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Citizens for Peace Minutes 3-8-11

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CITIZENS FOR PEACE
Minutes
March 8, 2011

Our meeting opened at 7:00 pm with a welcome by President, Colleen Mills. She was pleased to see so many in attendance for our Special Presentation by writer, speaker, traveler, peacemaker and friend, **Robert Weir**.

Special Presentation:

Robert was here to discuss his recent visit to Berlin, Germany and the Holocaust Memorial to the murdered Jews of Europe, located in the center of town. He spoke of Germany's economic, social and political situation after World War I and into the 1930s as one that was fertile ground for radicalism, making it easy for someone like Hitler to become so powerful.

The title of Robert's lecture was *How Could So Many Murder So Many?* He said the Holocaust is not only about Germans and Jews but about any people, anytime, anywhere. He shared slides depicting how far reaching the killing spanned, with supporters throughout Europe, western Russia, Scandinavia, the Balkans and northern Africa. It should be noted that many groups were victims of Hitler's regime: Jews, Catholics, Protestants, Eastern Europeans, Gypsies, Communists, Marxists, intelligentsia, nobility, invalids, minorities, "undesirables" and "traitors".

He explained how the rise of the Nazi party was inevitable due to: Military-based economy and foreign policy; Corporate privileges; Decreased influence of labor unions; Fewer workers' rights; High unemployment; Reduced wages; Decreased value of goods and services; Emphasis on short-term gain; Government-subsidized industries; Biased media, etc. He asked the group if these conditions sound familiar to what we're experiencing today??? Could it happen again? Is it happening now? A discussion with the group ensued, with comments on the similarities to our present day.

Robert then shared a video he took while walking through the Memorial. He said much thought went into creating this Memorial, which was quite expansive. He pointed out that the unmarked, concrete headstones started out short and lead to tall markers as one traveled into the interior, deeper regions of the Memorial. All markers were uniform in footprint and drab gray in color. He asked the group to take note of what they see and hear in the video. Afterward, he asked the group for their thoughts. A variety of comments and emotions were shared by the group. It was quite a moving experience for him and he was pleased to share it with us.

The members and guests thanked Robert for his very thought-provoking presentation.

Business Meeting / Announcements:

- Treasurer, Rick Abdoo, read the Treasurer's Report.
- DoP State Coordinator, Kevin Szawala, stated he will be traveling the state starting July 4th, with an exhibit to create awareness of the cost of war. It will culminate on Memorial Day with a Peace Walk across the Mackinac Bridge. Details to follow on how to join in the momentous event!
- There are copies of the newly revised Political Action Guide. Take a look at the wealth of information they contain, and very reasonably priced.
- The Peace and Justice Film series begins April 6th – see the flyer on the information table.
- Join us for our April meeting on Unmasking Youth Violence.

Colleen invited everyone to continue Robert Weir's discussion and enjoy refreshments in Friendship Hall.

With no further business to conduct, the meeting closed at 9:00 pm.