



ST. OLAF COLLEGE

Peace and Justice News

Teaching terror in the name of progress?

St. Olaf students investigate the former School of the Americas

By Sonja Tengblad '06

This coming November 20-24, a courageous handful of St. Olaf students will join the masses in a vigil and nonviolent civil resistance action against an institution that has been accused of gruesomely depriving thousands of their basic human rights.

One would assume that this concerns a far-off land foreign to any American. In reality, however, this form of apparent domestic terrorism is induced by our own government.

The Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation in Fort Benning, Georgia, stands for many things the American people and Constitution *do not*. There, Latin American military officers are trained in combat and counter-insurgency; in short, they learn how to overthrow governments and institutions in opposition of capitalist progress in very non-democratic means. Just as disturbing is the fact that some of the most horrific acts of human rights violations in Latin American history have been performed by WHISC graduates.

Wait a minute. Why would our government support such an institution? In light of the on-going war against terrorism, how could U.S. leaders be handing out money to an organization that creates the very evil we are fighting? A short history will help answer these questions.



The exterior of the controversial Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation, formerly known as the School of the Americas, at Fort Benning, Ga.

By 1948, American foreign policy had a clear mission: to fight communism and ensure the growth of capitalism. Since the Monroe Doctrine, Latin America has been considered under America's "sphere of influence," with the US providing a helping hand to bring about its dreams. One

such effort was the establishment of the School of Americas (SOA) at Fort Benning, Georgia. Results were brutally swift. Between 1961 and 1966 alone, nine Latin American countries were overthrown by military coups conducted by SOA graduates. Since 1968, ten SOA graduates have become heads of six Latin American countries through unjust means.

Many horrific acts performed by these soldiers have been documented. The massacre of 900 civilians of El Salvador where Jesuit priests were also later murdered, the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero (during mass), the torture and murder of a UN worker in Chile, and thousands of other kidnappings, rapes, and massacres of human rights activists and political leaders have all been traced back to SOA graduates.

In January 2001, SOA changed its name to the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHISC). Despite the friendly name, a point by point comparison of the old and new

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Welcome Back!

Peace and Justice Newsletter returns after three-year hiatus

From 1997 to 2000, *Peace and Justice News* was published monthly at St. Olaf by a dedicated group of socially-active student journalists.

Beginning with this issue, a new generation of student writers will be bringing peace and justice-related news, commentaries, recommended reading, events listings and more to the

St. Olaf community each month during the school year. To receive a free print copy in your PO box each month, email PJNews@stolaf.edu.

Each issue of *P&J News* will include at least one feature article [see above for this month's School of the Americas story], information about current Peace and Justice group actions and

education initiatives [see pages 2 and 3], and a list of upcoming on- and off-campus peace and justice-related events [see a list on page 4].

We hope you enjoy our new newsletter! Please send feedback or ideas for future editions to PJNews@stolaf.edu.

- Carl Schroeder '05

Peace and Justice News is a monthly publication of the **Peace and Justice Resource Network**, an official student organization at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota.

The views expressed in this newsletter do not implicitly or explicitly represent official positions and policies of St. Olaf College.

Peace Garden Update

Editor's note: This year, the Peace and Justice organization has formed several subgroups focusing on specific issues. P&J News will be providing updates from some of these groups throughout the school year.

Right now, the space between Buntrock Commons and Boe Chapel is a bleak, unused alleyway connecting the two sides of campus. With its prime location right in the heart of campus, this space has unused potential, a rarity on our increasingly compact campus.

That's why Peace and Justice has proposed to make this area a Peace Garden.

The FCA, St. Olaf Greens, the Environmental coalition and student congregational committee have all pledged their support in this project, thereby promoting campus unity as well as world peace.

Funded in part by a special grant from the Student Government Association, the Peace Garden will be installed on campus next spring.

Two art department faculty members, Pat Kelly and Christine Wilkins, have volunteered to design the garden's layout, and alumnus Andy Elkund has been commissioned to create a sculpture for the garden. Facilities director Pete Sandberg and Head of grounds Jim Fisher will help in plant selection and project design as well.

The goal of this project is not only to create a memorial to world peace but to create a space of reflection for St. Olaf students. To accomplish this many forms of seating including possibly hammocks are being considered. The garden will be installed by all interested students and faculty so stay tuned for the information on when your help will be needed. Suggestions or concerns are welcome. Email Ryan Baxter at baxterr@stolaf.edu or drop a note in the Peace and Justice PO box.

- Ryan Baxter '06



A St. Olaf Peace Garden will be installed between the Buntrock Commons and Boe Memorial Chapel during Spring 2004.

Sweatshops Update

Concerned with the rights of workers around the globe, this group sets out to educate ourselves and the campus on current unjust labor practices committed by many of the well known corporations at the forefront of our economy. A top priority for us is to offer viable alternatives for shopping at stores that take advantage of sweatshop labor. We plan to ensure that our own Ole bookstore continues to maintain its membership in the Workers' Rights Consortium (WRC). The non-profit WRC, composed of colleges, universities and labor activists, helps St. Olaf by monitoring factories

involved in producing St. Olaf-licensed goods. We would also like to renew Peace and Justice's membership in the nationwide United Students Against Sweatshops organization.

Additionally, having recently undertaken a project in cooperation with members of the local community, we hope to eventually shed light on the fact that violations of fair labor conditions may be taking place closer to the Hill than most Oles realize.

- Gloria MacWilliams-Brooks '06

Africa Update

The Committee on Africa is currently researching Liberia and the African AIDS crisis in Africa. Since one of the primary gaps in helping African countries is a lack of knowledge and information, the group plans to bridge this by educating St. Olaf students on a different African country every few months. Information on this month's country, Liberia, will be shared soon through cafeteria fliers.

- Samantha Gruner '06

Fundraising Update

Who likes cookies? Brownies? Maybe even pies? Almost everyone, so we're planning a bake sale sometime between Oct. 27 and 30 to raise money for Peace and Justice activities. If you are interested in cooking, cleaning, buying supplies, or have other ideas for raising funds for Peace and Justice, please contact Fundraising Committee leader Vanna Blomgren at blomgren@stolaf.edu.

- Vanna Blomgren '06

Recommended Reading

November 2003

* Paul Domko, *The Lost Tribes of Faribault*. An October 8 *City Pages* news article details unjust labor practices in nearby Faribault, Minnesota. Read it for free online at www.citypages.com.

* James Farrell, *One Nation Under Goods*. A St. Olaf professor details the history, benefits and perils of American shopping malls.

* Bryan Lindsley '03, *St. Olaf Activist Manual*. Ideas and resources for action from a St. Olaf alumni. Online at www.stolaf.edu/depts/cis/wp/lindsley/.

* Peter Philips, *Censored 2004: The Top 25 Censored Stories*. Visit www.projectcensored.org for info.

* Howard Zinn, *Passionate Declarations*. Essays on war and justice by America's most popular radical historian.



Investigating the School of the Americas

SOA continued from page 1

school proves that its mission still remain the same: to “provide professional education and training to military... to build strong relationships among the participating nations, helping to ensure peace and stability... to promote democratic values, respect for human rights and knowledge and understanding of U.S. customs and traditions.”

Even former Georgia Senator and SOA supporter Paul Coverdell claimed that most of the changes were “cosmetic” to ensure the sustenance of the school. Its courses still remain the same ones found in the first release of a SOA training manual by the Pentagon in 1991: “Combat Arms Officer,” “Psychological Operations”, and others alike.

(These courses, which typically enroll about 100 students, contrast greatly to that of “Democratic Sustainment”, which contains 13.)

Upon the manual’s release, the New York Times reported, “Americans can now read for themselves some of the noxious lessons the United States Army

taught thousands of Latin Americans... [The SOA manuals] recommended interrogation techniques like torture, execution, blackmail, and arresting the relatives of those being questioned.”

The WHISC is funded by U.S. taxpayers, specifically tens of million dollars here and there for renovations and annual management costs of a cool \$5 million. Since its inception in 1946, it has trained and graduated about 60,000 Latin American soldiers.

In 1990 Father Roy Bourgeois founded the School of Americas Watch organization, which heads the demonstrations and nonviolent protests every November and continually fights for the closing of this institution. Last year, two St. Olaf students, Loring Harkness and Dan Marx, were arrested at the WHISC nonviolent protest in Fort Benning, Georgia. There, thousands of people - each carrying a white cross bearing a torture victim’s name - participate in a funeral march that proceeds, if one wishes, to cross over the line marking WHISC territory. Harkness was

one of the many to cross over the barbed-wire fence guarding the WHISC where police awaited to arrest them. He emphasized, however, that an array of groups - nuns, Jews, students, parents, - intend on being arrested at the demonstration so that word travels faster among more people and opposition grows stronger about the school. Harkness also pointed out that this movement is shifting from an older to a younger generation, and that the leniency given to youth is significantly higher from that given to other groups.

“It doesn’t matter if you’re a pacifist or not,” said Harkness. “[The WHISC] is specifically designed to teach tactics that violate human rights.” Participating in the protest, Harkness says, “was one of the most positive, powerful experiences of my life.”

To learn more about the demonstration in November, please contact Elizabeth Henke at henke@stolaf.edu. For more information about the WHISC, please visit the SOA Watch website at www.soawatch.org.



Actor Martin Sheen participates in the annual School of the Americas protest in Fort Benning, Georgia, organized by SOA Watch.

“[Participating in the SOA protest] was one of the most positive, powerful experiences of my life.”
- Loring Harkness ‘03

Latin America update

Editor’s note: This year, the Peace and Justice organization has formed several subgroups focusing on specific issues. P&J News will be providing updates from some of these groups throughout the school year.

This year our group will be focusing on the educating of the St. Olaf population on United States influence on past and current issues in Latin America. This year we are paying special attention to several trade agreements: the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas (FTAA), the Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), Plan Pueblo Panama (PPP), and Plan Colombia. We are tracking the progression of these agreements and will hold a teach-in at the end of October.

We will also be offering several opportunities to get educated and involved in the issue of the School of Americas/Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (SOA/WHISC). [See feature article on pg. 1.]

St. Olaf students will be protesting the SOA at Fort Benning in Georgia, November 20th-24th, 2003. Anyone is welcome to join the protest. If you are interested in more information regarding the protest in Georgia or about the Latin America group of Peace and Justice, please contact Elizabeth Henke at henke@stolaf.edu.

- Elizabeth Henke ‘05



Peace and Justice News

November 2003

Editors

Sarah Burrige
Nali Prchal
Gloria MacWilliams-Brooks
Carl Schroeder
Sonja Tengblad

Peace and Justice News welcomes peace and justice-related articles, article ideas, news items, book reviews, commentaries and other contributions. For more information, e-mail PJNews@stolaf.edu.

VISIT THE PEACE AND
JUSTICE WEBSITE AT
WWW.STOLAF.EDU/ORGS/PJRN

The St. Olaf Peace & Justice Resource Network is an awareness-raising organization whose goal is to educate ourselves and others about issues of peace and justice. Through monthly newsletters, speakers, and campus-wide events, we explore both global and local topics of concern. The Peace & Justice Resource Network also helps integrate the efforts of other campus and community groups to promote peace and justice through co-sponsorships, advertising, and participation in local events. It is affiliated with Student Peace Action Network, a national network of campus peace and justice groups.

We meet each Tuesday during the school year at 8:00 p.m. in Buntrock Commons room 142 (on the way to the library). Regular meetings will resume on Tuesday, October 28. New members and curious bystanders are always welcome! Our office is located in the Student Organization Resource Center. Contact Peace and Justice Coordinator Elizabeth Henke at henke@stolaf.edu for more information or to be added to the St. Olaf Peace and Justice e-mail alias.

Announcing a Bush Debate

President George W. Bush: love him or hate him, if you're like most folks you probably at least have a stance on the guy.

Interested in hearing what your fellow students think? Come to a Peace and Justice-sponsored political debate in the Pause on November 13 -- ALL ABOUT BUSH!

College Republicans, College Democrats, Greens and others are welcome to join the debate. Contact Emily Dahl at dahle@stolaf.edu to get involved. (Debate time TBA)



Watch for our next issue
around November 24, 2003.

Upcoming Peace and Justice events In Northfield and the Twin Cities

Events in **boldface type** take place at St. Olaf College.

- Tues., Oct. 14, 8pm — **Guest Speaker Howard Zinn, historian: Boe Chapel**
Weds., Oct. 15, 3:15-5:15pm — **Guest Speaker Henry Oertelt, Holocaust survivor: Viking Th.**
Thurs., Oct. 16, 6:45pm — **Guest Speaker Alfred Montero, Brazil expert: Viking Theater**
Thurs., Oct. 16, 7pm — People for Peace and Goodwill meeting: 313 ½ Division St., Northfield
Sat., Oct. 18, 8am-4:30pm — NAFTA Activism Conference: Resource Center of the Americas, Minneapolis. Visit www.americas.org for more info.
Sat., Oct. 25 — Wellstone World Music Day: Visit www.wellstoneworldmusicday.com for info.
Thurs., Oct. 23, 7pm — People for Peace and Goodwill meeting: 313 ½ Division St., Northfield
Thurs., Oct. 23, 7pm — **Guest Speaker Eric Foner, "Freedom in the American Century, 1900-2003": Holland Hall, Room 501**
Thurs., Oct. 23, 7pm — **Homeless Sleepout on Mellby Lawn.** Contact hollstei@stolaf.edu.
Fri.-Sun., Oct. 24-26 — Cry Justice! Conference: U of M Law School, Minneapolis.
Visit www.cryjustice.org for more information.
Tues., Oct. 28, 8-9pm — **Peace and Justice meeting: Buntrock Commons, Room 142**
Thurs., Oct. 30, 7pm — People for Peace and Goodwill meeting: 313 ½ Division St., Northfield
Tues., Nov. 4, 6pm — **PAC Dinner with President Thomforde: Buntrock, Valhalla Room**
Tues., Nov. 4, 8-9pm — **Peace and Justice meeting: Buntrock Commons, Room 142**
Thurs., Nov. 6, 7pm — People for Peace and Goodwill meeting: 313 ½ Division St., Northfield
Tues., Nov. 11, 8-9pm — **Peace and Justice meeting: Buntrock Commons, Room 142**
Thurs., Nov. 13, 11:25am — **Guest Speaker David Leege, political scientist: Dittman, Rm. 305**
Thurs., Nov. 13, 7pm — People for Peace and Goodwill meeting: 313 ½ Division St., Northfield
Thurs., Nov. 13, time TBA — **P & J Bush Debate: The Pause.** Contact dahle@stolaf.edu.
Tues., Nov. 18, 7pm — **Pat Buchanan/Nadine Strossen Civil Liberties Debate: Boe Chapel**
Tues., Nov. 18, 8-9pm — **Peace and Justice meeting: Buntrock Commons, Room 142**
Thurs., Nov. 20, 7pm — People for Peace and Goodwill meeting: 313 ½ Division St., Northfield
Fri.-Sat., Feb. 20-21, 2004 — **Nobel Peace Prize Forum.** Visit www.stolaf.edu/nppf/2004.