

Voices for Creative Nonviolence

1249 W. Argyle St.
Chicago, IL 60640
773-878-3815
email: info@vcnv.org
web: www.vcnv.org

August, 2006

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Israel, Lebanon, Gaza and the West Bank.	2
Walk for Justice Concludes	3
Fresh Air a Poem by David Smith-Ferri	4
Upcoming Action and Resistance	5
Peace on Trial by Kathy Kelly	6
"You can cross over, but your children can't." by Cathy Breen	7

Dear Friends,

As we've compiled this newsletter, warfare has escalated in Iraq, Israel, Lebanon, Gaza, and the West Bank. Our friend Ramzi Kysia, whose nonviolent witness and work has guided past Voices efforts, writes from Beirut that any cautious optimism he'd had for a cease fire was snatched away by U.S. endorsement of plans for 30,000 foreign combat troops to enter Southern Lebanon. "The tactics used by many Arab militants should be resoundingly condemned," Ramzi writes, "both for targeting innocents and for bringing disaster on their own peoples. Even so, underneath America's scorn for Hezbollah and Hamas lies an incredible racism that pretends to believe that no Arab could possibly have any legitimate grievance with Israel. Even as Israel smashes their nations into oblivion. To deliver a solution to this crisis from out of that racism is to birth a monster.

For a short time this week I allowed myself to feel some hope. But America's plan for "peace" amounts to throwing gasoline on an already raging fire and standing back while we all burn." (July 26, 2006)

We find it exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to restrain, let alone abolish, the reckless warmaking that afflicts and sickly weakens our society. Can we look to religious hierarchs, elected representatives, mainstream media, or academic leaders for charismatic and courageous nonviolent resistance to war. Each of those institutions has generally shown alarming readiness to collaborate with ongoing war. Where we can turn is to community and solidarity amongst people who act on their belief that war is not the answer.

We look with particular appreciation to the five Pitstop Ploughshares activists who disarmed a U.S. warplane in Ireland's Shannon airport, in February, 2003. In late July of this summer, an Irish jury decided unanimously to acquit them.

We also look with gratitude to all of the many individuals and groups who have helped us "walk the talk," (especially those who hosted and fed us along the 320 mile Walk for Justice earlier this summer!).

Christopher Fry's words come to mind as we think of the long journey ahead. "...the frozen misery of centuries breaks, cracks, begins to move, the thunder is the thunder of the flocks, the thaw, the flood, the upstart spring. Thank God our time is now when wrong comes up to face us everywhere, never to leave us till we take the longest stride of soul folk ever took."

Please let us know if we can be of any assistance to you and your community while we undertake "the longest stride" together.

Sincerely,
Kathy Kelly, Laurie Hasbrook, Scott Blackburn, Joel Gullledge, Dan Pearson, Jeff Leys, Bob Abplanalp

Voices for Creative Nonviolence calls for an immediate end to all forms of hostilities in Israel, Lebanon, Gaza and the West Bank.

Voices calls for the release of Israeli soldiers held by Hezbollah and Hamas and for the release of Palestinians unjustly held in Israel's prisons and detention centers. Voices calls upon the U.S. government, as the key ally of Israel, to act to end Israel's military attack upon Lebanon and Gaza.

As stated clearly by the United Nations, attacks upon civilians—whether by Hezbollah or by Israel—are war crimes. As the main benefactor and ally of Israel, the U.S. is complicit in the war crimes being committed by Israel. The death toll continues to climb each day—well over 300 Lebanese are dead, over a 100 Palestinians, and over 30 Israelis are dead. Tens of thousands have been forced to flee their homes for (hoped for) safety.

As the international community slowly finds its voice to oppose Israel's military attacks against Lebanon and Hezbollah, and begins its work towards a ceasefire, the U.S. is actively working to subvert such efforts. The U.S. opposed a U.N. resolution which called for a ceasefire and which condemned Israel's military attacks as "disproportionate". The U.S. House and Senate voted overwhelmingly to support Israel in its war with Hezbollah and on Lebanon.

Now is the time to act to end Israel's military assault upon Lebanon and Gaza. Voices urges you to take the following actions:

- 1** Contact Ambassador John Bolton at the U.S. Mission to the UN by calling (212) 415-4050 or emailing usa@un.int and ask him to call for a ceasefire.
- 2** Contact UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and implore that the UN show leadership and demand a ceasefire. Email: sg@un.org and/or Fax: (212) 963-1921.
- 3** Contact your Senators and Representative to demand that she / he publicly call for an end to Israel's military aggression in Lebanon and

Gaza and for an immediate ceasefire. Ask your Representative to become a co-sponsor of the resolution introduced by Representative Dennis Kucinich calling for an immediate ceasefire, and ask your Senator to sponsor a companion resolution in the Senate. The Congressional Switchboard will connect you to the appropriate offices: Toll Free: 1-866-340-9281.

- 4** Contact the White House at 1-202-456-1111 to demand that President Bush call for an immediate ceasefire and apply pressure upon Israel to end its military aggression against Gaza and Lebanon.
- 5** When you call your Senator, Representative and White House, also demand that the U.S. be prepared to step up to the plate to provide full funding for the reconstruction of Lebanon, which has sustained a minimum of \$2 billion in damage to its infrastructure as a result of Israel's war making. The U.S. is complicit in this destruction and must be held accountable for the rebuilding of Lebanon.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. often repeated a quote from Edmund Burke, saying, "All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for the good people to do nothing."

Please tell your representative that it is not the desire of the US people to aid and abet Israel in its violation of international law and creation of a massive humanitarian crisis in Lebanon, and in Gaza. We must insist that they back a cease-fire for all concerned parties.

We can help amplify the uproar of concern and resistance that is already present within the communities of people determined not to collaborate.

Our future lies in Israeli demonstrators, with groups like Gush Shalom, who have staged demonstrations in Tel-Aviv. A demonstrator remarked, "That's exactly how it happened after Ariel Sharon's invasion of Lebanon. On the first day of the war we were a hundred, after a week we were a thousand, after three weeks we were 10 thousands and after two months, following the Sabra and Shatila massacre, we were 400 thousand."

Our faith lies in people like Staff Sergeant Itzik Shabbat, who became the first person to refuse to comply with

an emergency order to report for reserve duty in the Palestinian territories in order to free forces in the standing army for the war in Lebanon.

Our future lies in the 300 Lebanese who gathered, under great risk, in downtown Beirut yesterday to demand an immediate ceasefire.

Our faith lies in learning from the continued nonviolent resistance of the Palestinian people who confront the Apartheid Wall, the demolition of homes, and checkpoints in ever more creative and effective ways,

each and every day.

Our future lies in direct engagement, like that of our friend and co-coordinator of Voices, Dan Pearson, who is currently working with the Committee Against House Demolitions rebuilding Palestinian homes demolished by Israel.

Our faith lies in you. Please join us by taking action today.

-Voices for Creative Nonviolence

Walk for Justice Concludes: 3 Arrested at U.S. Military Entrance Processing Command JULY 2006



The Walk for Justice began its journey from the steps of the Illinois State Capitol and National Guard headquarters in Springfield, IL on June 7th. It ended with 3 participants nonviolently resisting the war in and occupation of Iraq at the U.S. Military Entrance Processing Command (MEPCOM) in North Chicago on July 5th. MEPCOM is the command headquarters of a system of 52 Military Entrance Processing Stations. The final oath of each and all enlisted individuals takes place at one of these stations. Upon entering MEPCOM's property Diane Hughes, Ceylon Mooney, and Jeff Leys began to read the names of U.S. soldiers and Iraq citizens who have died in the war. They were met by base security and were quickly arrested. The three were arrested on state trespass charges and face up to six months in jail. They will be arraigned on August 25 in Waukegan, IL.

The last day of the 30 day, 320

mile trek began with a vigil at the North Chicago Veterans Administration medical center, just down the street from MEPCOM.

Hughes, Mooney, and Leys broke from the vigil to seek an entrance to MEPCOM. Upon finding an entrance Diane Hughes of Pax Christi in Springfield, Illinois recalls:

"We stepped several feet into the parking lot, unfurled Ceylon's banner, and read off the names of Iraqi citizens and U.S. soldiers dead from this War, completing each name with the ringing of a bell. One of the soldiers told us that we were trespassing on government property, and if we didn't leave we would be arrested."



Dan Pearson, Timothy Keough, Lee Jankowski, Jeff Leys, and Nina Klooster on day 2 of the 30-day Walk for Justice.



Kathy Kelly is removed from Dick Durbin's office in Springfield, IL and arrested by the Federal Protective Service after refusing to leave. (story: <http://vcnv.org/failure-to-conform>)

Reflecting on where and how the Walk ended, Jeff Leys, Co-Coordinator of Voices for Creative Nonviolence, said:

"MEPCOM is ground zero for nonviolently resisting our country's war machine and to seek redress of the wrongs which our country commits against members of the military.

Our country must also be held accountable to provide for the well being of veterans and their families. Agree or disagree with the Iraq and Afghanistan wars,

our country chose to place soldiers in harm's way. It is therefore incumbent upon our country to ensure that veterans and their families receive the type of high quality health care they deserve. Indeed our obligation is to ensure that all residing in the U.S. receive high quality universal health care."

For over 320 miles participants on the walk witnessed a real shift in public opinion against the war in Iraq. The honks, peace signs, and emphatic waves from passersby as the walk proceeded far outweighed the negative responses. We are hopeful that the honks and waves will turn into more action to end the war in Iraq.

Fresh Air By David Smith-Ferri
Baghdad in the thirteenth year of sanctions. October, 2002

In surreal Baghdad,
ash and smoke from the volcanic threat of war
infiltrate the diesel pall smothering the city
and mix with the denser "effects of sanctions"
already poisoning the air,
coating our lungs,
an acid, metallic taste on our tongue.
Weeks? Months? Who can say when the mountain will blow,
when battering tsunami waves of artillery will land.
Meantime, we walk streets,
ducking into a music store on a main drag.
Not compact disks and cassettes but instruments:
ouds, doumbeks, flutes, a one-string Bedouin violin
with an unpronounceable name,
and one other thing, unexpected fresh air!
Danny picks up a flute, conjures
bird song, forests, water over river rocks.
Tamal, store owner and friend, plays for us
one after another: oud, violin, doumbek, flute, tambourine;
singing in Arabic, moving freely, sinuous and sensual,
drawing us delightfully in.
We breathe deeply an hour in a cramped store,
Tamal making love to us,
music cleansing the air,
a series of no-trail, paper-free transactions
no Sanctions Committee can touch.

This poem is from Battlefield Without Borders, an anthology of David Smith-Ferri's poetry, with a foreword by Kathy Kelly, due out this fall from Haley's Publishing.

RESOURCES

WWW.VCNV.ORG/RESOURCES

Israel, Lebanon, Gaza and the West Bank ONLINE RESOURCES

Electronic Lebanon

A project from the Electronic Intifada, offers commentary, analysis, human rights and development information, and voices from on the ground.
www.ElectronicLebanon.net

**Integrated Regional
Information Networks (IRIN)**
www.IrinNews.org

Gush Shalom
gush-shalom.org/english/

**See also Ramzi Kysia's
The Distance from Guernica to
Lebanon**
vcnv.org/guernica-to-lebanon



Information for **lobbying efforts
to end the war against Iraq** and
to promote real reconstruction of
Iraq can be found on the website
of both the **Friends Committee
on National Legislation** and
NETWORK.

FCNL
www.fcnl.org
NETWORK
www.networklobby.org

Voices for Creative Nonviolence endorses The Declaration of Peace.

The Declaration of Peace is a nationwide **campaign to establish by September 21, 2006 a concrete and rapid plan for peace in Iraq**, including: a prompt timetable for withdrawal of troops and closure of bases; a peace process for security, reconstruction, and reconciliation; and the shift of funding for war to meeting human needs.

People across the United States are signing The Declaration of Peace pledge, a commitment to take action if this comprehensive plan for peace is not created and activated by Congress by September 21, The International Day of Peace. From September 21-28, just days before Congress adjourns for the fall elections, Declaration signers will withdraw their consent from this war – and support a comprehensive peace process – by taking part in nonviolent action, marches, rallies, demonstrations, interfaith services, candlelight vigils and other creative ways to declare peace at the US Capitol and in cities and towns across the US.

The Declaration of Peace campaign will continue after the September actions if no comprehensive plan to end the war is in place. Nationally coordinated nonviolent activities will continue on a regular basis until the United States withdraws from Iraq and supports a comprehensive peace process.

SIGN TODAY BY VISITING WWW.DECLARATIONOFPEACE.ORG
.....□

SAVE THE DATE
SEPTEMBER 26TH 2006

In support of the **National Campaign for Nonviolent Resistance** in Washington, D.C., we will participate in the nonviolent actions planned for September 26th and 27th. These days fit into the larger call, issued by the Declaration of Peace, for a week of action starting September 21st.

Please contact us at 773-878-3815 or by writing info@vcnv.org if you'd like to join our efforts in Washington, D.C. or to develop compatible actions in your own locale.
.....□

WINTER OF OUR DISCONTENT

Voices for Creative Nonviolence is currently exploring the possibilities of helping to organize a Winter of Our Discontent II in the new year. If you would like to be kept informed about this, please contact us.

VOICES FOR CREATIVE NONVIOLENCE
1249 W Argyle St #2; Chicago, IL 60640
773-878-3815 info@vcnv.org www.vcnv.org



**Take
Action
to End
the US
War in
Iraq!**

**Sign *the*
Declaration
of Peace**



Peace on Trial

by Kathy Kelly
July 24, 2006

This July in Dublin, five peace activists were put on trial for disarming a U.S. warplane parked on the tarmac of Ireland's Shannon airport.

In February, 2003, with the U.S. completing its build-up for "Shock and Awe", these five activists broke into an airport hangar which the U.S. was using as a "pit stop" for planes en route to the war zone. They had dubbed themselves the "Pitstop Ploughshares" and, following the biblical injunction to hammer their weapons into plowshares, they took a hammer to the nosecone of a C48 U.S. Navy supply plane and disabled it. You'll find full details at www.peaceontrial.com.

At that time, the world was witnessing the largest movement ever in history formed to call for the end of a war before the war had started. The "Ploughshares" had heard me speak in Kildare, Ireland, five days before they disarmed the plane. They've called on me as a defense witness during each of their trials, claiming that evidence I presented motivated them to take responsibility for stopping U.S. use of Shannon airport for refueling "pit stops."

Ireland is a neutral country. Under international law and in accord with its own constitution, it would seem unlikely that Ireland could participate in U.S. war plans. But, by January 2003, 36,000 U.S. troops had passed through Shannon airport, en route to the Gulf area. The plane which the Pitstop Ploughshares disarmed was a U.S. Navy C48 supply plane, designated to give logistical support to the U.S. Navy's 6th fleet in the Mediterranean.

The five defendants were represented by three of the most talented barristers in Ireland. The final summations of each defense counsel urged jurors not only to ask whether the defendants were right to take action, but also ask why it is that the rest of us haven't acted. Mr. Nix, praised by the prosecutor as "the last of the great orators," noted that the prosecutor had characterized the action of the defendants "political" as if that were a bad thing. "I'll tell you of someone who made a great political speech," said Mr. Nix, "the

greatest political speech of all time and that's Jesus Christ." He went on to quote the Sermon on the Mount to the jury. I could hear the pencils stop scratching, see the jaws drop all around the courtroom. It was an awe-inspiring moment. The shock was yet to come.

Mr. Nix told us he had recently been in a park where he'd listened to children laugh and shout as they happily chased ducks and each other around on the green grass. He thought a sound of universal happiness must be the sound of children playing.

But now his tone darkened. "Now Lebanon is burning," he thundered. "Today, children swimming in a pool were bombed. A swimming pool is now filled with burning children. This is war."

From the The Guardian that morning (7/18/06, p.4):

"Whatever the Israelis' intended target, the bomb fell on a small water canal next to the Qasmia refugee camp [near Tyre, in southern Lebanon], home to about 500 Palestinians. Its victims were 11 children taking an afternoon swim in the canal. The first blast left a crater nearly four metres deep, burying many of the swimmers deep under the orange earth. Seven of the children were injured, three critically. Three others have not been found.

'The scene was littered with small plastic sandals, several caked in blood.' Ismael, the father of one of the children, sat on the edge of the crater, his head in his hands weeping. "Children! Children!" he roared through his tears, "Children here! My son here." He stood and looked down into the crater: "Is Hizbullah here? Only children here," he said."

When he had finished his talk, Mr. Nix asked the jurors and all of us present: "What would rise you to action?"

And that's a question we all need to think about. As I write, the jury in Ireland is still deliberating. Five brave men and women in Dublin tonight wait to learn their futures. Thousands more in Lebanon and Iraq and in so many other places look towards theirs with utter dread and uncertainty - many will not have futures. The peace movement is on trial in Dublin, where a media blackout has eclipsed nearly all reporting of the trial. But it's on trial everywhere, every time one of

us makes our decision either to get more involved, or perhaps to sit back and watch a little. We are left with their bravery, with the suffering of so many, and with Mr. Nix's final accusation: "What will rise us to action?" We are all of us on trial tonight.

What's the verdict?

Update: On July 25, an Irish jury unanimously acquitted the Pitstop Ploughshares activists



"You can cross over, but your children can't."

Letter from Cathy Breen
Updated 17 July, 2006
Amman, Jordan
June 22, 2006

Dear friends,

The Jordanian Police at the border gave the Iraqi mother a choice "You can cross over, but your children can't." Pregnant and with two small children under five years of age, she had traveled with a driver and her father the death defying road from Baghdad to Amman to be with her husband. He was already in Amman and wanted her to have a rest for one week from the violence and stress in Baghdad before he would return with them to Baghdad. I was sitting next to the desperate husband and father yesterday afternoon in Amman as he tried to maintain phone contact with his wife. He had asked me if I could speak in English, as an "American" on her behalf if she could find someone in authority? Of course, I said, if there is anything I can do to help. Our attempts were in vain, she was sent back to the Iraqi side.

"It is the dirty way" the husband said to me after the connection broke. What kind of decision is this, I thought, to put to a mother? Yes, it is a dirty way; it is a dirty war. I was thinking of all the other desperate Iraqi families who would be trying to "cross over" to a safer place. Safer than Baghdad maybe, but

by no means safe. Iraqis have no peace inside their country and no peace outside. Here in Amman Iraqi "refugees" are rounded up on a daily basis for deportation. From the stories I have heard, more and more of the few countries that have received Iraqis are now closing their doors to them. They are stuck. Not able to return to Iraq, they are also not able to resettle here. Except for wealthy Iraqis who are able to deposit \$100,000 in the bank (which is then frozen), the less fortunate are "fair game" for Jordanian authorities. "I don't care where I live" one Iraqi man said to me the other day, "I just want to live in peace."

Yesterday morning I had my unkempt head of hair cut. I put on a nice blouse and went to pick up the "business" cards I had ordered from a nearby printing shop. I was to begin a project as part of Voices for Creative Nonviolence to visit the 70 or so embassies in Amman. Following the suggestion of a trusted Iraqi friend who arrived a few days ago from Baghdad, we are pursuing the idea of doing a survey of the embassies to ask what immigration possibilities their countries offer Iraqis. Our friend told us that "rumors" abound among Iraqis both in Iraq and Amman as to what embassies might receive them or deny them entrance. Perhaps the project will serve to dispel some of the confusion as well as to surface new ways to address the desperate situation of Iraqis.

Iraqis I have spoken with are overwhelmingly in support of the idea. After visiting 3 embassies in the last two days, I am heartened. Not about the results of the visits which have not proven favorable toward Iraqis, but about what we might be able to do on down the line with the information. More and more I believe that we need to appeal to the international community on behalf of our Iraqi brothers and sisters. I will keep you posted.

Much love,
Cathy Breen



Voices for Creative Nonviolence

1249 W. Argyle St #2
Chicago, IL 60640

FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
CHICAGO IL
PERMIT NO. 1034

COMING THIS FALL...

THE WHEELS OF JUSTICE BUS TOUR WILL BRING NONVIOLENT EDUCATION AND ACTION AGAINST WAR AND OCCUPATION IN IRAQ AND PALESTINE FOR JUSTICE AND UNIVERSAL HUMAN RIGHTS

Having seen and lived with war, terror and occupation in Iraq and Palestine, participants in the Wheels of Justice offer first-hand experience irrespective of partisan politics and sound bite sloganeering. The Wheels of Justice Tour canvasses the United States with education, outreach, training, active non-violent resistance, and network/community-building.

To schedule bookings in your area, contact Dan Pearson at dan@vcnv.org or 773-878-3815, or you can Contact Lysander Puccio at lysanderp@yahoo.com

For more info: www.justicewheels.org

RESOURCES AVAILABLE FROM VOICES FOR CREATIVE NONVIOLENCE

The following are available from Voices for Creative Nonviolence. All prices include postage. You may make checks out to VCNV and mail to VCNV; 1249 W. Argyle St #2; Chicago, IL 60640. Please note in the memo of the check which item you are purchasing and quantity.

"In a Time of Siege: Defying War and Sanctions in Iraq", a **Peace Productions** documentary on the Voices in the Wilderness campaign to end U.S. economic sanctions. It includes footage of Voices members meeting U.S. Marines as they entered Baghdad following the Shock and Awe bombing. **\$20**

Other Lands Have Dreams: From Baghdad to Peking Prison by Kathy Kelly. **\$15**

Taking a Stand: A Guide To Peace Teams And Accompaniment Projects, by Elizabeth Boardman. **\$10**

September 11th Families for a Peaceful Tomorrow, edited by David Potorti. **\$15**