and return the coupon below.

Please return coupon with check/credit card info to NJPA, 673 Bloomfield Ave., Bloomfield, NJ 07003.

_____ I am not yet a member, but would like to join now! Enclosed is my check or credit card number for:

_____ \$ 35 Regular dues _____ \$ 52 Dollar-a-week for Peace _____ \$100 Supporter
 _____ \$250 Sponsor _____ \$500 Patron _____ \$1000 Benefactor

Name on Card _____ Exp. Date _____ Credit Card No. _____

_____ I would like to make a special contribution to commemorate NJPA's 50th Anniversary. Congratulations!

_____ \$1000 _____ \$500 _____ \$250 _____ \$100 _____ \$50 other \$ _____

For a contribution of \$50 or more, choose one of these premiums:

_____ 3' X 5' Peace Flag (\$100 gift) OR _____ DVD of 2006 Soup Luncheon featuring Ray McGovern, Sam Provance and Geoff Millard or _____ Stories from Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib. (\$50 gift)

_____ I would like to order _____ copies of the NJPA 50th Anniversary Cookbook @ \$20 per book. For orders of 5 or more cookbooks, each book costs \$15.

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A 2/07 below your name on the mailing label means you are NOT YET a Peace Action member. Please look inside for a way to join now!

**Important Contact
Information:**

Phone: (973) 744-3263
Fax: (973) 509-9774
E-mail: director@njpeaceaction.org
www.njpeaceaction.org

Quote for the Season . . .

“Our newly elected leaders need to be emboldened. It’s you who needs to embolden them.”

—Ray McGovern, former CIA analyst and founder of
Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity
Speaking on Nov. 11, 2006 at NJPA’s Soup Lunch

UPCOMING EVENTS

(for details check out our on-line calendar at www.njpeaceaction.org or call the office at 973-744-3263)

- March 17-19 **4th Anniversary of U.S. Invasion of Iraq.** We will post your local event on our website.
- March 24 **Be About Peace Day.** Arts and crafts for kids and nighttime vigil in Maplewood. Sponsored by South Mountain Peace Action. Visit www.beaboutpeace.com, call 973-763-9493 or contact Paul Surovell at paul4sure@aol.com.
- March 24 **Follow-up meeting and large rally to call for the troops to come home from Iraq! Follow-up to People’s Peace Conference,** 12:00 noon at Essex County College, 303 University Avenue, Newark
- March 31 **Mothers and Daughters Walk for Peace.** Starting at NJPA’s office, located at 673 Bloomfield Avenue, 2nd floor in Bloomfield. Begins at 10:00am.
- April 4 **40th Anniversary of Martin Luther King’s “Beyond Vietnam: Why I Oppose the Vietnam War” speech.** Please call the office if you plan to organize an event that day.
- April 12 **Dorothy Naor, Israeli peace activist from New Profile,** 7:00pm at the Morristown Unitarian Fellowship, Co-sponsored by Seeds of Peace, NJPA and Northwest NJ Peace Fellowship.
- April 16 **Tax Day events.** We urge that you pass out information about where our tax dollars go at your local post office. Please call the office to obtain materials.
- May 6 **NJPA’s 50th ANNUAL DINNER!** Keynote speaker Michael Parenti on “Crimes of Empire” From 12:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. at the Regency House on Route 23 in Wayne. Reservations required.
- June **NJPA’s PEACE CHAIN** to celebrate 50 years of grass roots activism. Add your June local action or activity to our peace chain!!
- Nov. 17 **NJPA’s 50th ANNUAL** Soup Luncheon at Columbia High School, Maplewood. Speaker TBA.