

By Bill Durland

Joining Israeli and Palestinian Peacemakers: “These are the real heroes...”

Note: Friends Peace Teams (FPT) partners with Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) and Peace Brigades International (PBI) to publicize their important work of witness and accompaniment and to encourage and support Friends who are lead to participate in that work. The Durlands are the latest Friends to join CPT delegations with support of FPT's Elise Boulding Fund.

Thanks to my association with Friends Peace Teams as a Coordinating Committee member representing Intermountain Yearly Meeting, my wife, Genie and I were led to join the recent Christian Peacemakers Team mission to the West Bank, July 27 to August 8. We were the only Quakers in our delegation of fourteen, which consisted of Mennonites, Episcopalians, a United Church of Christ pastor and several unaffiliated, but clearly Christian-oriented, peace activists.

To report on all we saw, did and experienced in detail would be far beyond the scope of this newsletter, so I will try to summarize briefly the flavor of the experience, with some highlights. We began in Jerusalem with two days of orientation and training. One of those days was a First Day and Genie and I were fortunate enough to have an opportunity to get to Ramallah to share Meeting for Worship with Ramallah Friends Meeting, certainly a highlight for us as Quakers. A group of Friends from Guilford College was also there doing a work camp at the Friends School which suffers continually from the Israeli harassment of Palestinian people and institutions in Ramallah. We also met Jean Zarou and her sister-in-law, Violet, who has given years of service to a nursery school for refugee children which she founded.

Our time as CPTers in the West Bank was given over to meeting with local peace and justice workers on both sides and taking part in actions of resistance

and solidarity. Among the local peace and justice workers we met and talked with were the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center whose spokesperson, Samia Khoury, gave a moving presentation about their work on liberation theology in the Palestinian context. There, we also met Jeff Halper, an Israeli activist and founder of Israelis Against Home Demolitions. We met Arik Ascherman, founder of Rabbis for Human Rights and visited the Dheisha Refugee Camp in



Bill and Genie Durland

Bethlehem where we saw amazing examples of the triumph of the human spirit over almost unimaginable poverty, deprivation and oppression. We met the staff of the Palestinian Center for Rapprochement Between People in Beit Sahour and the Palestinian Center for the Study of Non-violence in Hebron which is dedi-

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FriendsPeaceTeams

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cated to implementing the principles and practices of Gandhi in the Palestinian struggle for justice and freedom from occupation. At each meeting and in each place we were treated with warmth and enthusiasm and given so much valuable background and information about the current efforts of each group that it will take months to integrate it all!

Our actions included taking part in a human shield effort in Beit Jala. Beit Jala is a Palestinian (mostly Christian) town located across a valley from the large and well-established Israeli settlement of Gilo. The town is subjected to bombardments from Gilo, often without provocation. As human shields we CPTers volunteered to fan out in pairs and sleep in Palestinian homes in vulnerable neighborhoods. We spent our first such night under five hours of heavy shelling at very close range—pretty terrifying for us and yet something innocent families must live with constantly. *We* were blessed because the mother of the household later said that *she* was blessed to have us in her home. Such actions do not stop the Israeli shelling, but the fact that they are publicized to inform the world of the presence of internationals who care enough to do such a thing can be a deterrent to Israeli aggression. In this case, CBS News heard of the action, took an interest and aired a short piece about it on Monday, August 13!

While in the Bethlehem neighborhood, my wife and I were asked to provide help and suggestions on non-violence training to the leadership of an international solidarity group expected to arrive the following week. Members of that group were subsequently involved in protesting the seizure of Orient House after our departure. Our final week was spent at CPT headquarters in the city of Hebron which is neither Palestinian nor Israeli, being divided arbitrarily into “H1” which is presumably controlled by Palestinians, and “H2” which is controlled by Israel.

While there we accompanied Palestinians on essential errands which could not be accomplished without help because of the imposition of curfew; visited the homes of Palestinians besieged by settlements built

literally on their roofs and who, in order to protect themselves from stones and garbage thrown on them by settlers had to cover their courtyards and streets with wire mesh; helped landowners harvest their grapes and almonds (illegal under Israeli law) to save their land from confiscation; and spent the night with a family living on the border between H1 and H2, exposed to stoning and shelling from the adjacent settlement. Every day, family members see a large poster facing their house which reads: “Death to Arabs;” and their children must climb a steep hill and a 3-meter wall on a round-about route to get to school without walking on the road reserved for settlers. The elderly father of this family is ill and bedridden. When his sons tried to get an ambulance to take him to the hospital the settlers stoned the ambulance.

Finally, we visited Yatta where Palestinian shepherds, reduced to living in caves, had their caves destroyed by settlers and are now living in the open trying to protect what’s left of their sheep and vineyards. There we were accompanied by three bus-loads of ordinary Israelis who oppose their government’s actions in the occupied territories and risked their lives and freedom to deliver humanitarian aid to the dispossessed shepherds. These are real heroes, willing to publicly oppose such monolithic and oppressive official policies and public opinion!

These scenes and especially these intelligent, generous, forbearing people are in our hearts for good. Our experience gave us clarity that our next step must be to undergo the intensive training offered by CPT to become CPT reservists and make ourselves available for more full-time service. Our thanks go to Albuquerque Monthly Meeting and Intermountain Yearly Meeting for their generous financial and spiritual support and to the Elise Boulding Fund for an essential grant making our travel possible. Our next step is an act of faith since it means finally giving up our part-time employment, living only on social security, and trusting that the financial support for extensive CPT service will be forthcoming.

For contact information about CPT see page 4.

From the Editor

By Val Liveock

This month PTN's lead articles focus on the nonviolent witness for peace and social justice in the West Bank and Colombia of our partner, Christian Peacemaker Teams. The courageous efforts of Palestinians and Israelis in the West Bank and of the Embera-Katío indigenous group in Colombia are large steps forward in nonviolent resistance to the culture of violence that dominates life in their countries. Lawmakers of the United States need to find ways to support the people's need for peace and replace policies which destroy human life, the environment and threaten to spread the violence to the entire region. To learn how you can encourage them to do so, see Catherine Stratton Treadway's article on page 5.

This summer, much of my work has focused on Colombia. For over a year FPT has been attempting to develop a project there, trying to pull together a consultative group which would help us develop further work. I hope and trust that we are beginning to see the fruits of these efforts—a small group of people have begun regular telephone conferences—and that by next Spring, we will be able to send an exploratory team. If you would like to help us develop this project, please contact me at 877-814-6972 or by e-mail at fpt@quaker.org.

As we work in situations of violence, grassroots communities in the Middle East, in Colombia, in East Africa, have shown us the way. We need to continue to listen to, and learn from them. Then we can join with them in their nonviolent witness. Our work with our East African partners is an ongoing workshop in peace building that reaches from Los Angeles to remote villages in Burundi and Rwanda. Some of the flavor of this work is expressed by Adrien Niyongabo's report on page 7.

All of our work and the work of our partners continues only as F(f)riends are led to step forward to share their gifts with our partners in these troubled places. We'll be sending out our annual fundraising appeal this month. Please look for it and consider helping us continue to support the work of peacemaking.

Our Coordinating Committee will meet in Milwaukee Oct. 11-14. If you would like to join us for some of our session, or for a public discussion of our work, to be held on the 12th, please contact me (see above) or Julia Pantoga, our local contact, at 414-962-9194.

From CPT Net

In Colombia, CPTers Accompany Indigenous People

More than eight hundred indigenous people from throughout Colombia began a march Wednesday, June 13, in search of Kimy Pernía Domicó, the abducted leader of the Embera-Katío indigenous group.

Three masked men on a white motorcycle kidnapped the internationally respected leader at gunpoint June 2. He shouted, "They have me!" as the motorcycle sped from the municipality of Tierra Alta toward Monteria, Cordoba. Nothing has been heard from Kimy since.

The dominance of army-backed paramilitary in the region and the form of abduction indicate that paramilitary belonging to the United Self-Defense Groups of Cordoba and Uraba (ACCU) are responsible.

In media reports following the incident, the po-

lice commander of Cordoba attempted to justify the abduction by accusing Kimy of involvement in the drug trade. These comments have been proven untrue, but in this context they are dangerous nonetheless.

Indigenous people from around the country congregated and marched in the streets of Medellín on Wednesday and then descended to Tierralta, starting point for the direct action and march route, later in the day. Participants in the non-violent direct action plan to confront the paramilitary by marching to their farms around the city of Monteria and demanding the release of Kimy, or at least the return of his body.

Kimy Pernía Domicó was targeted for playing a leading role in the Embera-Katío campaign against the
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In recognition of US complicity in violence and injustice, Christian Peace Teams and Witness For Peace hold prayer vigil outside US Embassy in Bogota. Photo: CPT

Colombia...

construction of the Urrà dam mega-project. Due to their resistance, several Embera-Katío communities have been targeted by the paramilitary. Paramilitaries belonging to the AUC make no effort to hide their alliances with their private sponsors. In a recent interview with Carlos Castaño, former head of the AUC, a columnist from the Colombian magazine **Semana** asked "Whose work was (Kimy) impeding?" Castaño responded, "The Dam! He's impeding the functioning of the dam!"

The Urrà dam mega-project, partially funded by the Canadian government, ravaged the Embera-Katío ancestral lands and threatens the group's very survival. Several leaders were assassinated, community members were abducted, and others disappeared due to their active resistance to the project. The Embera-Katío thought the violence would subside with the treaty signed with the Urrà builders and the Colombian government early last year. They were wrong. Kimy's abduction was just one of the attacks they have suffered.

On Monday, June 18, CPTers Scott Kerr and Ben Horst arrived in the town of Tierralta in the department of Córdoba to accompany [the marchers]...

[The] Embera-Katío and allied indigenous groups occupied Tierralta's main central plaza for the dura-

tion of the encampment, stringing up a spider's web network of rope and plastic tarps to serve as tents.

The indigenous walked through the ranchland surrounding Tierralta on June 16, June 18, and June 20, asking ranchers, peasants, and passers-by for any information regarding Domicó. Kerr and Horst accompanied the marchers on June 20, walking for six hours over dusty roads in areas largely controlled by paramilitaries. When Horst asked why that section of the countryside had been chosen for the march, an Embera-Katío leader replied, "One of our shamans has seen signs that Kimy was brought to this area."

On June 22, officials, including the Minister of the Interior, several senators, and a UN delegate, arrived from Bogotá for a public meeting to discuss the disappearance of Domicó and the plight of the Embera-Katío people. The Colombian government officials hedged in response to the Embera-Katío's requests, in effect rejecting them.

The response of UN delegate Anders Kompas was more direct. He criticized the government's failure to enact a thorough search for Domicó, and their "lack of transparency" in matters regarding the indigenous peoples of Colombia. Additionally, Horst read a statement on behalf of the five international observers taking part in the march, which called in part for "the liberation of Kimy and the respect for the autonomy of indigenous territory and authority."

Editor's note: During the march, no one was hurt, but afterward, a Justapaz staffer e-mailed me saying, "Attacks on the indigenous have increased since the March ended."

Urgent Need

CPT's ability to provide accompaniment for indigenous groups in Colombia and Chiapas (see page 9) is limited by a lack of trained, Spanish-speaking team members. Please consider applying to become a member of the full-time Peacemaker Corps or the part-time Reserve Corps, and attend the upcoming Dec. 27 2001 - Jan. 23, 2002 training in Chicago. The deadline for applications is October 1. Contact information: Christian Peacemaker Teams, PO Box 6508, Chicago, IL 60680; tel: 312-455-1199; fax: 312-432-1213; e-mail: cpt@igc.org; website: <http://www.cpt.org>

Excerpts from Searching for Kimy: A Personal Account

By Julia Graff

Note: Internationals from a number of groups accompanied the Embera-Katio in their search for Kimy Pernía Domicó. Among them was Julia Graff from Witness For Peace (WFP). The following excerpts are from WFP Newsletter, Summer 2001.

...Because of the risks involved, (the Embera-Katio) invited us to participate as companions. They asked us, as international observers, to walk along side them, and after careful reflection, we accepted. This is, after all, what it means to be in solidarity with God's people—to share a portion of their pain, to assume some of their risks, and to live and trust and doubt and love right along with them. The idea was that the paramilitaries might not retaliate if foreign observers were present, since the international community would be more involved. Unfortunately, this reflects the fact that we live in a world that values the lives of US citizens more than it values the lives of Colombian indigenous people. Still, there are no guarantees in this chaotic and unpredictable war, and we knew that when we got on the plane.

When we arrived to the town that would be the organizational hub of the march, we found that 800 indigenous people from all over the country had already arrived and set up camp in the town square. Some had traveled two days by bus to participate in the search of a brother they had never met.

We marched under the oppressive sun for six hours straight on Saturday, but Sunday was declared a rest day to allow the swollen feet of the barefoot women to recuperate. Surprisingly, there were no threatening incidents while we were there, but neither was Kimy returned to us.

In the middle of the paramilitary stronghold, we laid down each night under a common tarp on a common pavement, with 800 brothers and sisters. I'm sure we uttered 800 similar prayers: "Please let Kimy be alive, please protect us from harm in the night, and please give us strength for the march." And we slept in the middle of uncertainty, with no walls and no locks, only our faith to give us good rest. Despite all the rumors, despite the fear and the terror all around us, there was an incredible spirit of unity and common purpose.

By the third day, I had made friendships, and smiles greeted me in all directions. Everywhere I looked, I saw enormous courage and faith to move mountains. What else but faith allows one to leave her land and meager earnings for two weeks to travel with small children to an unknown region in order to confront a powerful evil? What else but an extraordinary sense of community and brotherhood moves 800 people to unite in a non-violent act of solidarity and sacrifice?

...But mostly, I will remember that God never asks us take it all on ourselves, that just when we feel most powerless; we need to rely on our community at all levels. Community implies commitment and responsibility to one another, it implies support and sacrifice.

For more information contact: Witness for Peace, 1229 15th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005; tel: (202) 588-1471; fax: (202) 588-1472; e-mail: witness@witnessforpeace.org; website: www.witnessforpeace.org

By Catherine Stratton Treadway, Friends Committee on National Legislation

U.S. Military Aid To The Andes Makes its Way Through U.S. Congress

U.S. military and security assistance to Colombia and the Andean region, intended to fight a war against illegal drugs, is instead adding more fuel to the fire of a decades-old civil war in Colombia. The violence in the region has escalated along with the increasing flow of weapons and military training to the region. Thousands of civilians are dying in the cross fire each year many of them community lead-

ers and activists who are targeted for assassination. The U.S.-sponsored cocaine fumigation campaign has left people ill, food and alternative cash crops wilted, drinking water supplies contaminated, and aquatic life destroyed. Millions have been driven from their homes by the violence, fumigation campaign, and resulting poverty.

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FCNL...

In late March, the Bush Administration announced an \$800 million request for fiscal year (FY) 2002 for "Andean Regional Initiative" (ARI) to continue funding counter-drug efforts in Colombia (known in previous years as Plan Colombia) and to expand such aid to Colombia's Andean neighbors. Much of this aid is in the form of military and security assistance. Colombia would receive the largest portion of the military aid—over half. Colombia's neighbors—Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Brazil, and Panama—would receive significant increases in military aid over previous years. This package is being considered by the U.S. Congress as part of the regular FY2002 foreign operations appropriations bill. Additional aid to the region—about \$200 million—would be delivered through defense department counter-narcotics accounts.

In late July, the House debated and voted on the foreign operations appropriations bill. Reps. McGovern (MA), Hoekstra (MI), Pelosi (CA), Morella (MD), and Jackson-Lee (TX) offered an amendment to cut \$100 million in military aid to Colombia and transfer it to international programs to fight tuberculosis and support maternal and child health. Despite a good debate, the amendment was defeated 179-249. An amendment offered by Rep. Conyers (MI) to end funding for the fumigation campaign was eventually withdrawn without a vote. In spite of the failure of the U.S. House to pass these amendments, many representatives were openly critical of current U.S. drug policy and escalating U.S. military involvement in the Andean region. This was the first public debate in the U.S. Congress about the human and environmental impact of the U.S.-funded fumigation.

An amendment offered by Rep. Conyers to maintain the limit on U.S. troops and civilian contractors in Colombia to a total of 800 people, a cap the administration had sought to remove, was accepted on a voice vote.

That same week, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved their version of the foreign operations appropriations bill. Their version currently provides only \$567 million to Colombia and surrounding countries (a decrease from the administration's original re-

quest), includes some human rights conditions, emphasizes the importance of alternative development funding, and encourages compensation for farmers whose legal crops are fumigated or who suffer health damages due to aerial fumigation. Nonetheless, the Senate Appropriations Committee bill maintains support for forced aerial fumigation of coca and poppy fields and includes large-scale funding of the Colombian military. The full Senate will debate and vote on the bill after they return from Labor Day recess in September.

The Friends Committee on National Legislation, a Quaker lobby in the public interest, works in coalition with like-minded groups to oppose current U.S. policy towards Colombia. We believe that the emphasis of U.S. drug policy should be on reducing demand in the U.S. through expanded prevention and treatment programs and through programs that increase economic and educational opportunities in U.S. communities beset by drug addiction and drug-related violence and crimes. We urge members of Congress 1) to oppose continued military and security assistance to Colombia and the Andean region and for the fumigation campaign, and 2) to support increasing U.S. assistance to the region for sustainable, community-based, economic development and for the strengthening of democratic and civil society institutions.

We urge you to contact your senators with this message between now and the Senate vote in September. Also, please thank your representative if s/he voted in favor of the McGovern amendment to cut military aid to Colombia and transfer it to global health accounts. Check here to see how your member voted: <http://clerkweb.house.gov/cgi-bin/vote.exe?year=2001&rollnumber=263>. See the FCNL website for more information: <http://www.fcnl.org/issues/int/colindx.htm> or to write a letter to your senator from the Legislative Action Center on the FCNL website: <http://capwiz.com/fconl/home/>.

An extensive list of peace team groups working in Colombia, information sources, and US and Colombian officials' contact information is available on the FPT website site at www.quaker.org/fpt/ or by mail if you send a SASE to FPT, PO Box 10372, San Antonio TX 78210-0372.

By Adrien Niyongabo

Kwisumo Workshop Report



Adrien Niyongabo and Nobel Peace Prize winner, Jodi Williams, in South Africa.

On Carolyn's and my trip to Mutaho and Kwisumo, we attended the Sunday, August 5, service at Mubuga Friends Church. This church has been given birth by the Cagura Friends Church. Now it is growing. In fact, it has given birth to two other churches: Ngozi and Rwamiko. More than 500 people were gathering. Some of them had to stand outside because of lack of space. For that reason Mubuga Church members want to build a new and big church. May God help them!

Carolyn had the pleasure to preach that day. Her sermon was based on peace building. With holy scriptures and some Quaker testimonies from all over the world, she came to say that God created people not for fighting or killing each other, but for living in peace. To emphasize what she said, I told the church members that in our daily life, conflicts are unavoidable and it is up on to us to surmount them. How? With love, that love which has been given by Jesus Christ to us. For that, we will not hurt others. We left that church with a hope to meet again.

Our last workshop was the Kwisumo one. After a long way, from Ngozi to Ruyigi, we finally arrived there on Monday, August 6, 2001, after a stop at Gitega where we slept Sunday night. Tuesday morning we went to Kwisumo which is 12 Km from Ruyigi town. We were at Kwisumo Friends Station around 9:00 A.M. Some could have said that it is a forgotten land, but let us say an abandoned one. Only the Friends Station's buildings and some

few houses around can tell you that Kwisumo was a lovely place before the crises. Many other houses have been completely destroyed and people had to flee to Tanzania or to other places. But when you look around and see the hills covered with trees and the wind making them dance, you will not say that it is a forgotten land. More than that, on our way, we met people. Some were going to draw water, others with hoes on their shoulders going to work in their fields. Just to say that there is life at Kwisumo.

We met people at the station. They were well-dressed waiting for the workshop to start. The workshop started at 10:00. I welcomed the participants after two Kirundi religious songs. As usually, after the self-presentation for each participant, I went on with the BTHRC history, emphasizing the peace building tradition of Quakers. Afterwards Carolyn presented, "What Is Trauma?" As in previous workshops, she defined trauma as an event which destroys your worldview. She talked about feelings that occurred after traumatic events and the four forms (physical, cognitive, emotional and behavioral) under which trauma can affect someone.

When Carolyn was talking, some of the participants were drying tears with their hands and in others' faces you could read how painful it was. I thought that telling stories could have been better than the kind of workshop we were doing that time. And when I asked how many would like to share their stories, many hands were lifted up. Just three of them had the opportunity to share. To others, we said that we would have time for that in the future.

From the open discussion, participants suggested to have a site at Kwisumo and recommended us to bring our trauma teachings beyond the Friends Churches because, they said, it is very helpful. We finished our workshop with a nice lunch. Tea was also served; it is Burundi Friends tradition. Twenty-four participants were in our workshop.

On our way back to Bujumbura, we were pleased with the work done and praising the Lord for having kept us safe during that trip. That was the first time we spent all week up-country doing workshops.

As one who have been in all the workshops we have done, I can say that we need serious interventions, from whoever, to deal with the TRAUMA that has occurred in BURUNDI. For sure, people (Burundians) are in need of a breathing space.

By David Zarembka

Update On The African Great Lakes Initiative

AVP-Rwanda

After Rwanda Yearly Meeting organized twelve AVP workshops in March as part of Phase I of AVP-Rwanda, they took a rest. It wasn't until June that they got together again and decided to start an official AVP organization with officers and a bank account. They have appointed a committee of eight from all parts of the country to be on the committee with David Bucura, General Secretary of Rwanda Yearly Meeting and the flawless organizer of Phase I, as their AVP coordinator for Phase II of the AVP-Rwanda program. During Phase II, those Rwandans trained in Phase I will have their first experiences facilitating AVP basic workshops.

For the first eight workshops they will have the assistance of two Ugandan facilitators: George Walumoli who was part of Phase I and was recently facilitating AVP in Ghana with Rachel Harrison (a member of the Friends Peace Teams' Coordinating Committee) and Nakuti Victo, a female Quaker facilitator from Mbale, Uganda. These eight workshops have already been funded and the AVP-Rwanda Committee is hard at work organizing these workshops for the month of September. AVP-Rwanda also plans eight additional basic workshops as part of Phase II, but awaits funding of an additional \$9000 for these workshops.

AVP-Burundi

AGLI has also approved the Burundi Trauma Healing and Reconciliation Center's proposal to introduce AVP to Burundi. If the funding of \$11,750 can be obtained, this is scheduled for October. There will be two basic workshops, one advanced, and one training for facilitators, and then three more basic workshops were the new trainees can apprentice. One Uganda facilitator and one international facilitator will be recruited for this five week series of workshops.

Burundi Trauma Healing and Reconciliation Center

During July, the Burundi Team had a series of Trauma Workshops scheduled for the up-country Quakers which had to be canceled because of violence in the area of the workshops. This kind of cancellation should be expected at times in a country still with a low-level civil war. In early August, the Team facilitated three of the workshops that were missed in July. A report on the Kwisumo Workshop is included on page 7.

An interesting development is that the Team is orga-



Women's conference in Kuibuka where Carolyn Keys presented a trauma healing workshop.

nizing a one-day meeting where Quakers and others who know Kirundi, French and English will meet to determine the best translation into Kirundi for many of the words and concepts used in trauma healing work.

At the end of June, Brad Allen from the Burundi Team came back to the United States for a leave of absence. After Brad's return, he and AGLI agreed that he would not return to Burundi. He is now working with Sudanese refugees for Lutheran Social Services in Grand Rapids. We wish him well in his new endeavors. The Team in Burundi and the AGLI Working Group are discussing what to do about replacing him, but have not reached a decision at this time.

Rachel Fretz Sojourns in Burundi

Rachel Fretz, clerk of the AGLI Working Group and a member of Santa Monica Monthly Meeting, received funds from her Meeting to visit Burundi for three weeks beginning on August 27. In addition to meeting with the Burundi Team and members of Burundi Yearly Meeting, Rachel hopes to conduct storytelling/healing workshops with women in Bujumbura, at upcountry Quaker schools, and a seminar at the Great Lakes School of Theology. With AGLI's support, Rachel asked Santa Monica Meeting to host a Burundian who will sojourn for approximately a month at Santa Monica Meeting with the opportunity to acquaint Quakers and others from the area about Burundi and the programs of Burundi Yearly Meeting and also to participate in Quaker and educational gatherings of interest. Rachel will explore this exchange with Burundi Yearly Meeting. As way opens with Santa Monica MM and Burundi YM, this experience may become the model for future exchanges.

From Friends Peace Teams' Partners

Christian Peacemaker Teams

Chiapas: Abejas Begin Return To Their Homes After nearly 100 members of the Mayan pacifist group, Las Abejas (the Bees), had taken their seats at long rows of white tables on one side of the convention hall, the municipal authorities from Chenalhó, a small county in the heart of the Chiapan highlands, entered the lobby to sign in.

Then came a few select observers—religious leaders, human rights lawyers, the Red Cross—and the moderator of the meeting, Chiapas Governor Pablo Salazar. When the hall was full, there sat the Abejas face to face with many of the men who had run them out of their homes at gunpoint four years ago. They were there to sign an agreement which they hoped would allow more than 300 people displaced by paramilitary violence to return home safely. They had negotiated an “Accord of Mutual Respect” in which the government agreed, among other things, to prohibit the possession of firearms in the villages and to ensure the safety of those returning home.

Near the end of the break, CPTers noticed two men standing in the corner talking amiably and shaking hands. One was Abejas leader José Vásquez from X'oyep. The other was Manuel Pérez Arias, pastor of the Presbyterian church in Pechiquil—the home community of many of the paramilitaries who participated in the massacre of forty-five Abejas in December, 1997 in Acteal. These two old friends, who worked together to translate the Bible into their native language of Tzotzil, had not spoken to

each other for several years following the massacre.

On Saturday, August 25, CPTers Keith Young and Lynn Stoltzfus attended a farewell mass for the three communities who will be returning home August 28 after almost four years of living as refugees in this small hamlet. Although this return is something they have been looking forward to since they left their communities, there were still hints of sadness as they prepared to leave the people they have lived and worked with for the last few years.

In spite of the tears that were shed for leaving friends behind, the smiles on the faces of those returning reflected the excitement of finally being able to go home. CPT will provide accompaniment for the returnees. Friend Shirley Way [see PTN, Fall 2000], whose work last year with CPT was supported by FPT's Elise Boulding Fund, will be a member of the team. *By Kryss Chupp and Lynn Stozfus from CPT Net.*

CPT Delegation Schedule:

Middle East Delegation: November 16-28, 2000; Feb 14-26, 2002; May 24-Jun 5, 2002; July 25-Aug 6, 2002.

Mexico Delegation: Chiapas, Mexico: Nov. 19-Dec. 1, 2001; March 20-April 2, 2002.

Puerto Rico Delegation: Vieques, PR: To Be Announced.

Colombia Delegation: To Be Announced.

Peace Brigades International

PBI continues its work in Colombia, East Timor/Indonesia and Mexico. A current newsletter from the Mexico

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project is available at <http://www.peacebrigades.org/mexico/bulletin0107.pdf>. PBI is also looking for Spanish speakers to join its Mexico and Colombia teams. Potential volunteers need to be at least 25 years old; prepared to make a 1 year commitment; fluent in Spanish; experienced in NGO/international work. PBI provides: full and comprehensive training by a team of professionals; costs of training; travel to Colombia and living expenses while serving on a PBI team; \$200 US/month stipend; one year of field experience; close contact with local NGOs and communities. *Before being accepted, all candidates must present letters of reference, take part in a telephone interview and participate in a week-long training session.* If enough potential volunteers are found, there will be a training for the **Columbia Project** in mid-November. Deadline for applications is Sept. 30. Check out <http://www.igc.org/pbi/colombia.html>. For more information and application forms, US and Latin American residents contact: Andrew Fandino: e-mail: pbi colombia usa@msn.com; tel: (202) 544-3876. For general information contact Peace Brigades International/USA, 428 8th St SE, Washington DC 20003, tel: 202-544-3765; fax: 202-544-3765; e-mail: pbi usa@igc.apc.org; or visit PBI's website: <http://www.peacebrigades.org>.

Youth in Action Award Goes to Rachel Harrison

*Rachel Harrison, who represents Baltimore Yearly Meeting on FPT's Coordinating Committee, received a \$1,000 award from **Youth in Action** for organizing the introduction of the Alternatives to Violence Project to Ghana. An article about her work was published in the Summer 2001 issue of **Peace Teams News**. The awards are meant both to highlight important projects and to reward young people who are devoting themselves to making a difference as volunteer leaders. A council of young people reviewed the applications. For more information on Youth in Action and lists of this year's winners both internationally and in the US, see www.youthlink.org. To learn more about AVP in Ghana see the John William Montessori School website at <http://jwms.org>.*

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