

War With Iraq

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Why Are We Going to War?

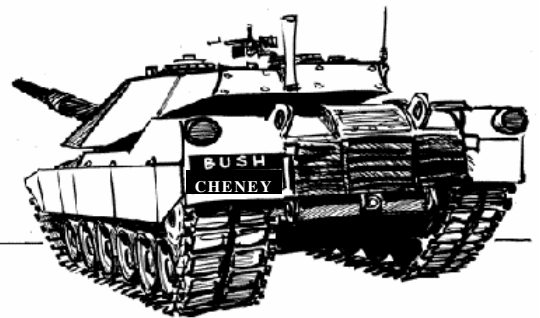
By John Gallini

I attended the World Affairs Council debate, "Iraq: Should We or Shouldn't We", in early December at the Governor's School. It was a rather depressing experience.

Ambassador Edward Peck offered arguments against a U.S. attack, focusing on the instability such an attack would bring to the region. "I think we're started out on a course that is not only not very smart but also very dangerous", he said.

Colonel Patrick Lang did not really offer any reasons for an attack. He simply said that a U.S.-led attack was "almost inevitable" because it would be politically impossible for Bush to back off after so much rhetoric promoting war. Toward the end, during Q&A, Lang did say, almost as an aside, that there was a contingent within the Bush administration that was pushing for massive restructuring of the middle east/Persian Gulf region.

No one summed it up, but the conclusion of the evening, as I heard it, was that we are going to attack Iraq, with or without UN support, kill tens of thousands of Iraqi children, women and men, because Bush cannot back away from the Rumsfeld-Cheney-Bush intemperate rhetoric!



What a sad experience for the many students that attended.

One further depressing point made by Amb. Peck (and agreed to by Col. Lang) was that during the first Gulf war, U.S. aircraft targeted and destroyed public water and sanitation facilities, and that the subsequent sanctions have prevented the rebuilding of these facilities. Amb. Peck noted that such targeting of water and

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Why Are We Going to War?

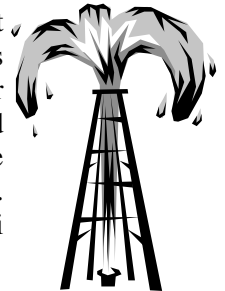
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sanitation facilities is contrary to the Geneva Convention. It was this action that is the primary cause of the deaths of many thousands of Iraqi children from disease.

A day later I read an article in the 12/13/02 issue of the National Catholic Reporter which expanded on Col. Lang's brief comment. Margot Patterson summarized the situation this way: "Foreign policy analysts are saying regime change in Iraq is only the first step in a grander, arguably grandiose, plan on the part of Some U.S. policymakers to remake the map of the Middle East. The goal is U.S. hegemony in the region and indeed the world. Included in the agenda are controlling other nations' access to oil and frightening Arab nations and the Palestinians into capitulating to U.S. and Israeli demands in the Middle East."

Patterson cites a half-dozen policy analysts, such as Phyllis Bennis, a Middle East expert at the Institute for Policy Studies, who says a U.S. invasion of Iraqi has little to do with Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

"It has to do with oil and to do with empire - getting control of Iraq's enormous oil resources," Bennis said. "That's not just about importing oil to the United States. We already do that. The issue is control, undermining OPEC, and controlling access to oil for Germany, Japan and the rest of Europe. This would give the United States tremendous political and economic clout in the rest of the world. Iraq is key, particularly if instability in Saudi Arabia grows. They're looking to have a backup if they lose access to Saudi Arabia."



Michael Donovan, an analyst at the Center for Defense Information, says, "These larger strategic fantasies that the neo-conservatives of the Bush administration come up with are not necessarily representative of the rest of the administration. They see Iraq as a staging area for the Mideast: The United States and Israel can co-manage a region that is unstable and chronically at odds with American interests. It's the same conservative pie- in-the-sky that has been talked about in conservative circles for years."

To read this instructive (and frightening) article on-line, go to the RPEC web page at "<http://www.rpec.org/>", www.rpec.org or directly to: "http://www.natcath.com/NCR_Online/archives/121302/121302a.htm", http://www.natcath.com/NCR_Online/archives/121302/121302.htm.

Needless to say, if these analysts are correct, the challenge to peacemakers is even more important. But I can't imagine that the U.S. public would support a war for these reasons. So part of the task is making public these ideas so that the public can see what's at stake.

Again, Fort Benning and the SOA

by Dave Depp

On Sunday, November 17, gathered at the main gate of Ft. Georgia for the annual continuing existence of the (SOA) or Western Hemisphere Operation (WHISC) which it

During the latter half of the 20th repeatedly implicated as the military involved in drug torture and general repression in governments. More than a called SOA Watch was formed school. Congressional lobbying, Washington D.C., and an annual

Ft. Benning were instituted. This gathering includes a variety of speakers describing atrocities committed by SOA trainees and a solemn funeral march commemorating the victims of torture, rape, and murder whose names are attached to small, white wooden crosses carried by the marchers. The solemnity and symbolism are striking.

This year, as in the past, some individuals carried their protest to the level of civil disobedience by walking around the Ft. Benning fence and onto the grounds beyond the closed main gate. Approximately 85 men and women chose to speak out in this manner and were arrested for trespassing on federal property. Those arrested ranged in age from 17 to 75 years old; 35 were under 25; and 28 were over 50. Among the arrestees were Catholic sisters, counselors, nurses, social workers, students, an accountant, air line captain, priest, artist, two farmers, a lawyer, pastor, brick layer, para-legal and more from cities all over America, including New York, Richmond, Boston, Atlanta, Tallahassee, New Orleans, St. Louis, Chicago, Albuquerque, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Seattle.

All of the arrestees were placed in shackles (padlocked chains around the waist, linked to handcuffs behind the back and ankle bands), fingerprinted, photographed, and transported to Muskogee County Jail in Columbus. Once at the jail, the shackles were removed, clothing was confiscated, and each prisoner was given short-sleeved pajamas, plastic sandals, a blanket, towel, tooth brush, mattress cover and toilet paper. The 35 male prisoners were held in a large unheated room with small open and broken windows at the ceiling level. The men kept relatively warm by employing their mattress covers as sleeping bags, their blankets as coats, and their towels as hoods. The men benefited from the humor, sensitivity and good feeling of each other and there was much stimulating conversation including political and social analysis, and shared personal experiences.

During the next 48 hours all the prisoners appeared before a federal judge with legal counsel provided by the SOA Watch organization. Each detainee was released on \$5,000 bail and ordered to appear for trial during the week of January 27th. Apparently, the judge believed the protestors before him each required the setting of bail because they were risks to society and/or risks to flee from the court's jurisdiction. The trespass charge carries a maximum penalty of six months in jail and/or a \$5,000 fine.



thousands of demonstrators Benning in Columbus, nonviolent protest against the School of the Americas Institute for Security was renamed two years ago.

century, the SOA was source of training for foreign trafficking, murder, rape, support of reactionary decade ago, an organization to work for the closure of the demonstrations in nonviolent mass gathering at

(Continued on page 4)

Again, Fort Benning and the SOA

(Continued from page 3)

The government's response to this year's SOA civil disobedience, which for the first time included mass jailing, shackling and bail, likely represents a growing impatience with dissent. Meanwhile, Secretary Powell just visited Columbia and suggested more U.S. money to fight leftist guerillas and the SOA at Ft. Benning continues to train foreign military to protect and advance American interests in Latin America. The government claims that the SOA changed its curriculum when it became WHISC two years ago, and trainees are no longer taught terror tactics and civil liberties repression. Even if this doubtful claim is completely true, the questions remain: Why is America training foreign armies that support the status quo in Latin America? How can we justify or explain our imperialistic interference in Latin American affairs?

Hopefully, the crowd at Ft. Benning next year will be even larger, and the number of those committing civil disobedience will also grow. It is encouraging to note that Amnesty International is about to release a report entitled, "Unmatched Power, Unmet Principles: The Human rights Dimensions of U.S. Training of Foreign Military and Police Forces." In this report, Amnesty International condemns the human rights consequences of the training at the SOA-WHISC, asks that an independent commission be established to investigate the school and its graduates, and says all training at the school should be suspended until the investigation is complete.

The Nuremberg Trials conducted after WWII ended, established the principle that no individual can avoid responsibility for his or her actions by saying, "I was just following orders." The yearly pilgrimage to Ft. Benning is made in harmony with this principle. Also in harmony with this principle and applying it to the world beyond Ft. Benning and the SOA to the present "war on terrorism" and the proposed war on Iraq is the "Pledge of Resistance: Not In Our Name" This pledge, which was distributed at the November 17 SOA demonstration says:

We believe that as people living in the United States, it is our responsibility to resist the injustices done by our government, in our names ---

Not in our name will you wage endless war ---

There can be no more deaths – no more transfusions of blood for oil ---

Not in our name will you invade countries, bomb civilians, kill more children, letting history take its course over the graves of the nameless ---

Not in our name

Will you erode the very freedoms

You have claimed to fight for ---

Not by our hands

Will we supply weapons and funding

For the annihilation of families on foreign soil –

Not by our mouths

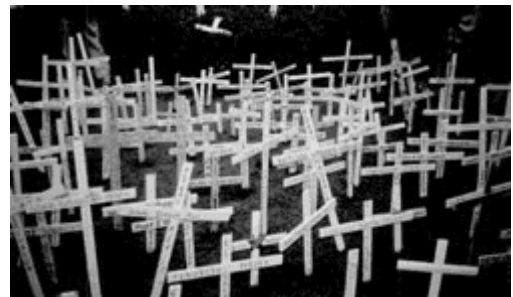
Will we let fear silence us ---

Not by our hearts

Will we allow whole peoples

Or countries to be deemed evil ---

Not by our wills and not in our name ---



We pledge resistance – We pledge alliance with those who have come under attack for voicing opposition to the war or for their religion or ethnicity --- We pledge to make common cause with the people of the world to bring about justice, freedom and peace --- Another world is possible. And we pledge to make it real.



RICHMOND PEACE EDUCATION CENTER'S Annual Peace Essay Contest Winners



Grades 9-12 **1st Place: Kendra Moses**
2nd Place: Sarah Keeton
3rd Place: None awarded

Grades 4-5: **1st Place: Charis Deadwyler**
2nd Place: Samantha Anne Lin
3rd Place: Kenny Clark

Grades 6-8 **1st Place: Susie Brock**
2nd Place: Alexandra C. Porter
3rd Place: Jessie Martin

Grades K-3 **1st Place: Suzanne Leah**
2nd Place: Annie Banton
3rd Place: Daniel Brooker,
Samantha Kese (tie)

Thank you to the over 400 children and youth who reflected on this question and submitted essays. Thank you to Sylvia Clute for coordinating the judging and to all who participated by developing this year's question, distributing the essay flyer, encouraging children to respond, and reading and rereading the essays to choose the best. The first place winners' essays will be published in future editions of rpecNEWS.

9/11/01

by Charis Deadwyler

Charis Deadwyler is the first place winner in RPEC's Annual Peace Essay Contest in the 4th-5th Grade category.

As many of us know something very tragic happened on September 11, one year ago. Even though no one can change the past, we can find out what causes those kinds of attacks and find out what we can do to reduce them. We can also take advantage of that day and let it teach us about peace and justice. I hope everyone will take the time to think about what happened and make the best of it.

I think most crimes and terror attacks are caused because people get mad at one another, mistakes escalate, or people want to get revenge. It sounds like a stupid reason to kill thousands, and it is, but sometimes that is what it takes to get attention to say that you are mad, you hate the United States, and you are going to get revenge. I also think it is weird that the United States bombed and sent in troops to Afghanistan. I know they were looking for "the prime suspect," but they killed tons of Afghan citizens with it. But even though the United States has killed innocent people, I am glad they have taken action and I hope

they will continue.

There is not any way to wipe out all crime, terrorism, and war, but there is always a way to reduce it. I think if people would work harder on learning to work together, it would definitely help. Also if countries learned to compromise, it would cut down on wars. For example, if Palestine and Israel made a compromise over Jerusalem maybe there would be less fighting going on and less people getting killed by suicide bombers and their armies. And maybe if governments would take time to make sense of what is going on and try to convince their people not to kill the other sides' citizens. Maybe they would listen and we could have peace in the Middle East. That is my dream, it may not happen in my lifetime, but I believe it will happen someday.

September 11, 2001 taught us many things. It taught us that working together can and will make a big difference. It taught us every American can save a life and will if they try. And best of all, it showed no one can destroy America or her pride no matter how hard they try. I also think people have more faith in the

government now that it has shown that even if two of the most important buildings collapse, we can still go on with our lives. And now more than ever, I am proud to be an American and I hope you are too.

One thing I know is that if every person pitches in by donating food, clothing, giving blood, or giving money to a charity we can make this world a better place. And just think, if cities, states, or even countries, made an effort to give, there would be no more third world countries, everyone could have a job, a home, a doctor, and a school to go to. Perhaps there would be no more crimes and everyone in the world could be a family. It may not happen very soon, but some day the world will be peaceful.

I hope people will help everyone to understand what happened on September 11 and what we can do to prevent future attacks. We still have more we can do, but as a nation we have done a great job of staying together and keeping the American

No Child Left Alone By Military Recruiters

by Leah C Wells

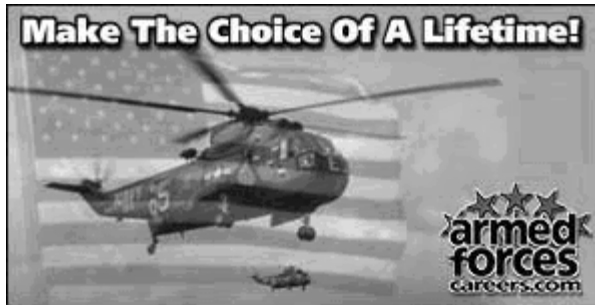
Excerpted from CommonDreams.org (12/6/02)

The No Child Left Behind Act which went into effect last week has some surprising implications for high school students. Buried deep within the funding benefits is Section 9528 which grants the Pentagon access to directories with students names, addresses and phone numbers so that they may be more easily contacted and recruited for military service. Prior to this provision, one-third of the nation's high schools refused recruiters' requests for students' names or access to campus because they believed it was inappropriate for educational institutions to promote military service.

This portion of the Department of Education's initiative to create better readers, testers and homework-doers is a departure from the previously federally guaranteed privacy protections students have traditionally known. Until now, schools have been explicitly instructed to protect the integrity of students' information - even to guard students' private information from college recruiters. Students must consent to releasing their personal data when they take college entrance exams.

However, since September 11th, educational institutions have slid down the slippery slope in doling out student information when solicited by the FBI and now the Pentagon. Only one university - Earlham in Indiana - declined to release student data when approached after the terrorist attacks last fall.

The No Child Left Behind have unimpeded access to solicitation for the military. federal law is not only an assault on their educational students are lulled by the cooing promises of funding students have fallen between educational programs, underpaid teachers. They are



opportunities for the systemic failure to put our money where our priorities ought to be: in schools.

act paves the way for the military to underage students who are ripe for This blatant contradiction of prior invasion of students' privacy but an opportunities as well. Too many siren songs of military service for higher education. Too many the cracks due to underfunded underresourced schools and penalized in their educational

It is critical that students, schools and school districts have accurate information regarding this No Child Left Behind Act in preparation for the forthcoming military solicitation. First, the Local Educational Agency (LEA), not individual schools, may grant dissemination of student information. When recruiters approach individual schools, the administration should refer them to the school district office where they are supposed to visit in the first place...

Second, students or their parents may opt themselves out of this recruitment campaign. So as not to be in violation of the previous federal law which restricts disclosure of student information, the LEA must notify parents of the change in federal policy through an addendum to the student handbook or individual letters sent to students' homes. Parents and students can notify their school administration and district in writing of their desire to have their records kept secret...

The Leave No Child Behind Act is a wake up call to students to reclaim their privacy, to reinvest their energy into demanding quality education and to remind their leaders that stealing money from education to pay for military is unacceptable.

Leah C. Wells serves as the Peace Education Coordinator for the Nuclear Age

What if a War with Iraq Breaks Out? Suggestions for action

By Stephen M. Colecchi

I am an optimist by nature and still hope that our nation will not take the path to war, but the realist in me acknowledges that war with Iraq is a definite possibility. It may even be a probability.

So what are we to do if a war with Iraq breaks out? I keep wondering what we might do to pressure our government to end the violence. This question has haunted me for some time and I would offer a few suggestions.

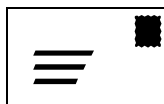
First, we can make our opposition to the war visible. Let's participate in a "black ribbon" campaign. Wearing a black ribbon is be a sign of mourning—mourning for the fact that our nation has gone to war, mourning for the people of Iraq who will die each day, and yes, mourning for the members of our armed services whose lives are put at risk by our nation's war policy. Although everyone won't know the significance of the ribbon, many will ask. We should take every opportunity to explain the meaning of the black ribbon to family members, friends, coworkers and others.

It is also important to participate in public protests. These events often get media attention. In Richmond, there will be a nonviolent protest at the corner of 10th and Main outside the federal



courthouse at 12 noon on the day following the outbreak of war.

Second, we can make our opposition to the war heard. In addition to contacting the President and members of the

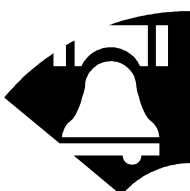


Virginia

congressional delegation ourselves, we can organize postcard campaigns with groups with which we are affiliated. Many communities of faith, circles of coworkers and clubs would respond to such an effort. I suggest post cards because the earlier anthrax scare is still slowing the delivery of mail in envelopes in the Washington, DC area. Writing letters to the editor, and encouraging others to write, is also helpful in shaping public opinion.

Third, if we are people of faith, we should ask our faith community to take a stand against the war. We can encourage our religious leaders to speak out against the war at religious services. And we can support them when they do! We can suggest that a concern about the war be part of the community's public prayer. There may also be powerful symbols that different religious traditions can employ. For example, Christian churches might "toll the bells" at 3:00 p.m.

each day to mourn those dying in the war. This time has great significance for Christians.



Church bulletins and signs could explain the meaning of the 3:00 p.m. bells. It is important to let the community know why the bells are being tolled!

Fourth, we can craft our message in ways that others may be better able to hear. Of course, we must remain faithful to our own integrity, but many times it is possible to frame the message so others can hear. For example, I try to link a prophetic critique of our nation's war policy to a pastoral concern for those in our armed forces and their families. To question the war policies of our political leaders is not to question the integrity of the men and women in our military services. Many Americans are reluctant to question a war because they want to "support our troops" whose lives are at risk. It is possible to do both. In fact, opposition to war can be also be a concern for the lives and welfare of persons in the armed services. Peace is patriotic!

Fifth, be strong, clear and civil in opposing the war. Unfortunately, public discourse often degenerates into "sound bites" and angry exchanges. We are more likely to change hearts and minds if we are both clear and civil. We don't want debates over the war to generate more heat than light.

Sixth, reach out to our Arab and Muslim neighbors. We need to caution against "war fever" turning into intolerance of Arab-Americans,

(Continued on page 8)

What if a War with Iraq Breaks Out?

(Continued from page 7)

Arabs or Muslims. In fact, we need to caution against “war fever” itself!



Seventh, reach out to the victims of war. What we do with our hands gives credibility to what we say with our mouths. Locally, Refugee and Immigration Services resettles victims of war and violence from throughout the world. To get involved call 355-4559.

There are a myriad of other ways to work for peace and against a war. Perhaps the above list will serve as a springboard for your own thought and action. The critical thing is that we take our opposition to war and do something with it. If you are a person of peace, work for



Anti Death Penalty T-Shirts Available

A limited number of t-shirts from Virginians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty are now available for \$10 each on a first-come basis at the RPEC office. Proceeds from shirt sales will benefit VADP. Call (804) 358-1958 for sizes, info., etc.

Grieving Well

By Chris Klug

Following the events of September 11, 2001, the U.S. population as a whole was left with the work of grieving its loss of a sense of being in control, of being safe and secure here at home. If done well this collective grief work had/has the potential to move the nation from brokenness and chaos to integration and healing.

Collective grief work includes public expression of feelings. It involves working creatively with the pain of loss by steering a middle course between the suppression or denial of feeling, and reacting to the pain by inflicting pain on oneself or others. “Numbing out” and “lashing out” are common maladaptive reactions to the pain of loss. U.S. leadership to a great extent has failed to assist the population to steer this creative middle course. They have encouraged numbing out with the message “Spend! Shop! Get back to Normal!”; and have modeled lashing out by inflicting pain on those whom they believe responsible for the loss, and many others.

Collective grief work also includes public acknowledgement that other groups are going through similar experiences. This makes it possible for grievors to connect emotionally with those who have experienced similar loss, i.e., “Others feel this way, too.” Unfortunately the US population as a whole has been deprived by its leadership of access to this critical experience of emotional solidarity. Leadership has refused to validate the loss and grief resulting from acts as criminal as those of Sept. 11, 2001 because those acts were perpetrated either by governments friendly to the US government, or by quasi-state sponsored terrorists (paramilitary groups, death squads) aligned with US government interests, or by US government sponsored terrorists. At the same time, with the help of the media, leadership has elevated the Sept. 11th events to a “one of a kind” status. This has left the population feeling as if no other group feels this way, supporting the dominant image of the US standing alone: alone as superpower victim, and alone in its grief.

In order for the US population as a whole to move toward the integration and healing that are the natural outcome of grief work well done, leadership needs to consider the mental and emotional health of the nation as a whole to be of at least equal importance with its physical safety. Then leadership might begin to model and encourage behavior that finds healthy expression of emotion in that middle place between numbing out and lashing out, and it might begin to promote emotional solidarity with all groups of human beings around the world who feel the pain of the loss of a sense of safety and security because of the criminal behavior of others.

Chris Klug is a former director of RPEC. He is currently director of the Iowa City Hospital Hospice and one who continues to learn and teach about grief.

Say NO! To War with Iraq

January 18 will provide at least one opportunity to join others in a public witness to oppose an escalation of our war with Iraq. The first is in Washington, DC:

**JAN 18 NATIONAL MARCH ON WASHINGTON
to demand:
NO WAR AGAINST IRAQ!
ELIMINATE U.S. WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION!
Rally at 11 am on the West Side of the Capitol
March on the Washington DC Navy Yard
Joint Action in San Francisco
Sponsored by: International A.N.S.W.E.R.
Act Now to Stop War and End Racism**

The second opportunity is to **go to Charlottesville** for a local rally and march to oppose the war. At one point, President Bush was planning to go to Charlottesville on the 18th to participate in the dedication of a memorial to Lewis and Clark. We have heard more recently that Bush is not coming. As of mid-December, the **Charlottesville Center for Peace and Justice** was still planning to hold the rally. The demonstration and march will start at **11:00am, January 18, on the grounds of the Ablemarle County Office Building** (corner of Preston and McIntire) and process through the downtown area. As we get more information, we will notify e-mail lists, and you can call RPEC at 358-1958 to confirm the arrangements.

Freedom Council Sponsors January Events

The Council for America's First Freedom, a Richmond-based nonprofit that celebrates the guarantee of religious freedom inspired by the ideals of Thomas Jefferson, George Mason, and James Madison, will sponsor two events in January: The First Freedom Awards 2003 and the National Religious Freedom Day.

On January 12, the following awards will be presented: M. Farooq Kathwari, International First Freedom Award, Norman

Lear, National First Freedom Award, and the Virginia Center for Public Policy and the Revs. James A. Payne and J. Fletcher Lowe, Jr., Commonwealth First Freedom Awards. The awards will be presented during a dinner at the Jefferson Hotel in Richmond.

Commemorations for the National Religious Freedom Day will take place from 12:30 – 1:30 p.m. at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 9th & Grace Streets, Richmond, on Thursday, January

16, 2003. Through the spoken word and musical traditions of the Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Native American, Sikh, and other faiths, the blessings of the inalienable right of religious freedom will be celebrated. The event is free and open to the public.

For more information call Sandi Poulsen at the Council for America's First Freedom, (804) 643-1786, or e-mail <spoulsen@firstfreedom.org>.

What if leaders of the world's major religions got together one day and denounced all religious violence? What if they unanimously agreed to make this plain, clear and bold statement to the world?

"Violence and terrorism are opposed to all true religious spirit and we condemn all recourse to violence and war in the name of God or religion." It could change the world. It could save the planet.

More than 200 leaders of the world's dozen major religions did get together Jan. 24 in Assisi, Italy. Maybe you missed the story about it the next day Pope John Paul II and a number of cardinals were at the meeting. So was Bartholomew I, spiritual leader of all Orthodox Christians. So were a dozen Jewish rabbis, including some from Israel. So were 30 Muslim imams from Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Pakistan. So were dozens of ministers representing Baptists, Lutherans, Anglicans, Methodists, Presbyterians, Pentecostals, Disciples of Christ, Mennonites, Quakers, Moravians, The Salvation Army and the World Council of Churches. So were dozens of monks, gurus and others representing Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs and Zoroastrians and native African religions. They ignored the personal and political risk of attending such a high-profile gathering.

They convened and talked and prayed. They unanimously agreed to condemn "every recourse to violence and war in the name of God or religion." They also said, "No religious goal can possibly justify the use of violence by man against man." And that "Whoever uses religion to foment violence contradicts religion's deepest and truest inspiration." They called their statement the Assisi Decalogue for Peace. It consists of 10 mutual commitments to work for peace and justice in the world.

(The author: David Waters is a columnist who writes about religion for the Memphis, Tennessee Commercial Appeal and appears in syndication.)

Decalogue of Assisi for Peace

1. We commit ourselves to proclaiming our firm conviction that violence and terrorism are incompatible with the authentic spirit of religion, and, as we condemn every recourse to violence and war in the name of God or of religion, we commit ourselves to doing everything possible to eliminate the root causes of terrorism.

2. We commit ourselves to educating people to mutual respect and esteem, in order to help bring about a peaceful and fraternal coexistence between people of different ethnic groups, cultures and religions.

3. We commit ourselves to fostering the culture of dialogue, so that there will be an increase of understanding and mutual trust between individuals and among peoples, for these are the premise of authentic peace.

4. We commit ourselves to defending

the right of everyone to live a decent life in accordance with their own cultural identity, and to form freely a family of his own.

5. We commit ourselves to frank and patient dialogue, refusing to consider our differences as an insurmountable barrier, but recognizing instead that to encounter the diversity of others can become an opportunity for greater reciprocal understanding.

6. We commit ourselves to forgiving one another for past and present errors and prejudices, and to supporting one another in a common effort both to overcome selfishness and arrogance, hatred and violence, and to learn from the past that peace without justice is no true peace.

7. We commit ourselves to taking the side of the poor and the helpless, to speaking out for those who have no

voice and to working effectively to change these situations, out of the conviction that no one can be happy alone.

8. We commit ourselves to taking up the cry of those who refuse to be resigned to violence and evil, and we are desire to make every effort possible to offer the men and women of our time real hope for justice and peace.

9. We commit ourselves to encouraging all efforts to promote friendship between peoples, for we are convinced that, in the absence of solidarity and understanding between peoples, technological progress exposes the world to a growing risk of destruction and death.

10. We commit ourselves to urging leaders of nations to make every effort to create and consolidate, on the national and international levels, a

CALENDAR**JAN/FEB 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.** **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 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

- Jan. 12** **The First Freedom Awards 2003** - Jefferson Hotel in Richmond. See p. 9.
- Jan. 16** **Commemoration of National Religious Freedom Day** - 12:30 – 1:30 p.m. at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 9th & Grace Streets, Richmond. See p. 9
- Jan 18** **Rally and March to Oppose War in Iraq** - Saturday, 11:00 am – in Charlottesville
- Jan 18,19** **Rally and March to Oppose War in Iraq** - Saturday, 11:00 am – in D.C.
- Jan 27** **Start of trial of SOA protesters** - Monday – in Columbus, GA



**for March Issue
February 17**

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

Consumers Corner – A Source of Organic Clothes

By John Gallini

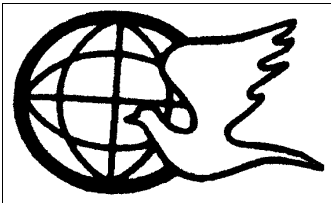
As I have written in this space on other occasions, the challenge of moving to shopping in more responsible ways is largely a matter of habit. One small example that I will offer this month relates to clothing. Now I do not spend much effort or money on clothes. Basically, once a year I usually drive a few miles to our local mall, go to the men's section of one of the large retailers and buy socks, tee shirts, etc. to replace what has worn out during the past year. I pay some attention to labels (in terms of sweatshops) if I think of it ahead of time. And that's it!

This year I decided to see if I could be a little more conscientious about this one piece of my spending habits. So I went to the web to find a supplier who advertised products that expressed my values better.

I started with Shop For Change at: <http://www.shopforchange.com> Then I searched for "men's clothing" and I scrolled down the list of companies. I settled on Maggie's Functional Organics at: <http://www.shopforchange.com> , found what I was looking for, placed an order and five days later my order arrived at my front door. The label in the tee shirt expresses well why I did all this:

"Made in Nicaragua by a Worker Owned Cooperative – 100% Certified Organic Cotton"

The cost was certainly higher than I would have paid at the mall, but in this case it means that the workers who made the shirts are getting a reasonable wage – and that is a strong value for me.



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