Memorial Day May 25, 2009
Omni Memorial Day Newsletter May 20, 2009

Formerly Decoration Day, the last Monday in May remembers members of the US armed forces killed in war. Let us work together to create a World Memorial Day for all the victims of wars to replace this nationalist Memorial Day.

(Veterans Day: Nov. 11, a legal holiday in the US in commemoration of the end of WWI and in honor of veterans of the armed forces, formerly, Armistice Day.)

Compiled by Dick Bennett for a Culture of Peace

Omni seeks a world of compassion for all victims of violence and wars, a society with liberty and justice for all, a community where every person’s potential may be fulfilled, an earth restored. Grassroots nonviolence, world peace, human rights, social and economic justice, environmental stewardship protecting species and the earth.

See Newsletters on Veterans Day, Flag Day, Patriotism, Armed Forces Day, Torture, and more.

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Litany of Ashes, Stones, & Flowers

[We offer this service for use especially on Memorial Day. If possible, incorporate the names of Americans and Iraqis who have been killed in the Iraq war [and Afghanistan, and all US invasions and interventions]. There should be a pot or basket of ashes, one of stones, & one of flowers, and a large bowl of water -- or a body of water (lake, river) -- at the place of the service.]

One: For vibrant lives suddenly and shamelessly sacrificed we lift up the ashes of our loss, O Source of Life.
[All: Hear our prayer.]
For the lives that continue, haunted forever by the pain of absence, we lift up the ashes of our remorse, O Wellspring of Compassion.
[All: Hear our prayer.]

For the conflagration of flames and nightmare images forever seared into our memories we lift up the ashes of our pain, O Breathing Spirit of the World.
[All: Hear our prayer.]

For the charred visions of peace and the dry taste of fear we lift up the ashes of our grief, O Infinite.
[All: Hear our prayer.]

For all the deaths that have been justified by turning the love of God or country into fanatical arrogance, we lift up the ashes of our shame, O God.
[All: Hear our prayer.]

As we cast these ashes into the troubled water of our times, Transforming One, hear our plea that by your power they will make fertile the soil of our future and by your mercy nourish the seeds of peace.
[All: Hear our prayer.]

**The people recite the names of the dead.**

**The people cast the ashes in silence into a body or bowl of water.**

For the ways humanity pursues violence rather than understanding, we lift up the stones of our anger, O Breathing Spirit of the World.
[All: Hear our prayer.]

For the ways we allow national, religious and ethnic boundaries to circumscribe our compassion, we lift up the stones of our hardness, O Wellspring of Compassion.
[All: Hear our prayer.]

For our addiction to weapons and the ways of militarism we lift up the stones of our fear, O Source of Life.
[All: Hear our prayer.]

For the ways we cast blame and create enemies we lift up the stones of our self-righteousness, O God
[All: Hear our prayer.]

As we cast these stones into the troubled water of our times, Transforming One, hear our plea:
Just as water wears away the hardest of stones, so too may the power of your compassion soften the hardness of our hearts and draw us into a future of justice and peace.

*The people recite the names of the dead.*

*The people cast the stones in silence into a body or bowl of water.*

For sowing seeds of justice to blossom into harmony, we cast these flowers into the water, O Source of Peace.
[All: Hear our prayer.]

For seeing clearly the many rainbow colors of humanity and earth, we cast these flowers into the water, O Infinite.
[All: Hear our prayer.]

For calling us to life beyond our grieving, we cast these flowers into the water, O Breathing Spirit of the World.
[All: Hear our prayer.]

As we cast these flowers into the troubled water of our times, Transforming One, hear our plea:

Just as water births life in a desert and gives hope to the wounded, so too may the power of your nurturing renew our commitment to peace.

*The people recite the names of the dead.*

*The people cast the flowers in silence into the body or bowl of water.*

[This litany was created by Rev. Patricia Pierce of Tabernacle United Church, Philadelphia, and Rabbi Arthur Waskow of The Shalom Center.]
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CHOMSKY’S SUMMARY HISTORY OF TORTURE BY USA
http://www.commondreams.org/view/2009/05/19-7
Dave Davison

How should we respond to Memorial Day?

This letter from the president of the PNO, Peace Network of the Ozarks, the Springfield area group, gets to the heart of the situation—the extreme ethnocentrism, nationalism, exceptionalism, militarism, and imperialism of the present Memorial Day and its exclusion of all the victims except our own. Dick

To Members & Friends of the Peace Network of the Ozarks,

Last night, the evening before Memorial Day, I thought perhaps I should send something out to our members and friends that might be a commemoration of Memorial Day. I thought I might send something like a YouTube video that would memorialize the troops, and the innocent victims of the contrived war for profit and oil. I looked at several things on YouTube, but I couldn't seem to find anything that contained both the troops and the one million other victims of the war. I did see several videos that were the typical high flying aircraft, the scenes of dust in battle, the soldiers on crutches and in wheel chairs, the flag waving high, but I couldn't seem to find anything of the innocents, the men, women, children, elderly, the victims of the war who have suffered so much more than the average American whose leaders are profiting from the immoral war. So at the time, I decided if I couldn't find anything with both the troops and the innocent victims of war, I would just stay silent, and regrettably so.

Today I found the email following below in the PNO inbox. It is from a young man familiar to many of us as the son of one of our strongest peace advocates from Missouri who has continually walked the halls of Congress in these recent years. I thought to myself, this would be a better thing to send to our members and friends rather than somebody's canned editorial with the tuba puffing regimen of high flying aircraft symbolizing only the tools of war without addressing the victims. Of course we remember and honor the fallen on the designated day, and we don't have to have the designated day to do that. We remember them every day, and every night when we watch the latest news.

The attached reflection on the horrors of war are obviously very personal to the young man who wrote it, and it is plain he does not forget the victims of the war in which he was obviously exploited for his services by the authoritarians who profit from the war. If I ever have a chance to meet him I will shake his hand and thank him for his reflection and memory as a participant, for sharing this part of himself with us, and for the efforts he now makes along with his mother to end this nightmare.

Our thanks to Cloy Richards, a young soldier who continues to suffer his own thoughts at home. We wish him the highest and very best recovery, and soon. We hope he knows he has friends that understand his feelings, and support him in his continuing work.

On this Memorial Day that is not a celebration, but a remembrance, we remember the young men and women like Cloy, survivors who still suffer, and of course we remember those who have fallen. Unlike the many videos that glorify war without remembering the victims of war, we also remember the many innocents.

This election year news coverage has quite obviously slowed down the national peace effort, at least for now, but we still have a lot of things to do to educate and communicate in our own community for the higher benefits of peace. The election is coming to our community too, and we need your help to make the best local and national peace possible. We need your voice. Stand up, step forward, give us your thoughts and ideas, and help us. The center core of PNO can't do this by ourselves effectively. We need
your help. I can't think of a better way to communicate the benefits of peace, and influence the votes of the public that will determine the difference between peace or war.

Peace. Dave

WILLIAM BLUM’s ANTI-EMPIRE REPORTS, a sampling

Anti-Empire Report, June 6, 2008
http://killinghope.org/aer58.htm

Anti-Empire Report, October 30, 2008
http://www.killinghope.org/bblum6/aer63.html
BBlum6@aol.com

Anti-Empire Report, February 3, 2009
BBlum6@aol.com

Anti-Empire Report, April 4, 2009
http://www.killinghope.org/bblum6/aer68.html

Blum is author of Rogue Nation and Killing Hope, which catalog and analyze the many illegal US invasions and interventions.

HOWARD ZINN

Zinn, Howard. “Put Away the Flag” in We Who Dared to Say No to War. “Whom Will We Honor Memorial Day?” The Zinn Reader: Writings on Disobedience and Democracy (Seven Stories, 1997). This essay was one of Zinn’s regular columns in the Boston Globe and appeared June 2, 1976. His column was then canceled. Here are two sentences from the column: “Memorial Day will be celebrated...by the usual betrayal of the dead, by the hypocritical patriotism of the politicians and contractors preparing for more wars, more graves to receive more flowers on future Memorial Days. The memory of the dead deserves a difference dedication. To peace, to defiance of governments.”

For the entire newsletter, go to OMNI's web site: www.omnicenter.org