



The Newsletter of the Richmond Peace Education Center

September/October 2004

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Save the Date for the RPEC Annual Dinner and Auction



This year the Annual Dinner and Auction will be held on November 12 at 6:30 at St. Paul's Episcopal Church downtown. There will be a lot of changes in this year's dinner that we hope you will like.

- We are giving the first annual Peacemaker of the Year award to Retired Bishop Walter F. Sullivan for the many years he spent promoting peace and justice in Virginia and for the pivotal role he played in the creation of Peace Centers across the state.
- Lt. Governor Tim Kaine will join us as a "Guest Auctioneer." I know people will be anxious to see him and to encourage him.
- We are having the dinner catered this year and it will be primarily finger food that will be available as soon as you arrive. Additionally, we will have beer, wine and soft drinks.
- Jim Bennett is getting a jazz combo together and they will be playing throughout the evening.
- We have many exciting items for the auction this year. They will be posted on the RPEC web site and you will receive as complete a list as we have in your invitation. This way you can plan ahead for big items you may want to bid on. We have at least four vacation homes this year, for example.
- For tickets purchased in advance of the dinner, the cost will be \$20 for adults, \$12 for youth 6-12, and kids under 5 are free. All tickets at the door will be \$25.

This should be a great party, so please plan to come and invite your friends. This is the major fundraiser for the Peace Center and we need everyone's participation.

rpec NEWS

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Message from the Board Chair

Dear Friends,

This is a truly amazing time for the Richmond Peace Education Center. Not only are we on the path to recovery from an extremely difficult financial period, but we are beginning to travel several exciting new paths. Here is just a sampling: We have relocated! Our new location allows the board to meet on-premises and will give us room to grow. We're getting a makeover! The board has taken the initiative to update our mission statement to help focus the center and bring us firmly into the 21st century. Along with this our visual image is being updated, so expect to see the new face of RPEC in the near future. We're celebrating! Our fundraising committee has created a gala event for our annual auction unlike anything we've had before. Plus, as our 25th anniversary approaches expect to hear about many exciting events and ways to get involved. We can't do this all without you so please be sure to call the office today and find out how you can get involved.

Yours truly,
Noah Scalin, Board Chair
noahs@alrdesign.com

Contributing to RPEC through your Workplace

Financial contributors can once again choose to use payroll deduction through their employers to support the work of RPEC. We are included in four different campaigns:

- United Way, which includes many commercial and industrial companies
- Combine Virginia Campaign, which is for State employees.
- Central Virginia Area Combined Federal Campaign for Federal employees.
- Local Government and Schools Campaign (LGSUWC) for school teachers and other employees of local governments in Richmond, Henrico, Chesterfield and Hanover.

To specify that your United Way contribution be designated for RPEC, you should select "Option E" (Another health and Human Service Organization) on your contribution form, and specify "Richmond Peace Education Center, 14 N. Laurel St., Richmond, VA 23220".

To contribute through the Combined Virginia Campaign, specify our name and address (as above) as well as the agency code from the brochure on your pledge card.

For both the Combined Federal Campaign and LGSUWC, specify our agency number or code from the campaign brochure on your campaign pledge card.

We suggest that all who choose to contribute in this way request that your gift be acknowledged. We want to thank you and credit your records properly.

Independent Media For The People, By The People

Muna Hijazi

Eyewitness accounts from Najaf, Iraq in the midst of heavy fighting. Reports from the streets of New York City during the Republican National Convention protests. Stories of struggle in the neighborhoods of Buenos Aires, Argentina.

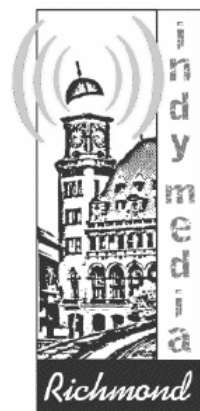
Exposes on war profiteers headquartered in Arlington. Exclusive coverage of police brutality in Richmond. Updates on Louisa County's fight against the construction of new nuclear plants. Coverage of labor issues in Hampton Roads, Fredericksburg, Charlottesville, and even North Carolina and Baltimore.

Add all of these to the laundry list of articles posted by Virginia authors to the Richmond Independent Media Center's website – **richmond.indymedia.org** – this past year.

The Richmond Independent Media Center, or Richmond Indymedia as those of us worn out with acronyms prefer to call it, is a local organization devoted to providing online, grassroots news about progressive issues and events across Virginia. Our work centers around our website and we're part of the international network of online Independent Media Centers, hundreds of which span the globe. Every IMC works towards the same goals within their local communities, with the support of their international Indymedia community every step of the way.

Richmond Indymedia has been around for about five years now as an online news source.

Over the years, we've covered tons of stories either neglected or inaccurately or incompletely covered by major media outlets. With just half a dozen active volunteers, a couple of dusty computers, meeting space at the wonderful Richmond Queer Space Project, and zero, zip, zilch for a budget, the Richmond Independent Media Center has managed to



become a refreshing source of news for people across the region and indeed the world. How is it that such a small organization can provide such a depth, diversity, and volume of stories? Simple:

You.

The heart of Indymedia is its users, who – through revolutionary open source, open publishing software – are able to easily publish their own stories online. The **richmond.indymedia.org** website gets thousands of visitors a day. Publish a story on the site and your piece will instantly receive local, national, and international coverage. There are over 150 Independent Media Centers worldwide, creating a network of progressive people in tune and in touch.

"If we leave storytelling to the experts, we forget how to tell our own stories." So says Danielle Chynoweth of Urbana-Champaign Indymedia. A

fundamental aspect of Indymedia is empowering ourselves and each other. Too often, our voices are overlooked or drowned out by an inattentive media system more focused on profits than people. Indymedia exists to give folks the resources to tell their own stories, to report on their own communities. We act from the firm belief that a lot of times there are no better experts on the issues we care about than ourselves.

It's crucial to not only give people the opportunity to share their own news and views, but the encouragement as well, and to insist that our voices are valid, credible, and desperately needed in today's world. This is one of the key distinctions to make between grassroots Indymedia groups and professional media companies.

Indymedia is importantly not just a news outlet. Indymedia is a passionate, unfiltered media-driven vehicle for social change. People publish stories on Indymedia websites not just because they want to share news, but because they hope by doing so they can change our world for the better.

Visit our website **richmond.indymedia.org** to read all of the stories coming out of our communities and start publishing your own stories today. On the site you can also learn more about the Richmond Independent Media Center and Indymedia in general. If you'd like more details, or would like to contribute to Richmond Indymedia in some way, just contact us at **info@richmondindymedia.org**.

The Impacts of US Economic Policies on Communities of Color at Home and Abroad

Building Cross-Border Solidarity

Thursday, October 7th
The Pace Center
700 W. Franklin St.
Richmond, VA
Potluck Supper 6:30 PM
Discussion 7:30 PM

Featuring

Zulia Mena

Zulia has been active in the struggle for Afro-Colombian and women's rights in Colombia for nearly her entire life. Zulia was elected to Congress in 1994, serving for four years as Colombia's first ever Afro-Colombian congresswoman. Today, Zulia continues her work in the Chocó as a community organizer and social worker. She has attended conferences in Europe, the U.S., and throughout South America, speaking about the situation of Afro-Colombians, human rights of ethnic minorities, women in Colombia, land rights, and citizen participation in democracy, among many other themes.

Art Burton

Art serves on the Executive Committee of the Richmond Chapter of the NAACP. As a founding member of the environmental racism group, Parents for Life, Art was one of the leaders of the struggle to relocate a Richmond public school that was situated atop toxic waste. He remains active in the struggle for justice for Richmond's inner-city residents engaging city-level politics on a variety of issues. Art currently serves on the board of directors of The People United.

For More Information:

(434) 361-0243 or info@thepeopleunited.org

Sponsored by:

RPEC Moves to New Location, Will Turn 25 Ken Willis, RPEC Executive Director

Since 1981, the RPEC offices have been located in rent-free space provided by the Catholic Diocese of Richmond at 14 N. Laurel Street. However, due to recent staff expansion by the Diocese, RPEC will move to a new space at the Berryman Center for Community Ministries, 400 W. 32nd Street (in Richmond's Woodland Heights neighborhood) by the end of September. There are pros and cons connected with the move. The Center will enjoy a slightly larger space and will also have access to other areas in the Berryman building for programs and public events, but, for the first time in its history, will also be required to pay rent. Still, both the RPEC Board and I agree the move is a positive step forward for our organization at this time, since the rent is minimal and the costs are outweighed by the benefits the new location provides. And, we thank the Diocese for the hospitality and support it has extended to RPEC over the past 20+ years as we look forward to continuing our relationship in working together to promote peace and justice locally and worldwide.

Along with the move, there is other exciting news for RPEC: 2005 is the 25th anniversary of the incorporation of the Center as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit operating in the greater Richmond area. In recognition of this fact, the Board has taken on the job of refining and clarifying the current focus and future goals of the Peace Center, while a special sub-committee has been hard at work planning a gala event for this year's Annual Dinner & Auction (see article on p.1). Other 25th Anniversary activities will be announced as 2005 draws nearer and as the year progresses.

We ask our many members and supporters to bear with us as we complete our move, reconnect phones and computers, and continue to grow in our ability to teach peace in troubled communities. We apologize for any inconvenience you may experience in contacting us during this transition. And, we ask that you join us in celebrating 25 years of past experience as we position the Center now for the challenges of peacemaking in the 21st Century that surely lie ahead.



Appalachian Spring Cooperative 2004 Holiday Gift Baskets

Some of you remember **Steve Hodges**, the founder of RPEC, and his wife **Diantha**. They founded **Jubilee Project**, a non-profit community development organization in Cook County, TN, in 1991. At last year's RPEC annual meeting/dinner we were able to offer RPEC members the opportunity to purchase a Holiday Gift Basket from **Appalachian Spring Cooperative (ASC)**, which is one of the numerous offshoots of Jubilee Project. ASC is a member-owned marketing association of family farmers and small-scale food processors producing premium quality processed foods and personal care products for commercial markets. ASC uses the **Clinch-Powell Community Kitchens**, a licensed, shared-use facility capable of producing 2000 units per day of vegetable or fruit products for commercial sales. The Kitchens are another program of Jubilee Project.

ASC Holiday Gift Baskets are available once again this year. Contact Elaine Ogburn by Friday, November 19 at the latest – the earlier, the better! You will need to mail your check made out to Appalachian Spring Cooperative to Elaine by November 19 also. No order can be submitted unless payment has already been received. Elaine will then submit one cumulative order for RPEC members, which saves everyone substantial shipping charges. ASC intends to deliver to Richmond by approximately Friday, December 3, and orders will be available at the RPEC office after that date. You will be notified by email or phone when your order has arrived. Questions? Contact Elaine at 320-4514 or esogburn@mail2.vcu.edu.

Orders must be received by Friday, November 19. Send your check (made out to Appalachian Spring Cooperative) and order form to:
Elaine Ogburn, 3211 Whitehorse Road, Richmond, VA
23235-1319

Your name _____

Phone _____

Your email address _____

Number of small baskets _____ x \$25.00 = Total _____

Number of large baskets _____ x \$40.00 = Total _____

Total cost of order enclosed \$ _____ (make check out to Appalachian Spring Cooperative)

2004 Holiday Gift Baskets

Small Basket \$25.00 + S/H

1-16 oz. jar Snappy Pappy's
 Chunky Tennessee "Gormay"
 Salsa, by Linda & Wells
 Sommer

1-14 oz. jar Tailgate Orange
 Salsa, by Paul Miller

1-16 oz. jar Davidson Country
 Store Farm Fresh Salsa, by Bill
 Davidson

Large Basket \$40.00 + S/H

1-2 fl oz. bottle of Cook's
 Greenhouses Happy Habby
 Habanero Extract, by Sandee
 Cook

1-16 oz. jar of Riga's Old World
 Italian Pasta Sauce, by David
 Riga

1-12 oz. bottle of Clinch
 Mountain Farms Sweet & Spicy
 BBQ Sauce, by Bob
 Wagenseller

1-10 oz. jar of Sweet Dream
 Farm Sweet Potato Buffer, by
 Vaughn & Sara Schutz

1-8 oz. jar of White's Little
 Mountain Apple Butter, by
 Steve White

1-1/2 oz. tin of Pure Mountain
 Herbs Calendula Lip Balm, by
 Diantha Hodges & Anne Hunter

1-9.25 oz. jar of This

Homesteader's Herbal
 Concoctions Ginger Honey
 Mustard, by Sherri Hudson

*All items are arranged in a
 beautiful wood-handled basket*

(No shipping charge if ordered)

Wanted: A Global Movement to End the Arab-Israeli Conflict

Rev. Alex Awad

How much more death, suffering and humiliation must Palestinians and Israelis endure before the world's human conscience wakes up and says enough is enough? The Israeli attacks and the slaughter of Palestinian men, women and children who took part in a peaceful demonstration to protest the destruction of their homes in Rafah (a city in the Gaza Strip) illustrates that the current Israeli leadership is becoming ever unabashed and brazen in committing crimes against a weakened and a crushed population.

It is futile to assume that the United States will act decisively to put an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict in a fair way unless a massive world-wide protest movement makes it morally, politically and economically too expensive for the U.S. to stay on the same course. It is therefore time for those who wish to see justice in Israel and in Palestine to set aside their fear of being labeled anti-Semitic and to openly speak out against the atrocious Israeli measures carried out against Palestinians.

All through history, men and women of conscience courageously stood against tyranny, slavery, colonialism, segregation, and apartheid, and they succeeded in bringing emancipation, freedom, equality and dignity to hundreds of millions around the world. Must Palestinians and Israelis continue to suffer endlessly? Should we

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allow radical Zionist policies, controversial Christian theologies and domestic U.S. political and economic interests to justify the inhumane treatment of the Palestinian people?

Take a look at the following list of repressive measures that Palestinians face on a daily basis and join millions of people all over the globe who are committing themselves to speak out and take a stand against these grave Human Rights violations.

1. According to U.N. reports, in the last three years Israel has destroyed over 3000 Palestinian houses. Each of these houses comprises a multi-level complex (between two and six floors), which serves as homes for many families. Most of those families first became refugees in 1948 when Israel grabbed their land and now they are refugees for the second or third time. While Israeli settlers are encouraged by their government to build and expand within Palestinian territories, Palestinians in Jerusalem and the West Bank have unrealistic restrictions on building homes on their land.

2. High cement walls, razor-sharp

fences and heavily fortified checkpoints are besieging all Palestinian towns and cities and imprisoning a population of over three and half million people. Israel claims that it is taking these measures to stop suicide attacks. Why doesn't Israel construct these barriers around Israeli cities, towns and settlements? Or at least on the internationally acknowledged borders?

3. These fences cut off Palestinians from 50% of their total land territories causing untold economic and social woes to Palestinians. Thus a situation is created whereby over 60% of the Palestinian population exists on less than \$2 a day.

4. Palestinians control no borders that connect them to the outside world. Israel closed off their seaport, destroyed the only Palestinian Airport in Rafah and placed a permanent ban against Palestinians flying via Ben Gurion Airport.

5. No Palestinian man, woman or child is allowed to travel from one Palestinian city in the West Bank to another without a permit from Israeli officials. Most Palestinian villages have also been cut off from neighboring city centers by trenches, rocks, and other barriers so that access to and from the villages is only by foot.

6. No Palestinian, man woman or child is permitted to travel to Arab East Jerusalem or anywhere in

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Wanted: A Global Movement to End the Arab-Israeli Conflict

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Israel without a permit from the Israeli officials. This measure is having as much negative impact on Palestinians living in the West Bank as it is having on Palestinians living in Jerusalem.

7. The process of acquiring these permits is humiliating, time consuming and often fruitless. More often than not when Palestinians apply for permits they are turned down. Moreover, Israeli soldiers at the checkpoints do not always respect the permits issued to Palestinians by Israeli military officials, which are frequently suspended at Israeli discretion.

8. Palestinian Christians and Muslims living in the West Bank are not allowed to travel for worship in their respective holy places in Jerusalem. This means Palestinian Christians in Bethlehem are not allowed to worship in their churches in Jerusalem, which is only 6 miles away. Palestinian Muslims under 45 are not allowed to worship at Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem.

9. The permanent closures of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and the restrictions of transportation between Palestinian cities have complicated the Palestinian health care system. To get a Palestinian patient to a good hospital is a dreadful ordeal for the patient and his or her family. Scores of Palestinians have died waiting at checkpoints and hundreds of women have given birth in vehicles waiting for permission to cross at checkpoints.

10. There are between 6,000 and 7000 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli detention camps and jails. Many of them have no idea why they are there. They have not been tried in any Israel court.

The list of oppressive measures can go on and unless a global non-violent movement rises to address them, terrorism and military confrontations will continue to shatter innocent lives in the Middle East and will spill over to the rest of the world. All of us, who yearn and pray for peace, must act to stop Israel's brutal war against the Palestinian masses. We can start by demanding an end to Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Here is what you can do:

1. Keep calling on your elected officials to act justly. Keep quizzing them as to why the US continues to support Israel in spite of Israel's clearly dismal human rights record.
2. Keep writing to your local newspaper and confront the prevailing ignorance on these issues.
3. Connect with folks in your community who are fed up with America's unreasonable support for radical Israeli measures against Palestinians. Work cooperatively to expose Israeli policies of destruction and humiliation by planning educational and advocacy activities.
4. Be alert to and participate in

VADP NEWS

We had a good turnout for the August VADP-R meeting on Monday, August 23rd. Margaret Edds, Virginian-Pilot editorial writer and author of an Expendable Man, gave a great talk about the Earl Washington case and practical changes that could be made to police procedure and the death penalty system in general.

We are considering moving to a schedule of bimonthly rather than monthly meetings. To try out this possibility, the next meeting has been scheduled for Monday, October 25th at 7:00 at St. Mark's.

We have two conferences coming up in our area: the VADP annual conference October 2-4 in Charlottesville, and the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty annual conference in DC October 15-17. Both are highly recommended for anyone who would like to educate themselves about the death penalty and ways to get involved in the abolition movement. Please refer to HYPERLINK "<http://www.vadp.org>" www.vadp.org and HYPERLINK "<http://www.ncadp.org>" www.ncadp.org for details.

There are also two important action alerts on the VADP website. James Reid's execution, which raises important questions about lethal injection, was carried out on September 9. VADP also continues to press Gov. Warner to allow the testing of Roger Coleman's DNA through the Where's Warner? campaign. If you would like to contact the governor about either of these issues, please go to

Nuclear Power in Virginia

Elena Day

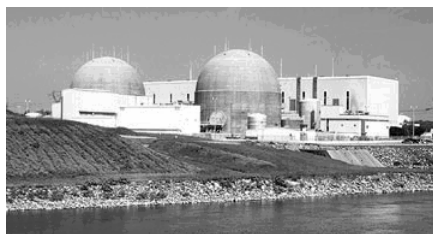
Heads up, Virginians!

Dominion Resources, formerly Virginia Power, has applied for an Early Site Permit to build two or more new nuclear reactors at their North Anna power station. North Anna is 30 miles from Charlottesville, 40 miles from Richmond, and within 50 miles of the outermost suburbs of the Washington metropolitan area.

In the United States, a new nuclear reactor hasn't been ordered since 1978. Yet, the Bush administration has set its sights on revitalizing the nuclear energy industry and has streamlined the licensing process.

Why? The nuclear industry was a heavy contributor (\$260,000) to the Bush/Cheney campaign in 2000. The industry, through its political action committees, also donated \$82,000 to the Senate campaign of Spencer Abraham who was subsequently appointed Secretary of the Department of Energy (DOE) in the Bush Administration after his failed Senate campaign. Not surprisingly, Secretary Abraham and the nuclear industry have come up with "Nuclear Power 2010," a plan to construct 50 new nuclear reactors and bring them on line by 2020. And Congress, which is heavily pro-nuclear (as evidenced by nuclear industry PAC contributions to House and Senate campaigns of more than \$5.8 million in the 2002 election cycle), has not been averse to getting on board as well.

2010 is the date of the scheduled opening of the proposed federal nuclear waste depository at Yucca Mountain in Nevada. The



Bush Administration pushed through the site designation despite substantial scientific evidence challenging the safety of the site (Yucca Mountain is crisscrossed with earthquake faults). With site approval, a total of 70,000 metric tons of highly radioactive spent fuel are currently scheduled to move across our country via road, rail and sometimes barge to Yucca Mountain for 24 years. A recent federal court ruling has put the Yucca Mountain project on hold.

Every nuclear reactor generates 22 tons of highly radioactive waste each year. Only radioactive waste generated before 2010 will be accommodated by Yucca Mountain. The continuing accumulation of spent fuel will need to be stored in a new depository. However, the more likely alternative is that the highly radioactive spent fuel rods will remain sitting in expanded spent fuel water pools in proximity of their respective reactors. At North Anna storage pools are full. There is some dry cask storage. Dominion will be applying to expand spent fuel storage by the end of 2004. In our current political climate these storage units, water pools and dry casks, are considered highly vulnerable to terrorist attack.

The Administration's Energy Act of 2003 streamlined the Early

Site Permit process so that it is basically a "drive through" for the utility companies. Public scrutiny and intervention are limited. The government (i.e., taxpayers) will pay for half the expenses incurred in the application process. In the case of North Anna, the expansion-permitting process is a hefty \$14 million, and this is for two nuclear facilities *whose designs have not yet been finalized*. It seems inappropriate that one government agency should give money to a private industry so that it can apply for permits from another government agency. Public input is thereby effectively sidelined.

Nuclear power proponents once promised us electricity that was "too cheap to meter." Instead, every aspect of electricity generated by nuclear power is expensive and government/taxpayer subsidized. The Price Anderson Act insures that the government (i.e. the taxpayer) covers the industry's liability in case of nuclear accidents. The public also pays for decommissioning of aging nuclear reactors, the storage and containment of the highly radioactive spent fuel rods, as well as for the "disposal" of low-level waste.

Although the nuclear industry often claims that nuclear energy emits no greenhouse gases, large amounts of fossil fuels are consumed during the entire process leading to a nuclear facility's operation, (beginning with mining and milling of uranium) resulting in a wide range of substantial pollution. **In the end, it is**

(Continued on page 12)

Trip to Israel & Palestine

Tyla Matteson

I traveled to Israel & Palestine in August with Global Exchange, a human rights organization which arranges "reality tours" letting the public see with their own eyes various hot spots in our world. For 11 days, our small group of 8 visited both Palestinian and Israeli groups, guided and facilitated by a Palestinian and an American, mainly in the Israeli occupied areas of the West Bank.

Some highlights were an overnight visit with a Palestinian family in the Bethlehem area. We saw up close the security barrier, or the "Wall". In many spots, this wall is 8 meters high, or 26 feet, which is taller than 4 people head to toe. We drove on superhighways that the Israelis may use, taking them only minutes to drive to their destination, but a Palestinian with a different license plate cannot use the road, and may spend up to 5 hours on alternate roads to cover the same distance.

We crossed checkpoints where Palestinians must show IDs on a daily basis, set up by the Israeli military with heavily armed soldiers. The conditions are crowded, dusty, and demoralizing, where searches occur at will. We saw one man dismantle his computer in the dust, and several boys detained and slapped.

We met with a group for prisoners' rights and spoke with Palestinians who have family members in prison. A hunger strike by prisoners began August 15, protesting the totally unacceptable conditions for the Palestinians in the Israeli prisons. There are presently 7500 in



prisons, including hundreds of women and minors under age 18. Most are abused in some manner en route to the prisons, and most are tortured or abused in some manner when in prison.

Some of the groups we visited provide legal help or prepare case studies of Israeli military crimes. For example, the Israeli military has targeted entire villages or refugee camps. In one village near the West Bank city of Ramallah in 2003, Israeli soldiers attacked a high school during recess, purposely firing to kill, and two were killed in cold blood.

We visited a home bulldozed 3 times, only to be rebuilt by human rights volunteers, now a memorial to two people killed. One of these is the 23 year old Rachel Corrie, who was bulldozed in Gaza two years ago, trying to stop a home demolition. We photographed a number of bulldozed homes, said to be in the way of the route of the Wall going through Jerusalem.

We saw Israeli settlements springing up and being expanded and spoke to two settlers who live in well-irrigated and landscaped areas. The settlements are protected by sniper towers, and large pumps bring up water from

the aquifers below, causing the Palestinian towns nearby to experience depleted water supplies. Often, the farmers are separated from their fields, and their harvest is lost. Roads and settlements are continuing illegally, with the great insult of destroying century old olive groves, as the olive tree is a special symbol for the Palestinians. The settlements are also causing environmental degradation, by denuding the hilltops and contaminating the ground water. The situation is continually worsening, with the apparent conclusion being that the Palestinians are encouraged to give up their homes and life as they know it, and move out. This would be called ethnic cleansing.

The Bush administration is not opposing the continuation of the settlements in the West Bank, although the United Nations International Court of Justice declared in July 2004, that the Wall and its associated regime are in breach of international human rights and law and should be dismantled. This resolution passed 150-6, but Israel stated their rejection and disdain, pledging to continue building the Wall. Since the US government gives Israel over \$3 billion a year, or \$8 million a day, it is in our interest to keep informed, ask questions, and demand answers.

RPEC is planning a program to bring more information to the attention of Richmond citizens. It is scheduled for Sunday, November 7 at 7-9 PM at the First Unitarian Universalist Church

Once Again, Genocide

Dave Depp

Last April marked the 10th anniversary of the Rwanda genocide, the wanton slaughter of more than 800,000 people in approximately one hundred days. For ten years people have questioned how this tragedy occurred. After all, the world certainly learned about genocide when the holocaust in Europe was exposed. In 1946, the International Convention on Genocide was adopted. It said, “the systematic killing of a racial or cultural group,” was to be jointly opposed by all the nations of the world. But then there was genocide in Cambodia, genocide in Rwanda, genocide in the Balkans, and also among the Kurds. On June 24th of this year, the U.S. Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. dramatically closed its main exhibitions to call attention to the latest genocide occurring in the Darfur region of Western Sudan. It’s happening again.

The nations of the world again are dancing around blindfolded while thousands of people die. In June, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell was asked whether genocide was occurring in Darfur. He said, “let’s not put a label on things. We know what the situation is like, we know what we have to do and we’re going to do it.” Three months later, on September 9th Mr. Powell called the Darfur situation genocide while speaking to the U.S. Senate. Meanwhile, over a million people have been displaced, thousands are living in camps that will likely become swamps during the rainy season, and thousands have been murdered, raped, and mutilated. The Sudanese government arms and often directs the Janjaweed (literally “guns on horseback”) militias responsible for the ravaging of Darfur villages.

The United Nations has so far been powerless to act effectively, perhaps because Security Council nations such as China have heavy oil investments in Sudan and they are hesitant to censure the Sudanese government. It may also be difficult for the U. N. to act in a world divided over the occupation of Iraq. Arab nations generally side with the Arab regime in Sudan. A U. N. report last spring described in detail one area of Darfur now devoid of people where once 70,000 inhabitants resided in 119 villages; all the houses burned and water wells poisoned with corpses. The U. N. High Commission on Human Rights (HCHR) during its annual meeting in Geneva on April 23rd expressed “concern”, while stifling a research report describing the Darfur genocide in order to allow a U. N. fact-finding mission into the region.

So far the Sudanese government in Khartoum has been allowed to control all access to Darfur by independent observers, aid agencies, and the African Union organization. This latter entity has been trying to arrange a peace agreement in the region that includes Sudan. Darfur is one piece of a much larger political, economic, and social struggle that has been festering for many years in East Africa. To date, the African Union has about 300 “monitors and protection forces” in Darfur, an area the size of France.

A sampling of the titles of newspaper, magazine, journal, and newsletter articles suggest the gravity of the Darfur situation. For example, there are articles titled, “Sudan’s Reign of Terror”, “Deathly Silencer”, “Genocide Again”, and “Conditions in Darfur Continue to Deteriorate”.

Perhaps the Holocaust Museum should completely shut its doors until candidates Bush and Kerry start acknowledging the suffering and destruction of the people in Darfur and explain how they will respond to the world’s latest genocide. Perhaps all of us who go from day to day in our comfortable routines enjoying security, plentiful food, unthinking access to clean water and shelter should find our voices and open our wallets. Telephone or write to government officials demanding more forthright action to save the people of Darfur and send dollars to aid agencies such as Doctors Without Borders, Lutheran World Relief, Catholic Relief Services, Union for Reform Judaism, American Friends Service Committee, and others.

CALENDAR

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 , University of Richmond campus. Contact Ray Hilliard at 289-8289
Every 3rd Friday	Sufi Dancing: Dances of Universal Peace , 7:30-9:30 PM except Oct. Round House, Byrd Park. 353-4901
Every Thursday	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 Saturday	Equality Virginia , 12:00 noon at the office. A political advocacy group working towards equal rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender citizens of Virginia. Open to the public. Contact number is 643-4816.
Every 4th Saturday	Pax Christi Peace Community - Call Paula Powdermaker for details - 355-7395
Every 1st Monday	Virginia People of Faith for Alternatives to the Death Penalty , 4:45 PM Catholic Diocese Conference Room, Floyd and Cherry, Kathleen Kenney, 359-5661
Every 3rd Sunday	The Richmond, Virginia Buddhist Peace Fellowship - holds a meditation vigil for peace in Monroe Park at 1:00 PM.
Every 2nd Saturday	Walk for Peace - 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM. Meet at the Boulevard entrance of the Virginia Museum. Wear black.
Every Friday	Protest the War on Iraq - Noon til 1:00 PM at 10th and Main Streets.
Every 3rd Thursday	Richmond Chapter VADP - 7:00 PM at St. Marks Episcopal Church.

UPCOMING EVENTS

October 2-4	VADP Annual Conference in Charlottesville - Refer to HYPERLINK " http://www.vadp.org " www.vadp.org and HYPERLINK " http://www.ncadp.org " www.ncadp.org for details.
October 7	Witness for Peace and The People United Sponsor "The Impacts of US Economic Policies on Communities of Color at Home and Abroad" - Thursday, October 7th at The Pace Center 700 W. Franklin St., Richmond, VA - Potluck Supper 6:30 PM , Discussion 7:30 PM. For More Information: Call (434) 361-0243 or visit info@thepeopleunited.org
October 14-17	The National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty - At the Kellogg Conference Center Hotel in Washington, DC. For information or to register go to HYPERLINK " http://www.ncadp.org " www.ncadp.org or call 202-387-3890.
October 22-24	Annual AI National Weekend of Faith in Action on the Death Penalty - Free materials are available from amnestyusa.org/abolish .
October 24	Take Back Your Time Day . Go to HYPERLINK " http://www.timeday.org " www.timeday.org .
November 7	Panel Presentation on the Israel/Palestine Conflict - 7-9 PM at the First Unitarian Universalist Church at 1000 Blanton St., Richmond. Co-sponsored by RPEC and UU.
November 12	RPEC Annual Dinner and Auction - at 6:30 at St. Paul's Episcopal Church downtown. Call 358-1958 for information.
November 22	The Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy will co-sponsor a Poverty Diet event on Monday at Reveille UMC - For more information contact Josh Bailes at josh@vicpp.org or by calling 804-643-2474.

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

Nuclear Power in Virginia

(Continued from page 8)

irresponsible to promote the risk of radiation as an environmental alternative to greenhouse gas emissions and to claim that building nuclear reactors achieves clean energy goals.

In May 2004 three environmental organizations (Public Citizen, Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League, and Nuclear Resource Information Service) filed contentions in this first phase of licensing—requesting that the Early Site Permit be denied. On August 6, the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board of the NRC agreed with BREDL, NIRS, and Public Citizen that indeed Dominion had failed to adequately address the adverse

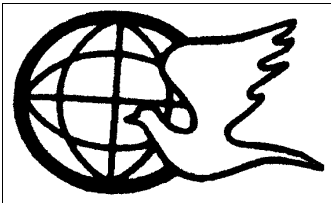
impacts, especially that of increased water temperature, of operating one or two additional reactors on the striped bass in Lake Anna and in the North Anna River. It should give readers pause that the NRC is more concerned with striped bass. Other contentions regarding Central Virginians' health and safety, terrorism and evacuation in case of accident, were denied.

It has been 25 years since the meltdown/catastrophe at Three Mile Island. Given that nuclear power generation is expensive, that the nuclear waste problem remains unresolved and that reactors are acknowledged terrorist targets, why embark on a program to build new nukes. Isn't it time that we take a good look at alternatives for

our energy future – alternatives that include conservation technologies and renewable energy? Isn't it time for the public to demand that the administration fund research and development of renewable energy and implement conservation rather than pour taxpayer dollars into new nukes?

Here in Central Virginia the People's Alliance for Clean Energy (PACE) is organizing against the proposed new reactors at North Anna citing likely problems in planned evacuation scenarios, the impact on water sources and the threat to public health. PACE activists plan to make it clear to the industry, and to the government, that the public doesn't want a new generation of nuclear plants.

To get involved in the local



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