

◆ The New Jersey Peacemaker ◆

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Founded 1957, 44 Years of Citizen Action

Summer 2001

New Jersey Peace Action and New Jersey Peace Action Education Fund, formerly SANE/Freeze, 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 Hand Gun violence), demilitarize the federal budget, and teach non-violent conflict resolution.

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Jonathan Schell Warns of Growing Nuclear Threat at Annual Dinner

The world is a lot more dangerous than it was during the days of the Soviet Union, Jonathan Schell told a rapt audience at this year's annual dinner, on Sunday May 21 at the Friar Tuck Inn.

Mutual Assured Destruction, which held the world in a precarious balance was indeed MAD, he said, but it did help avert the use of nuclear weapons over the course of some very tense decades. Now, the disintegration of Russia's control over its own military and weapons facilities means that it has never been easier for weapons-grade plutonium to fall into the wrong hands.

Much of Schell's 45-minute talk focused on how our pursuit of national missile defense undermines the goal of nuclear abolition.

Schell castigated the U.S. for not leading the way in attempting to put the nuclear genie back in the bottle. The U.S. will not even commit to a no first-use policy.

Instead, we have gone in

the opposite direction with Star Wars and our failure to even ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, while we keep our missiles on hair trigger alert.

He spoke of how Star Wars destabilizes international relations and will spark a new arms race. Thus, we have seen the detonation of atomic bombs by India and Pakistan, further strides by North Korea in developing a nuclear strike capacity and suspected efforts to develop the bomb elsewhere.

New policies to curb the spread of nuclear weapons materials and technologies and to deter use of these weapons are desperately needed.

Schell spoke also of the fundamental immorality of having, never mind using, such weapons of mass destruction. Even to an audience already convinced of the need to abolish nuclear weapons, Schell made clearer the overriding need to do so and the challenges we face.



Gumbleton with NJPA Director Madelyn Hoffman at Los Alamos

Bishop Gumbleton at Los Alamos Rally

Pax Christi founder Bishop Thomas Gumbleton addressed over 300 people at a rally in Los Alamos on July 17. The rally was organized by New Mexico Peace Action and other local groups committed to abolishing nuclear weapons.

The talk was followed by a march to Los Alamos National Laboratory to oppose development of new nuclear weapons.

Gumbleton spoke of his anger at use of atomic bombs on Japan in 1945 and that the first a-bomb test in July 1945, was known as Trinity. The atomic bomb is "the most anti-democratic, anti-human and outright evil human beings have ever made," he said.

"We must reject the atomic bomb and nuclear weapons and instead accept the challenge of making this planet capable of

SAVE THE DATE!!!

Nov. 17 Winter Event

Featuring Speaker Bishop Thomas Gumbleton,

OUR AGENDA FOR PEACE

On Saturday, June 23, November 11 Veterans about 40 very enthusiastic NJ Peace Action members and friends came to an Open Meeting to discuss their concerns about the U.S. military budget, Star Wars, and U.S. policy, particularly toward Vieques, Colombia and Iraq.

After breaking into discussion groups in the morning, we came back together in the afternoon to formulate actions to bring the attention of our legislators and the public to our agenda for peace. The result was an ambitious, but doable, 6-month plan!

Highlights of the plan are:
\$The Peace Site Committee, begun in the 80's by Lou Cousin, has been restarted, and is meeting most Friday mornings (call the office for exact times). The committee is planning a

November 11 Veterans Day Weekend for Peace, inviting re-dedication of old Peace Sites, and dedication of new ones. Our first outreach will be to synagogues, churches and religious organizations. A Peace Site can also be a school, office or home, dedicated to peace.

\$Colombia Peace Action, a group of Colombian citizens, has committed itself to working with us to educate our legislators and the public on what Plan Colombia, the Administration's contribution to the Colombian government of \$1.3 billion plus to "combat drug trafficking," means to the Colombian people. They will be working with us to set up workshops on the issue.

\$Actions against Star Wars will be expanded, while we reach out to other organizations to discuss the impact of a \$360 billion NMD project on human needs.

\$The committee putting together "National Priorities: Defense or Human Needs", the December 8th conference, has been expanded, and is involving many groups in the state.

\$We are pursuing a Sister City project with Managua, Nicaragua. Other Sister Cities are envisioned with the people of Vieques, P.R., and Colombia.

What can you do now?

\$Call the office to get involved in one of the committees (Peace Sites, Sister Cities, Dec. 8 Conference, Political Action). Your help is needed as we implement

these plans!

\$Send in your "Star Wars is a Lemon" postcards right now!

\$Sign up to staff a table at one of the street festivals we will be attending, including the Labor Day Parade in Haledon on Sunday, Sept. 2. Please contact the office if you can join us any one or more of these days!

\$Let us know your e-mail address so you can receive action alerts.

\$Let us know if you belong to a house of worship which might like to declare itself a peace site on the weekend of Nov. 11.

Thank you all for your support and for whatever level of participation you can offer. We have our work cut out for us. As a speaker at a recent conference said, "I suppose we can thank

New Jersey Supports Vieques! by Dave Cline, VVAW

PAZ PARA VIEQUES! has become the rallying cry of the growing effort to end 60 years of environmental and human damage caused by U.S. Navy bombardment of that island.

The struggle began 28 months ago after a civilian guard was killed by Navy bombs. Most people had never heard of Vieques. Now it has become national news, with both Democrat and Republican politicians calling for the bombing to end. George W. Bush recently announced that the

Navy will leave in 2003, but they continue to hold bombing exercises.

Each new round of Navy war games has been met with another wave of non-violent civil disobedience. Over 500 protestors were arrested recently, with many sentenced to 30 days or more in federal prison. Prominent civil rights and labor leaders, environmentalists and elected officials have been jailed along with hundreds of Puerto Rican students, clergy, working people, veterans and professionals.

In a July 29 referendum on Vieques, 68% voted for an immediate end to the bombing, 30% voting for the Navy to stay and a mere 1.7% for the Bush plan to remain until 2003. Immediately afterward, the Mayor of Vieques served the Navy with an eviction order. The Navy's response was to begin bombing exercises on Aug. 2, a sign of their contempt for the people there.

The solidarity movement continues to develop beyond the Puerto Rican community

with significant participation by civil rights, labor and peace groups. NJ Peace Action participated in recent actions in Westfield, Jersey City and Newark.

Vieques is not merely a Puerto Rican issue but is important for all who want peace and justice. The Navy is destroying the health, livelihood and land of the U.S. citizens who live on Vieques in the name of "national defense." We must continue to protest this violation of human rights.

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members and Other Friends,

Just a short while ago, the situation looked very bleak. The unelected George W. Bush occupied the White House, pushing a big business-oriented and radical right agenda that threatens to revive the Cold War, while Dick Cheney stood ready as Vice President to break any tied votes in the evenly balanced Senate.

The picture brightened considerably with the decision by Vermont Senator James Jeffords to leave the Republican Party and become an independent. In one fell swoop, not only must the Bush agenda now contend with a Democratic majority in the Senate but we have gotten rid of Jesse Helms as chair of the Foreign Relations committee, of Orrin Hatch as chair of the Judiciary committee and of Trent Lott as Senate leader. Helms alone was a one-man barricade to U.S. ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, payment of UN dues and other key goals.

As welcome as these developments are, they do not mean that we can sit back and relax. We still have an uphill battle to oppose the Star Wars program, abolish nukes, shift national spending priorities and generally work for a more peaceful and just world. Now is the time to step up our efforts.

Keep in mind The picture changed because one man, Jeffords, decided he'd had enough and could no longer sit back and go along with the ultra-right agenda of the current administration. Jeffords is obviously a special case. He is no ordinary citizen and his switch happened to take place at a unique moment of balanced political power but his example gives us hope that extends far beyond the halls of Congress. There must be millions of ordinary people out there who have also had enough. Every day the efforts of the Bush administration are pushing them closer to the point where they too are ready to rouse themselves to action in defense of their principles. As a grass roots organization, it is our job to facilitate that process by highlighting important peace issues and actions that they can take against nuclear weapons, against war, against violence and in support of a more sane, peaceful and just world.

Just when things looked most dire, they changed for the better because a lifelong Republican could not go along with Bush policies that would destroy the environment, benefit the most wealthy at the expense of the poorest and most vulnerable in our society, and fuel a new arms race. It was a dramatic reminder that most people do share our values. They want a more just society, a clean, healthy planet to live on and they want to rid the world of the threat of nuclear annihilation that has hung over us now for over 55 years.

Thank you Sen. Jeffords for acting on your principles and for the hope you give to all of us who rely on the good sense and fundamental decency of people to believe that we can and will make a difference.

Peggy Monges

P.S. A warm welcome to the new Board members elected at the annual membership meeting on July 29. Bill Bradley, coordinator of Peace Voter 2000 and presently an organizer for Service Employees International's Justice for Janitors campaign, and Louisa Trotta, an active volunteer and translator with NJPA .



CDs and VIDEOTAPES OF JONATHAN SCHELL AVAILABLE!!!

Did you miss our annual dinner with Jonathan Schell ? Or do you just want to hear his inspiring talk again and share it with others who couldn't be there?

CD's and videotapes of his talk are available from New Jersey Peace Action for \$12 each. Please call the office at 973-744-3263.

REPORT FROM
COLOMBIA
By Carol Gay

"Plan Colombia es un plan de muerte" (death) and our tax dollars are fueling the flames of war once again—this time under the guise of a "war on drugs." As Witness for Peace delegates, we were invited to Colombia to investigate the impact of U.S. aid on the Colombian people. Congress recently approved a \$1.3 billion package. Over 85% of that will go to the Colombian military forces and the rest to aerial fumigation of coca crops. Congress is now considering a regional Andean Initiative, nearly \$400 million of which will boost Colombia's military capacity. The clear losers in this conflict are the Colombian people.

Our delegation met with groups representing all sectors of Colombian society. Almost all expressed the desire for a negotiated peace. The U. S. Embassy representative, however, informed us that \$1.3 billion is just the start. We also learned that the U. S. is paying private companies not only to fly and maintain fumigation planes but also to fly combat helicopters, gather intelligence and carry out other military functions. In effect, we are funding a private war with hired mercenaries and little if any accountability.

The political and economic reality were explained to us by the director of a popular education and

communication center. He told us that oil is Colombia's main export and that the largest contributor to Bush's gubernatorial and presidential races was Enron, the energy company that led lobbying for Plan Colombia and owns a natural gas pipeline in northern Colombia. Dubya also has ties to the Harkin Group, which does business in Colombia's oil and energy markets.

For the business sector, everything is at stake. More than half their trade is with the U.S. Two-thirds of total exports are raw materials, mainly mining and oil (nearly 100% of the oil goes to the U.S), and the areas of the country most affected by violence and the drug trade are those most abundant in natural resources.

Twice we met with the Colombian military. We asked tough questions. Their view was that maintaining and strengthening the state is fundamental. They said their goal was to reduce drug production by 50% in the next 6 years but it seemed their main focus was on eradicating the guerrillas.

We flew into paramilitary territory. Here we found an abundance of misery and poverty. The inhabitants were mostly women and children who have lost their fathers, husbands, and brothers. Their message to us was "No more bombs, no more guns and no more helicopters; Plan Colombia is a war on people, not on drugs."

One of the most memorable have to use force, it's because we are America. We're the indispensable nation. We see further than other nations."

Gumbleton concluded: "If we begin to consider the terrible evil of what we are planning, it's important not to think in abstractions. It is important to have in one's mind's eye, a picture of people, victims of nuclear weapons, vaporizing, incinerating....The world is 4.6

experiences was our meeting at the Casa de la Mujer Trabajadores where women leaders spoke about their commitment to a peaceful negotiated peace process. All spoke about the increase in human rights abuses. We were told that Plan Colombia is a plan for intervention and exploitation of Colombia's rich natural resources. An organization representing displaced Afro-Colombians and others we met told us that Plan Colombia is also a plan to exterminate the Afro-Colombian population. They have been driven from their ancestral homelands, which may very well become the next intercoastal waterway (replacing the now obsolete Panama Canal).

I can't report on Colombia without discussing the Coca plant, used in its natural form by indigenous peoples of the Andean region for centuries for its medicinal purposes as well as in sacred rituals. Intensive U.S. funded aerial fumigation began last December. The herbicide used, glyphosate (aka Roundup, made by Monsanto) also kills other crops and fish as well. It is causing health problems. Aerial spraying also does not seem to work. Satellite surveys show increased production.

We concluded our Colombian experience with a solemn procession and vigil at the U.S. Embassy.

(Call the office for Carol Gay's

GUMBLETON, cont'd

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sustaining life...Our military not only wants nuclear weapons as a 'deterrent,'" Gumbleton continued, "but they want 'first-strike' capability. The targets are already identified as are the number of casualties, described as 'collateral damage.'" He spoke of the arrogance of referring to human casualties as "collateral damage," quoting Madeline Albright: "If we

**BE PART OF
THE SOLUTION!**

Contact Colombia Peace Action

to learn how you can help.
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Quote for the Season . . .

"Pursuit of the 'Star Wars' Anti-Missile Defense System undermines the real goals of the peace movement -- abolition of nuclear weapons."

*paraphrase of remarks by Jonathan Schell
at NJPA 44th Annual Dinner, May 2001*

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Tues.,Sept.11 7:30 p.m. Hear Sr. Helen Prejean, author of "Dead Man Walking," speak on the death penalty at St. Mary's Franciscan Church, Pompton Lakes. Call 973-835-7912 for information.
- Sun.,Sept.23 Hoboken Street Festival. Please call office to be part of tabling effort.
- Sun.,Oct.7 Tabling at NJ Pride event, Holmdel Arts Center. Call NJPA office to participate.
- Sat.,Oct.20 9:30-3:30 Social Justice Gathering, sponsored by 4 NJ Catholic Archdioceses, at Immaculata H.S. in Somerville. For more info, call Kay Furlani, Newark Archdiocese, 973-497-4341.
- Fri.,Sat.,Sun. Nov.9-11 Peace Action National Congress. Austin, TX.
Weekend for Peace in NJ. Reactivation of Peace Site Network. Churches, synagogues and other places of worship encouraged to participate. Call NJPA office for more info.
- Sat.,Nov.10 Day of Spirituality with Fr. John Dear, former director, Fellowship of Reconciliation, at Good Shepherd School/Church, Wickatunk, NJ. For more info, call 201-342-3531.
- Sat.,Nov. 17 12-4 NJPA Winter Event (Soup Lunch) with Bishop Thomas Gumbleton, St. Paul's Baptist Church, 119 Elm St., Montclair. Contact NJPA at 973-744-3263 for reservations.
- Sat.,Dec.8 10-2 "National Priorities: Defense or Human Needs" Conference with Ibrahim Ramey, Disarmament Coordinator, Fellowship of Reconciliation, Seton Hall Prep, West Orange.
- Sun.,Apr.21 NJPA Annual Dinner.