



Jesus Emilio Tuberquia with Pastor Twink at UCC Church in Fitchburg

Observations on the Visit of Jesús Emilio Tuberquia

Jesus Emilio Tuberquia, a founder and leader of the Peace Community of San Jose de Apartado, visited Madison as a part of the celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the Colombia Support Network. He met with Dane County Executive Joseph Parisi and attended a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Dane County Board. Acting Board Chair John Hendrick welcomed comments by Jesus Emilio, who briefly described the threatening situation facing the Peace Community from paramilitaries and Colombian Army soldiers patrolling in areas adjoining the Peace Community. Jesus Emilio then requested that the County Board send a letter to the U.S. Secretary of State asking for support and protection for the Peace Community and its residents. Later, at the 25th Anniversary event at

Observations on the Visit of Jesús Emilio Tuberquia continued

the University of Wisconsin, Jesús Emilio received a welcoming Resolution from the County Board. During his visit, Jesús Emilio also took his message from the Peace Community to two churches, the United Church of Christ in Fitchburg and the Unitarian Church in Madison, at both of which he received a warm welcome and answered questions from the congregation. State Representative Mark Pocan, now a member of the United States Congress, introduced Jesús Emilio at the Unitarian Church and expressed his support for the Peace Community of San Jose de Apartado, having visited San Jose some years ago. John Peck of the Family Farm Defenders took Jesús Emilio to visit to the farm of fellow farm defender John Kinsman, who graciously hosted him there. Jesús Emilio also attended a class at Madison East High School and spoke to a large class at Carroll University in Waukesha. The following are comments by several people who attended events at which Jesús Emilio spoke.

From Madison-Rafah Sister City Project

Madison-Rafah Sister City Project was pleased to co-sponsor Jesús Emilio's visit to Madison and to host him for a dinner at The Nile restaurant. We have long appreciated the support of CSN and were glad to return the favor in some small way, especially in light of the close ties between the governments of Colombia and Israel. We were most interested to hear from Jesús Emilio about how the people of the peace

community manage to remain steadfast in the face of such terrible repression and murders, and to see if there were lessons that we could learn from another community where ordinary people are caught up in a situation of extreme violence and repression. I personally learned a great deal that I did not know about the situation in Colombia from both his campus talk and our dinner conversation. Hopefully the kuffiyeh from Palestine that we gave him kept him a bit warmer while he was here, although we realize he won't need it to stay warm at home!

Barb Olson

From a East High School Student

I am a student at East High School, and I live in Madison, which is the sister city of San Jose de Apartado. A representative of the community, Jesús Emilio, came to my Latin American studies class to talk about the peace community and the atrocities being committed in Colombia, especially in the last 50 years. Jesús talked to us, through Cecilia's translation, about the government and the paramilitaries and the extreme violence in this country. Apartado was described as a bubble of peace and justice, staying out of the conflicts that much of the country was engaged in. Apartado is an especially hot spot, as it is on the route used by the cartels to transport drugs out of the country, as well as legal exports. Jesús talked to us about the violence surrounding the community, that reached the community as well.

He also talked about the school and the agricultural programs. Following Jesús' visit, Cecilia returned to get us involved in the Freeze for Food event. Four other students and I volunteered to help out with the race, and got to work alongside other people fighting for Apartado and raising money to feed the children in school. This was altogether a great experience, especially since our Colombian sister city is not often mentioned but could use our help. Thanks so much to everyone involved, we loved it!

Mara Rosenberg

**From ALBERTO VARGAS,
Associate Director of Latin American,
Caribbean and Iberian Studies
Program at the University of Wisconsin,
Madison**

One of LACIS' priorities is serving community groups interested in a better understanding of Latin America and to connect such groups with students and faculty. The Colombia Support Network has a partnership with LACIS to promote the learning of current events in Colombia. Last fall LACIS hosted Jesús Emilio Tuberquía, legal representative and a founding member of the Peace Community of San José de Apartado, sister community of Dane County, to share his experience and views on the prospects for the peace community.

Jesús Emilio discussed with LACIS students and faculty the continuous threats that members of the community encounter due to their reluctance

continued on the following page

Action On Colombia is the official newsletter of the Colombia Support Network, a national peace and justice network of groups and individuals working to promote respect for human rights in Colombia and a just relationship between the United States and Colombia through grass-roots activism.

CSN supports a nonviolent, negotiated resolution to the conflict in Colombia.

CSN is the only current project of Wisconsin Interfaith Committee on Latin America

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to take sides with the armed groups in the civil conflict. It is truly ironic that a community that wants to live in peace is constantly under menace for their very declaration of neutrality. Jesús Emilio's commitment in seeking alternatives for the economic well being of his community, such as growing, processing and exporting cacao was a source of hope and inspiration for students. Hosting visiting activists, such as Jesús Emilio, is also helpful to value and put into context the privilege we have in Madison to express our points of view without fear of retaliation. This is not the first time that LACIS hosts members of the peace community of San José Apartado since it was declared as such in 1997. The process of accompaniment of sister communities is important to assure that people who want to live in peace have another level of shelter to achieve their dreams.

From the Plowshare Center in Milwaukee and Waukesha

Reflections on Meeting Jesús Emilio Tuberquia

On October 8, 2012, at the Carroll University Student Center in Waukesha, Wisconsin, Colombian Jesús Emilio Tuberquia spoke to seventy-five students and community people about the inspiring peace community to which he belongs. The rural, farming Community of San Jose de Apartado is committed to maintaining nonviolence in the midst of armed attacks by the Colombian army, paramilitary death squads, and guerilla warfare. The

community is determined to stay on their land, protecting themselves from being displaced, as they refuse to sell out to the multinational corporations, such as Coca Cola and Chiquita Banana, who want to extract natural resources (gold, oil and other minerals) from their beautiful, lush land. These companies are aided in their efforts by policies created by the signing of the Free Trade Agreements between the U.S. and Latin America.

The atmosphere in the room was hushed, almost stunned, as Jesús recounted in Spanish, aided by an interpreter, the struggle of his community to survive. Since its foundation in 1997, the indigenous Community of San Jose de Apartado, has been under attack, and 200 community members—children, women and men have been murdered. Jesús said that they are seen as a threat to the various powers and armed groups; because of their neutrality, they are seen as “aiding the enemy.” Jesús also showed a disturbing film which revealed scenes from everyday life and the history of the community. Various people were interviewed about the atrocities they had witnessed over the years, against family and neighbors.

Later, during the question and answer session with the audience, Jesús explained how he and others from the peace community have been travelling to the U.S. and Europe to speak out, believing that if there is international outrage and solidarity with them, the Colombian government will begin to protect the peace community. When

questioned about what we can do, Jesús replied that we could send letters to our Congressional representatives, urging them to cut the millions of dollars the U.S. sends to the Colombian government, which ends up aiding the military in killing its own people. When asked by another participant how they face such huge obstacles and continue living happily, Jesús replied that it is the solidarity of the community and their faith that those killed are still with them, that allows them to live with peace and love in their hearts! He is also hopeful that the peace negotiations, which are just beginning in Oslo, will bring understanding and yield some solutions to the conflict.

Another student later observed to the writer that, “Even students who had come mainly for the attendance points were moved, and I saw one young woman embrace Jesús afterwards. Others communicated their sympathy as best they could with limited Spanish.”

For living a life of nonviolent resistance, commitment to peaceful resolution of conflict, and focusing on basic democratic rights, The Community of San Jose de Apartado was nominated for the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize!

Kate Delaney Jolin
Education Committee Co-Chair
The Plowshare Center
Waukesha, Wisconsin

Celebrating CSN'S 25th Anniversary

CSN received many congratulatory messages on its 25 year anniversary. We will be publishing some of them in this and in upcoming newsletters. A sample!

It is a real pleasure to salute Cecilia and Jack, and their associates at the Colombia Support Network, for 25 years of truly distinguished and courageous work in defending oppressed and brutalized people in Colombia, and teaching us about the realities of what is happening in that beautiful and tragic country, which owes them an inestimable debt, as do we all.

Noam Chomsky

Congratulations and warmest wishes on the occasion. Wish I could be with you.

Edith Ballantyne,
WILPF Geneva Office

Congratulations to Cecilia, Jack and all of the CSN team on your 25 years of service, which you are celebrating on October 2, 2012. Your hand has been extended in solidarity to thousands of persons who have been persecuted politically, displaced and been victims of violence in Colombia. Personally and politically we have profound respect and gratitude for your tireless efforts. I wish CSN many more decades of life. We have to keep in mind that, if a peace agreement is signed between the Government and the FARC, that will be the beginning and not the end of the process of construction of peace in Colombia. Long live CSN!

With best wishes,
Clara Lopez Obregon
President, Polo Democratico Party

In the name of all the workers in the mining and energy sector, we wish to thank you for the 25 years of accompaniment on the road of our struggles, the 25 years of being at our side trying to build a better country.

Twenty-five million thanks for your strength and your struggle, which is also ours!

Francisco Ramirez Cuellar
President, FUNTRAENERGETICA
Union of Energy Sector Workers

Dear Cecilia, Jack and all the Members of the Colombia Support Network:

As you complete 25 years of work in solidarity with the victims of Colombia, I want to thank you and accompany you there spiritually, recognizing the tenacity and steadfastness of this work.

You have given testimony, through all these years, that above and beyond geographic distances, divisive and exclusionary ideologies, there is an ethical sentiment which transcends all the distances, differences and divisions to affirm the dignity of every human being when he or she is trampled upon by the established powers.

Many communities of victims in Colombia have felt and benefited from your solidarity, most notably among them the Peace Community of San Jose de Apartado, which I accompany in a special way. Thank you for all of this work.

May God continue to bless your work. With feelings of gratitude and fraternity, I join you in the activities with which you have wished to commemorate this anniversary.

Father Javier Giraldo, S.J.

I have seen in my mail the strength of messages in solidarity sent to CSN. These 25 years of CSN are for me a gigantic example of love for our people on the part of you CSN members. A giant example at the same time of generosity, of audacity, of character, of perseverance, of presence. I ask of the God of life that another 25 years will come with the same greatness of human spirit, which we so much miss in Colombia and everywhere. As always, very united.

Father Francisco de Roux, S.J.,
Jesuit Provincial in Colombia

Dear Cecilia and friends of CSN,

I send you a special, warm and brotherly greeting. I cannot let this moment pass without showing my sincerest satisfaction with this new anniversary, 25 years of tireless dedication to solidarity, support and accompaniment of so many processes and communities in Colombia. The seriousness, professionalism, and commitment with which you have dedicated your efforts each day has contributed significantly to the strengthening of important social processes in Colombia.

I am especially grateful for all your dedication, for your unconditional solidarity and courage at every moment to denounce the actions which hurt humanity.

Fraternally,
Jorge Eliecer Molano
Attorney for the relatives of the victims of the Palace of Justice and other cases

Freeze for Food

From the Camentsa Community in Putumayo

Friends of CSN:

A thousand congratulations from Sibundoy, Putumayo on your silver anniversary, completing 25 years of service to so many communities in Colombia and the World.

May the all powerful God bless the selfless work which this important organization has carried out with respect to Human Rights and the collective rights of humanity. May God give to the founders and those who continue this work good health and wisdom so they may continue with this important Mission, in which so many efforts have united for a more just and more humane Colombia and world.

A hug for all of you! Accompanied by a lot of gratitude to each one of you for being close to us in this struggle which we, the Camentsa and Inga peoples of the Upper and Middle Putumayo, have undertaken, seeking respect for our territory and culture on the part of the Colombian State and the multinational corporations.

Fraternally,
Carmenza Tez Juagibioy
Member of the Camentsa Biya
Community of the Municipality of
Sibundoy in the Upper Putumayo

*Nora Walker, former intern
at the CSN's office*

This year's "Freeze for Food" 5 and 10 kilometer race, which was hosted by the Colombia Support Network and former Peace Corps Volunteers, drew a great crowd of runners, Peace Corps enthusiasts, and activists for the improvement of political conditions in Colombia. The icy Wisconsin climate and frozen pond located only steps away from the race's homebase at the Vilas Park Shelter did not shake the resolve of hundreds of energetic participants, who were anxious to take to the trail on that remarkably sunny day! As a former intern at the Colombia Support Network office, my favorite part of the day was answering the range of

questions posed by many participants who were unfamiliar with the adverse political climate in Colombia. The Freeze for Food race is an excellent community building activity that brings together people of many ages, backgrounds, and geographical areas to strengthen community bonds and effect positive change in Colombia. Additionally, the smiles on the faces of accomplished runners and amateurs alike after completing the race and viewing their names on the winner's board were highly contagious! I look forward to Freezing again next year, and appreciating again the community of excellent people in the Madison area who extend their consciousness and generosity to those who need it in Colombia.



The start of the 5- kilometer race at the Freeze for Food

In support of Carol Chomsky Mountain

Jack Laun, President of CSN

Some three years ago an organized campesino group in Cauca Department decided to honor the memory of Professor Noam Chomsky's beloved companion, Carol Chomsky, who had recently passed away. CSN representatives, the Defensor del Pueblo of Valle Department, Padre Javier Giraldo and other human rights workers accompanied Professor Chomsky to the site of the memorial to Carol Chomsky.

As an update on the project, the organization of campesinos has been protecting the Carol Chomsky memorial area, which they call the "Carol Chomsky Mountain". The organization has applied to INCODER (the Colombian Government's land management agency) for recognition of the area including the Carol Chomsky Mountain as a Zona de Reserva Campesina (ZRC) under the Colombian law which permits such reserve, protected areas. However, INCODER has put their application and others for recognition of new campesino reserve zones on hold, citing the fact that the FARC guerrillas have in their peace talks with the Santos Administration introduced a proposal for zonas de reserva campesina to be established on a semi-autonomous basis, similar to the status of indigenous communities and Afro-Colombian communities. INCODER apparently intends to delay action on new or pending applications until the Colombian government and the FARC guerrillas agree upon the legal status of these ZRC's and establish which lands are to be included in these ZRC's. The ZRC which is to include the Carol Chomsky Mountain is broader than the La Vega ZRC, which consists of some 35,000 hectares.

The campesino organization is clear about how important maintaining the Carol Chomsky Mountain is for the

supplying of water to residents of the area of the ZRC. There have been incursions of small-scale "wildcat" miners on 2 occasions into this area. Both times the community has gotten them to leave and remove their excavating machinery from the immediate area. The campesino organization believes a multinational mining company is behind these incursions into the campesino lands, as it may be easier for it to take over the lands if the small, wildcatting miners get a foothold in the region. The Colombian Government has reportedly allocated money for a plan of protection of the ZRC and has apparently also allocated money for 7 municipalities in the region. The campesino organization has established that there are 6,768 properties in the proposed reserve area.

What form investments by people in the U.S. who want to support the Carol Chomsky Mountain project (i.e., the ZRC in which it is located) might take is under discussion. The campesinos of the area may form as a pilot project a business to export coffee, which would help the campesino economy and the support for this project. The coffee produced in the Santa Rita/La Vega area, in which the Carol Chomsky Mountain ZTC is located, is of high quality.

The CSN office in Madison has been discussing ways to support the Carol Chomsky Mountain project with a highly qualified, experienced investment program manager in Madison. We expect to meet soon with the expert to discuss the feasibility of the idea of an investment fund to support the Carol Chomsky Mountain project with its promise of protecting campesinos and their lands, and the water-producing lands of the Colombian massif, from multinational mining interests being promoted by the Colombian government and from wildcat miners operating illegally.

The Colombia Support Network

Action on Colombia

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<http://colombiasupport.net/donate/>

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As a part of our celebration of 25 years of work in the human rights field for Colombia, CSN invited Lynn Werner, a poet and playwright from Galena, Illinois, to present the original play which she developed in response to horrific events she witnessed and herself suffered from in Colombia several years ago. Lynn was working as a freelance video journalist in Cauca Department with Colombians who opposed the repressive government policies which caused so much pain and suffering to so many Colombians. People with whom she was working very closely were attacked and murdered by Colombian forces and she was attacked and her life threatened. The play, called "The Winds of March", is tremendously moving, as Lynn in her one-woman show captures the danger of seeking a better society in a highly militarized situation where even comments critical of the status quo can put one's life in danger. A part of Lynn's presentation featured actual recordings and letters of friends who were shortly thereafter murdered. The play was performed before a sympathetic audience, including Jesus Emilio Tuberquia of the Peace Community of San Jose de Apartado, in the Bartell Theater in downtown Madison. CSN is very grateful to Lynn for presenting her very moving work as a part of our 25th Anniversary program.

Fair Trade more important than Free Trade

By John Kinsman

Posted: Wednesday, April 17, 2013 9:27 am

http://www.thecountrytoday.com/opinions/guest_opinions/article_e6a31fce-a76a-11e2-b84e-0019bb2963f4.html

The guest opinion by Rep. Ron Kind in the March 13 issue of The Country Today ("Wisconsin farmers deserve access to global markets," Page 6A) deserves a response. Kind quotes statistics by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection that Wisconsin is the No. 1 producer of cheese in the U.S. and No. 2 in the nation for cheese exports. He lamented the fact that even though we have trade agreements with Canada and Russia "the threat of non-tariff trade barriers, such as non-science based sanitary and phytosanitary issues and protectionist actions, are very real."

What Kind neglected to say is that Wisconsin is also No. 1 in the U.S. when it comes to antibiotic, hormonal and other drug residues in our exported dairy and meat products. These drug residues are far above the allowable "safe" limits for human consumption not only in Canada and Russia, but also the European Union, Japan, South Korea and many other countries. But when our partners refuse to budge on these completely justified "non-tariff trade barriers" the U.S. threatens them with World Trade Organization sanctions.

Kind's support of unsafe food exports through the likes of the Trans Pacific Partnership and the U.S.-E.U. Trade Agreement will not only destroy the farmers in these countries but also their economies. These forced trade policies are unethical and immoral and are no way to make friends around the globe.

Kind should remember that these free-trade deals will hurt U.S. farmers and consumers too because the subsidized dumping by corporate agribusiness goes both ways. For instance, the U.S. has been a dairy deficit nation for more than a dozen years now — in fact, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture we now have more than 265 tariff categories just for dairy imports.

One of these questionable imports now flooding the U.S. is milk protein concentrate.

MPCs are a major component in the production of glue and undergo no Food and Drug Administration food-safety testing. In 2012 alone the U.S. imported more than 240 million pounds of MPC and casein, much of it from New Zealand through its dairy giant, Fonterra. WTO-style trade deals like the TPP force countries to export and import such products no matter what their domestic needs. Unnecessary shipment of these food items also requires enormous amounts of fossil fuels that add to our foreign oil dependency and worsen climate change.

There are winners and losers in all of these so-called free-trade agreements. The winners are the 1 percent of the wealthy at the top, the losers are the rest of us. Why would anyone expect anything but a race to the bottom in farmgate prices, workers' wages and environmental standards by implementing the TPP? We need only to look at what happened in the years following passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement when the U.S. dumped subsidized corn below Mexican farmers' cost of production. Two million Mexican farmers were forced to leave their families and their land to risk their lives migrating to the U.S. in hopes of finding work. In the U.S. thousands of farmers, workers and small business people were personally devalued as they lost their livelihoods in the race to the bottom triggered by NAFTA.

The corporations pushing TPP will be taking advantage of the huge supply of cheaper labor in the Pacific Rim. The recent exposé of technology giant, Apple, using suppliers where large numbers of workers have committed suicide jumping off the roof of their sweatshops reveals the horrific conditions these workers are forced to endure and with which no worker anywhere should have to compete. What is the payoff in passage of TPP for politicians like Kind?

We should repeal existing disastrous agreements — like the Korea-U.S. one — and stop the TPP and the U.S.-E.U. deals before they are enacted. We could all be winners if we worked together in constructive cooperation for policies that promote fair trade instead.

John Kinsman of Lime Ridge is president of Family Farm Defenders. John graciously hosted Jesus Emilio for a tour of his farm.



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