Raed Jarrar: Crisis in Iraq: Politics, Oil and Refugees

Iraqi political analyst Raed Jarrar spoke at Lehigh University (sponsored by the Progressive Student Alliance) and the Unitarian Church on October 15. His topic was billed “Crisis in Iraq: Politics, Oil and Refugees” and his take on those issues was informative, as was his animated delivery. Approximately 125 people in total attended the two presentations, both organized by the Lehigh Valley Peace Coalition.

Jarrar stressed that the US media spin is wrong in calling the violence in Iraq sectarian. He spoke of understanding the roots of that violence and that most Iraqis believe the violence is politically motivated by the nationalist majority who want the country to remain intact, and separatist groups who want Iraq to be split into Kurdistan, a Sunni, and a Shia area, each with sovereign rights to make oil deals with the oil in their territory. The problem is Shias in Sunni areas, Sunnis in Kurdish areas, and Sunnis in Shia area, and all those of mixed parentage, like Jarrar, who have lived together for centuries without these problems that arose since the US invasion of 2003. Jarrar portrayed the violence within Shia and Sunni neighborhoods as the drive to frighten the population into sectarian groups.

The violence has resulted in 4.5 million displaced persons, half of whom live as refugees in neighboring countries, when what they want is to go home. That will only happen when the US ends the occupation and completely leaves, said Jarrar. Only then will Iraqis have the opportunity to reconcile and rebuild their country.

Jarrar charged that the Bush administration doesn’t really want democracy; they prefer the non-elected cabinet of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, closure on an oil bill that greatly favors privatization and the US, and an Iraq divided along sectarian lines. It was the Iraqi people who demanded the right to vote and a general election, and they elected a parliament with a majority of nationalist candidates who desire the country to stay together, with a strong central Baghdad government. The parliament has resisted the current oil bill because they prefer Iraqi oil resources and profits to be developed and distributed to Iraqis first. Hence the political stalemate in Iraq is rooted in the conflict between the parliament and the cabinet whose appointed members have been together since 2000, supported the U.S. invasion of Iraq, and who urge privatization of Iraq’s oil industry.

Jarrar answered familiar questions from the audience. Wasn’t Saddam Hussein a bad leader? Hasn’t Iraq been unstable for a long time? Will Iraqis be able to get along and govern themselves?

So what if Iraq had many revolutions in the past half-century, said Jarrar, Iraq overthrew their governments and made it better. He went on to say that U.S. (continued on page 4)

Proposal to Raise LEPOCO Membership Dues

Members of LEPOCO approved an increase in annual dues at two Action Meetings, in September and October. The final consideration will occur at the Action Meeting on November 12th at 7 pm, at the Peace Center. This first increase since 1991 is seen as a critical effort as the organization faces financial challenges.

Effective January 1, 2008, the new dues would be as follows: $35 for individuals; $45 for families; and $75 for supporters. Dues for limited income individuals will continue at $5 per year. (The current dues schedule appears on page 2 of this newsletter.)

The new dues structure was proposed reluctantly but out of necessity because of LEPOCO’s precarious financial condition. At mid-month in October, expenses for the year-to-date were $46,946, but total income for that period was only $37,733. Fortunately, there is a small reserve fund that can be used for cash (continued on page 4)

Close the SOA Convergence

3-Days for Justice & Accountability
Help Make the School of the Americas History
November 16-18
Ft. Benning, Georgia
Rallies, Workshops, Concerts, Teach-Ins, Exhibitions, Resistance
See www.soaw.org for more information.
Call Joe DeRaymond or LEPOCO re: local car pools. Call Mark Shedden at 570-443-7595 about a Pennsylvania bus to the SOA demonstration that will stop in Scranton and Harrisburg.
A September of Protest

In September, I attended three demonstrations of resistance to the Iraq War in Washington, DC. On September 15, the ANSWER Coalition sponsored a rally, march and civil disobedience die-in action at the Capitol. Several carloads of local activists attended, and participated with between 10,000 and 100,000 on a clear, crisp DC day. Speakers included Cindy Sheehan, Ralph Nader, Adam Kokesh of Iraq Veterans Against the War, Ramsey Clark, and Ann Wright, former US Army Colonel. 197 people, including many veterans, were arrested at the Capitol for staging a die-in in solidarity with the victims of the war.

On September 19–20, Tim Chadwick, Sarah Snider, Suzy Creed and I participated in the events sponsored by the Declaration of Peace and the National Campaign for Nonviolent Resistance at the Capitol. On the 20th, Tim and I went into the House Gallery of the Capitol, then joined a group of 32 other activists in a room off the entrance to the Rotunda in a die-in demonstration to bring attention to the civilian deaths of the Iraq War and occupation. We each carried a picture of an Iraqi victim, and tried to bring his/her story to the public. The area was quickly declared non-public by the Capitol Police, and we were arrested, cuffed, hustled into busses. The initial charge was a misdemeanor trespass, quickly reduced by the Capitol Police legal staff to Disorderly Conduct. We will begin the third phase of the action, our court appearance, on October 18.

As Tim and I protested in the Capitol, Sarah and Suzy participated in a protest against the war at the Capitol steps, and also attended a rally in support of the Jena 6 being held in an adjacent area. Sarah reported that there were many people who participated in both events.

During our six-hour arrest period, we were able to hear the views of some of the police officers. Captain Joyce Johnson engaged us at length about the situation we were protesting, and stated she would join us upon her retirement. We were treated with a minimum of torture compared to people of color or others who have crossed paths with their authority. It is noteworthy that on September 10, the Capitol Police had aggressively arrested and injured Hip Hop Caucus organizer Reverend Lennox Yearwood as he attempted to attend the General Petraeus testimony before Congress.

On September 29, Troops Out Now, a split from the ANSWER Coalition, held a demonstration and march against the War at the Capitol and through the streets of DC. It was attended by 5 to 10 thousand people. I spoke with attendees who had bussed from Minnesota, which sent a contingent representing the FMLN of El Salvador.

While many are willing to wait until 2009 before we can hope for change, there are many thousands demanding policy changes now. I encourage you to attend the UFPJ events October 27. Let us make this an autumn of protest and change against the vicious U.S. policies in Iraq, the Middle East, the Americas, and within the United States.

- Joe DeRaymond

2007 Bike/Walkathon: The Final Report

This year’s Bike/Walk-a-Thon, held on June 2nd, was a resounding success, raising the excellent sum of $3148.75 for LEPOCO and this year’s sponsored organizations, the work of Partners in Health in Haiti and the project of the Philadelphia House of Grace Catholic Worker setting up a clinic in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

Many thanks to all those who participated, either by biking, walking, volunteering, donating, or serving as a sponsor for one of our bikers or walkers. We would specifically like to congratulate our participants who raised the most funds this year: Walt Garvin, Cradford Harris, and Ursula Wuerth, and the organizations which generously donated prizes for these lucky winners: the Lehigh Valley Velodrome, the New Street Book Shop, and the Old Library Shop.

The Bike/Walk-a-Thon not only provides LEPOCO with the opportunity to raise funds to support our work and the work of like-minded organizations, but it is also a wonderful chance for fun and fellowship amongst LEPOCO members and their friends (and a chance to explore some of the most beautiful and historic sites of the Lehigh Valley, along the way). We very much hope that you will be able to join us next spring for the 2008 Bike/Walk-a-Thon, on Saturday, June 7th.

- Holly M. Kent

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Newsletter of LEPOCO
Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern
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Bethlehem, PA 18015
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fax: 610-691-8904
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The LEPOCO Newsletter is published 10 times a year by the Lehigh-Pocono Committee of Concern, a nonviolent, nonprofit organization dedicated to peace in all forms.

Annual dues are:
- Regular Member $25
- Limited Income Member $5
- Household Membership $30
- Supporting Member $50

Articles/news should be submitted by the third Wednesday of the month for use in the following month's newsletter.

Newsletter Staff: Ellen Buck, Martha Christine, Peter Christine, Peter Crownfield, Fran Dreilsbach, Ariene Grow, Mike Lawton, Tom Lloyd, Bob Riggis, Tom Stinnett, Joan Stolz, Joan Stone, Nancy Tate, Marion Thorne, Jeff Vitelli, Hans Wuerth, and Ursula Wuerth.

Thanks to all the people who staple, fold and label the newsletter each month.

LEPOCO Steering Committee: Addison Bross, Peter Christine, Robert Daniels II, Julius Iwantsch (co-treasurer), Holly Kent, Mike Lawton (ex-officio), Michelle Mecham, Janet Ney (co-treasurer), Sue Ravitz, Nancy Tate (ex-officio).
Popcorn & Politics
at the LEPOCO Peace Center
Friday, Nov. 2, 7 pm
The Camden 28

This documentary from 2006 explores how and why a group of concerned individuals intentionally placed themselves at risk of arrest and imprisonment while protesting the war in Vietnam. Featuring a treasure of archival materials and current interviews with the activists, former FBI agents involved in the case, and scholars such as Howard Zinn, this powerful film asks the hard question, "How far would you go to stop a war?" Directed by Anthony Glacchino. 83 minutes.

Please bring a snack or beverage to share.

Potluck & Politics
at the LEPOCO Peace Center
Friday, Nov. 9, 6:30 pm
Perspectives on Immigration and the Lehigh Valley

Erika Sutherland a professor at Muhlenberg College who works with an immigrant support group and a representative of the organization, A Day Without An Immigrant, will speak about their experiences working on this crucial issue. As communities like Hazleton take a hostile stand toward immigrants others are trying to address the human suffering caused by current US policy and to seek responses that are compassionate and address the root causes of economic crises in the Americas.

Please bring some food to share for the Potluck Dinner at 6:30 pm. The program should begin around 7:00 pm.

Popcorn & Politics
at the LEPOCO Peace Center
Friday, December 7, 7 pm
The Mission

This sweeping spectacle of great beauty and compassion depicts an epic struggle between a man of the sword and a man of the cloth as 18th century Spanish Jesuits try to protect a remote South American Indian tribe in danger of falling under the rule of pro-slavery Portugal. Starring Robert DeNiro and Jeremy Irons, with a cameo appearance by Daniel Berrigan. Directed by Roland Joffé. 126 minutes. 1986.
Please bring a snack or beverage to share.

Join Us at Action Meetings

The second Monday of every month, LEPOCO holds its inspiring and thought-provoking Action Meeting. All LEPOCO members and supporters are invited to attend this meeting to learn more about, and share their views concerning current LEPOCO events and projects. Over the next several months, LEPOCO Action Meetings will become yet more exciting (if that's possible!). The Steering Committee will be holding a business meeting (to which everyone is invited) at 7:00 pm (to discuss finances, office management, etc.) and then at 7:30, the action-packed Action Meeting will begin. On alternate months, the Action Meeting will highlight the work of one LEPOCO committee, working group, or network, giving members of that group the chance to present in greater detail on the exciting work for peace they are doing. A tentative schedule of presentations is as follows:

- November: Nuclear Abolition Sisters
- January: Association of Students Advocating Peace
- March: Lehigh Valley Peace Coalition
- May: Peace Camp
- July: Americas Solidarity Group
- September: Committee Against State Killing

Please consider attending Action Meetings to learn more about all of the important work now going on at LEPOCO, and to share your views - we hope to see you there!

- Holly M. Kent

Nuclear Nugget Action Alert:

Call your US Representative and Senators Casey and Specter today! Tell them that the $50 billion tax subsidy for the nuclear industry to build new nuclear reactors must be removed from the Renewable Fuels, Consumer Protection and Energy Efficiency Act of 2007. Remind them that nuclear power is not a "clean" solution to the climate crisis, especially because there is no safe-disposal solution possible for the radioactive waste that reactors produce. That $50 billion is needed to develop genuinely clean, renewable and efficient technologies that stand the best chance of helping to slow global warming. And propping up an industry that continually creates radioactive waste that must be transported and stored is definitely not the smartest thing to do in an age of terrorism!
Proposal to Raise Dues

(continued from page 1)

flow, but in truth, continued financials that show excess expenses over revenue will exhaust that small reserve.

LEPOCO has about $24,000 in investments of be-
quests that, if needed, can be pressed into service
for the organization. Recently, the co-treasurers
drew $5,000 from that fund in order to pay current expenses. Clearly, we need to raise current revenue for current expenses rather than depending on an investment fund that will disappear rapidly if withdrawn in $5,000
chunks.

In light of the concerns, the Steering Committee
asked the co-treasurers for a review of expenses in
order to determine if expenses are excessive. The
resounding conclusion was that all of the expenses are
reasonable; indeed, the prudent stewardship of funds
entrusted to both staff and volunteers is exemplary. It
is apparent that the problem is a simple one; we need to
raise more money.

Fundraising for LEPOCO is an ongoing effort, all
through the year. Efforts include the Annual Dinner,
the Bike/Walkathon, the annual phonathon, fund ap-
peal letters twice a year, the yard sale, sales of buttons,
bumper stickers, and other boutique items, and a fall
picnic. The Fundraising Committee is eager for addi-
tional members to join in the planning of fundraisers
and, most important, anxious to hear new ideas for
fundraising. The committee encourages anyone with a
fresh idea for increasing LEPOCO’s revenue to attend
their next meeting. Please call the LEPOCO office or
Tom Lloyd if you can help.

Finally, the Fundraising Committee has set the
annual Phonathon, to take place in November. If you
can help with telephone calls, be sure to call the office
to schedule your dates and times for volunteering.
Please respond generously when a volunteer calls you
or send your donation in advance to save us a call. (You
can also let us know in advance by note or call that you do not
wish to be called. We will do our best to honor previous no-
call requests). LEPOCO needs your support now more
than ever.

- Janet Ney
LEPOCO Co-Treasurer

Raed Jarrar: Crisis in Iraq:
Politics, Oil and Refugees

(continued from page 1)
citizens think too highly of the longevity of the U.S.
government and their constitution, a constitution that
has been greatly reduced from its original intent,
hijacked by an administration that many U.S. citizens
do not support. Does that make it O.K. for France to
come in and take out Bush? So why did the U.S. take
out Hussein? Jarrar’s comments made connections to
issues on the ground and ideas that made sense, like
Thomas Jefferson’s comment that a little revolution
now and then was good for democracy. I’d like to think
those who heard him think a bit more clearly about
Iraq. Read more political analysis by Jarrar on his web
log “Raed in the Middle” and in the latest issue of Fel-
lowsip published by the Fellowship of Reconciliation.

Raed’s visit was made possible by American
Friends Service Committee for whom he works as a
consultant. Peter Lems, the director of AFSC’s Iraq Pro-
ject accompanied him.

- Monica McGahan

A Picnic of Food,
Games, Music & Fun

The second annual LEPOCO Peace Picnic was held
on September 30 at the Lehigh Valley Friends Meeting
House in Bethlehem. About 70 people came out for a
day of celebration, delicious food and fantastic weath-
er. There was something for everyone, including games
for the children, and games for the adults. Knock the
Crown Off King George was a big hit. We took turns
throwing beanbags at poor George in an attempt to

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Eyes Wide Open

Bright September days provided the setting for the Eyes Wide Open (Beyond Fear – Towards Hope, An Exhibition of the Iraq War) at Lafayette College, September 23 and 24, and at Northampton Community College (NCC), September 25. The weather was appropriate to honor the mostly young lives represented by the empty boots on display; but not appropriate for the grief most of us feel over the disastrous government policies that have resulted in the Pennsylvania deaths represented by the 175 pairs of boots.

The exhibit is meant to deepen the commitment of those already active for peace, but more importantly, the Lehigh Valley Peace Coalition brought the exhibit for a second Lehigh Valley visit (the first was in October 2006 at Lehigh University, Muhlenberg College and the Bethlehem City Center) hoping to touch the hearts of those not yet actively questioning the war.

The first reward was working with the engaged students at NCC and the quieter ones at Lafayette in a short training to be listeners at the exhibit, preparing to help welcome and talk with people visiting Eyes Wide Open. They were all excited to participate in this effort – Lafayette students especially because they see their campus as apathetic. The listeners trained at NCC included several international students.

Students at Lafayette visited the exhibit in small numbers, one student was overheard saying it was “scary” as he walked past the exhibit. On Monday, two classes visited the exhibit, “Social Justice Through Quantitative Literacy,” and “Religion and Society.” WLVT-Channel 69 did an extensive report on their news programs on Sunday and Monday that inspired some from the community to visit.

The presidents of both Lafayette and NCC visited and expressed appreciation for the exhibit being at their school.

Setting up at NCC on September 25, we realized quickly how much closer the students are to the effects of this war. They are mostly local and many of them knew someone who had been killed.

One young woman in a class helping with the exhibit set-up could not come too close because she is worried about her brother who is being sent to Afghanistan soon. (He already served a tour in Iraq.) A father of an NCC student said his daughter is doing well, but she helped take care of 12,000 injured people while she was in Iraq, often while their medical unit was taking mortar fire. One young veteran had seen five of his friends killed by a roadside bomb. Another veteran visited the exhibit with his class – he has an artificial leg after being injured in Afghanistan. At least six classes at NCC either visited the exhibit or helped with the set-up on Tuesday.

Nor surprisingly, with so many students so close to the war, we got a few negative responses, but they were very small in number. One woman cried as she talked about being active against the Vietnam War and regretting not having acted sooner against the war in Iraq. She says she will do so now.

At NCC the losses of war were at least as evident among those who visited the exhibit as they were in the boots and their mementos.

A final note: the exhibit now includes new American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) banners listing some of the important things we could do if we were not spending 720 million dollars a day on the war. Some examples are: give 423,529 children health care; pay 12,478 elementary school teachers; provide 1,274,336 homes with renewable electricity; provide 6482 families with a home; provide 1,153,846 children with free lunches.

Thank you to Scilla Wahrhaftig of AFSC, Pitts- burgh, who is the keeper and organizer of Eyes Wide Open Pennsylvania; to Students for Social Justice, the College Democrats, and Kim Robertson at Lafayette; and to the Student Senate, the Political Science Club, the Progressive Student Alliance, the Art Student Association, the Forum on Peace, Justice and Conflict Resolution, the Women’s Club and Dr. Vasiliki Anastasakos at NCC. In the Lehigh Valley Peace Coalition, Joe DeRaymond, Terry Briscoe, Susie Ravitz, and the L.V. Monthly Meeting of Friends helped in special ways. And thank you to the dozens of others who volunteered to staff the exhibit, help with set-up and tear-down each day.

- Nancy C. Tate

Photo by Susie Ravitz.
Students at NCC set-up the Eyes Wide Open exhibit in the main campus quad at the school on September 25th.
Act to Support ABA Report

On October 9th, the American Bar Association released a report that found that Pennsylvania fails to comply with over 93% of the ABA’s recommendations designed to improve the fairness and accuracy of the death penalty. In the area of racial bias in particular, our state does not fully meet a single one of the ABA standards. In fact, Pennsylvania now has the shameful distinction of having the largest minority population of any death row in the nation. In addition, more than 90% of those on Pennsylvania’s death row could not afford an attorney at their initial trial.

It is important that you contact your state senator to deliver the following message: "Pennsylvania’s death penalty system is seriously flawed. A new report by the American Bar Association lists the problems that plague the death penalty in PA. The ABA study found that Pennsylvania risks executing the innocent, is fraught with racial and geographic disparities, and that better standards are needed to insure that lawyers for poor defendants are competent. Please support Senate Bill 850 that would impose a moratorium while these flaws are reviewed and addressed."

This same message can be delivered to your state representative asking him/her to introduce moratorium legislation in the state House of Representatives that is compatible with SB-850.

- Maria Weick

Veterans For Peace at the Great Allentown Fair

Veterans For Peace, Lehigh Valley Chapter, participated in Cindy Sheehan’s visit to Allentown on July 25th. The group was represented by a contingent that marched with Cindy from the Allentown Armory to the Sterling Hotel. A table with articles for sale and a donations jar was set up at the Sterling.

From August 28 through September 3, Veterans For Peace occupied a booth at the Greater Allentown Fair. While located somewhat off the midway, the booth was situated along the main avenue of access to the restrooms that provided significant exposure to passersby.

For the greater part, response from fairgoers was supportive; however, there were a few instances of spirited discussion. A number of veterans stopped to express an interest in joining Veterans For Peace that hopefully will be reflected in an increased enrollment for the group. Two signs reading “Bring Our Troops Home; End the War Now” were sold and placed in front of the Allentown VFW post on Hamilton St., where they remained for several days. Donations in excess of eight hundred dollars were collected to provide free telephone calling cards for wounded service people recovering at Walter Reed Hospital.

Acknowledgement should be made of those who assisted in this experience. An anonymous donor provided the funds to acquire the space at the fair. Also, of note was the help in staffing the booth offered by members of LEPOCO, Lehigh Valley Peace Coalition, Association of Students Advocating Peace, VFP members, and others. Special mention needs to be made of the yeopersons’ duty turned in by Louise Legun and Judy Woodruff in making this endeavor a reality.

- Paul Fichter

Nuclear Nugget II

According to the Union of Concerned Scientists, "Nuclear weapons remain the gravest and most immediate threat to human civilization. There are still some 25,000 nuclear weapons worldwide."

"The Bush administration has been promoting new roles for nuclear weapons. In 2001, the administration issued a provocative Nuclear Posture Review calling for the development of new, more usable nuclear weapons and for maintaining an option to use nuclear weapons first even against non-nuclear weapon states. Since then, the Bush administration has further articulated its nuclear use doctrine, asserting in several documents that the United States has the right to use nuclear weapons preemptively -- in peace-time and on its own authority -- to stop states from acquiring nuclear, chemical or biological weapons."

Once again our government is guilty of embracing a double standard that places the US above the rule of international law. Raise your voice! Oppose the Bush administration’s nuclear weapons proliferation policies.

Weekly Peace Vigils

Bethlehem: 4-5 pm, Thursdays
3rd & Wyandotte Sts., south Bethlehem
Contact: Vince Stravino 610-216-8103

Allentown: Noon-1 pm, Fridays
Federal Courthouse, 5th & Hamilton Sts,
Contact: Rev. John Clint Fowler, 610-746-5013

Easton: 10-11 am, Saturdays, Centre Square
Contact: Reggie Regrut, 908-859-5632

Please attend as often as you are able!

Check out the LEPOCO Website at www.lepoco.org. There is a great calendar maintained by Robert Daniels II for information on upcoming events.

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40 Years of Occupation:
Assessing the Prospects for Peace

“A land without people for a people without land,” so goes the myth in many minds upon which modern Israel was born in 1948 on land known internationally as Palestine. If only both parts of that statement were true. Unfortunately, while the Jews were a people without land fleeing a monstrous holocaust and European anti-Semitism, the land of biblical Israel was already populated by 600,000 Jews along with 1,269,000 Arab Palestinians who had lived there for centuries. The Arab Palestinians, like the Jews believed they had an intrinsic right to this land. And, therein lies the major rub in the conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians: land.

An invasion in 1947-1949 by Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Iraq claiming they were “saving” the Palestinians from the Zionists resulted in the exodus of 700,000 Palestinians who then became refugees living in refugee camps in Middle Eastern and other countries. The Israelis call this the War of Independence; the Palestinians call it Al-Naqba, the catastrophe. Following what is known as the Six Day War in 1967, when Israel battled Egypt, Syria and Jordan and decisively defeated them, Israel captured and occupied the West Bank, East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights. These are what are known as the Occupied Territories with the exception of the Gaza Strip that has been returned to the Palestinians.

This summer, prompted by my son and his family making “Aliyah” (moving to Israel permanently) I went on a two-week delegation to Israel/Palestine sponsored by Interfaith Peace Builders entitled “40 Years of Occupation: Assessing the Prospects for Peace.” Traveling throughout the West Bank and Israel, meeting with over 65 Israeli and Palestinian peace and justice activists allowed me a glimpse of the dehumanization occurring both to the oppressed and the oppressors as a result of a 40-year occupation.

Always claiming security needs Israel has established an elaborate system (a “matrix of control”) whereby the daily life of the Palestinians is dramatically restricted. Abuse, humiliation and injustice are commonplace. Many limitations and Israeli actions hardly represent security measures, but are repressive actions designed to take over more and more land and to make life so miserable for Palestinians that many more will leave. Israeli activities are creating “facts on the ground” that make a viable Palestinian state virtually impossible.

Part of the “matrix of control” consists of walls and fences (called “security barriers” by the Israelis and apartheid walls by the Palestinians). The barriers create political borders, not security, and reach far into Palestinian territory. The walls are often as high as 28 feet and separate one village from another or divide cities and communities into two or three parts. Thousands of families living east of the barrier are separated from their farmland situated west of the barrier, impairing their ability to earn a living. To pass through the walls Palestinians must go through check points where their identity cards are checked by soldiers (Israeli Defense Forces) who are frequently rude and physically and verbally abusive. Checkpoints can be closed at any time without explanation and hours and hours of delay occur daily. (There are also “flying checkpoints” which appear unannounced making the daily lives of Palestinians totally unpredictable.) Getting to work, to school, to the doctor, etc., often takes many unnecessary hours and consequently Palestinians lose jobs, flunk out of school and suffer from untreated illnesses. There are many tragic stories of people dying and babies delivered at checkpoints. Additionally, the mandatory ID cards that everyone must carry put limitations on the areas of the country one is permitted to visit. Those living in East Jerusalem, for example, may not be able to visit family or work in Bethlehem; those living in Gaza may not be allowed to attend school in the West Bank, etc.

Perhaps most insidious of all is Israel’s wanton seizing of land and homes owned by Palestinians and the subsequent demolition of the homes and olive trees on the land in order to build Israeli settlements. This is in clear violation of international humanitarian law and is happening at an alarming rate. An elaborate network of roads (on which only Israelis are allowed to travel) is being constructed that connect one Israeli settlement to another, bypassing Palestinian communities. Israel has encouraged Jews from all over the world to move to Israel and live in settlements built on land stolen from Palestinians. The settlement blocs cover over 30% of the West Bank. An expanded Israel as a result of land taken for settlements and the wall will occupy 85-90% of the entire country, giving Israel control over the richest farmland, water and natural resources, as well as the movement of people and goods among Palestinian “islands.”

Almost miraculously, and rarely reported in the U.S., is the fact that in this land of deep sorrow, injustice, pain and hatred, there are thousands of courageous Muslims, Jews, Christians and secular folks reaching out to embrace the other’s humanity and find nonviolent ways to bring justice and peace to both sides. One participant in another Peace-Builder delegation said, “Day by day, from place to place, they travel to the other side together. Day by day, year by year, bereaved Israelis and Palestinians, sick of the politics that divide and kill, grow wisdom from their losses.” They believe a just solution is still possible and struggle daily against “the assassination of hope,” the phrase used by one Palestinian we met to so poetically express their growing despair. In their words was an urgency and a challenge to all of us to help end the stupidity of brutality that will never bring security or peace to this beleaguered country and to join their courageous struggle.

Living and working heroically among the Palestinian people are organizations well known to the U.S.
Take a Stand

On August 28th at the United Steel Workers Van Bittner Memorial Hall 200+ people heard several speakers “Take A Stand.” The meeting was the culmination of projects undertaken throughout the summer by Americans Against Escalation in Iraq in an effort to sway our congressional representative toward ending the war. The campaign was nation-wide. Our local effort, led by Aaron Swisher (and Dorotheilia Mills earlier in the summer), targeted US Rep. Charles Dent, who largely ignored the voice of his constituents on this matter, including inviting the to the Take A Stand event itself. An empty chair signified his absence.

Addison Bross aptly and respectfully hosted the speakers. Lafayette college professor, Dr Steven Lamer, spoke on the unjust war. Iraqi Lehigh graduate student, Louis Yako told of his personal experiences in the war with insight and emotion. Former Air Force Captain Louise Legun of Lehigh Valley Veterans for Peace gave a speech that was from a soldier’s perspective. She quoted an op-ed published this summer in The New York Times that was written by seven US soldiers serving in Iraq. “In the end we need to recognize that our presence may have released Iraqis from the grip of a tyrant, but it has also robbed them of their self-respect. They will soon realize that the best way to regain dignity is to call us what we are — an army of occupation. And force our withdrawal.” I might add that two of these soldiers died within a month of the op-ed and another was wounded as the letter was being prepared. Louise also quoted Major General Paul Eaton and Major General John Batiste in their opposition to the war. “As two military veterans, we join our voices with the majority of the people and many military leaders in our country who say that the war in Iraq is a mistake. How long must we support a mistake? Why should this country send more and more members of the military to their early graves in an attempt to justify the mistakes of the politicians in Washington?” Louise also listed many of the problems US soldiers suffer after their return including, but not limited to PTSD, traumatic brain injury, and being denied disability ratings.

So let’s “Take A Stand” and work even harder to end this war!

- Judith K. Woodruff

Kirkridge Peace & Justice

Nov. 2-4: Richard Deats
Making a Difference: The Nonviolent Life
Richard Deats worked with the Fellowship of Reconciliation for many years. He is a writer, storyteller, activist and trainer and has traveled throughout the world working for justice and peace.
Program $135, Rm/Bd $175.

Nov. 7-11: Janet Chisholm & T. Michael Rock
Training of Trainers: Creating a Culture of Peace
Program $145, Rm/Bd $300

Call 610-588-1793 or see www.kirkridge.org for more info.
They are artists of torture.
They are artists of pain and fatigue.
They are artists of insults and humiliation.

Where is the world to save us from torture?
Where is the world to save us from the fire and sadness?
Where is the world to save the hunger strikers?

- Hunger strike poem by Adnan Farhan Abdul Latif in Amnesty International's Poems from Guantanamo, Fall 2007.

ANTIWAR INDEPENDISTAS IN PUERTO RICO - On a recent morning in a neighborhood in San Juan, Puerto Rico, the sun rose to illuminate a group of activists distributing flyers to young people as they arrived at their school to begin the academic year. The handouts were emblazoned with the logo: "Our Youth Should Not Go To War." There was a tear-off at the bottom which students were encouraged to sign and hand to their teachers if they did not wish to be contacted by military recruiters. This scene was repeated in communities all over the island.

Although there is a long history of military service on the island, the war in Iraq has become increasingly unpopular, and pro-independence organizations have tapped this sentiment in a very successful opt-out campaign. Pro-independence advocates point out that most Puerto Ricans do not regard the U.S. armed forces as "their military." "If the death of a Puerto Rican soldier is tragic, it's more tragic if that soldier has no say in that war," says Juan Dalmau, secretary general of the Puerto Rican Independence Party. Between 2003 and 2006, 4947 men and women from Puerto Rico enlisted in the U.S. military. The Pentagon lists 37 service members from the island killed in Iraq and Afghanistan, but anti-war groups say the number is closer to 80, including suicides, and soldiers recruited on the main land.

In the past year, 57% of youth or their families have signed opt-out forms, effectively barring the Pentagon from reaching out to about 65,000 high school students. According to Bill Carr, Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for military personnel policy, the opt-out rate for the continental United States rarely exceeds 10%.

The efforts of the Independistas, and other anti-war groups in Puerto Rico have been greatly facilitated by the education secretary for the island, Rafael Arangunde. A self-declared Independista, Arangunde last year granted equal access to pacifist groups and recruiters seeking to contact young people. "You don't want children fighting on the streets, you don't want children cheating, nor stealing, and you don't want them thinking that an alternative to solving any conflict is war...I've always felt that one of the by-products of a good educational system is that you have citizens who will defend pacifism. I think that just as we have to insist on ecological values, we have to insist on pacifist values."

Source: Paul Lewis, Washington Post, 8/18/07

THE STATE OF HATE - Every so often, in an almost predictable cycle, an incident like the Jena Six in Louisiana, becomes a media showcase to remind us that racism is very much alive and well in the United States. As Gary Younge writes in The Nation ("Jena Is America," 11/8/07), "What took place in Jena is not aberrant; it's consistent. The details are a local disgrace. The broader themes are a national scandal. Jim Crow Jr. travels well — unencumbered by historical baggage."

The Southern Poverty Law Center continues, as consistently as this pervasive racism, to monitor organized hate group activity throughout the states and to publish their documented research in "The Intelligence Report." In a recent broadside, SPLC identified 844 active hate groups in the United States, 27 of them in Pennsylvania. The groups include Ku Klux Klan, neo-Nazi, racist Skinheads, Christian Identity, Black Separatist, and general hate groups that don't fit neatly in any mold. The groups have different philosophies, different targets, different modus operandi, but they all promote hate, are violent, and often illegal.

In their Call to Action, SPLC suggests ways that individuals can promote tolerance, and fight against organized hate groups. Among them are: speak up when you hear slurs; seek out opportunities to interact with people who are different from you; encourage local police to identify bias-motivated criminal acts as hate crimes; complain when media reports promote stereotypes; look inside yourself for hidden biases; take a test at www.hiddenbias.org.

ARLEN SPECTER ON THE GLOBAL WARMING FENCE - The dire warnings about the future effects of unabated global warming are well known. The good news is that we may be able to avoid the worst effects by taking dramatic action today, and that there are bills before Congress that, if implemented quickly, could achieve the 80% reduction in emissions of green house gasses that scientists are telling us will be necessary by the middle of the century.

One of these, the Sander-Boxer Global Warming Pollution Reduction Act (S-309) could come to a vote this fall. Our Senator Arlen Specter has yet to decide whether he will co-sponsor this critical legislation. You can contact Senator Specter and ask him to co-sponsor S-309 and thereby protect us from a future where the average summer temperatures will be 100 degrees in Pennsylvania by the end of the century.

Source: Union of Concerned Scientists Action Network

- Jeff Vitelli

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On Sept. 28 the War Resisters League gave their Peace Award to the Center for Constitutional Rights and the Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition International. David McReynolds wrote the text for the award:

When pain is a hated companion
When burning light is constant
When noise does not stop
When there is no sleep
When your hands go numb from cords
When you are harse from screaming
There are lawyers committed to justice
And survivors who have never
Forgotten how to remember
These who, being free, can speak seeking
to ease the pain, dim the lights, silence the noise, listen to your brokenness and end it

In an America and a world where so many are complicit by silence,
Where the unspeakable has become state policy
We honor those who keep the long watch, who set at liberty those who were bound and break the policies that break our hearts.

The Fellowship of Reconciliation and Interfaith Peace Builders are sponsoring a program on Grassroots Civilian Diplomacy: Activists in the Halls of Power, Nov. 4-5, in Washington, DC. This is a Two-Day Training on Advocacy for Demilitarization. The cost is $25-75 on a sliding scale. To register contact Sharon Martin at FOR 845-358-4601 x33.

The 48th Annual Nazareth to Bethlehem Christmas Peace Pilgrimage will be held Sat., Dec. 8. Alan Jennings, Executive Director of the Community Action Committee of the Lehigh Valley will speak on “Irresponsible Stewardship: Are We Too Polite?” A flyer about the pilgrimage will appear in a future mailing. It begins at Noon in Nazareth with rides from Bethlehem leaving from 520 E. Broad St., at 10:45 am. For more info.

10 LEPOCO Newsletter / Late October 2007 see www.peacewalk.org or call 610-258-7313.

Calendars for 2008 are now available at the LEPOCO Peace Center. The War Resisters League Peace Calendar this year is titled “Salaam, Shalom, Solih: Nonviolence and Resistance in the Middle East & Beyond.” Kathy Kelly writes in the introduction, “As the pages of this year’s War Resisters League calendar turn, we must continue to listen and narrate the stories of those who’ve borne, most directly, the consequences of war. The stories herein help us imagine a new and life-giving history.” It is $13.95.

The Syracuse Cultural Workers (wall) Peace Calendar features beautiful pictures and art from doves, to Catholic Worker houses to Iraq Veterans Against the War. It is $13.95.

Monica Haas of New Jersey recently returned from her first delegation with the Christian Peacemakers Team in Colombia. CPT is present in many countries at war. She spoke about her trip to the Americas Solidarity Group on Oct. 17 and showed us a photograph of her delegation parading through the streets of Barrancabermeja in their cardboard truck painted with slogans opposing the trucks that regularly recruit (take) young men from the streets of that town for the military. Monica will be going to Chicago for further CPT training and plans to participate in similar efforts with CPT over the next three years.

Phillip Mentor will lecture on the Harlem Renaissance on Thurs., Nov. 1 at 3:30 pm, in Seegers Union, Rm. 111, Muhlenberg College. That evening at 7:30 he will present a recital, “Homage to Paul Robeson” at the Center for Arts, Recital Hall. Both are free.

War Tax Resistance and the Path to Peace is the theme for a national gathering of NWTRCC (National War Tax Resistance Coordinating Committee). They will be celebrating 25 years of work as an organization. Hosted by the Heartland Peace Tax Fund, the gathering will take place near Newton, Kansas (served by Amtrak). Cost is what you can afford $30-$45. For more info, call 1-800-269-7464 or see www.nwtrcc.org.

On Sun., Oct. 28 at 2 pm, the Allentown Armory Activists will lead the anti-war/impeach contingent in the Allentown Halloween Parade. To join them meet at the Ritz Barbecue Stand wearing anti-war related costumes, carrying your signs and props. For more info. see www.my space.com/armoryactivists.

Hope UCC, 1031 Flexer Ave., Allentown, will hold their International Holiday Bazaar on Sun., Nov. 18, from 11:30 am to 4 pm, featuring SERRV crafts. Each purchase helps provide income and dignity to artists and farmers in developing countries.

The Fired Up Films Program for the Fall of 2007 opens Fri., Oct. 26, at 7 pm, in Miller 33, at Cedar Crest College, with Our Brand Is Crisis about U.S. highly-paid consultants molding opinions and voters around the world. Dr. Jeff Pooley of Media & Communication, Muhlenberg College, will lead the discussion.

In November the series will include: Sír No Sír! on Fri., Nov. 9, in the same location at CCC. This is the story of U.S. troops who acted to oppose the Vietnam War while still in uniform.

China Blue will be shown on Wed., Nov. 14, in Trumbower 130, Muhlenberg College. It is about two teenage jean factory workers in China and the effects of globalization. And, on Tues., Nov. 20, Argentina: Hope In Hard Times, will be shown about some of the response to economic crisis in that country, also at the Muhlenberg location. All the November films are at 7 pm.

The former president of El Salvador, Francisco Flores, spoke at Lafayette College on Sept. 17. He presented a very rosy picture of conditions in his country. Joe DeRaymond, Tim Chadwick and Reggie Rurgut greeted those who attended with a handout that presented some of the reality for poor people in that country.
Thanks to all who helped staff the LEPOCO booth at the Peace Fair at Buckingham Friends Meeting on Sept. 29. It was a lovely day and the music, the displays and the massages were great. We encouraged attenders to sign a postcard to Rep. Patrick Murphy urging him to call for the closing of the SOA.

The Peace Commission of the Diocese of Bethlehem will hold a celebration of the life of Bishop Paul Jones on Sat., Oct. 27, 1-4 pm, at St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church, 35 S. Franklin St., Wilkes-Barre. The program will include a “Culture of Peace” Workshop led by Addison Bross and Janet Chisholm. David Jones, son of Paul Jones will speak. For more info. call Jim Walton at 610-868-6878.

Much appreciation to the young people from the The Lehigh Valley Charter High School for the Performing Arts who performed the Poverty Requiem with a large chorus and dance troupe in Bethlehem on Oct. 17, at the United Nations Oct. 16 and at the World Bank on Oct. 21. It was a very moving performance. Their dedication to the seriousness of the project was evident.

Tom Melville and George Mische, long-time activists in the struggle for peace and justice and veterans of the 1968 Catonsville Nine draft file burning, will speak in Harrisburg on Sat., Nov. 11, at 7 pm, at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, 1439 Market St. Melville wrote the book, Through A Glass Darkly: The U.S. Holocaust in Central America. If you would like to attend this program riding with others from the Lehigh Valley please call LEPOCO or Joe DeRaymond.

Congratulations to the Tama Manufacturing workers for winning a three-year contract containing many of their demands after a 15-week strike. Gail Meyer, a Unite (their union) leader said, “This is a major victory.”

Thank you to the many people who helped staff and made donations to the LEPOCO Yard Sale on Oct. 6. It was a successful day with much hard work. We grossed over $1000. Thanks to everyone including the Community Action Committee of the Lehigh Valley that makes the Forte Bldg. available to the community.

David Rose is speaking on Sun., Nov. 4, at 11:45 am, on “Judging the Death Penalty,” at First Presbyterian Church, Spring Garden St., Easton. You are welcome to attend.

MEETINGS...MEETINGS...MEETINGS...MEETINGS...ETC.
Tues., Oct. 23 & Thurs., Nov. 8, 7 pm: Veterans for Peace meetings at the LEPOCO Peace Center.
Mon., Nov. 5 & Dec. 3, 7 pm: LEPOCO Steering Committee meeting at the Peace Center.
Mon., Nov. 12 & Dec. 10, 7 pm: LEPOCO Monthly Action Meeting at Peace Center. All members and friends welcome at this monthly business meeting where the activities of all committees and working groups are reviewed. (See page 3 for more.)
Wed., Nov. 14, 8:30 am: Lehigh Valley Committee Against State Killing meeting at LEPOCO Peace Center.
Thurs., Nov. 15, 6 pm: Nuclear Abolition Sisters meeting at Olive Branch Restaurant on Broadway, south Bethlehem.
Thurs., Dec. 6, 7 pm: Americas Solidarity Group meeting at the Peace Center.
Please join in the meetings and work of these groups as you are able. If you want to know the next meeting for the LEPOCO Fundraising Committee, the Association of Students Advocating Peace or the Lehigh Valley Peace Coalition please call the Peace Center at 610-691-8730.
END THE WAR NOW

OCTOBER 27
national day of action

BOSTON
CHICAGO
LOS ANGELES
NEW YORK CITY
NEW ORLEANS
ORLANDO
PHILADELPHIA
SALT LAKE CITY
SAN FRANCISCO
SEATTLE

We the people of this country want the war to end. But Congress has failed to take decisive action! With each passing month nearly 100 service people and countless more Iraqis are killed. Some $200 billion of our tax dollars are spent and the death and destruction continue. From New Orleans to every corner of the country, our communities are neglected and suffer from the consequences of this illegal occupation of Iraq. We the people have spoken! We want the war to end and we want it to end now!

Take the Lehigh Valley bus to Philly to help End The War Now on Sat., Oct. 27.
Seats are $20 each ($10 for those on limited income).
Make a reservation by calling 610-691-8730,
e-mailing lepoco@fast.net,
sending a check to or visiting the
LEPOCO Peace Center,
313 W. 4th St.,
Bethlehem, PA 18015.

United for Peace and Justice发动了一项针对政客的运动，在11月20日之前的全国范围内的和平集会和游行示威。