The company has a number of lucrative connections to America’s defense industry. Catherine Fitts at Scoop Online muses that “Dyncorp seems to have had a hand...in information systems at the Department of Justice, the Department of Defense, the CIA, the Air Force, the FBI, and SEC and even the New York Stock Exchange.” Dyncorp has donated more than $225,000 to the Republican Party. Ex-CIA Director — and leading candidate for the position of new Iraq Information Minister — James Woolsey served on the Dyncorp board from 1988-89. And according to a pre-war report by ICONMEDIA’S “Military Documentation Project,” “[Dyncorp] has been helping to stockpile weapons in the Persian Gulf region that will be used in a pre-emptive attack on Iraq,” a country that the company is now promising to help “rebuild.” Perhaps reflecting these close government ties, Dyncorp’s contract was “sole-sourced” rather than put up for competitive bidding.

Even more incredible than Dyncorp’s government connections are its scandal-plagued performances in the international arena. As reported in the April 13 edition of the London-based Observer, “Dyncorp personnel contracted to the United Nation’s police service in Bosnia were recently implicated in buying and selling prostitutes, including a girl as young as 12. Several Dyncorp employees were also accused of videotaping the rape of one of the young women.” When Dyncorp employee Kathy Bolkovac blew the whistle on the sex ring, she was fired. A British employment tribunal recently ordered the company to pay Bolkovac more than $173,000. British labor judges aren’t the only ones suing Dyncorp. A group of Ecuadorian peasants have filed a class action against the company alleging that, as part of “Plan Columbia,” Dyncorp sprayed toxic herbicides that drifted across the Ecuadorian border, destroying crops and killing children.

This, then, is the company now being paid millions of dollars to introduce Iraqis to the “rule of law.” And who better to help them do it than New York City’s own year veteran of Hussein’s security forces.

Dyncorp has been accused of everything from running an illegal sex ring in Bosnia to killing children in Ecuador as part of “Plan Colombia.”

Dyncorp has been everything from running an illegal sex ring in Bosnia to killing children in Ecuador as part of “Plan Colombia.”
Victor Hidalgo worked for $9 an hour in a cramped Cintas factory in Branford, Ct, unloading trucks full of dirty laundry. Employees received two sick days per year and were summarily fired if injured on the job. “It’s a very hard job, very dirty,” he says of his work for the nation’s largest uniform manufacturer. “They don’t even provide gloves to handle contaminated laundry from the Red Cross.”

Clorinda Valdivia, a mother of three, worked on an assembly line at Cintas Central Islip, N.Y. plant, and was expected to repair 50 uniforms per hour in a room with no windows and no air conditioning. After six years at the plant she earned only $7 per hour, with only one sick day per year. “The workers don’t matter to them,” she says. “The only things that matter are the production numbers.”

When Hidalgo and Valdivia tried to organize their fellow workers to join a union earlier this year, they were both fired. They have continued organizing and on April 23 they helped lead a spirited march through Midtown that stopped outside a pair of Starbucks to draw attention to the coffee giant’s union-busting national apron and mat supplier, Cintas.

The march, called by the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) Local 155, with support from the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 32 BJ and the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFTW) Local 1500, was part of a national day of action in support of 17,000 Cintas workers.

Similar protests took place simultaneously in Philadelphia, Detroit, Las Vegas and other cities across North America as part of a UNITE campaign called “Uniform Justice.” Starbucks portrays itself as socially responsible. They have fabricated an image that they care about workers — that they care about the environment, said UNITE Vice President Wilfredo Laurancuent. “Well, if that is what your standards are, observe them. And have the same standard for all of your suppliers, including Cintas.”

Besides illegally firing union supporters, the Cincinnati-based company has been cited numerous times by the National Labor Relations Board for sexual and racial discrimination. They have been forced to pay overtime and to conduct surveillance and interrogation of employees. Over 100 labor law violations have been filed against Cintas this year. On March 19, charges were brought in California against Cintas on behalf of 3,500 employees who were misclassified as overtime exempt and forced to work up to 70 hours a week. The lawsuits could cost Cintas $75 to $100 million in unpaid overtime. Last year the company agreed to settle a similar lawsuit over unpaid overtime in California for $10 million. In 2002, Cintas made $234 million in sales.

Cintas also has a history of buying out unionized competitors and closing their facilities, leaving thousands of union members out of work. In 1999, Cintas bought out a heavily unionized competitor — Uniting — and closed all but one of Uniting’s 15 unionized plants. Cintas also acquired Metropolitan Uniform Services, where employees had been unionized for 28 years, and then tried to decertify the union by promising higher wages and better benefits, unlawful conduct under U.S. labor law.

Despite Cintas intransigence, organizers aren’t discouraged. Hidalgo passes out leaflets outside the plant he used to work in while management videotapes him from the roof. He and Valdivia continue to hold Saturday afternoon meetings with former co-workers whose hopes are greater than their fears.

“We are going to see more equality, more personal days with our children,” Valdivia says.

**UNIFORM JUSTICE**

**UNITE TARGETS CINTA IN NATIONAL ORGANIZING CAMPAIGN**

BY TONY PECINOVSKY AND JOHN TAILERON

WAY DOWN IN THE MINES:

**FIRE RIDENT CINTAS WORKERS: Clorinda Valdivia and Victor Hidalgo protest outside a Starbucks to draw attention to the coffee giant’s relationship with their former employer. PHOTO: Erick Setterlund**

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**UNION & SAFETY: MEMORIALS & RISK**

BY TONY PECINOVSKY

Since 1989 the AFL-CIO has observed April 28, Workers Memorial Day, as a day to remember those who have suffered and died on the job. Every year about 6,000 people are killed at work. Another 50,000 die annually from work-related injuries and diseases. And millions more are injured, maimed or become sick because of workplace conditions.

Workers Memorial Day is observed by nearly 100 countries. It has been officially endorsed by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, the International Labour Organization, and five countries — Canada, Portugal, Spain, Taiwan and Thailand — formally recognize April 28 as Workers Memorial Day.

This year marks the 15th annual observance of Workers Memorial Day. While injury and illness rates have fallen from 11 per 100 workers in 1973 to 5.7 per 100 in 2001, much more work needs to be done to address workplace trauma. Obtaining more reliable safety equipment, creating stronger training programs and strengthening OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) requirements and regulations are just a few of the suggestions advocated by the AFL-CIO.

Unfortunately, the Bush administration has done everything in its power to weaken the health and safety regulations already in existence. For example, President George W. Bush’s proposed fiscal 2004 budget would cut money for enforcing workplace health and safety laws.

The administration’s disregard for the safety of working people is exemplified by the attempted packing of the federal courts with ultra-conservative, reactionary, anti-union appointees.

Federal judges – 900 men and women who sit on our federal district courts, courts of appeals and the U.S. Supreme Court – are appointed for life and enforce constitutional and statutory rights. They also hear challenges to OSHA rules and regulations, and have the power to overturn or strengthen safety and health rules enforced by OSHA. And if the Bush administration’s assault on health and safety regulation will be weakened even more.

In 2000, the average U.S. worker put in 1,978 hours, up 170 hours from almost a full week — since 1990. With more families working longer, and more safety and health regulations under attack, a strong OSHA, forcing employers to adhere to higher health and safety standards, is desperately needed.
Aresh Javadi of the More Gardens Coalition. “The legal but not all of New York’s 543 community gardens. after the City and New York Attorney General Elliott Spitzer prevail, one thing is certain: the battle over the fate of some of DeCosta Headley of Diversified Inch by Inch Inc. to back off, for now. Preservation and Development (HPD) and real estate developer willing to risk arrest in the quiet green oasis she had helped create in beauty for African-Americans should be kept,” Helen Mason, the negotiations couldn’t: his Caterpillar bulldozer.

BY JOHN TARLETON

BROWNSVILLE DUCKS BLOCKADE BULLDOZER BULLIES

When Horace Watt arrived at Fantasy Garden on the afternoon of April 16, four ducklings halted what years of lawsuits and negotiations couldn’t: his Caterpillar bulldozer.

“I have heart, miss. I have children at home, and something of beauty for African-Americans should be kept,” Helen Mason, the garden’s caretaker, remembers him telling her.

Using the reprieve, Mason contacted press and supporters who were willing to risk arrest in the quiet green oasis she had helped create in the middle of Brownsville, East Brooklyn. The sudden glare of a round-the-clock vigil has forced the City’s Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) and real estate developer DeCosta Headley of Diversified Inch by Inch Inc. to back off, for now.

While it is uncertain how much longer Fantasy’s defenders can prevail, one thing is certain: the battle over the fate of some of New York’s community gardens is heating up again, eight months after the City and New York Attorney General Elliott Spitzer settled a long-running lawsuit with an agreement that spared many but not all of New York’s 543 community gardens.

“It’s going to be a crazy spring with lots of bulldozing,” says Mason, whose 2,400 sq. foot garden is slated to be replaced by five housing units. “Brownsville is the golden egg and they’re swarming here like locusts,” says Mason, whose 2,400 sq. foot garden is slated to be replaced by five housing units.

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Direct Action!

FANTASY GARDEN SURVIVES: Helen Mason feeds Minnie Pear, garden defender and long-time resident. INSET: Neighborhood kids celebrate. ALL PHOTOS ON PAGE: Erick Setterlund.

BY JOHN TARLETON

Finally... Jersey Cops Indicted in Chago Slay Case

Family and friends of Santiago “Chago” Villanueva celebrated a crucial breakthrough in his legal case on April 16 even as they mourned his senseless death a year ago at the hands of four Bloomfield, New Jersey officers. Villanueva, 35, a popular community activist and Afro-Dominican musician in the Washington Heights community, died in police custody April 16, 2002 while experiencing a severe epileptic seizure at a Bloomfield garment factory where he worked.

Villanueva’s co-workers called an ambulance, but the police arrived first. Thinking the dreadlocked Villanueva was on drugs, the four white police officers handcuffed him, shouted profanities, demanded that he and his co-workers speak English and forced him to the ground and sat on top of him. He stopped breathing. Two of the four police officers had EMT training.

Villanueva’s estate recently filed a $55 million wrongful death suit against the Township of Bloomfield. On April 15, Richard Chiarello, 43, Vincent DeFabrizio, 44, Frank Furfaro, 37, and Gerald Filippone, 32, were indicted on charges of reckless endangerment, which carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison. The four officers were suspended from duty and receiving full pay.

“It’s a small relief for me knowing that something has been done,” said Villanueva’s widow, Lisaann Villanueva. “They [the D.A.’s office] keep putting me off. They keep everything hush-hush. They don’t want to go after four of their own.”

“It’s a little bit of good news. It makes it [the anniversary] a little bit more bearable,” added Nina Paulino, a friend of Villanueva since he immigrated to the U.S. nine years ago.

After holding a late afternoon rally outside the police precinct in Bloomfield, about 40 people turned out for the ceremony in Washington Heights, which was held in a small park on the corner of 170th and Broadway down the street from where Villanueva used to live. As dusk turned to nightfall, neighbors gathered in a circle, lit candles and took turns speaking.

“We’re making a commitment to each other,” said one woman. “When you lose your memory, you lose the possibility for making justice,” said Rodames Rodriguez. “And if you lose a sense of justice, you have no future.”

The somber candlelight circle eventually gave way to the spirited drumming and singing of Villanueva’s fellow Pa’i musicians who chanted “¡A pa’i! es San Santiago! [A pa’i! es San Santiago]”

“We understand it’s a long struggle,” said Paulino. “But, we’re not going anywhere.”

IN CHAGO

JERSEY COPS

INDICTED

IN CHAGO SLAY CASE

BY JOHN TARLETON

Meanwhile, the flower beds and fruit trees are finally blooming for the ceremony in Washington Heights, which was held in a small park on the corner of 170th and Broadway down the street from where Villanueva used to live. As dusk turned to nightfall, neighbors gathered in a circle, lit candles and took turns speaking.

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IN CHAGO
**A WORLD OF TROUBLE: DEADLOCKED U.N. STRUGGLES TO SOLVE GROWING CRISIES**

**INTERNATIONAL POLITICS**

**BY DONALD PANETH**

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y. - The United Nations, an imaginative, deadlocked U.S. hostility to the world organization and by U.N. uncertainty about how to proceed. The U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan has absent himself from headquarters. Annan is visiting European capitals. At stops along the way, he murmurs reassurances.

The U.N. dedicates $1.4 billion programs. President George W. Bush has signaled that the U.N. will have a “vital” but limited and still unspecified part in the reconstruction of Iraq.

Richard N. Perle, who contributed a article to The Guardian (UK) March 21 entitled, “Thank God for the death of the U.N.,” calling it an “abject failure,” resigned as chairman of the Pentagon’s Defense Advisory Board following conflict-of-interest revelations in relation to Global Crossing, a telecommunications and education industry.

None of these possibilities have ever been seriously debated.

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**CONFLICT LEAVES A WOUNDED LAND**

**BY KRISTEN MCLEOD-BALL**

The “embedded” journalists’ snapshot of the invasion of Iraq – whisking sand and swarming soldiers set against the backdrop of an apocalyptic landscape – do not bring to mind the environmental impact of war. What damage, after all, can be done to a desolate and lifeless desert?

The first Gulf War’s environmental legacy included depleted uranium (DU), hundreds of oil well fires, billions of gallons of crude oil doused in land and at sea, and burning caches of chemical weapons. That conflict resulted in one of the most toxic battlefields ever. Gulf War II escaped most of these risks, but not all.

The Pentagon won’t say how much of the DU was still a major effect of this war, damaged oil wells, pipelines and oil-filled trenches was still a major effect of this war, major food crises in Africa, fighting in Afghanistan, Cote d’Ivoire, Liberia and Congo, the perennial Israeli-Palestinian conflict, U.S. fighting in the deserts of California. He explained these observations, according to Dr. Robert Stebbins, a professor at UC Berkeley who studies the deserts, they left a clear footprint. The Pentagon won’t be able to be harvested.

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On April 15, Rev. Billy and his “Stop Bombing Gospel Choir” called on their congregation at St. Marks Church to avoid the federal ATM and instead learn the basics of a “gift economy.” Rev. Billy (a.k.a. Bill Talen) is a political performer and Lower East Side icon. He started campaigning against consumerism in the late 1990’s as the irreverent pastor of “The Church of Stop Shopping.” He made many appearances in the playgrounds of Manhattan’s corporate giants, getting blacklisted by Starbucks and chalking up a string of arrests for his anti-sweatshop “act-outs” at the Disney store.

The Reverend re-christened the Church of Stop Shopping as the “Church of Stop Bombing” soon after September 11 as he considers war another product with a well-produced ad campaign. When the service at St. Marks ended, the Reverend headed to the 33rd Street Post Office to preach to late tax filers. Along the way, I caught up with his wide strides hoping to find some more answers.

IMC: How do you feel about the present situation?
RB: It’s a dark time. We definitely have thugs in charge and right now it’s not easy to know what to do. We are at a tremendous crossroads; mostly we are emotional – we don’t feel very good because people are dying every minute. On February 15 we had millions on the streets saying “peace” in unison, and George Bush said: “That’s a focus group and I am going to ignore them and instead pay attention to weapons dealers, Big Gas, Big Oil and Big Media.”

February 15 was a high point of expressing an opinion in a public space. If that has no impact in a democracy we just have to rethink going into more serious ways of denying the government money.

IMC: In your speech, you referred to the war as a product. What other “products” do you think the government is selling?
RB: Well right now it’s violence, financing military, paying money to wealthy people by way of tax cuts, selling privileged financial agreements with the government. They are using tax money to make a living, they are manipulating us and getting away with what they can. They lie – they’ve just been caught too many times lying – Enron, WorldCom, now the Iraq war…”

IMC: Is there a way to fight this system? How does the concept of “Gift Economy” fit in?
RB: “Gift Economy” is a local economy. It’s in keeping our money closer to our bodies, closer to our neighborhoods. It’s a pretty basic idea – just don’t trust them with the money, they’ve abused the trust.

For years we’ve been living in the Clinton-Gore neoliberalism of “shopping is good.” And now we see how the military guys took this idea and ran with it with the permission given to them by 9/11. I hope that people are starting to understand that a shopping-centric culture directs energies in a particular way – towards making of products, towards fossil fuel. We won’t start this gift economy unless we have some discipline, unless we stop letting chain stores in, unless we are strict about our tax money.

IMC: You’ve mentioned in your “prayer” that you’ve been discouraged, and it seems to be the trend with the peace movement – the events were hard on everybody. Where do you find your support?
RB: There is something oddly counter-intuitive about the whole notion of peace, maybe, because this culture is apotitical. People can’t think politically here – they get upset when you raise the basic questions. Europe has the tradition. Anti-consumerism – what my group does in Starbucks and Disney – has a very strong following in Britain and especially in France, where the most celebrated intellectual writers and thinkers are anti-consumerists. Here we are really “kooks,” we have to get our feelings of support from our performances, while the larger culture considers the anti-consumerist movement “kooky.” I am going to Britain and France to be in that support and find out what it feels like. I certainly felt support tonight. I love being at the heart of my community, being useful, and tonight was wonderful. I’ll live on what happened tonight all summer long.

For more information on Reverend Billy’s performances go to rebilly.com

“SHOCK AND AWE” FOR FUN AND PROFIT

By IMC Staff

S hock and Awe — the idea of using massive bombardment to psychologically cow an opponent into submission — received a decidedly negative public reaction when the Pentagon suggested using the tactic against Iraq. The idea was scrapped, but that hasn’t stopped America’s finest entrepreneurial minds from trying to make a quick buck off the resulting catch phrase. The U.S. Patent and Trademark office has received dozens of applications since March to trademark the term for hundreds of items (no trademarks pending yet for “Decapitation Strike”). The following is just a sample of what may be coming soon to your corner deli.

1. “Shock and Awe” Condoms
2. “Shock and Awe” Energy and Fruit-flavored Drinks
3. “Shock and Awe” Fireworks
4. “Shock and Awe” Pesticides and Herbicides
5. “Shock and Awe” Teddy Bears
6. “Shock and Awe” Sandals
7. “Shock and Awe” Coffee Mugs
8. “Shock and Awe” Eyeglasses
9. “Shock and Awe” Teriyaki Sauce
10. “Shock and Awe” Greeting Cards
11. “Shock and Awe” Coffee and Tea
12. “Shock and Awe” Head Wraps
13. “Shock and Awe” Dollhouses
14. “Shock and Awe” Firearms
15. “Shock and Awe” Telecommunications Equipment
16. “Shock and Awe” Date Books
17. “Shock and Awe” Legal Services
18. “Shock and Awe” Ketchup
19. “Shock and Awe” Dietary Supplements
20. “Shock and Awe” Jewelry
21. “Shock and Awe” Office supplies
22. “Shock and Awe” Yo-yos
23. “Shock and Awe” Shampoo
24. “Shock and Awe” Playing Cards
25. “Shock and Awe” Televisions
26. “Shock and Awe” Exercise Equipment
27. “Shock and Awe” Underwear
28. “Shock and Awe” Mayonnaise
29. “Shock and Awe” Calendars
30. “Shock and Awe” Corn Chips

For more information – or to register your own trademark! – go to: uspto.gov
THE NYPD GOES GLOBAL: NEW YORK’S FINEST AND OTHER HUMAN-RIGHTS VIOLATORS PREPARE TO POLICE IRAQ

“DynCorp ... has been helping to stockpile weapons in the Persian Gulf region that will be used in a pre-emptive attack on Iraq,” a country that the company is now promising to help “rebuild.”

NYPD continued from page 1

March 2002: Brown University hires the Bratton Group to gather information about campus safety and to make recommendations for improvements. After 22 days of meetings and three sparsely attended forums, Bratton releases a 40-page study that contains one overriding recommendation: arm the Brown campus police.

October 2002: Rudy Giuliani’s consulting firm, Giuliani Partners, signs a one-year contract to revamp policing in Mexico City. Giuliani, who presided over New York during the controversial police killings of Amadou Diallo and Patrick Dorismond (among others) and the attack on Abner Louima, tells reporters that he will “help Mexican police implement some of the same tactics he employed in New York during his two terms as mayor.”

More recently, NYPD officials admitted asking dozens of protesters arrested at recent anti-war gatherings questions about their feelings about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, their political affiliations, schools attended, other sensitive issues, recording them in a special database. The Department defends the activity but destroyed all the information collected after the questioning came to light, the NYCLU contends that “this is a practice that never should have happened and raised serious First Amendment concerns.”

Despite all the controversy, how did the New York City Police Department become one of the most called-upon international crime fighting units in the world? NYPD supporters argue that Giuliani-era police techniques contributed to New York’s crime rate decrease of the early 1990’s. They cite the so-called “Broken Windows Theory,” coined by conservative sociologist James Q. Wilson: “If the first broken window in a building is not repaired, then people who like breaking windows will assume that no one cares about the building.” In other words, crime is seen as the result of lax police efforts, and stricter law enforcement policy is the primary ingredient to promoting safer communities.

But critics of the NYPD see no direct correlation between New York’s crime rate decrease and its “zero-tolerance” approach to policing. According to a recent study released by the Center for Juvenile and Criminal Justice, “Strict law enforcement approaches emphasizing arrests, prosecutions, convictions and incarceration do not reduce crime rates.” Even some of the less dogmatic supporters of recent NYPD policies admit that there is no guarantee that policing techniques applied in New York City will make a similar impact overseas – whether in Iraq, Mexico City or elsewhere.

As DynCorp International continues to implement its plans to “rebuild” Iraq’s criminal justice system, its recruitment drive may net dozens of ex-New York City police officials. If that turns out to be the case, Iraqis may soon find themselves struggling against corporate globalization. Don’t miss an issue—subscribe today!

Officers ever convicted of committing homicide while on duty: 3.
Total civil awards to victims of NYPD abuse in 1999: $40 million.
Total civil awards to victims of NYPD abuse in 1998: $28.3 million.
Officers ever convicted of committing homicide while on duty: 3.

Projected number of soldiers needed to occupy Iraq: 75,000-100,000
EXPAND GIULIANI-ERA POLICING

QUALITY OF LIFE CRUSADERS

arrest. Former Chief William Bratton initiated the policies March 1999 found only one in nine incidents resulted in an arrest. Michael Bloomberg’s continuation of Giuliani’s “Quality of Life” initiative. While there was an outpouring of support for New York’s Handschu Agreement, which limited its ability to surveil peaceful First Amendment activities, there is a growing consensus that information gathering is the new police order of the day.

THE HEAVY HAND: From bullying rallies to Operation Atlas, repressive policing has become the rule, rather than the exception. PHOTO BY: FRED ASKEW

BY IMC STAFF

By IMC Staff

One night this January Charles Burnham jumped on his bicycle to buy cat food at the corner grocery a block-and-a-half from his home in Prospect Lefferts Gardens. A half-hour later, he was being held in a cell at the 71st Police Precinct.

Burnham, a professional violinist, had the misfortune to briefly veer onto the sidewalk to avoid a patrolman. Despite apologizing to the officer’s enraged partner, a patrol car was called and the unlucky musician was taken away.

The incident angered local residents. “While the cops are busy with this sort of thing, the real criminals can have a heyday and get away,” complained Celestine Thompson, a neighbor of Burnham.

Burnham was netted in “Operation Clean Sweep,” Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg’s continuation of Giuliani’s “Quality of Life” initiative. From January 2002 to January 2003, 11,000 people were arrested in New York and 110,000 more were issued summonses, according to the mayor’s office.

Under Giuliani, misdemeanor arrests shot up almost 75 percent from 1993 to 2000 for a total of 224,663 arrests. He also put in place stop-and-frisk policies that many saw as thinly disguised fishing expeditions for information. In fact, a review of 175,000 such stops from January 1998 through March 1999 found only one in nine incidents resulted in an arrest. Former Chief William Bratton initiated the policies to pile up arrests so as to feed that information into the computer crime tracking system known as COMSTAT.

After September 11, the fear is that those caught in such fishing expeditions may find themselves in the grasp of the John Ashcroft’s Justice Department. In addition, the hyper-surveillance instituted in the 1990s smoothed the way for the dramatically increased policing seen in the city today.

While there was an outpouring of support for New York cops after September 11, it hasn’t been reciprocated. One lawyer says “Our files are bulging with charges of police brutality that occurred after September 11.”

Bloomberg and Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly link Operation Clean Sweep to their campaign to combat terrorism, a.k.a. “Operation Atlas.” The operation includes more police at Manhattan bridges and tunnels, use of bomb-sniffing dogs and radiation detectors to screen vehicles, and armed troops patrolling city subways and commuter trains. With Operation Atlas costing New York $5 million a week, the city will be hard pressed to maintain the quality of life sweeps.

Now that the NYPD has been freed of the Handschu Agreement, which limited its ability to surveil peaceful First Amendment activities, there is a growing consensus that information gathering is the new police order of the day.

With a bellicose imperial junta in power in D.C., and no other country coming even close to matching U.S. military might, the question isn’t whether we’re going to war again soon, it’s where. War protects their economic domination (and provides juicy contracts), makes them feel manly and well-hung, fulfills their religious-apocalyptic visions, intimidates other countries and stifles domestic dissent. So who’s next?

BY STEVE WISHING

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It was 1999 and, as much as he tried, Francisco da Silva could no longer find work. At that same time, a cousin had told him about an MST (Landless Workers’ Movement) meeting. He went. From that day on, he would take control and change the course of his life.

The MST, one of the world’s most successful social movements, was officially founded in 1984 after the Catholic Church and peasants joined forces to occupy an unproductive parcel of land in the state of Rio Grande do Sul. While Brazilian media works overtime to portray MST as violent and irresponsible, over one million people have settled on land taken over by the organization.

Da Silva, who grew up in Brazil’s impoverished northeast and moved to the city in the mid-1970s, joined 500 other people in taking over an idle farm in the north of the state of Rio de Janeiro. He lived in a tent for two months almost without food and water and was one of 60 settlers to persevere. The settlers built a community center, a road cutting across the farm and a school. They cleaned old houses, brought electricity and running water and divided the land among themselves.

Now 62, he is president of the community association. He organizes workshops, conferences and improvements for the community. The families meet in an open democratic manner each week to discuss problems, solutions and next steps. Da Silva, his wife and their five children plant and harvest their own produce, and own some cows, chickens, pigs and ducks. When there is surplus, Da Silva rows his canoe to the nearest town to sell his products.

The land will soon be his. He will be able to request government credit to build a better house for his family, buy more crops and continue to grow the community he helped create. He is critical of corruption within the MST and does not hesitate to support and participate in other takeovers of lands. For him, the MST is the peasants that live on the land. “We are the MST. The MST only exists because of us.” As for the new government of President Luis Ignacio “Lula” da Silva, he says, “I hope he makes Agrarian Reform a reality. This is the only way people of this country can know justice. As for me, I will keep fighting.”

INTERESTED in having a photo essay published? Send an email inquiry to: indypendentphotoessay@yahoo.com
**In Brief**

NYCLU to NYPD: Stop Beating Protesters

On April 18, New York Civil Liberties Union called on city police to stop using physical force against peaceful protesters. The recommendation came as the NYCLU issued a 40-page report based on 350 eyewitness accounts of what happened at the May 1 anti-war protest. NYCLU Executive Director Donna Lieberman said, “On February 15, the NYPD engaged in massive interference with peaceful protest, starting with the denial of a permit to march; excessive use of force, including the use of horses to charge into crowds of peaceful demonstrators and the use of pepper spray on people simply trying to get to the rally; and pervasive constitutional violations of those arrested, including political interrogations, denial of access to counsel and even forcing some to stand chained together outside for a long time in the freezing cold following hours in cold, dark unheated vans without food, water or medical care.” Read study at www.nyclu.org

CUNY Law Bars Students from Honoring Stewart

A majority of the CUNY Law School’s graduating class chose to present Dean Kristin Booth Glen last week with a petition nominating movement lawyer Lynne Stewart as public interest lawyer of the year. Dean Booth Glen informed the students at a meeting on Tuesday that she did not allow them to present its award during the graduation ceremony.

Stewart was arrested last April on charges levied by Attorney General John Ashcroft that she helped an Egyptian sheik to direct terrorist operations from his prison cell.

DOCS MISDIAGNOSE “LAWSUIT CRISIS”

The American Medical Association’s claim of a “lawsuit crisis” in 18 states is baseless according to a study recently released by the Center for Justice and Democracy. The study reveals that the AMA suppressed evidence showing there is either no relation of tort lawsuits to medical costs or that the number of claims is decreasing. Citing excessive lawsuits, skyrocketing insurance rates and an exodus of doctors, the AMA is pushing for so-called “tort reform” legislation that would cap payments for pain and suffering due to medical malpractice at $250,000. According to the report, insurance companies looking to recoup stock market losses, not the legal system, are culpable for burdensome insurance rates. Study results are at http://centerjd.org.

GUN INDUSTRY TAKES AIM AT LIABILITY LAWS

The House of Representatives recently passed the “Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act,” which would shield gun manufacturers, dealers, distributors and importers from lawsuits related to the misuse of their products. The Senate is expected to vote on the legislation this summer. If passed, it will overrule laws in 24 states that grant immunity to the gun industry. The 1999 gun-death toll in the U.S. was 28,874 persons, according to the Centers for Disease Control.

**Don’t Vote for Me Argentina**

BY MARINA SITNIN & MARTIN KRZYMKIEWCZ

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina—The first round of balloting is over in the presidential elections and the field has narrowed from five to two candidates, both from the right-wing Peronist party.

Whomever triumphs in the runoffs on May 18, “law and order” is already the big winner. In the run-up to the April 27 poll, ex-President Carlos Menem, who led the field with 24 percent of the vote, repeatedly aired a TV commercial that looked like an episode of COP5. It showed lots of blood and violence that faded to a picture of a smiling Menem with ORDER spelled out across the screen.

Crime is on many people’s minds as a result of the economic collapse that climaxned in December 2001 – more than half of the population now lives in poverty. Just like their U.S. counterparts, Argentine politicians use law and order as code. However, they’re not talking about street gangs or violence perpetrated by the increasingly militarized police forces. It’s social movements that politicians and the press cast as a dangerous criminal element in need of heavy-handed discipline.

The last two years have witnessed the rise of groups of unemployed workers who seize and run abandoned factories. Many people have lost their jobs, and each time they were threatened, groups of unemployed workers seized the factory’s debt and hired more workers – most of them women – seized (Argentine Uprising) of December 2001, Argentines have been looking for, but rather against a politician.

Voters say they have no choice. The other candidate in the second round is Menem’s fellow Peronist Néstor Kirchner. Both espouse order and a stronger economy, which means selling off natural resources and doing what the international financial institutions demand. And until the crash of December 19 and 20, 2001, Argentina was the “emerging” example for the success of these institutions. Now no one believes the elections will improve the desolate economic situation of the country.

The powerful cannot buy love, confidence, imagination and desire; they are the basis of the new values and new struggles in these communities. “Our dreams do not fit in your ballot boxes,” says the unemployed workers’ movement. This knowledge is dangerous to those in power and through the elections, the new government, whatever it is, will claim to have the mandate of the people, and will try to repress them more.

Nonetheless, factory occupations, movements of asambleas and international solidarity continue to invent creative forms of disobedience against an inhumane order. Another world is not only possible – it is being created, and no new politician or elected official can stop this creation.

**Democracy Is in the Streets:** Supporters defend the worker-occupied Brukman factory in Buenos Aires. PHOTO: Argentina IMC

Ex-president Carlos Menem, who led the first round with 24 percent of the vote, repeatedly aired a TV commercial that looked like an episode of COP5. It showed lots of blood and violence that faded to a picture of a smiling Menem with ORDER spelled out across the screen.
UN EJERCITO DE VELAS: Una ayuda para que este aniversario de su muerte sea “menos insoporable.” FOTO: Erick Setterlund.

Familiares y amigos de Santiago “Chago” Villanueva celebraron una decisión clave en el juicio contra los responsables de su muerte el pasado 16 de abril, mientras continúan lamentando su muerte. Villanueva, 35 años, un conocido activista y músico folklórico afro-dominicano de Washington Heights murió bajo custodia policial hace un año en Bloomfield, New Jersey. Villanueva estaba en su trabajo, en una fábrica de esa localidad, cuando sufrió un ataque de epilepsia. Sus compañeros pidieron una ambulancia pero la policía llegó primero. Pronto cuatro policías blancos, sin hacer ninguna indagatoria, supusieron que estaba bajo efectos de drogas. Lo esposaron, insultándolo, gritándole a él y a sus colegas que hablaran inglés, lo tiraron al piso y uno de ellos lo golpeó con un puño. El 15 de abril pasado, Richard Chiarrello, Vincent DeFabrizio, Frank Furfaro y Gerald Filippone fueron acusados de negligencia criminal, por el que podrían pasar un máximo de 10 años en la cárcel. Los cuatro oficiales fueron asignados a “tareas de escritorio” y siguieron cobrando sus salarios.

“Nos da un pequeño consuelo saber que se ha hecho algo. La oficina del fiscal no quería hablar conmigo. Quieren acallarnos, no les gusta que se acuse a cuatro de los suyos”, dijo Lissaan, viuda de Villanueva.

“Es una ayuda para que este aniversario de su muerte sea menos insoporable”, agregó Nina Paulino, que es amiga de Villanueva desde que él llegó a EE UU hace nueve años. Después de manifestar frente al precinto en Washington Heights. Allí, en el parque de la esquina de Broadway y la calle 170 tuvo lugar una emotiva vigilia. Los presentes formaron un círculo, encendieron velas y se turnaron para hablar. “Si perdemos la memoria, perdemos la posibilidad de lograr justicia. Y si perdemos el sentido de justicia, no tendremos futuro”, dijo Radamés Rodríguez.

Al final de la vigilia, se levantaron los ancesorales sones de los tambores y de las letras puertorriqueñas y latinas. “Es una ayudita para que este aniversario de su muerte sea ‘menos insoporable.’”

UN EJERCITO DE VELAS: Una ayuda para que este aniversario de su muerte sea “menos insoporable.” FOTO: Erick Setterlund.
El candidato a vicepresidente de Elisa Carrió, candidata del centroizquierda, no se le ocurrió mejor respuesta que anunciar que apelará al Ejército para reorientar la ayuda social con menor conflictividad; el populismo de Rodríguez Saá muestra su verdadera cara llevando al militar golpista y experimentado represor Aldo Rico, que acaba de reivindicar el intento de Golpe Militar que encabezó en 1987. Kirchner, continuidad calcada de la mafia duhaldista, propone en su libro de campaña el mismo discurso que aplicó el gobierno en la masacre de Avellaneda: “aislar a los violentos y después reprimir los focos rebeldes”. López Murphy, expresión pura de la derecha neoliberal, aclaró que, en caso de ganar, “no le van a sacar en las calles lo que conquiste en las urnas” (recordemos que quien “gane” lo hará con no más del 20 % del electorado), y que reprimirá con toda la fuerza del Estado. Y por último Menem, se presenta como “garantía de orden”, y de “un país sin piqueteros en las calles”, en tono de amenaza. A días de las elecciones, el Gobierno de Perón se mantiene con su versión más radical de “orden por el que se vayan todos”, para imponer su propia agenda política logró burlar la consigna del “que se abstenga o la broncea, contiene una verdad que en su versión más radical conducen al voto- mal menor”. La primera afirmación, que en el inminente proceso electoral suele resumirse en dos lugares comunes: “son todos iguales” o “una vez más tenemos que resignarnos al statu quo”.